

the rank and file in action

Labor Today

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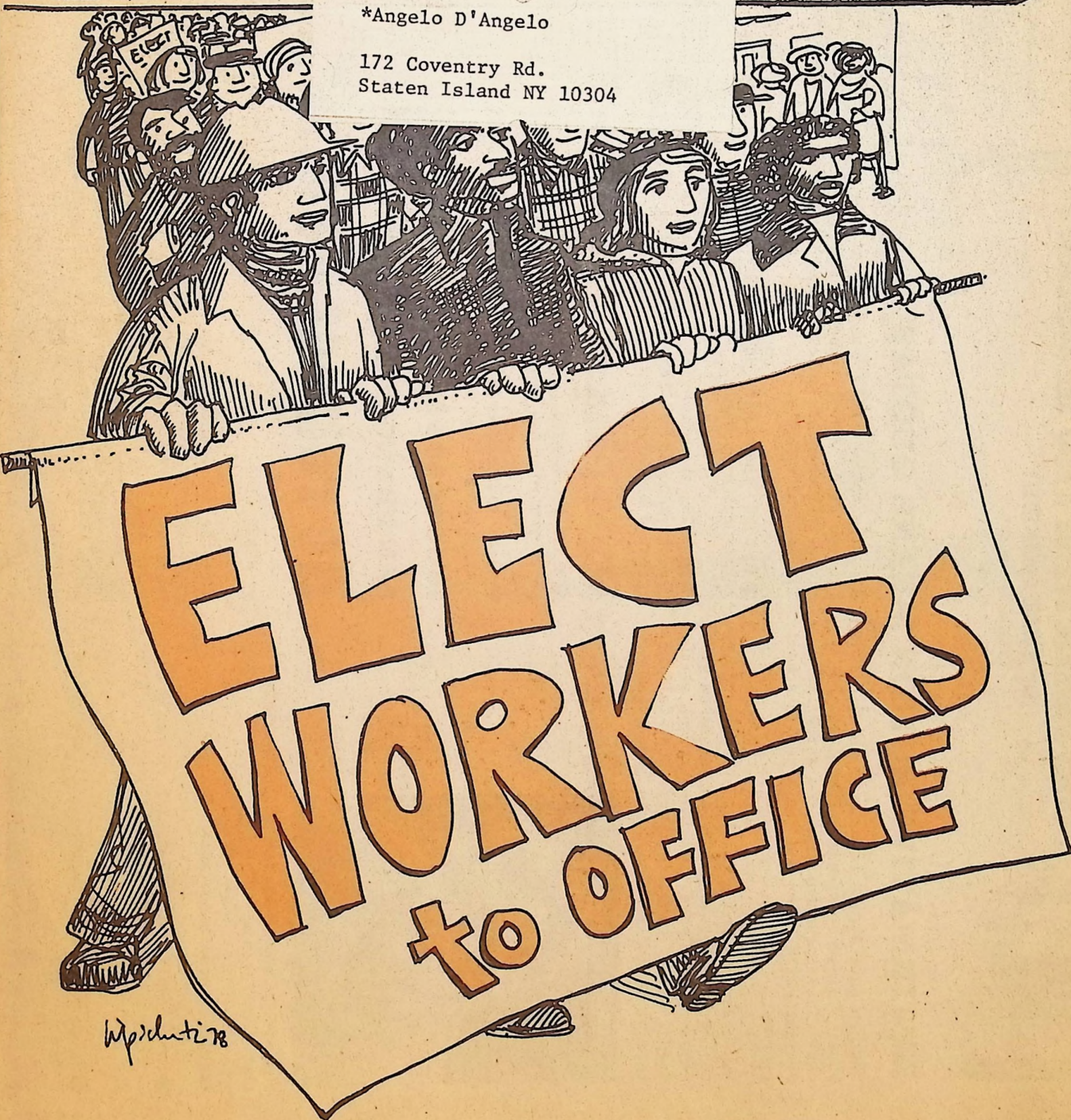
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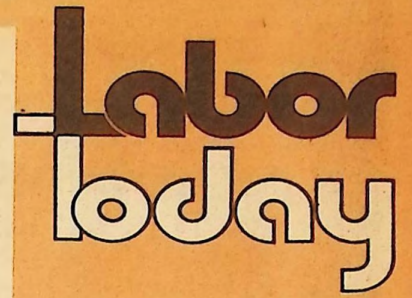
*Angelo D'Angelo

172 Coventry Rd.
Staten Island NY 10304



Wpichuti 78

There's a painter in the house!



LT recently spent a half hour with Congressman Edward P. Beard of Rhode Island. We hope you enjoy his comments:

In the material published in the Congressional Directory, you list your membership in Local 195 of the Painters Union. Tell us a little of your trade union activity and how you maintain contact with workers and trade unionists now that you are a Member of Congress.

First of all, I am still an active member of Local 195. I make it a point to go back home and work at the trade at least once a year. I "hang around" with the same people I associated with prior to coming to Congress. Some of my best friends are carpenters, plumbers and the very people that I hope to be able to represent as a Member of this Congress. I'm also a realist: this job could be very temporary so, if for any reason I lose out, my membership is paid up and I'm ready to go back to work.

As a tradesman, I always supported the labor movement. I was not a "leader" in the local, but I've always carried my share of the load and I've always believed in the goals of the labor movement.

That is partly why I'm here today--I feel that there are not enough people in the Congress who can represent the rank and file. Most Members of Congress have no roots among the rank and file. They do not understand their aspirations nor have they suffered the hardships that ordinary people are up against every day.

Continuing along that line, you are one of a handful of active, practicing trade unionists in the Congress of the United States today. Why do you consider your labor experience and trade union membership qualifications for holding public office?

Workers have good sense!

First of all, those of us who work for a living are a majority of the people in the United States. We are a majority of the voters.

A lot of what happens around here requires good common sense. And I happen to know that workers have good common sense. You don't have to be a Philadelphia lawyer--if you'll pardon the expression--or a bank executive or a corporation big shot to hold a seat in Congress. This is supposed to be a Congress--a House of Representatives--of all our people.

I think that it is a disgrace that we only have about two percent of both Houses of Congress--that's 535 Members--who even come close to having had some kind of affiliation at one time during their life with the labor movement.

Working people have got to get over the concept that says, "Unless you are a lawyer, you shouldn't be down here." I respect the legal profession, but it is a fact that many times lawyers and other people who are supposedly looking out for our interests have crippled the country. Labor needs better representation--more numbers from their own ranks down here. It's very simple as I see it--if you're not represented, elect your own. Think about it a minute: How can someone articulate a program for the unemployed if he or she has never been unemployed?



Edward P. Beard, M.C.
2nd District Rhode Island

I've been unemployed...

Sure I have. I've walked on picket lines and have been with workers in many, many situations as a worker. And, to me, that means something different than being there as a supporter.

Think about your own life and how it is for workers--the actual experience and hardships of being unemployed, of working in dangerous situations, of wondering when the next meal will be, of educating their children. Well, I've experienced all of that and the insights that I gained from that kind of life makes me a better Congressman.

Why, after more than forty years of political and electoral activity by the labor movement, are there only a mere handful of real, live, honest-to-goodness workers in Congress?

I don't know, but I think that the labor movement, or at least those who speak for the labor movement on these matters, have done the wrong things for too long.

We can learn from industry

I think that we can learn from what industry has done. There was a time when the lobbyist from the oil company, from the steel corporation, would come and talk to the Members of Congress and would meet to plan strategy with those they knew to be sympathetic to their cause.

But that's begun to change--the corporations have gotten smart. Instead of going through someone else, they've sent their own to Congress. Those who were lobbyists a few years ago--or at least the same type--are now on the floor as Members of the Congress. The corporations are thus able to deal directly with legislation, without the aid and cost of the "middle man".

Send in our own

I think that labor should do the same thing. If you have a Member in your district that's not representing the people they claim to be representing, then labor ought to send one of its own to Washington.

Many speak of the legislative set-backs that organized labor suffered in 1976 despite the fact that Mr. Carter and two-thirds of the members of both House and Senate are Democrats. Do you agree with

that assessment and, further, do you think that a Blue Collar Caucus in Congress, made up of women and men elected from the mines, mills, factories and offices of the country would be able to change this?

Just because someone's a Democrat

Labor has suffered set-backs in this Congress--and I think that they have--it's partly because many of the labor lobbyists here take people for granted. They assume that just because someone is a Democrat or has received a donation from a union's political action committee that that person is going to vote in support of labor's program.

Let me tell you, that's wrong. And it's even more wrong to think that a group of labor leaders can talk to the Congressional leadership and get the job done that way. That's not the way it is anymore. Most Members of Congress cannot be "delivered" by Congressional "leaders".

Then there is the way that endorsement and money is given by the labor movement. There is very little grassroots participation in the process and I think that kind of rank and file scrutiny is necessary. If it was, labor would be much more successful in Congress.

A proven record of support

You see, it's not enough to give to someone just because they've been here a long time or because they are Democrats. I think these so-called "rewards" should go to those who have a proven record of support to the programs representing the needs of working people.

And then there is the situation where many members of unions are oblivious to what's going on here in Congress--or for that matter in the 50 legislatures around the country. There are ways to correct this and one of them is for local unions and those labor organizations back home to mobilize the membership in support of the legislative programs of labor. It is wrong to leave these things to "Washington"--whether "Washington" is meant to be the legislative representatives of the labor movement or as Congress and the Executive Branch.

Forget for a moment that you are a Member of Congress and think of yourself as a trade unionist who is concerned about the general state of the labor movement and especially the waning strength of influence of labor--both at election time and here in Congress.

An end to dead-heads!

What changes in the present way organized labor conducts its legislative-electoral business are needed if workers are going to be, as you say, "represented by their own"?

It all goes back to what I said at the beginning. Labor has to take a hard look at the membership of Congress. They've got to put an end to financial and election-day support of those I call the "dead heads" from the point of view of their support of labor issues. Those who speak for the labor movement are going to have to tell some of their so-called "friends" who vote against them on key issues that, "We're not sup-

(continued on page 2)

MULTINATIONALS

A Growing Corporate Society

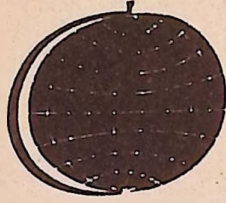
■ Huge U.S. corporations have been accused of having too much influence in the political and economic life of our nation. They have been accused and some have been caught making payoffs and bribes in buying or, at least, renting congressmen and other politicians who vote for legislation favorable to the corporations. They have been accused and caught making huge profits in conspiracy through administering and fixing prices and restricting the supply of goods to the detriment of consumers.

Now can you imagine that kind of profit greed hanky-panky taking place on a world-wide scale? A number of big U.S. corporations as well as foreign corporations have extended their operations world-wide. These corporations are thus called multinationals. This means that these corporations produce their goods (by as much as 20 per cent or more) outside the country of their headquarters. Each of these corporations have many plants scattered throughout the world. The operation of these multinationals is growing and becoming more concentrated in fewer hands.

It is estimated that by 1985, 200 companies will control 80 per cent of all productive assets of the non-communist world. The average growth rate of some multinationals is two to three times that of the most industrialized nations. For example, the sales of General Motors are larger than the gross national product (the money value of a nation's total annual output) of Switzerland or South Africa.

This compares with the corporate concentration of economic power in the United States.

In 1955, the 500 largest U.S. corporations had 44.5 per cent of all U.S. manufacturing and mining revenues and 40 per cent of all



manufacturing and mining assets. By 1970, their share had grown to 72 per cent of all U.S. revenues and 70 per cent in assets.

It is reported that during the 15-year period from 1953 to 1968 some 14,000 mergers of manufacturing corporations took place in the U.S. The acquiring corporations amassed \$66 billion in assets in that period.

Many of these same corporations acquired foreign subsidiaries. Much of this was done by buying out local businesses. The advantage in most cases is to cut production costs by using less expensive foreign labor, especially in plants located in Asia, Africa, and Latin-America.

Thus, U.S. based multinationals are adding significantly to the economic recession in the United States where unemployment is high. It was estimated that during a three-year period more than 5,000 jobs a month were lost in the electronics industry alone to foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies. These U.S. multinationals appear to have no patriotic allegiance to the United States. Their patriotism is found in profit greed.

Ironically, U.S. government economic policy favors foreign investment over domestic investment by U.S. corporations. Tax breaks are given to U.S. corporations with foreign subsidiaries. They are allowed to defer payment of taxes on foreign earnings until those earnings are remitted to the U.S. parent. This allows U.S. corporations to

accumulate funds in foreign tax havens, paying little or no tax on them. U.S. corporations also receive a foreign tax credit for taxes paid abroad.

Another U.S. program to encourage investment abroad is low-cost insurance provided by a U.S. government agency called the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). It provides insurance against three kinds of political risks: war risks, inconvertibility of currency, and expropriation. This insurance removes the risk of investing abroad and encourages companies to invest in politically unstable areas of the world.

Thus, it is obvious to see that multinationals have an impact on U.S. foreign and defense policy. In the case of Chile, it may have been cheaper for the CIA to spend \$11 million to help in the overthrow of the Allende government to protect U.S. corporations located there than have the OPIC pay out the insurance to those corporations even though Allende agreed to make expropriation payments to those firms.

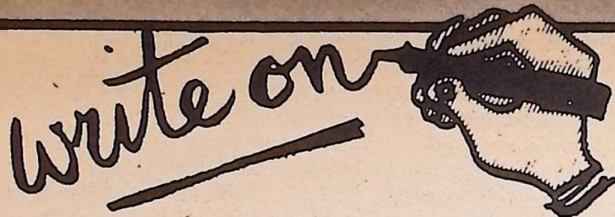
Multinationals are too large and too powerful. Their special interest for profits and only profits served as a threat to democracy and against the best interest of citizens and workers alike.

The United States should take the lead in breaking up the dangerous concentration of economic power already possessed by multinational corporations. The government can begin by stripping away the tax shelters which have largely lowered the capital-labor ratio, lowered productivity, and lowered domestic output in our nation. Multinationals must not be allowed to evolve as an instrument making the world a corporate-led society.

R.G.D.

JANUARY 1978

Reprinted from THE BUTCHER WORKMAN



YOU WORK 20 YEARS AND WHAT DO YOU GET?

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I have been a member of Local 6301, USWA, for almost 20 years and I have almost the same amount of time with the American Can Co. I was laid off from my job in September 1976 and have been out of work for over a year in which I received unemployment and some months of SUB (Supplemental Unemployment). Four months out of that year I got no money from the company because they said the fund was exhausted.

Under the contract signed in February 1977, it states that a man can retire if he has 20 years with the company and is 45 years of age upon plant shut-down or if he is on a two-year lay-off. Well, I and many thousands like me, fit this requirement. The only catch is we come under the previous contract and do not fit in anymore.

Why did the company keep us out in the street for so long? The answer is so they wouldn't have to give us these benefits under the new contract. "Lack of business" will always be the company's argument. Well, I say this is bull. I can prove the company worked people overtime while we were on unemployment.

The Steelworker International bureaucracy and the company they deal with are always

trying (and most of the time succeeding) in convincing the American worker how sweet he has it; but unfortunately, it is the worker who is still getting the shaft.

I would like to see this article printed in your paper for I know if it were written to the STEEL LABOR it would never get published even though I've been a dues-paying member for almost 20 years.

Bill Gfroehrer



IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Your contribution to developing rank and file control of the major unions is one of the most important efforts being made in the interest of all working people.

Fraternally,

Art Haendle
(retired union member)

A painter in the house

(continued from page 1)

porting you this time around." And, if that's not enough, if more drastic action is necessary, the rank and file is going to have to find someone--man or woman from the ranks--who can come to Washington.

We can no longer afford to generalize and support people just because they are Democrats, although I was elected to Congress as a Democrat. But I'm a worker first and a painter second.

If workers would only support their own, there would be more than 13 or 14 seats occupied by Members of Congress who belong to what we call the Blue Collar Caucus. I'm looking forward to the 1978 elections with a great deal of interest. I hope to see a number of rank and filers running for election and I hope to see some of them elected.

And miners too!

Reprinted from LABOR TODAY, November 1976

(Ed. Note: At the 1976 UMWA convention, LABOR TODAY interviewed Joe Gormley, President of the National Union of Miners of Great Britain. The following remarks were directed towards labor independent political action. Gormley was interviewed by Fred Gaboury.)

Are there any miners sitting in the British Parliament?

We sponsor miners to run for Parliament. At present, we have 19 miners who serve as Members of Parliament (MP's). That's out of about 340 Labour Party MP's.

Are there steelworkers sitting in Parliament?

Oh yes, they have MP's as well. We all have our own representatives--but the miners have the largest number. And out of those 19 MP's, we have three who serve as Cabinet Ministers.

In our Congress we have doctors, lawyers, real estate agents and what-have-you. Why do you run miners?

For the people to speak for miners, they must be miners. Lawyers can speak for anybody, but they usually speak for the ones who pay them the most money. We have lawyers in our Parliament, but not as many as you do here in the United States. Look, there are organizations that sponsor lawyers. There are organizations that sponsor doctors. There are already enough lawyers in government, so we don't need anymore lawyers

Our miners' MP's have come up through the Miners Union. They've been educated industrially, politically and socially. So they know how they ought to be doing their job. We don't tell our MP's how to vote on this issue or that issue. They know we expect them to vote the way the policy of our union dictates. If we don't think they're doing a good job, then we have the right to remove them and not sponsor them in the next election.

Labor
today

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WOMEN STEELWORKERS SAY:

We're here to stay!



SARAH WILBORN, Assistant Griever

"I insisted on my right to learn how to operate heavy equipment. Then I insisted on my right to operate heavy equipment. So, on that day, the foreman drove me down to the garage where the front-end loader was parked. When I got out, he just turned around and drove away. That was my on-the-job training!"

The Burns Harbor Works of Bethlehem Steel Corporation is located on the southern tip of Lake Michigan about 50 miles east of Chicago. It is one of the newest and most productive steel-making facilities in the nation. There are about 650 women in it's 5,000-plus workforce.

Burns Harbor workers are represented by Local 6787 of USWA, one of the locals in District 31 where the rank and file candidates won the 1976 election. We spent an evening talking to four women in Burns Harbor.

Their story is not that different from the story of women in other industries.

Gloria Kelly has been at Burns Harbor for nine years. She was one of the first women hired and she got the ball rolling. "They didn't want us in the first place. The plant ran for five years without a single woman going through the gate. It would still be that way except that a number of women who were being passed over in hiring took action to stop that practice.

"There were twenty women hired in January 1969--they warned us that we were a test. At that time the probationary period was

ing life miserable for all workers--not just women workers."

We began to talk about Bethlehem's policies toward pregnant women. "My God--have they no decency or compassion? Have women no dignity, no right to privacy?" And then it all came out: How any foreman could order a woman to the clinic; how, if she were determined (correctly or incorrectly) to be pregnant, she was summarily forced on sick leave; how this forced leave was interpreted as "personal leave", thus enabling the company to terminate medical and insurance payments.



DORIS PORTER, Secretary, Local 6787 Women's Caucus

"We were all working in the labor gang. When it was time to assign jobs, the foreman made sure that the women were given the shovels and the wheel barrows."

30 days and, despite everything, we stuck it out. I say this because they pushed all of us into the so-called hot, heavy, hazardous jobs and each one of us was considered to be fair game by some of Bethlehem's worst foremen."

The women laughed as they exchanged stories but Gloria brought things back to a serious vein when she discussed the present situation. "After nearly 10 years Bethlehem refuses to accept the fact that we are in the workforce to stay."

TEMPORARY BATHROOMS

Sarah Wilborn told about the last round of local negotiations: "Gloria is right. One of our demands was for additional bathrooms--we call them welfare rooms--for both men and women employees. We got them, but do you know what? The company has built mobile, temporary facilities for the women, almost as if they think that we're going to go away. Well, I've got news for them--we aren't!"

DELIBERATE HARASSMENT

Each had been the butt of petty--and not so petty--harassment by their foremen. Doris Porter told us, "Don't you believe that harassment against women is some personal thing by some particularly 'mean' foreman. It isn't--it's a deliberate policy that comes from and is condoned by plant and company management at the highest level. And all of it is aimed at mak-

Diane Kaczocha, who chairs the Local 6787 Workmen's Compensation Committee explained: "At Bethlehem the contract allows six weeks paid maternity leave. Despite the fact that the company forced them to leave work because of pregnancy--I remind you that it was after the company clinic determined the employee to be pregnant in the first place--they refused to allow payment until the time for legal abortions had passed saying that they didn't want to contribute to a situation where women could get pregnant, have an abortion, get pregnant again, have another abortion and so on, thus violating the 'spirit of intent' of the maternity leave provisions of the working agreement!"

WE'VE SLOWED 'EM DOWN!

"We've not been able to end all of this but we've made important gains. We now have the support of the local union in our efforts

GLORIA KELLY, Co-Chair, Local 6787 Community Services Committee

"When we insisted on our right to promotion, we were often forced to do the work of two employees. We wouldn't have made it at all if it hadn't been for the support and solidarity of a number of our brothers who recognized that discrimination against women was discrimination against them, also."

to end discrimination against women--and to end racial discrimination as well--and we've filed a class action lawsuit seeking \$30,000,000 compensation for those women who were forced off the job because they became pregnant while employed at Burns Harbor."

Doris, speaking with pride in the proven ability of Burns Harbor women to hang together and fight back, added, "We've es-

DIANE KACZOCHA, Chair, Local 6787 Workmen's Compensation Committee

"We have documented evidence of pregnant women being assigned to paint gangs using lead paint. In another instance, a pregnant woman was the only member of a crew who was not warned of radioactive contamination in a work area."

tablished the right of women workers to continue on the job as long as they and their personal doctor feel it to be safe. Although we've not ended it all, we've sure slowed the company down when it comes to harassing pregnant females."

SOME GUIDELINES

The discussion made it clear that certain steps had to be followed should other women want to follow the lead of their sisters at Burns Harbor in battling 19th Century maternity policies.

(1) In the first place, familiarize yourself with the provisions of the grievance procedure in your working agreement and follow it to the letter. This is important in establishing the record if it becomes necessary to go beyond the collective bargaining process for relief.

(2) When you go to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for help, know your rights--and insist that the EEOC allow you to exercise them. Although a certain period of time--about six months--must elapse before you can go beyond the Commission, be very careful that the Commission doesn't "lose" your case or drop it for some reason or other.

(3) You may have to go to Federal Court, as was the case at Burns Harbor. For that you'll need a good lawyer. As a matter of fact, it is probably necessary to secure the help of a trustworthy attorney about the time you find yourself forced to go beyond the grievance procedure. (TUAD and LABOR TODAY work with a number of excellent lawyers on these questions.)

We spent some time talking about on-the-job promotion and the integration of women into the leadership of the local union. It be-



came clear that, prior to the rank and file victory of a year ago, the local leadership had been "less than enthusiastic" about the problem of women workers. "Even my husband who was very supportive of my efforts to become a steelworker--and no family can get by with just one breadwinner--tried to talk me out of going to union meetings," we were told.

And then the tape ran out, but Sarah continued, "We're a stubborn bunch at Bethlehem. Today we have about 75 women in the apprentice trades. There are 18 women who serve on committees of the local and two of these committees are chaired by women. We don't have a woman on the local executive board, but the next election is only a year away."

Only one way to win: depe

Wimpy calls 'em like he sees 'em



William Winpisinger

Grassroots organizing is the answer to the increasing corporation domination of the political process in the view of President William W. Winpisinger of the International Association of Machinists, AFL-CIO.

In a telephone interview with LABOR TODAY, Brother Winpisinger attributed the passage of the labor law reform bill in the House last fall to a grassroots effort highlighted by the delivery of 255,724 postcards signed by machinists to Congressional offices. A similar effort is underway by the IAM and other unions to ensure Senate passage. (See story, this issue.)

Winpisinger and other union and community leaders were members of a committee that in January invited leaders of the World Peace Council to the U.S. for a historic "dialogue on disarmament and detente." A month earlier, he joined with others to protest President Carter's proposed \$9.4 billion Pentagon budget hike and to call instead for cancellation of \$10.5 billion annually in proposed new weapons systems.

Text of the interview

The electoral process and the legislative process are more and more being dominated by big money, such as the corporate PACs. What's the answer?

The answer is to generate grassroots support.

Labor won a significant political round with passage of labor law reform in the House. How was that achieved?

Again, by grassroots support. The Senate is another test. We're using the same approach there.

Very few members of Congress have a working class background. Why haven't we elected more union members to high office?

I think the common perception is that you need a big brain and lots of degrees to be an effective legislator. Whether or not that's true is another matter.

Another deterrent is that the average worker doesn't have a political background. He's been too busy making a living all of his life.

And third, there's money. Workers lack the financial backing to make a run for office, except for money from labor, and that

sometimes is a liability because of labor's political image.

How can labor's political image be improved

Fire George Meany. That's a starting point. That's got to be the starting point.

What do the SALT talks, the Transfer Amendment and disarmament mean to workers? What should labor be going to ensure world peace

There's no doubt we solemnly support the SALT talks and wish for their success. I don't know of anyone who doesn't feel that way. I pray everyday they'll be successful. This matter of armaments is already well past the point of sanity.

What's your estimate of COPE's effectiveness? Can you suggest ways to make it more effective?

I think COPE remains an effective organization. It could be more effective if it paid more attention to involvement with other groups, to coalitions. We need to set aside our knee-jerk reaction to other groups.

The Federation showed an awareness of the necessity for that around labor law reform. It conducted an outreach program to communities, churches and other groups to get them involved. These are the groups that were responsible for progress in the past.

The only thing is we ought to be doing it more methodically. We shouldn't have to wait for an emergency issue like labor law reform to build a coalition. We should be doing it all the time. And we should do it around broad social issues that affect a majority of the people.

Mobilizing the ranks: Two examples

What is "independent labor political action" anyway? LABOR TODAY summarizes below two actual campaigns we think spell out the answer. Both are designed to meet a specific political need of working people. And both draw upon the power of the rank and file--not upon cozy ties with establishment politicians--for results.

1 The IAM's postcard blitz for labor law reform

In August, Machinists President William W. Winpisinger spread across page one of his union's newspaper a signed open letter to the membership. He restated his earlier pledge to make organizing his No. 1 priority. Then he said:

"Now, I am asking your help in one of the most difficult undertakings that the IAM and the entire American labor movement has ever attempted. With the support of President Carter, we are seeking a major overhaul of the nation's laws governing the right of employees to organize in a union and bargain with management. Only through changes in the laws can union organizing become effective. Thus to spur organizing, labor law reform must be our top legislative priority...."

And he served notice that at the right moment, "I am going to ask every IAM member to write" to Congress.

Note that he took full advantage of President Carter's declared support for labor law reform--but he turned to the membership for action.

What was in August. In November, THE MACHINIST carried another signed front-page message from the union president. It began:

"On the eve of the House of Representatives' vote on labor law reform...we delivered 255,724 postcards, individually signed by IAM members, to the offices of 431 members of Congress."

Then he warned: "But we're only halfway home. We now have to get it through the Senate." And he proceeded to call for "an even greater effort to get the 60 votes necessary to break the anti-labor filibuster that's expected."

The results in the Senate are not known at this moment. But if labor law reform prevails, it will be in no small measure be-

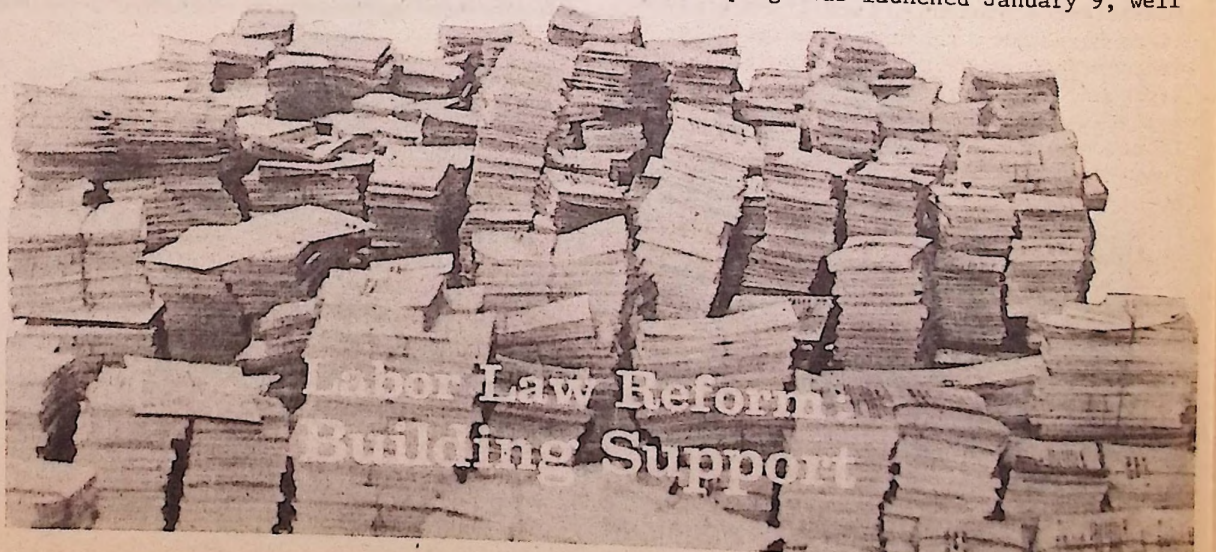
cause a president of a major industrial union had confidence in his own rank and file, called upon them for action, and got the kind of response workers are capable of.

And that's independent labor political action.

2 British Columbia labor's fight for jobs

Unemployment in the Canadian province of British Columbia is running close to 10% by official figures. The B.C. Federation of Labor has turned both to its own rank and file and to the people generally to make it impossible for this year's Legislature to ignore the issue of jobs.

The campaign was launched January 9, well



and on ourselves...

Back to basics AN EDITORIAL

Unless some petrified political action practices are shucked off, labor's 1978 political activity could be drowned in a rising flood of corporate PACs and ultra-right "hate-union" outfits.

AFL-CIO COPE Director, Alexander Barkan, signalled the danger in the AFL-CIO NEWS (11-26-77): "In 1976 elections, corporate PACs contributed \$6 million mostly to conservative candidates.... This year contributions of such PACs will at least triple. In 1976 there were a relative handful.... Today there are more than 450 corporate PACs...."

RIGHT WING POURS MILLIONS INTO ELECTIONS

But that's not the worst of it, Barkan says. The "New Right" is "even more dangerous. For the first time in history, right wing political activists are in place, ready to go into any campaign, at any time, anywhere in this country."

In addition to swamping elections with right-wing bucks, the corporate PACs, the New Right and other special interests pour millions into year-round lobbying.

LABOR MOVEMENT IN "STATE OF CRISIS"

When the picture is put together, the threat is indeed serious. Barkan was not far off when he told the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers recently that our labor

movement is in a "state of crisis" because of the concerted activities of its enemies.

The problem for labor is how to counter these activities. Barkan summarizes the AFL-CIO answer this way: "We, of course, have weapons of our own. We register our members. We get them out to vote. We are able to contribute financially to endorsed candidates from funds contributed to COPE voluntarily by union members."



OK as far as it goes. But that approach reduces working men and women to passive pawns whose sole political functions are to part with a few bucks and to pull the right levers on election day.

The problem is that too often there are no right levers to pull. Many of the "endorsed candidates" whom workers send to Congress and the legislatures vote wrong on key labor issues again and again.

SOUL-SEARCHING IN AFL-CIO

So there's some soul-searching within the AFL-CIO. How to punish those who betray their labor constituency? Barkan outlines several alternatives.

One option is to "just sit out the election and not endorse or support." But that's not political action. That's political inaction, leaving the field of battle to the enemy.

Another option: "We could take on in a primary a few Democrats who have consistently voted against us on labor issues." More vigorous intervention in primaries, as opposed to routine endorsement of any hack the Democrats come up with, would certainly be an improvement. But basic questions remain unanswered: What candidate will labor support? Who puts together his program? To what constituency is he responsible?

How do you get workers revved up about beating one bum with another? And are you any better off if you do succeed?

Barkan's third option is based upon labor's experience in Louisiana "when a state senator we endorsed repudiated his endorsement. Our leaders then got together with our Black allies and withdrew their endorsement.

"We urged our people to vote for the Independent candidate, whom no one took seriously, but he then got 14,000 votes."

This modest political success was made possible by a degree of independence from the Democratic party coupled with a political alliance with the Black community. When politicians figure that labor has some place else to go, they sit up and pay attention.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS A CAPTIVE TOOL OF THE EMPLOYERS



What the whole scene adds up to is that labor is taking a clobbering in the elec-

toral-legislative arena, and its leaders are compelled by their own bitter experience to take timid steps in the direction of political independence.

It's welcome, but it's not enough. What's needed is a working class understanding that the Democratic party is the captive tool of the employers. Period.

ONLY ONE WAY TO GO

Based upon that understanding, there's only one way to go: Independent.

That doesn't mean boycotting all Democrats and Republicans, but it does mean making political decisions on the basis of the needs of working people.

LABOR TODAY has no more fundamental job than to spur and speed labor's transition from political dependence to political independence. We're going to hammer away at this question in issue after issue. Right here, let's re-state the basics:

1. Both old parties are dominated by millionaires and corporations. A consistent policy of political independence from both parties is in the true interests of all workers.

2. Labor needs its own dependable power base in Congress and in the legislatures. It can only be established by nominating our own best union fighters for these offices, then building the coalitions out in the communities that can elect them.



3. Labor's political muscle does not lie in "rubbing bellies" with establishment politicians and sucking around for cheap-skate political favors. It lies in an organized and activated rank and file. The rank and file have a right to help shape the program and choose the candidates.

4. Independent labor political action will enable us to build an independent political movement, national in scope, anchored in labor, and strong enough to compel action on the most urgent social and economic questions confronting workers and the nation.

5. That independent political movement--incorporating Blacks and other oppressed minorities, women and youth, working farmers, professional people and small business people--will provide the foundation for the emergence of a new, clean people's party whose platform we will write and whose candidates we will choose. When that happens, we can effectively challenge the power now wielded, through the two-party machinery, by anti-labor corporate giants and their political stooges.

With our power organized on the level of a new people's party, we can truly frustrate the corporate PACs and the far-out union haters--no matter how many zillion bucks they raise.



Ahead of the spring legislative session, with information booths at scores of shopping malls where leaflets, bumper stickers and questionnaires were distributed over a two-week period.

A letter-writing campaign to legislators and members of Parliament was organized. Labor-prepared briefs were presented to municipal councils.

A mass rally at Victoria, the provincial capital, is slated to coincide with the opening of the legislature. The demand for government action on jobs will be pressed in rank and file lobbying, and will be dramatized with a Depression-style soup kitchen on the Legislature lawn.

Local rallies throughout the province will coincide with the rally in Victoria. Most local labor councils have established unemployment committees to press the campaign in their areas. Every effort is being made to draw in unemployed workers and community forces to assure the broadest possible impact.

The results of course will not be known until the issue is actively joined in the provincial capital. But taking the jobs campaign directly to the people is far more likely to get action than buttering up "labor's friends" in the cushy pubs of Victoria.

A CALL TO THE FIRST NATIONAL ALL UNIONS' CONFERENCE TO SHORTEN THE WORK WEEK

APRIL 11, 1978 - 10:00 A.M.
HYATT-REGENCY HOTEL-DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

Initiated by the All Unions' Committee to Shorten the Work Week.

FOUNDED, Detroit, Michigan, October 25, 1977 by those listed below:

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| William Andrews, President
Local 1010, USWA
E. Chicago, Indiana | Bob Cross, President
Local 652, UAW
Lansing, Michigan | Harry Ibsen, President
Local 9415, Comm. Workers
of America, AFL-CIO
San Francisco, Calif. | Henry Oginsky, Pln. Sec'y.
Local 599, UAW
Flint, Michigan | William E. Stebbins, Pres.
Local 1393, Retail Store
Employees Union
Reading, Pa. |
| Loa Antal, President
District 5, UMW
Pittsburgh, Pa. | Bobby Demby, Vice-President
Local 1014, USWA
Gary, Indiana | Anthony Jannette, Pres.
Local 51, UAW
Detroit, Michigan | Myron Paris, President
Local 93, UAW
Kansas City, Mo. | Joe Takacs, President
Local 45, UAW
Cleveland, Ohio |
| James Balanoff, Director
District 31, USWA: AFL-CIO
E. Ch. | Paul Domeny, Gen. Secretary
Local 1864, United Catering
Restaurant Bar & Hotel
Dearborn, Michigan | Paul Koczocha, President
Local 6787, USWA
Chesterton, Indiana | Mel Perez, President
Local 595, UAW
Linden, New Jersey | Robert J. Tenerow, Pres.
Local 636, UAW
Bristol, Connecticut |
| Chas. Loc. AF
Ch. | with Eickman, President | Frank Keane, President
Local 109, Food Council of
Philadelphia and Vicinity
Philadelphia, Pa. | Norman Purdue, President
Local 1011, USWA
E. Chicago, Ind. | Larry Wahl, President
Local 1111 U.E.R. & MWA (U.E.)
Milwaukee, Wis. |
| | | Mike Rinaldi, President
Local 600, UAW
Dearborn, Michigan | John P. President
Capital & Workers Union | Clifford M. Walsh, President
Ainal, Local 2274
U.E.R. & MWA (U.E.)
Greenfield, Mass. |
| | | | | Floyd J. Watson, President
Local 1066 USWA
Gary, Indiana |

Who may attend the April Conference

Voting delegates to the First National Conference to Shorten the Work Week shall be Local Union Presidents and others (to a maximum of five) selected by their Local Union.

This same right of representation shall be extended to Regional, District or National Bodies of International Unions and to State and City Central Labor Bodies.

Although voting rights shall be limited to five delegates, there shall be no limit placed upon the number of representatives who may attend, provided, however, that they must be certified by their Local Union or Central Body and pay the requisite \$25 registration fee.

ALL UNIONS COMMITTEE TO SHORTEN THE WORK WEEK
4300 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, Mich. 48210 (313) 897-8850

More than 70 local union leaders, representing some 400,000 workers from 17 national and international unions in 18 states have signed the Conference Call.

This Conference marks an important step in the campaign to build a national movement for a shorter work week.

No retreat (continued from page 7)

although these campaigns seldom resulted in breaking down the bars to membership in the construction unions. He explained that "affirmative action programs which involve building trades unions generally stop at the door of the union hiring hall" although, in at least one instance, some "minority" workers hired as the result of a successful community campaign, had been admitted into union membership and, in a very few cases, into apprenticeship programs.

The last speaker was a young, Black man, Bruce Pickens, an iron worker. His contribution to the conference was a vivid, detailed description of what he had to contend with to become a trained iron worker. He drew applause as he described how he fought for his right to be trained by going to his union business agent with his complaint.

In the iron workers' union a "trainee" program came out of a civil discrimination suit. (In 1970, of 8,700 iron workers in Northern California, only 15 were Black.) This five-year training program was for Black workers over 31 years old and was supposed to parallel the apprenticeship program. The "trainee" program is now abolished--federal funds were cut off--but during its existence it was a constant battleground for basic rights: to be trained, to attend union meetings, to be dispatched to jobs, to do skilled work, and to be accepted by the white members as union brothers. The union did nothing to defend the program or to educate the white members but, even then, the program was the best in the building trades.

LESS THAN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION NEEDED

In closing the discussion, a brother in attendance made this point: Affirmative action is not just another way of fighting racism and discrimination unless there is some positive correction of past discrimination and an opening up of jobs to minority workers now. Minority and women workers can go on forever pursuing life, liberty and happiness. Affirmative action must be part of the drive to unionize, to fight for more jobs, to educate union members, and to make our unions fight for all the members.

Southern Labor Today

by Scott Marshall

MINERS FAMILIES SAY "CALL OFF COPS!"

The United Mine Workers Women's Club in Harlan County, Kentucky is out in the streets again. The club, originally organized by the wives and daughters of Brookside miners several years ago, is being reactivated and has already begun to build support for the present strike of the nation's coal miners.

On February 8, several carloads of miners families from Kentucky, Virginia, Ohio, and West Virginia converged on the state capitol at Frankfort, Kentucky to demand that Governor Julian Carroll get state and local police out of the coal fields.

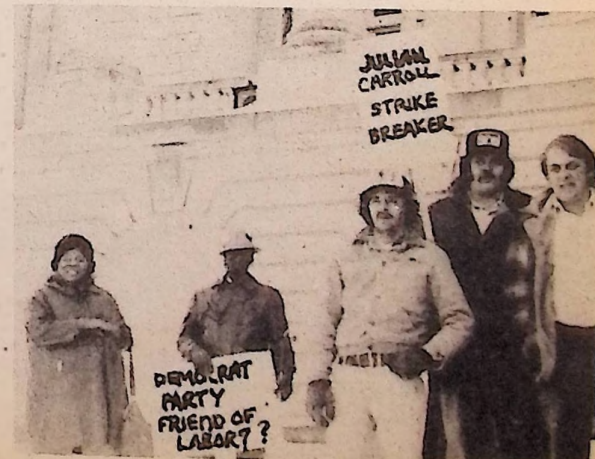
"We came here because of the police brutality against the miners and the strike-breaking activities of the state police. Miners could get a better contract if the Governor keeps the police out. Governor Carroll is only interested in one thing we have--coal. He doesn't care how many of us die or how many of us are killed by gun thugs. He's done everything possible to help the operators," said Lois Scott, an organizer of the demonstration from Harlan County.



One of the leaflets handed out at the rally said, "Our main goals are to lend all forms of assistance to families on strike now and to support future organizing drives. Our union must organize the unorganized! We need the support of all labor. We can no longer have a situation where a few do the fighting and many reap the benefits."

A group of seven demonstrators were able to meet with the governor. Afterwards, Reverend Cowans, a retired Black miner, told the rally, "We are not satisfied with our meeting because we think we were given the run around. We had a talk, but that's all. The governor is in for a surprise. We United Mine Workers aren't going to take this lying down!"

The Harlan County Women's Club asks that people send telegrams to Governor Carroll, Capital Building, Frankfort, Kentucky, demanding that state and local police be withdrawn from the coal fields of Kentucky. Please send a copy of each telegram to UMW Women's Club, Cumberland Chapter, General Delivery, Cumberland, Kentucky 40823





the rank and file in action

by FRED GABOURY

Field Organizer
TUAD

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION MEANS QUOTAS

Workers have always known that knowledge is power. This understanding propelled the early labor movement into the struggles against child labor and for a public school system.

Any understanding of an issue as important to the U.S. working class as the Bakke Case requires knowledge--and a sober look at the facts. Given that, other questions fall into place and Bakke and his most vocal



Fred Gaboury

● By the fall of 1976, again discounting the two Black schools, there were 1,187 "minority" students spread among the then 112 medical schools.

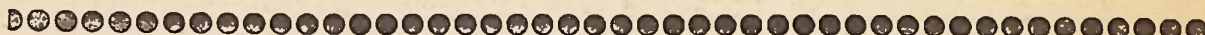
● In 1968, there were 9,561 whites who entered medical schools.

● In 1976, the number of whites entering medical schools climbed to 14,213 and represented 91 percent of all entrants.

And finally, one last set of facts:

● Black youth make up one-eighth of the 22 to 24-year-old age group.

● Black youth make up one-twentieth of first-year medical students.



SAN FRANCISCO TUAD CONFERENCE

No retreat on affirmative action

by HELEN LIMA

When the San Francisco Bay Area TUAD decided to organize a Conference on Affirmative Action we did so with the full knowledge that affirmative action programs--and worse yet, the concept of affirmative action--are under attack in area after area. This knowledge came from first-hand experience in the shops and local unions where we work and from a "rank and file survey" we did that convinced us that those who talk of "reverse discrimination" were making headway in the labor movement in the Bay Area and throughout Northern California.

We had never organized a single-issue conference before and, in many ways, we were starting from scratch as we went about the work. Of course, we had built up a mailing list. We had a phone list and we appealed to our friends in the progressive movement for additional names. We used all of these but, more important than anything else, we were able to reach beyond our ranks and get the help of others in planning our conference. This accounts for the fact that we were able to secure at least two speakers that we might not have reached in other ways.

FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

Our conference was hardly underway before all realized that the defense of even those token gains in employment that



Richard Sorro (speaking)

Leonard McNeil, Chair (seated)

Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans and women have won since the struggles of the 1960's is the first line of defense in the fight against racism.

One of our speakers, Cheryl Perry, is a compliance officer for the building trades division of the Alameda Legal Aid. She told us that in spite of the law--and the intent of Congress in passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 being clearly on the side of affirmative action--very little has been

● Only 2.2 percent--only one out of forty-five doctors in the U.S. are Black.

Thus, our final conclusion: The claims that affirmative action programs have given unfair advantage to what the government calls "underrepresented minorities" is not substantiated by the record.

No matter how it's cut, a decision in Bakke's favor will be a set-back for affirmative action. As such, it will be a set-back to the rank and file movement and will undercut the unity and strength of the labor movement.

We at TUAD support affirmative action programs. But our experience as workers teaches us that a contract that leaves everything to the good faith of an employer is unenforceable.

It's the same way with affirmative action programs--without quotas, they are like a "sweetheart" contract.

After all, there's a difference between quotas that guarantee and expand opportunities and those quotas of yesteryear that were used to limit opportunity. We at TUAD stand with the first.

supporters stand exposed as the racists they are.

Consider these uncontested facts:

● Bakke applied for admission to two medical schools in 1972 and to 11 more in 1973, for a total of 13.

● Bakke was turned down by all thirteen of these schools.

● Bakke re-applied at Davis in 1974, and was denied a second time, bringing his total to fourteen rejections.

Thus, our first conclusion: Bakke was unable to fulfill the admission requirements at any of thirteen medical schools.

Then there are more facts:

● There were 2,644 applications for the 100 openings at Davis in 1973.

● Under the affirmative action admissions program at Davis, 16 "slots" were set aside for "disadvantaged students" in 1973.

● Of the 84 white students admitted to Davis in 1973, eight had lower "bench mark" scores than Bakke and 36 of those admitted had lower grade point averages.

● Bakke, despite his claim that he was denied admission because of the affirmative action program at Davis, was also denied admission at the University of South Dakota--where no affirmative action program exists and where no Black, Chicano or Asian-American entered medical school in 1973.

Thus, our second conclusion: By challenging only the six Blacks, the eight Chicanos and the two Asian-Americans who had lower ratings than his while, at the same time, making no challenge to the less qualified white students, Bakke stands clearly exposed as a tool--willing or otherwise--of those who, by attacking the affirmative action program at Davis, would roll back all of the gains won in the hard years of struggle before and after passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

There is a third set of facts that must be considered:

● In 1968, not counting enrollment at Meherry and Howard (the nation's two Black medical schools), there were only 111 Black, Native American, Chicano or mainland Puerto Rican first-year students at the 97 other U.S. medical schools.

accomplished in the building trades unions. As Ms. Perry pointed out, "In some of the trades, the number of so-called 'minority' workers is declining as the concept of 'reverse discrimination' gains acceptance.

Helen Lima



The leadership of the building trades have shown no sensitivity to the rights and needs of 'minority' workers. After five years of struggle, there are only twenty 'minority' workers in the Sheet Metal Workers Union in Alameda County." (Alameda County includes the City of Oakland where a Black Mayor was elected in 1977. Ed.)

Because it has become the legal battleground for yet another test of the concept of affirmative action, our conference spent part of its time discussing the case of Allan Bakke.

SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES IF BAKKE WINS

After detailing the facts involved, Margaret Gannon, a Bay Area labor attorney warned, "If the Supreme Court decides in Bakke's favor, it will be declaring that any law which outlaws discrimination is illegal. If that happens, it will have serious consequences for the rank and file movement. At the very least, we can expect the racists--the Klan and the Nazis--to go on the offensive with the goal of wiping out the gains made by 'minority' and women workers."

LEARN FROM STRUGGLES

Our conference had the opportunity to study some concrete struggles and to draw some lessons from them.

We learned from Richard Sorro how the United Filipinos for Equal Employment worked with other community groups and organizations to force contractors working on government construction projects to hire residents from the community for 50 percent of the jobs. He pointed out that this was one tactic that had been successful in getting jobs for Blacks, Latinos and others,

(continued on page 6)

Free the Wilmington 10

by MIKE MYERSON

National Alliance Against Racist and
Political Repression

The continual refusal of the authorities in North Carolina to free the Reverend Ben Chavis and his co-defendants of the Wilmington 10 places the ball squarely in President Carter's court. The White House campaign for human rights in other countries while refusing to deal with human rights in these United States, rings most hollow in the case of these young freedom-fighters sentenced to hundreds of years in prison for their civil rights activities in behalf of equal education.

NORTH CAROLINA REFUSES TO BUDGE

Despite the mammoth defense movement put together by the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression and the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice, the state of North Carolina refuses to budge. That movement--which includes the National Council of Churches and virtually every Protestant denomination, dozens of members of Congress and the entire Congressional Black Caucus--has been joined now by the NAACP, the National Urban League and every other traditional civil rights organization. Scores of leading daily newspapers have editorialized for the freedom of the Wilmington 10 and protests from abroad have come from heads of state, members of parliaments, national trade union federations and the World Council of Churches. Still, the ruling circles of North Carolina are unrelenting.

It is not incidental that North Carolina has the least unionized working class in the country--only 6.5 percent of its workers are organized. This is the result of decades of harsh repression, from right-to-work laws and other such legislation to outright terror by state police and night-riders. The current struggle to organize the workers of J.P. Stevens and the resistance it is meeting has deep historical roots. Nor is it coincidental that the Rev. Ben Chavis, the leader of the Wilmington 10, was once an organizer for the State, County and Municipal Employees Union in North Carolina, seeking--like his spiritual kin, the late Dr. Martin Luther King--to join the struggles for civil rights and labor rights. The absence of a strong labor movement in North Carolina allows those in



The
Rev.
Ben
Chavis

power to flagrantly violate basic human rights as they are doing in the case of the Wilmington 10.

LABOR MUST SPEAK OUT

While important voices of labor ranging from the Hawaii State Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, to the Amalgamated Meatcutters of North Carolina have protested this injustice, it must frankly be said that the labor movement has not made its full strength felt as it can and must do, and as, say, the churches have. It is not only in the interests of justice that organized labor must speak in defense of the Wilmington 10; it is also in our self-interest. Because the Rev. Chavis is correct, the fate of labor, including the J.P. Stevens workers, is indivisible from the question of civil rights.

NATIONAL MARCH ON THE WHITE HOUSE

On March 18, a National March on the White House to Free the Wilmington 10 will bring thousands of representatives of democratic organizations together. It is imperative that labor--from its leadership to the rank and file--be represented with a major presence. Moreover, there is not a union local or convention in our country from whose floor or through whose executives the question of the Wilmington 10 cannot be raised. Readers of LABOR TODAY are urged to hit the bricks in Washington, D.C. on March 18 and to hit the floor of your next union meeting. It is time to end this disgrace. FREE THE WILMINGTON 10!