

the rank and file in action

Labor Today

35¢



Volume 16, No. 3

March 1977



STEEL RANK AND FILE:

We have only just begun to fight!

Labor Today

Statement of National Steelworkers Rank and File Committee, Box 1152, Lorain, Ohio 44055.

The USWA elections have marked a tremendous step forward for rank and file steelworkers. The results are a mandate for far-reaching change in working conditions, contract demands and internal union democracy. They show that a broad, powerful and growing current in the union demands action on issues, jobs, speed-up, discrimination, health and safety and other urgent questions.

Our union will never be the same. The rank and file movement has sunk roots throughout the union and the stage has been set for a thoroughgoing victory.

Ed Sadlowski, Oliver Montgomery and the entire Fight Back slate deserves the deepest admiration and respect of all rank and file steelworkers for their courageous and tireless efforts during this historic campaign.

Never before have any candidates for international offices faced such fierce and concentrated opposition from the steel corporations and their friends. These forces poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into the drive to stop the Fight Back slate. Top corporation executives openly sided with Lloyd McBride. Anti-labor columnists and editorial writers conducted an unprecedented campaign of slander and vilification against the reform slate.

Within the labor movement, every backward force sought to prevent a rank and file breakthrough in our union. Tottering bureaucrats in the AFL-CIO Executive Board unleashed a barrage of funds, resources and propaganda to influence our election.

The entire USWA international apparatus was used as a "war machine" for the McBride slate. District offices were turned into campaign headquarters, and the great majority of staff and employees were mobilized into an army to stop Sadlowski.

This machine conducted one of the dirtiest campaigns on record. The reform slate was slandered and red-baited. Its positions on every issue were misrepresented.

Nevertheless, despite everything, Sadlowski nearly won. The Abel-McBride effort to confuse and frighten the rank and file fell flat. Some 250,000 members of our union voted for change.

This support came from every section of our union including locals and districts where the Fight Back slate had little or no organization. They included the votes of the large majority of Black, Chicano, female and young workers who rallied to the reform slate.

The Fight Back slate won a clear-cut majority in locals in every industry. Most significantly, they won the majority in basic steel, winning all the largest basic steel mills in the key steel districts, including Baltimore, Bethlehem, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Cleveland, the Iron Range and Chicago-Gary. This is the heartland of our union. It shows to all concerned that the handwriting is on the wall.

FIGHT BACK SLATE: (left to right) Kmec, Weinstock, Rodriguez, Montgomery, Sadlowski



The basic steel vote is of special importance for contract talks now going on in that industry. Those workers directly affected by the no-strike "Experimental Negotiating Agreement" voted to reject it. They voted against the "productivity drive" which has meant speed-up, crew cutting and the elimination of thousands of jobs. In short, the basic steel vote is a decisive repudiation of the Abel-McBride sell-out policies in that industry.

Instead, steelworkers voted for an entirely new set of policies laid out in the Fight Back program. These included the right to ratify contracts, end discrimination, right to shut down unsafe areas and the six-hour day with no cut in pay.

The impact of the Fight Back campaign was demonstrated when an official committee of 50 local union presidents in basic steel called for a 32-hour week with no cut in pay as a major contract demand. Abel and McBride are now trying to side-track this urgent demand with gimmicky promises about a "life-time pay guarantee."

An entirely new leadership will take office in our union June 1. There are new top officers, a new Canadian director, and 15 new district directors out of a total of 25. Some of the new district directors sup-

GEORGE EDWARDS



ported Sadlowski. Some remained neutral. Many supported McBride.

But the main thing is that the leadership has changed. The old machine has been dislocated. It cannot exert the same bureaucratic control.

One of the most significant changes is the first election of a Black vice president, and we wish to express our best wishes to Leon Lynch, the first Black person to break through the lily-white character of the International Executive Board. We also heartily congratulate Oliver Montgomery for the tremendous vote he received. Montgomery came the closest of any on the Fight Back slate to winning the official vote and has now emerged as an outstanding leader of our union.

The most significant election was in District 31, Chicago-Gary, where Jim Balanoff was elected director. Balanoff has played an outstanding role for many years in innumerable battles for the rank and file. He has been a vocal leader of the rank and file in recent conventions.

The Abel-McBride forces have challenged Balanoff's election and are conspiring to prevent this important victory for the union membership. They are also trotting out the tired old schemes for dividing up District 31. These attempts will not succeed any more than did the previous attempts against Sadlowski.

These actions as well as the wide-spread irregularities in the election of the top officers, show that the Abel-McBride forces continued to do the companies' bidding in our union. As Ed Sadlowski has said, the vote fraud, ballot box stuffing and intimidation by the staff and union apparatus are serious crimes and those who are responsible should be prosecuted.

The Abel-McBride drive against union democracy is also shown by their threat to eliminate referendum elections of top officers and district directors altogether. They propose turning these vital decisions over to our International conventions where the machine and the staff can exert maximum control. We intend to do everything possible to block this effort to steal our right to vote.

Aside from continuing problems in the union, rank and file steelworkers now face a renewed company offensive. There is every indication of a widespread crackdown in terms of harassment, speed-up and discipline. We also see a much

(continued on page 5)

NO PROTECTION AT G.E.

Supreme Court OK's sex discrimination

by NOLA J. HITCHCOCK CROSS, Attorney
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The United States Supreme Court recently dealt a severe blow to all working women. It held that federal sex-discrimination legislation (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended) does not prohibit employers from excluding pregnancy-related disabilities from employer-contributed disability plans.

In this case, Gilbert vs. General Electric, the employees had won a disability benefit plan financed entirely by the company. The plan paid certain benefits to employees who were physically unable to work because of any non-work related ailment except pregnancy. The female employees sued the company, claiming that by excluding pregnancy-related disabilities from the benefit plan, General Electric was illegally discriminating against them on the basis of sex and violating Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The federal Court of Appeals agreed. Basing its decision on the guidelines promulgated by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) which administers Title VII, the federal Appeals Court ordered General Electric to pay back disability benefits to all female employees who had been denied such benefits.

In its December, 1976 decision, the Supreme Court reversed the lower court, along with five other federal Appeals Courts in other jurisdictions which had similarly held that excluding pregnancy from disability plans constituted illegal sex discrimination. Speaking for the majority, Nixon-appointed Justice Rehnquist stated in the opinion:

"For all that appears, pregnancy-related disabilities constitute an additional risk, unique to women, and the failure to compensate them for this risk does not destroy the presumed parity of the benefits, accruing to men and women alike, which results from the facially evenhanded inclusion of risks."

Thus, the high court, in its "wisdom" found that an employer disability plan which excluded pregnancy-related disabilities was "facially neutral" because it insured men and women against exactly the same risks, although it excluded altogether one risk which is "unique" to women--pregnancy.

Although the decision was 6-3, two of the justices siding with the majority, partially disagreed with the Court's reasoning. The dissenting justices pointed out that a disability plan which excluded pregnancy disabilities is not neutral. Such a plan is designed, they explained, to insure employees against the risk of

being physically unable to work generally. General Electric's disability plan, however, insured male employees 100% against the risk of being physically unable to work, while not offering female employees such complete protection. In his separate dissent, Justice Stevens noted simply:

"Rather, the rule at issue places the risk of absence due to pregnancy in a class by itself. By definition, such a rule discriminates on account of sex; for it is the capacity to become pregnant which primarily differentiates the female from the male. The analysis is the same whether the rule relates to hiring, promotion, the acceptability of an excuse for absence, or an exclusion from a disability insurance plan."

First, and most effectively, the federal legislation (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) should be amended to overrule the Supreme Court's decision. But until that happens, action must be taken at the State level.

The Court's decision, which was based on federal law, does not disturb existing state law nor does it in any way prohibit states from requiring employers to cover pregnancy-related disabilities in the same manner as all other disabilities. Thus, in Wisconsin and New York, the state courts have ruled that the state fair employment laws, which prohibit discrimination based on sex, do prevent employers from excluding pregnancy-related disabilities from disability benefit plans. This is not to say that employers in Wisconsin and New York will not try to change the law nor that employers in other states will not seek to insure that they do not follow Wisconsin's and New York's progressive lead. Still, it is clear that since the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling has no legal effect on state law, that women workers can and should lobby to get and keep state legislation prohibiting employers from treating pregnancy-related disabilities differently from other disabilities.

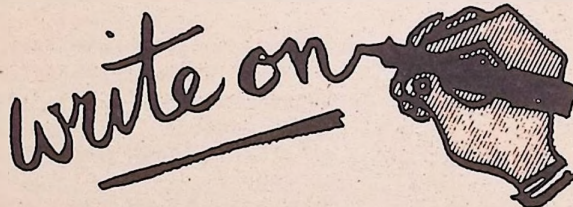
How come they cover your prostate but not my pregnancy?



Finally, women can secure equal treatment of pregnancy-related disabilities through the Labor Agreement between the company and the union.

Since most women work in unorganized shops, this is a long process involving several steps. Yet, as long as federal or state legislation does not require employers to treat women workers equally, such treatment can only be won through a union contract. This requires, first, that women throughout the country recognize the need to organize unions at their work place, to participate in their unions once organized, and to convince their fellow male workers that treating pregnancy-related disabilities like all other disabilities for purposes of use of accumulated sick leave, seniority retention, medical insurance and disability pay is a high priority at the collective bargaining table.

Although the minority sounded a voice of reason, the majority's holding remains. In Gilbert vs. G.E. the U.S. Supreme Court has shown working women that they cannot rely on the courts to secure their rights. Rather, they must now more than ever become active labor organization leaders.



TWO CONGRESSMEN SEND GREETINGS!

To the Editor:

Please excuse my delay in responding to your letter inviting me to attend LABOR TODAY's 15th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, February 19, 1977 in Evergreen Park, Illinois.

According to my calendar, I have already been committed for that time and regret that I will not be able to participate in your celebration.

Please be assured that I very much appreciate receiving your invitation and would like to extend my very best wishes for a successful program.

Sincerely,

AUGUSTUS F. HAWKINS
Member of Congress
29th District
California

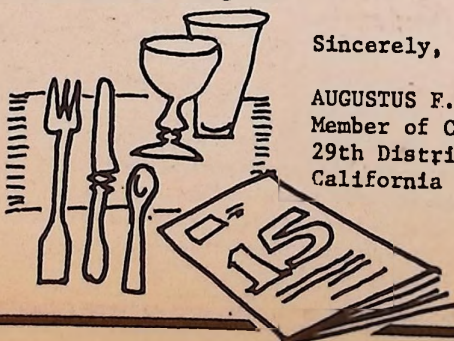
To the Editor:

Although I regret that I will be unable to attend your dinner marking the 15th anniversary of LABOR TODAY, I want to take this opportunity to express my unwavering support for your newspaper and the goals that have brought you together.

We're in a race against time--unseen by many--in a technological trap in which we are bound by a war economy and a consumption pattern that must continually grow if we are to stay even. What we must understand is that an economy with full employment as its goal, prepared to turn aside the nuclear arms race and its international implications, is critical. I count on you at the front of this movement, and look forward to our continued cooperation.

Best wishes,

JOHN CONYERS, JR.
Member of Congress
1st District
Michigan



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ADDIE WYATT SAYS:

Union women must build for participation

(Last fall, LABOR TODAY interviewed Addie Wyatt, International Vice President of the Amalgamated Meatcutters, AFL-CIO. Sister Wyatt is the highest-ranking Black woman in the U.S. trade union movement.)

LT: What kinds of gains are women making in the trade union movement today?

WYATT: Despite some setbacks, women are making substantial gains in the labor movement, and in the attainment of leadership positions. This is of vital importance to all working people, because it is a way of strengthening the entire labor movement. This new role for women in the labor movement is especially significant because of the many problems that women face--they have families to care for and many other duties at home that demand their time and effort. Despite this, many women are engaging in more union activity because they see this as the way to increase democracy on the job through their participation in the union.

There is also an increased sensitivity in some unions for the need to take special measures to ensure women's participation.

LT: There are, as you say, many road-blocks that stand in the way of women's participation in the union--the so-called "second shift" when they return home. But one problem seems to be that many women lack confidence in themselves and are hesitant to become involved. How can this problem be overcome?

WYATT: We have a fundamental duty to recruit women into the unions and give them an opportunity to get together among themselves for education, encouragement and inspiration. The union has a duty to encourage this, because the union is only as

Active participation of women strengthens the union...



strong as its weakest link. The active participation of the women strengthens the union, and that is a very vital force for progressive social and economic change. If we're going to have a strong labor movement, then it's in every union member's interest to see that everyone is fully involved. Women have brought very special strengths to every institution and organization in which they have been involved. This is a strong tradition, and the labor movement has to draw from this tradition. It's very important that men recognize this and see the participation of women as a factor in building a strong labor movement.

LT: You often speak of the importance of building a base, of developing organizational strength so that one's voice can be heard. How should women go about building a base in the union?

WYATT: When women get together, they supply a kind of strength for each other



ADDIE WYATT

that's very, very crucial in base-building. So it's very important that women in the unions get together between meetings, talking about issues that concern them.

Women must get together between meetings



In doing so, they will find strength in each other and the courage to press these issues in the union. This way, when women then go to their local union meeting, they find they have the strength and ability to really play a role.

One of the problems that women face when they organize is that the union may not understand what they are trying to do. When Black workers began to form caucuses in the unions, they ran into the same kind of opposition. What's important about the women's committees is not that they just give women a chance to get together, but they give them a base upon which to build to involve themselves in the total union structure. When women meet together and develop themselves and develop issues, then they're not easily put off in a union meeting if somebody laughs at them or tries to put them down. What the union soon learns is that women have tremendous

Women have tremendous leadership potential



leadership potential. They make fine meeting chairpersons, they make fine shop stewards, they make good officers--and when the union takes advantage of this potential, the union makes itself stronger and more effective.

I never fail to emphasize what women can do in this labor movement of ours. Most men want to overlook a lot of these issues. They want to move on to the really "important" business. And because of this problem within the movement, we have to raise the right of women to participate quite a bit. Look, I'm a worker, I'm Black and I'm female--and that's the bottom of the ladder. And even though we make breakthroughs as workers and as Blacks, unless we win these gains for women I'm still stuck there on the bottom rung. Until the labor movement makes time to discuss women's issues, their problems and their frustrations, we're not going to have a labor movement that is truly serving the membership.

Always keep in touch with the rank & file

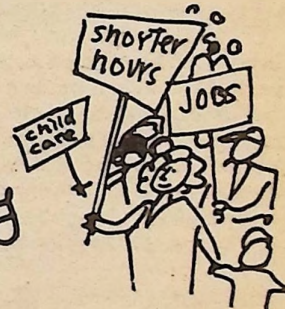


The main thing to keep in mind as you get involved in the movement is always to keep in touch with the rank and file. Always maintain your own base. If you're a leader at all, you're a leader of that base. You must always keep in touch with what the rank and file wants and speak for them.

LT: What are some of the main issues facing the labor movement today?

WYATT: Well, this is a very dreary time for a lot of workers. The issue of jobs and full employment and affirmative action are really crucial. And the Blacks, women and young people are hardest hit. We have to create the kind of climate where our leaders understand the seriousness of this continued unemployment. I think one of the issues that needs to be tackled is the question of people working overtime while others are out of work. In some industries people are forced to work this overtime while their brothers and sisters are out on the street.

An injury to one is an injury to all



In the thirties, we had a slogan that was very important: "An injury to one is an injury to all." We have to pick up on the labor tradition of fighting for shorter hours. It's high time we had 32 hours work for 40 hours pay. There's more to life than just work. People need more leisure time to spend with their families, to strengthen family life and to develop themselves culturally as fuller individuals.



WREE LEADER URGES:

Fight for affirmative action !

(NOTE: In this issue, LABOR TODAY interviews Sondra Patrinos, National Coordinator of Women for Racial and Economic Equality, a national women's group based in Chicago. WREE was one of the many organizations which worked to block a campaign to gut the U.S. government's Office of Federal Contract Compliance affirmative action programs.)

Recently, women, labor and civil rights groups worked to block the gutting of federal affirmative action programs by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance. What were the results of that protest?

Since the protests were mounted, the OFCC has been forced to withdraw its proposals to gut federal affirmative action programs. So, the protests resulted in a victory. However, the victory is only a partial one.

As you know, at the very same time the OFCC was moving to gut affirmative action, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission instituted a number of retrogressive changes, with no hearings, under a veil of secrecy, which means that thousands of complaints previously filed will be dismissed. As a result, thousands of women and minority workers have been denied redress of their grievances.

What can be done about the EEOC's action, and to assure that affirmative action will not be watered down even further under the Carter Administration?

There is need for a continuing movement of protest against the EEOC changes. We need not just hold the line against the cuts during the Ford Administration, but to push for a much more positive posture, for affirmative action procedures and regulations that make real progress in assuring equal rights. We need to continue the fight for full integration of women and minority workers in hiring and promotions.

Even though the EEOC changes have already gone through, there is still the possibility of changing them through mass action, petition campaigns, demonstrations, conferences to demand that the Carter Administration restore these cuts made in the last days of Ford and to turn things around in a progressive direction.

Since Carter took office, he has restored some of the cuts that were made under Ford. Do you think these actions will satisfy the needs of women and minorities--

Not by a long shot. Carter hasn't yet even scratched the surface in terms of the immediate needs such as education, health insurance, child care. There is a tremendous backlog of social needs that need to be met. And the only way to do it, is cutting the military budget and transferring those funds to the peoples' needs.

What was the role of trade unions and union women in the fight to stop the cut-backs by OFCC? How can their involvement in this fight be broadened?

CORRECTION

"A Woman's Place is in the Mill," by Jackie Lavelle, USWA Local 188, which appeared in the January issue of LABOR TODAY, was a reprint from the WREE-VIEW, published by Women for Racial and Economic Equality (WREE) at Room 1024, 202 S. State Street, Chicago, IL. We goofed and lost the credit line. Our apologies to Sister Lavelle and WREE. Readers of LT might well want to check out the WREE-VIEW, which is devoted to the problems of working-class women. Sample copies are free on request.

Unfortunately, there were not enough unions that got involved in the fight against the OFCC cuts. Some did, however, and they played a very important role in shifting the balance of public opinion. It's going to take pressure by the rank and file in unions to really assure that their unions are fully involved in the fight to save and extend affirmative action.

Your organization, Women for Racial and Economic Equality, is rather new. What are you folks about? Who are you trying to reach? Why is another women's organization necessary?

SONDRA PATRINOS



Well, we are only a year old as a national organization, but we've already begun to make ourselves felt. We're planning a national convention in Chicago next September. WREE's purpose is to appeal to women of many different backgrounds, primarily working women and working-class women

whether they are employed or not, and those who haven't been involved so far in what is generally called the "women's movement." We are interested in the problems of women in working-class communities--the problems of housing, schools, child care, employment. We're not a trade union organization, although we're interested in attracting trade union women to our work. We work in the community around the kinds of issues which women share all around the world. We make a special point of being a multi-racial organization. Black and brown women really carry a double burden of discrimination.

WREE's definition of "women's issues" seems a bit different than some of the other groups. While many of the existing women's groups stress issues like abortion and ERA, you seem concerned about economic issues. Why are these "women's issues"?

It's true, our emphasis is different, but we think it's an emphasis that corresponds to the needs and demands of working-class women across the country. Women have always been involved in the fight for a better life for themselves, their families. Women, for example, have always played more of a role in the peace movement than men. Women concern themselves with the struggle for a decent education for their kids. That's a very crucial issue for most women.

Our issues are not issues that separate us from men--and that's an important difference--we don't look for issues that separate us, we look for the issues that unite us with others who are in struggle. The obstacles to equality for women come from discrimination on the job, those things that prevent us from working--like the lack of decent day care. It's going to take a united struggle of women working with men to win those kinds of issues.

WREE has developed a program called the "Women's Bill of Rights." Just what does it mean, and how do you see it being implemented?

The Women's Bill of Rights attempts to list those things that we consider basic requirements to achieve full equality for women. We consider it to be a positive approach to women's equality instead

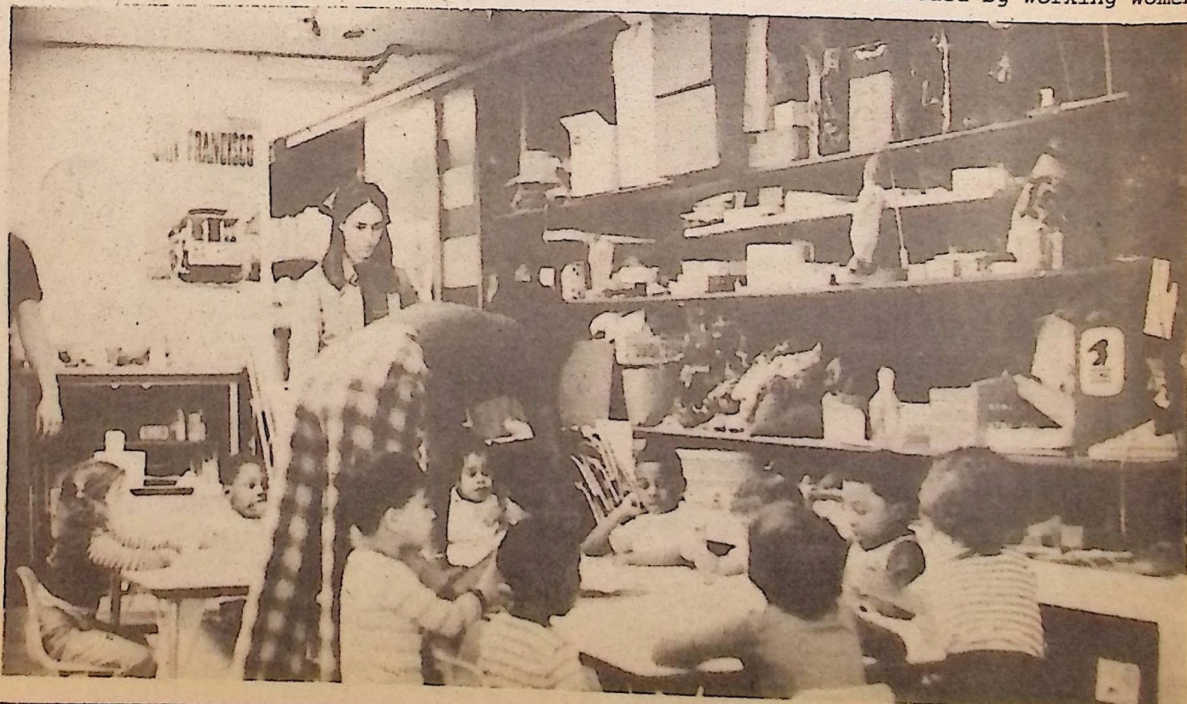
of the kind of negative way the campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment sometimes takes on. We expect that ERA will become the law of the land within the next two years. All that ERA does is say that discrimination against women is illegal. What ERA doesn't do is talk about what is required to overcome centuries of past discrimination. We see the provision of universal, quality child care as absolutely essential if women are to be as free to hold jobs as men.

We're vitally interested in full employment, the shorter work week. The Women's Bill of Rights puts all these issues together in a context that we think contributes to the understanding among people about what the content of women's equality really is.

How do women get in touch with WREE?

We have chapters now in about six cities, and others in formation. We publish a paper every two months called the WREE-VIEW. Women who are interested should contact WREE's national office at Room 1024, 202 S. State Street, Chicago, IL. Phone: (312) 663-1364.

Daycare centers like these are needed by working women



Just begun to fight (continued from page 1)

more hardline attitude from management in the contract talks.

The companies know we moved forward in this election and they hope to break the fighting spirit of the rank and file

To meet the challenges in the mill, at the bargaining table, and in our union, the National Steelworkers Rank and File Committee pledges to redouble its efforts to build a strong, fighting rank and file movement. We stand ready to join forces with all USWA members who agree with our program for a democratic fighting union.

Our program calls for an all-sided, determined struggle for these following key demands:

1. A 30-hour week at 40-hours pay.
2. Eliminate ENA.
3. Membership ratification of all contracts.
4. Guarantee Black, Chicano, female and other minority leadership in our union
5. Full plant-wide seniority and compensation for victims of discrimination.
6. End productivity committees.
7. Eliminate the anti-Communist clause in the USWA Constitution.
8. Honest, democratic conventions.
9. Right to strike on health, safety and unresolved grievances.
10. Organize the unorganized.



We aim to unite and rally the broadest forces around this program to organize and strengthen rank and file caucuses of all kinds and others in our union committed to fighting for this program.

The entire experience of the past decade confirms our conviction that this is the only way to change our union and solve the problems we face as steelworkers. It has been the long-term fight of the rank and file movement against deteriorating conditions in our places of work that set the stage for the emergence of the Fight Back slate.

Black, women's and Chicano caucuses, the local and district rank and file committees, and the National Steelworkers Rank and File Committee played a key role in this election. It provided reserve of strength for the slate and continued to advance our program. Our newsletters and such rank and file publications as LABOR TODAY helped rally forces and provide political leadership.

The National Steelworkers Rank and File Committee will devote itself to the goal of organizing all honest forces seeking a democratic, fighting union rallying our entire union to the fight against the companies.

The Fight Back slate received its largest vote in precisely those districts where the rank and file has been most active.

We are therefore convinced that the key task of the movement is to build the rank and file generally, and the National Steel Workers Rank and File Committee in particular.

We therefore rededicate ourselves to the goal of organizing all honest forces seeking a democratic, fighting union and rallying our entire union in the fight against the companies.



the rank and file in action

by FRED GABOURY

Field Organizer
TUAD

ABEL'S ULTIMATE ACT OF TREACHERY

Over the years we've seen the Meany-Abel leadership of the AFL-CIO pull some pretty lousy deals as they joined--and sometimes led--the attack on the rank and file.

In 1970 they were willing to cooperate with Nixon in order to deny the right of the membership to ratify contracts. They continued their attacks on the rank and file in 1971 when both of them joined Nixon's wage control board. They both thumbed their noses at the rank and file in 1972 when they came up with that "neutrality" bit in the elections that left us stuck with Nixon and Watergate. Since 1973, when Abel came up with his "no-strike" Experimental Negotiating Agreement, both he and Meany have spent a lot of union time and money trying to saddle the rest of the labor movement with compulsory arbitration. This duo of case-hardened collaborators have been leaders in the campaign against affirmative action programs to break down the barriers of racist discrimination on the job and in the labor movement.

We thought we'd seen it all; we thought that Meany and Co. had reached the end of the line when they joined the corporate-government gang-up that prevented the rank and file movement from winning the USWA election.

But we were wrong! The decision of the AFL-CIO Executive Council to invite a Senate investigation into these elections takes the rag off the bush. Even though the AFL-CIO withdrew its request a few days later, Abel has continued to press for this ultimate act of treachery.

Abel's pious talk of "outside influence" is a smokescreen to cover his attack on the most basic democratic right of workers--to belong to unions of their choice lead by leaders of their choice. Unless stopped by a mass protest--a protest that should include a number of labor leaders who sit on the AFL-CIO Executive Council--this despicable act of the Meany-Abel cabal may succeed in slowing down the fight for militant democratic unionism and give a new boost to the corporate offensive against the U.S. standard of living.

Neither Meany nor Abel are too old to remember the many Congressional investigations of labor over the past thirty years. There were the infamous investigations of "subversion" and "subversives" that began during the Allis Chalmers strike and there were the McClellan Committee hearings of the 50's. Both had the effect of weakening the labor movement.

FRED GABOURY



The Taft-Hartley Act, with its Section 14-b, its blank check to employers to harrass and frustrate collective bargaining, its 80-day cooling off period--this was the result of Congressional investigation of the labor movement. We do not need more of this, nor do we need those muck-raking investigations that serve to undermine mass confidence in the ultimate value of labor unions.

We are the first to say that our labor movement needs to be overhauled--that's why we're in business. But to invite outsiders to investigate the internal affairs of the labor movement--well, we think that's a function best left to the rank and file.

We are convinced that steelworkers will find the way of dealing with the Abels of this world and, given time, the rest of the labor movement will find the way of dealing with the George Meany's. And we'll do it without a Congressional investigation thank you!

ADVICE TO CARTER ON SPENDING

"Go civilian or go broke"

"The United States military economy is an inflation machine," according to Seymour Melman, professor of industrial engineering at Columbia University, New York. Melman has published numerous studies on the impact of military spending on the domestic economy. His conclusions were recently summarized in an article in the NEW YORK TIMES. Melman said that in the inefficient military spending system, "Cost and price increases are encouraged and rewarded. Unlike civilian firms that traditionally minimize production costs to maximize profits, firms in the Pentagon economy maximize all costs and the offsetting subsidies. These translate into rising prices. "Moreover," Melman said, "the products produced in the military economy add nothing to consumption or production." The result is an overheated consumer economy.

The Pentagon and allied agencies have more research and development money and more capital each year than is left after taxes for all U.S. corporations. In addition, Melman says, "the military economy produces unemployment. As cost maximizing raised United States prices, many firms

became non-competitive. American firms invested abroad and imported instead of producing here. One result is unemployment in many industries."

American firms invested \$47 billion abroad during the 1960's. In manufacturing alone, this created 3.3 million new jobs overseas.

Melman points out that military expenditures employ fewer people directly than civilian expenditures. This means a loss of over 800,000 jobs in the U.S. All told not fewer than 3.5 million to 4.5 million jobs are lost to Americans owing to the direct effects of a war economy.

Melman advocates economic conversion including "transferring manpower, capital, and technology from the military to the civilian economy." "There is no viable economic prospect for the United States without conversion of our technology and capital resources from military to civilian priorities.

"The options for Jimmy Carter are: Go civilian or go broke," Melman says

Working women's

by WILLIAM WILLIAMSON, OCAW L 7-268 &
BRUCE DOERING, USWA L. 1657



The future success of the labor movement depends on its willingness to organize its fastest growing sector--women workers. In the past five years women have been surging into factories, offices and stores faster than anytime in U.S. history. In 1976 alone 1.6 million women joined the workforce--almost double the number of men. At present, 38.6 million women hold jobs or are actively looking; they comprise 48 percent of all women. Almost two of every five--or 40 percent of the workforce--are women, a percentage higher than any other Western country. By 1990 the government estimates that two out of three new job seekers will be women, most between the ages of 25 and 54.

WOMEN WORK BECAUSE THEY MUST

With unemployment among adult males continually rising, many families are increasingly forced to rely on the woman's earnings alone. Furthermore, a skyrocketing inflation rate has eroded real earnings so much that millions of families require two incomes just to get by. According to 1970 data, only 46 percent of all jobs paid enough to sustain an average family at a "reasonable" level--and since then real income has plummeted below the 1967 level. These figures explain why working mothers have accounted for the largest increase among working women--nine percent in 1940 to 42 percent in 1972.

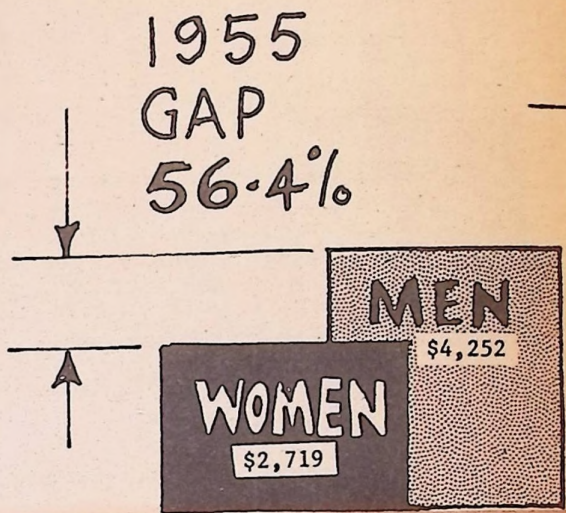
BIG BUSINESS DIVIDES TO CONQUER

As more and more women get jobs, they find their hopes for decent wages and working conditions impeded by profit-hungry corporations. Dividing in order to conquer, big business segregates women into an "employment ghetto" of low-wage, non-union jobs, otherwise known as "women's work." In all, about half of all women work in just twelve job categories--from bookkeeper to waitress. Not only are the incomes of women substantially less than those of men, but the gap is widening.

LABOR MOVEMENT LAGGING

Most sections of organized labor have ignored the increasing number of women workers, as well as the rising tide of women's awareness. Although women have proven themselves to be militant fighters and skilled organizers throughout labor history, only

GAP BETWEEN MEN'S & WOMEN'S AS PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN



WORKING WOMEN AS PERCENTAGE OF ALL U.S. WOMEN

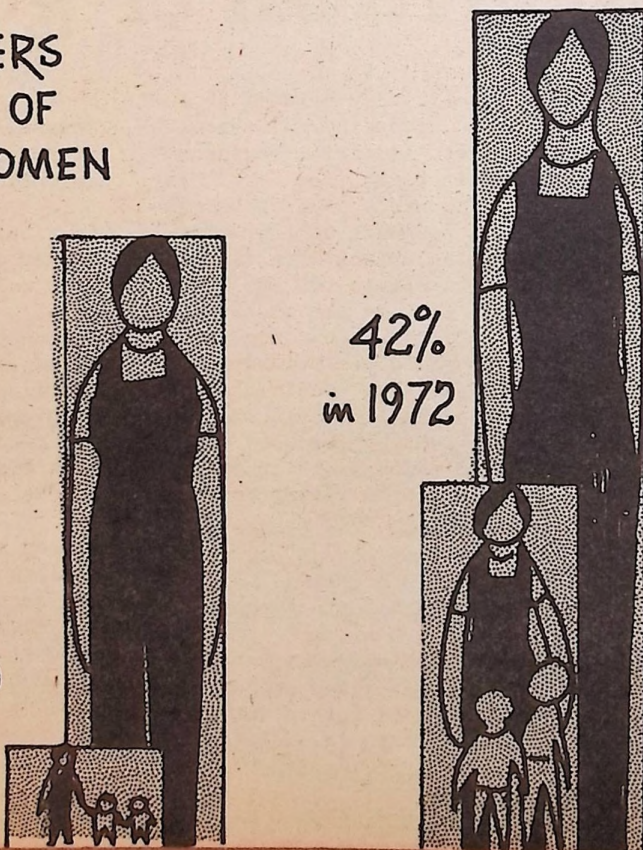
48%
in 1976.



WORKING MOTHERS AS PERCENTAGE OF ALL WORKING WOMEN

9%
in 1940

42%
in 1972



12.6 percent are union members, compared with 30 percent of the men. Even more alarming, the ratio of women in unions is declining! These sorry statistics are not due, however, to the unwillingness of women to join trade unions, but to the refusal of the AFL-CIO leadership to organize low-paying industries.

Moreover, at a time when women are winning more and more elective posts in government, the paltry number of women occupying policy making positions in the House of Labor hardly inspires confidence. Although nationally known leaders such as Delores Huerta of the Farmworkers and Addie Wyatt of the Amalgamated Meatcutters have emerged from labor struggles, the "esteemed" Executive Council of the AFL-CIO is still an exclusive all-male club. In unions where women make up half the membership, they are represented in only 4.7 percent of union leadership posts. For example, the Ladies Garment Workers, whose membership is 80 percent women, has one woman among its twenty Vice Presidents. Indeed, even where women hold staff positions, they are in out-of-the-way areas such as insurance and research.

THE COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN - CLUW

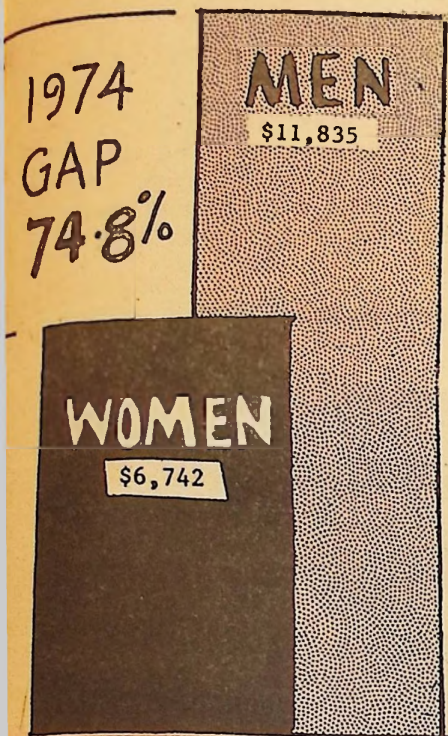
Recognizing that sexual bias was a major factor holding back the progress of labor, in March of 1974 more than 3000 women members from 58 unions formed the Coalition of Labor Women (CLUW). Organized to fight for women's rights within trade unions, CLUW's objectives reflected the weaknesses of the policies of organized labor:

- To encourage unions to be more aggressive in efforts to organize unorganized women,
- To strengthen the participation of women in union policy-making positions,
- To encourage unions to act against sex discrimination in pay, hiring, job classification and promotion, and
- To support adequate child-care facilities, a "liveable" minimum wage, improved maternity and pension benefits, and improved health and safety laws.

The potential of CLUW to organize and galvanize the militancy of trade union women

woes worsen

WOMEN'S AVERAGE EARNINGS MEN'S EARNINGS



union women which compels the entire labor movement to face up to the issue of women's equality in a new way.

Some unions, such as the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), have formed women's departments. A month ago women steelworkers in District 31 formed a district-wide caucus. Jim Balanoff, newly elected district director, welcomed it and promised his support.

Much remains to be done in the fight for women's equality. More than 30 million working women--87 percent--are not in unions. To tap this vast reservoir of energy and latent power is one of the greatest challenges confronting organized labor.

The labor movement will advance or retreat depending on whether or not it accepts this challenge.

PERCENTAGE OF WORKING MEN, WOMEN, IN UNIONS

MEN 30%
WOMEN 12.6%



U. S. LABOR DEPT. SHOWS

Earnings gap widens

(reprinted from UE NEWS)

WASHINGTON--The gap between the average wages of men and women has grown larger, not smaller, over the past 20 years, according to a study released by the U.S. Labor Department last week.

The study, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, compares the wages of all categories of male and female workers in 1955 and 1974.

The earnings of men who worked full-time and year-round in 1974 were 74.8 percent higher than those of women who also worked year-round and full-time, reported the study. In 1955, the male-female earnings gap was 56.4 percent.

THREEFOLD INCREASE

Translated into dollar terms, the differences between the annual earnings of the average man and the average woman rose more than threefold. In 1955, the difference was \$1,533--in 1974, the difference was \$5,093.

When the effects of inflation are taken into account, the gap between the purchasing power of men's earnings and women's earnings increased by 79 percent over the 20 year period.

DISCRIMINATION PERSISTS

The Labor Department report states that, "Despite the fact that increasing numbers of women are securing high-level and better-paying positions, there is still a pre-dominance of women in lower-status occupations of a traditional nature which provide limited opportunity for advancement."

The document concludes that even when such factors as the large number of women workers who are just entering the labor force and are thus at entry-level position, and the shorter average lifetime work experience of women are taken into account, "much of the male-female differential remains unexplained" and probably reflects continued discrimination against women workers.

While the difference between men's and women's earnings has increased dramatically, the once-large gap between the earnings of white women and Black women has decreased. The study includes all types of workers, factory workers, professionals, office workers, etc.

Black women who worked full-time year-round in 1974 averaged \$6,611, or 94 percent as much in wages as white women with the same work schedules, who averaged \$7,025. In 1960, the earliest year for which comparable figures are available, Black women's earnings averaged 70 percent of white women's.

Figures by race and sex show that for white men who worked full-time and year-round in 1974 the average earnings were \$12,343 and for Black men the average was \$9,082. The average annual earnings for women in that same year were \$7,025 for white women and \$6,611 for Black women.

The Labor Department stated that women of all races are "clearly overrepresented among workers whose earnings are low."

For example, more than 80 percent of all regularly employed women make less than \$10,000 a year, while only 38 percent of regularly employed men make less than \$10,000.

is enormous. CLUW can become a force which helps unite Black, Latino and white women workers, together with their union brothers in the fight for full equality for women workers and thereby strengthen the entire trade union movement.

RANK AND FILE PARTICIPATION AND CONTROL

But in order for CLUW to fulfill its potential, it needs the participation of rank and file groups among women in each and every union. Basing themselves on the problems women face, these groups should play an influential role in CLUW. Women must also be encouraged to play an active role in rank and file caucuses which are composed of both men and women. These caucuses in particular should pay special attention to the problems women members face and develop a strong program.

CLUW will succeed to the extent that it becomes a mass democratic expression of

MEAN ANNUAL FULL-TIME EARNINGS, 1974



A VITAL NEW BOOK

Lucy Parsons remembered

by JIM WILLIAMS
Editor

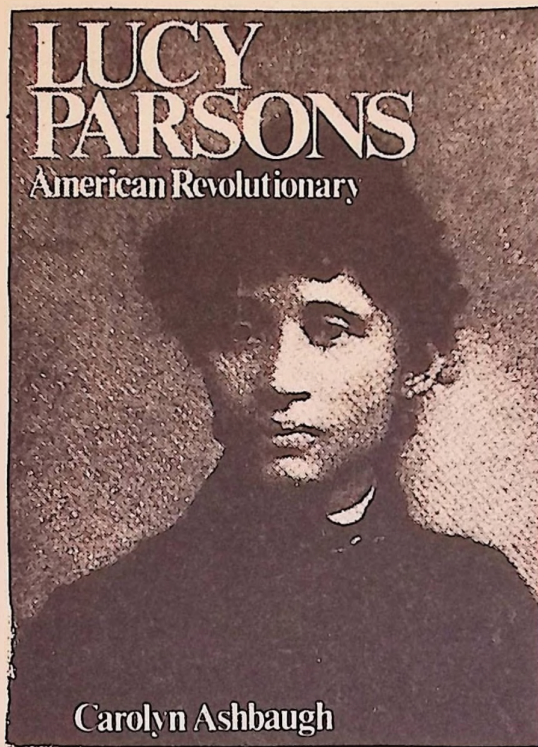
LUCY PARSONS, AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY by Carolyn Ashbaugh, Charles H. Kerr Publishing Co., Chicago, 1976. \$3.95 paper.

Much of the rich historical heritage of the U.S. labor movement still lies hidden. While most students of labor history know of Albert Parsons, who was hanged by the State of Illinois in the aftermath of the Haymarket riots of 1886, few are acquainted with his wife, Lucy Parsons.

Poor, non-white, woman and social reformer--with these marks against her, Lucy Parsons became a woman so feared by the Chicago establishment that police broke up her meetings for 30 years. Lucy Parsons ranks with the leading women union activists of our history, Mother Jones and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. From probably slave origins, she became one of the nation's leading spokespersons for trade unionism, the eight-hour day and socialism.

Carolyn Ashbaugh has performed a remarkable service to the movement by retrieving this history from the dust of archives and making it live. The causes for which Lucy Parsons fought are still very much with us today, and the impact of this book has great significance for the movement today.

Such few historians who have mentioned Lucy to date have dismissed her simply as the grieving widow of Albert Parsons, who continued to agitate and claim his innocence until her death in 1942.



But the marriage of Albert and Lucy Parsons was more than a marriage. It was a life of shared struggle for the good of working people. By 1877, Lucy was an activist in the Socialist Labor Party and a leading writer for THE ALARM, a Chicago labor paper. She was active in organizing working women's circles, and some of her organizing among the dressmakers and seamstresses in

Chicago laid the basis for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union.

She and Albert were among the main leaders of the eight-hour day movement in the mid-west. They led the march on May 1, 1886 in Chicago, which ushered in the nationwide struggle for shorter hours that was to remain the main thrust of the American Federation of Labor for many years.

In later years, Lucy became active in the Industrial Workers of the World, one of the precursors of the CIO--and indeed, gave all her support, despite her advanced age, to the CIO in the 30's and the organizing drives in Chicago.

Her life was dedicated to the cause of labor and humanity. Carolyn Ashbaugh's book has rewarded us with a sense of the richness Lucy Parsons contributed to our lives.

A MOVIE FOR THE RANK & FILE

"Union Maids" built their unions strong

by LABOR TODAY Staff

Precious few films have been produced on the history of the U.S. labor movement, and even fewer of these have provided an insight into the role of women in the building of the trade union movement.

"UNION MAIDS," a new documentary about women trade unionists in the 30's, begins to fill the gap by making this history come alive.

This remarkable story unfolds through interviews with three Chicago women who became rank and file trade union organizers during the building of the CIO, Kate Hyndman, Stella Nowicki and Sylvia Woods. Sylvia Woods, of course, is widely known as the leader of the movement to free Angela Davis and the head of the Chicago Chapter of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression.

The film artfully cuts from one interview to the other, weaving a cohesive pattern, interspersed with documentary footage from the union struggles of the 30's. The film is particularly vivid in its depiction of the movement in steel, packing and among the unemployed.

The 30's were a landmark period for the labor movement, and these women give striking accounts of the struggles they went through, with the special insight into the second-class status of women and minorities.

For Sylvia, the union experience taught her

that it was possible for white workers to show solidarity with Black workers. As a UAW member, she saw a white shop steward lead a fight to get a Black man hired into the skilled trades in her plant--and it gave her a new sense of hope and confidence

The unionism of the 30's was rank and file unionism, and these union maids give the

full flavor of the times and a fighting brand of trade union struggle so urgently needed today.

"UNION MAIDS" is an inspiring film and an excellent way to get discussion going at a meeting. It can be rented for \$50 from New Day Films, P.O. Box 315, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417, phone 201/891-8240.




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MEANY ABSTAINS

World labor backs South Africa boycott

by LABOR TODAY Staff

When the Nedloyd Kimberly docked in San Francisco on January 18 with a load of South African cargo, members of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union refused to unload it.

The ILWU's action was taken in cooperation with the week-long international boycott imposed by the International Confederation

of Free Trade Unions and the World Federation of Trade Unions.

While actions against South Africa were taken all over the world during the week of January 17, AFL-CIO President George Meany refused to endorse the boycott unless it were also called against Soviet goods. As a result, the AFL-CIO was the only major labor federation in the world that did not take part in boycott activity.

Nevertheless, rank and filers across the U.S. observed the boycott to the extent possible, organizing demonstrations in New York and in other cities.

In Britain, the boycott received the full support of the Trade Union Congress. Postal workers boycotted mail and phone service to South Africa, while dockers, airline workers, truck drivers and seamen also participated. Similar actions took place in Norway, Canada, the Netherlands, Italy and France.

In Canada, the 2.3 million member Canadian Labour Congress participated in boycott activities and took up shop collections to "support the Black and colored unions in their daily struggle against oppression."



African workers recruited for labor in South Africa are subjected to finger printing for purposes of identification

3 exciting issues of LT coming up



The next three months of LABOR TODAY are going to be exciting issues. Probably, you'll want extra copies to share with friends and shopmates. So, place your special orders now!



APRIL: ORGANIZE THE UNORGANIZED! A series of articles devoted to problems of organizing the millions of unorganized workers in the U.S. today. We'll also have an advance look at some of the problems faced by Auto Workers and their upcoming convention; and we'll begin a series of articles on what's happening in the United Mine-workers Union, and the fight of the rank and file to maintain control.



MAY: THE CASE FOR THE SHORTER WORK DAY, will be the central theme of this issue with all the facts and figures to show that the shorter work day with no cut in pay is long overdue--and the only way to solve our unemployment crisis. We'll continue our examination of the rank and file movement in the coalfields. This issue, because of the overriding importance of the shorter work day, should be distributed at every trade union meeting, every central body--anywhere where workers meet.

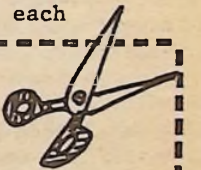


JUNE: SCHOOL'S OUT! And maybe out for the count! Rank and file teachers will discuss what's happening to our educational system under the repeated attempts of big business to slash it to bits.



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Up to 1,000 copies 10¢ each
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TO END THE ARMS RACE

Unionists support new peace appeal

A group of leading trade unionists have joined the thousands of U.S. citizens who have become sponsors of the Stockholm Peace Appeal. The Appeal calls upon all governments to end the arms race, to make detente irreversible, and to build peace and friendly relations among nations.

U.S. supporters of the Appeal specifically call for a substantial cut in the U.S. military budget, and use of the resulting savings to solve our urgent economic and social needs, to reduce unemployment, to rebuild our cities, to insure quality education and health care, and to provide equal opportunity for all. Support is also urged for the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) to move to a successful end.

Trade union sponsors of the Appeal include Nick Ballas, Staff Representative, AFSCME



District 48; Harry Bridges, President, International Longshoremen's Union; Abe Feinglass, International Vice President, Amalgamated Meatcutters; Patrick Gorman, Chairman of the Board, Amalgamated Meatcutters; Donald Jones, President, Local 1395 of AFGE; C.J. Robinson, UAW Local 5; Frank Rosen, International Vice President, United Electrical Workers; Ted Smolarek, President, Local 3745, USWA; Jack Spiegel, Midwest Director, United Shoe Workers; Harry Syverson, President UAW Local 329; and Jim Williams, Editor, LABOR TODAY.

For copies of the Stockholm Peace Appeal petitions, write to the National Stockholm Peace Appeal Campaign, 156 Fifth Ave, Room 232, New York, NY 10010.

We're sorry we're late

LABOR TODAY was late in February, because it wasn't released until our anniversary celebration on Feb 19, instead of the first of the month, per our usual schedule.

This March issue is also late, because of the lateness of the February issue, and the need for a brief breathing spell for our overworked staff.



The April issue may also be just a bit late--but we'll be back on the track in April, and the May issue should be right on time! Thanks for bearing with us!

"THE RANK & FILE MADE THIS POSSIBLE"

600 at LT's anniversary

by LABOR TODAY Staff

A foot-stomping, hand-clapping crowd of nearly 600 persons filled the Martinique Restaurant February 19 to pay tribute to LABOR TODAY on its 15th anniversary. Not only Chicagoans, but readers from Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, Colorado, California, Michigan and New York were there.

LABOR TODAY had indeed come a long way since its humble beginnings in Detroit in 1962. "We've come this far because we put our faith in the rank and file," LT Editor Jim Williams told the crowd, "and it's the rank and file that has made this possible."

The evening's keynote was delivered by Charles Hayes, International Vice President of the Amalgamated Meatcutters and Executive Vice President of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists. Hayes flew in from a meeting of the CBTU Executive Board in St. Louis to attend the LT function.

Hayes blasted Congress for voting itself a \$13,000-a-year pay increase, while failing to pass needed legislation to end unemployment. Hayes laid the blame on the big corporations who "are still operating on the Washington scene. Money still talks for it Republican or Democrat." Hayes called for "greater involvement" with political action by working people.

A special note of solidarity was sounded by Luis Menesas, General Secretary of the Exterior Committee of the Central Unica de Trabajadores of Chile, who brought the fraternal greetings of the CUT and described the impoverished conditions of the Chilean workers under the fascist junta. Brother Menesas said the solidarity shown by the U.S. labor movement had done much to help the Chilean labor movement, and called for renewed efforts against the junta. Menesas was warmly greeted by the banquet guests, especially the many Latino workers who attended.

A special event was the presentation of a plaque for Patrick Gorman, Chairman of the Board of the Amalgamated Meatcutters, who served as Chairman of the Sponsoring Committee. Brother Hayes accepted the award in Gorman's behalf from Altherna M. Hunter, LT Business Manager.

John Kailin, LT Contributing Editor, recounted the experiences of the paper over the years, and the many, many persons who had worked to make it possible, and a warm round of applause was given for former editors Charles Walters and Adelaide Bean.

Williams read greetings received from Congressmen John Conyers of Michigan, Augustus F. Hawkins, Jr., of California, the French General Confederation of Labor and its journals LA VIE OUVRIERE and ANTOINETTE. He also introduced special guests Pedro Grant, leader of the United Workers Movement of Puerto Rico (MOU) and Vissarion Sisnev, correspondent of the Soviet trade union paper, TRUD.

The evening's festivities were chaired by Rayfield Mooty, National Co-Chairman of the National Co-ordinating Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy and by Roberta Wood, Trustee, Local 65, United Steel Workers. Fred Gaboury, National TUAD Organizer, opened the evening with "Talking Union Blues."

LT Art Director Peggy Lipschutz and folk-singer Roxana Alsberg floored the audience with a spectacular presentation of chalk talk and song. The evening concluded with the singing of labor's anthem, "Solidarity Forever."



RAYFIELD MOOTY



ADELAIDE BEAN



JOHN KAILIN



ROBERTA WOOD



CHARLES HAYES and ALTHERNA M. HUNTER



JIM WILLIAMS, LUIS MENESAS and JORGE FRIAS



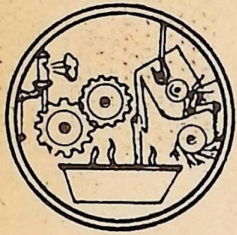
FRED GABOURY



PEGGY LIPSCHUTZ and ROXANA

Some more greetings

Greetings
FROM



THE CHICAGO AREA COMMITTEE ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH

CACOSH

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from a
friend...



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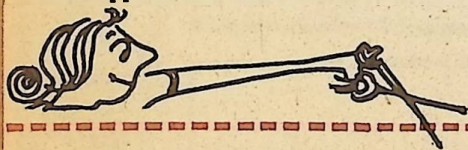
before July 1st

In honor of LABOR TODAY's 15th Anniversary, we have embarked on a new campaign to add 1,000 new readers to our rolls. Because we're so enthusiastic about LT, and because of the need to involve thousands of trade unionists in the struggle for the shorter work day--we've decided to take a big chance and make this special offer.

Between now and July 1, you can sign up new readers at a special introductory rate of only \$1.00.

Do you know someone who should be reading LABOR TODAY? Then why not be a decent sort and buy them a gift sub at this special rate?

If you send us 12 new readers at the special rate, we will send you a free labor book as a token of our appreciation.



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