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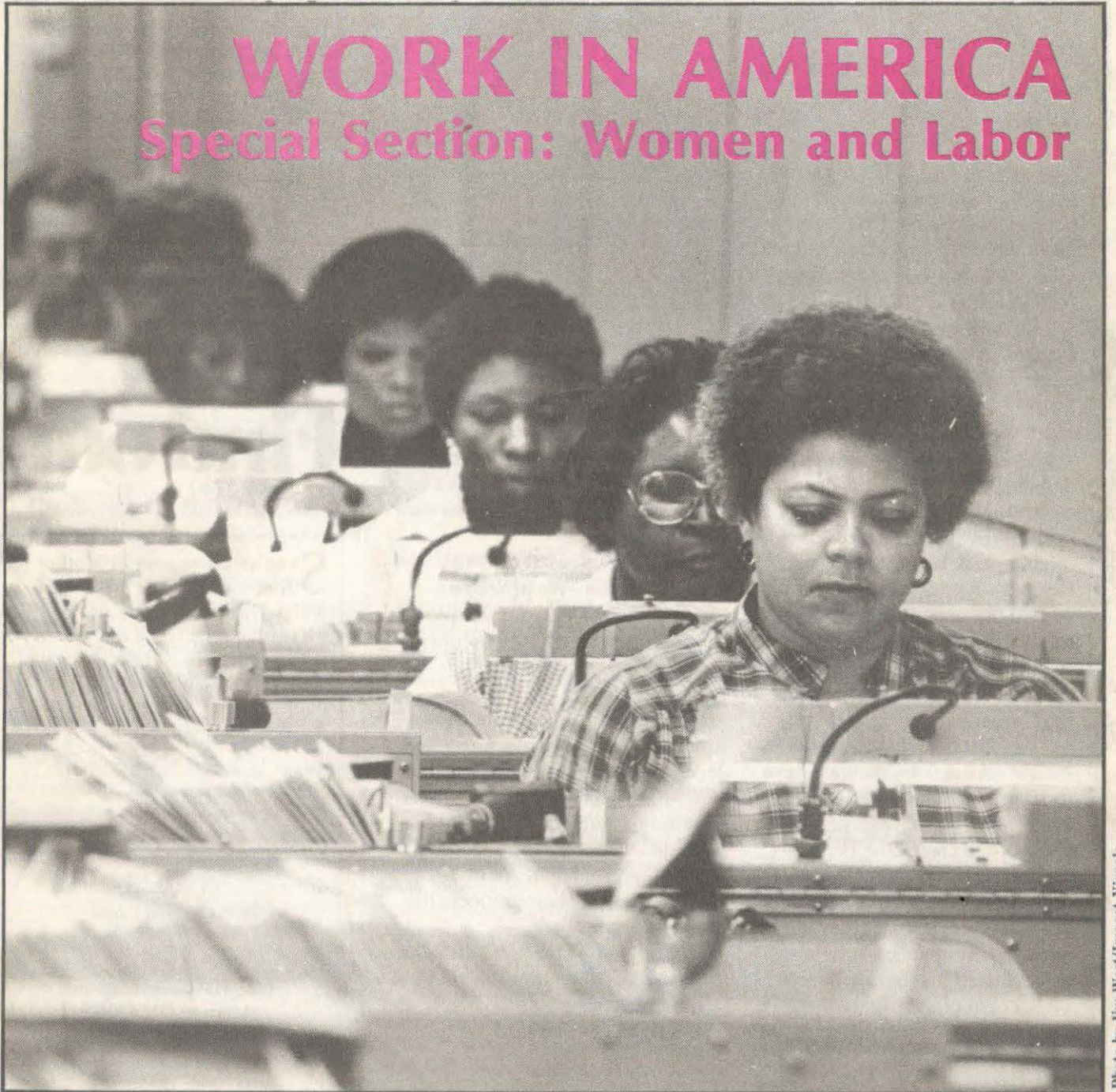


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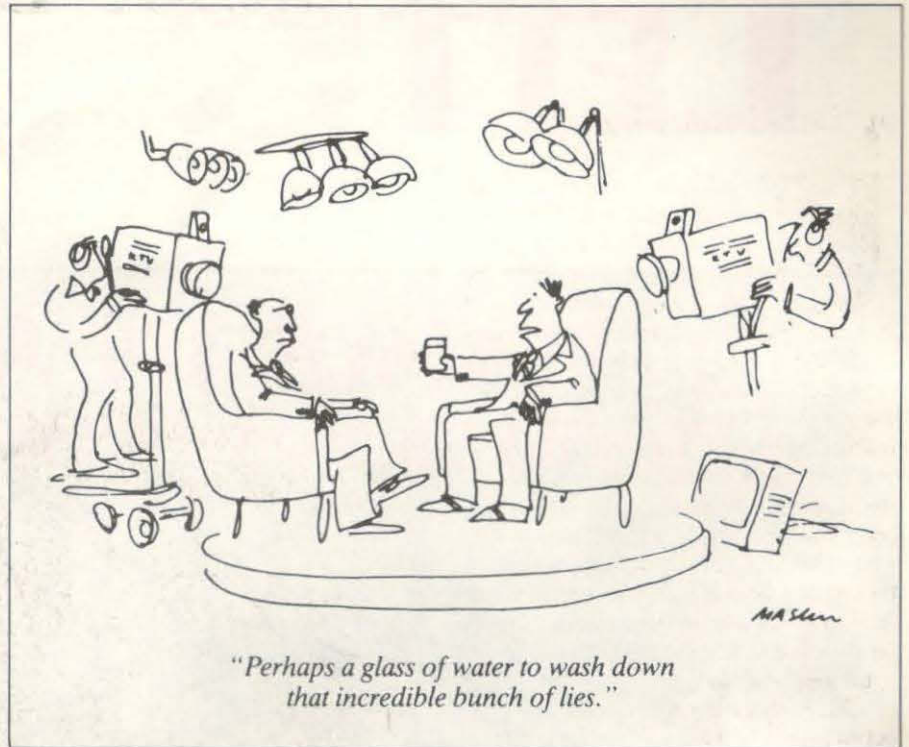
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LOCKED OUT On Labor Day

by David Bensman

U.S.X., once known as U.S. Steel, locked out 21,000 employees on August 1, 1986, after rejecting an offer by the United Steelworkers of America to continue working under terms of the expired labor agreement. U.S.X.'s apparent eagerness to take on the union, despite the orders it will lose to rival steelmakers, symbolizes how weak and vulnerable American labor has become in the world of transnational capital. A look at both how the Steelworkers have moved forcefully and creatively to strengthen their union, as well as how economic transformation has limited their success, is useful if we are to understand the situation of American labor today.

Many observers believe that U.S.X. is out to break the steelworkers' union. They point to the company's unwillingness to engage in serious bargaining as well as to the huge crews of non-union contract employees who have been working in the company's plants the past three years, and to the even larger pool of laid-off steelworkers living in the Rust Belt without hope of ever being re-employed.

But most observers are less apocalyptic, believing U.S.X.'s goal is not to break the union, but merely to weaken it so badly that it accepts not only steep wage cuts, but also the dismantling of hundreds of work rules, seniority practices, and manning agreements that have protected workers' rights for the past forty years. If the USWA were to accept terms such as these, it would have to make similar concessions to the other integrated steel producers, who have already gained modest labor cost reductions in this year's bargaining rounds, for if U.S.X. alone enjoyed steep cuts it would have a killing cost advantage over its rivals. For the USWA, acceptance of U.S.X.'s demands would mean the loss of tens of thousands of jobs, and loss of all control over how work is done in the mills. Thus, victory against U.S.X.'s aggression is imperative if trade unionism in the steel industry is to have a future.



Steelworkers rally in Gary, Indiana.

Photo by Mahmood Nudis/Impact Visuals

Be Prepared

Fortunately, the USWA has not blindly drifted into this fateful confrontation. For the past three years, under the leadership of President Lynn Williams, the union has been busy cultivating allies and developing its own organizational capacities. Unlike the sorry situation at Phelps Dodge, when the unprepared union did not gear up for battle until the war was lost, the USWA prepared very carefully for the steel bargaining round of 1986. Recent efforts to save mills in Chicago and the Mon Valley had led the union to engage trained financial analysts, and had stimulated coalition-building with community groups. The union's daring and successful resistance to Wheeling-Pittsburgh's bankruptcy threats taught important lessons about dealing with the financial community.

By the time local presidents gathered at the Basic Steel Industry Conference in February 1986, the Steelworkers' leader-

ship could present to them an analysis of the industry's economic condition written by Locker Associates. Moreover, the leadership, knowing that bargaining would be hard, that a strike was likely, and that membership support would be vital, proposed to the local presidents that steelworkers be allowed to vote on their contracts for the first time. There was also a political plan — to organize community coalitions on behalf of a broad ranging federal legislative program to support the American steel industry. And finally, the USWA had a carefully-crafted bargaining strategy designed to minimize givebacks and job loss, and maximize pressure on the most aggressive steelmaker: U.S.X.

High Stakes

It is difficult to predict whether or not U.S.X. will continue on its warpath, or instead accept, as corporations have tradi-

tionally done in the post-War era, a compromise that allows the union to continue playing a collective bargaining role. Trade unionists throughout the country have a large stake in the outcome. If U.S.X. succeeds in dismantling or crippling the union, hundreds of CEO's will give serious consideration to launching their own wars on organized labor.

U.S.X.'s lockout of the steelworkers is also of wider interest because the USWA's dire condition is utterly typical of labor today. Throughout America, unions are strengthening themselves — improving internal communications, experimenting with innovative tactics and strategies — and yet their condition is worse than it has been in nearly fifty years. The concession bargaining of the first half of the 1980s has not faded with the partial recovery of the nation's economy, but instead has become a seemingly permanent feature of collective bargaining.

To start at the top, the AFL-CIO has modernized its operations and is now providing real leadership, perhaps for the very first time. The Federation's George Meany Center has become an effective instrument for labor education; the leadership's campaign to breathe life into central labor bodies is awakening long-dead corpses; and the Federation has even intervened to halt the appalling waste of scarce resources expended in competing union organizing drives.

There are also good signs in some national unions. Vince Sirabella has brought energy and a faith in rank-and-file committees to the organizing drives of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union. Morty Bahr, new president of the Communications Workers of America, recently named as his union's Director of Organizing Larry Cohn, who successfully applied community organizing techniques to sign up public employees for CWA in New Jersey and then showed how the same strategies could be used to make the union into a feared and respected political power. The Bricklayers, Carpenters, and Operating Engineers have all demonstrated how pension funds can work as levers to force contractors to hire union labor. And the American Federation of Teachers has boosted its standing with its members and the public, as well as taken the initiative in reshaping its bargaining environment, by adopting a program to enhance teachers' professional status.

At the local and regional level, there are many more successes. The Tri-State Conference on Steel, working with the USWA, has had startling success in building public support for continued industrial employment in the Monongahela Valley.

HERE won an important victory by organizing Yale; District 65, UAW succeeded at Columbia; District 925, SEIU conquered Equitable in Syracuse; and AFSCME finally brought collective bargaining to Chicago's many city workers.

There's also much experimentation going on. In Chicago and Cleveland, labor activists are establishing early warning systems, to alert workers and community residents when plants are in trouble; this has enabled some unions to look for new owners, or to establish ESOPs or coops of their own. The Cementworkers and the Autoworkers have both developed campaigns using "working strikes," to pressure employers for contract improvements while members remain on the job, when traditional strikes are inadvisable. And knowledge about how to implement "corporate campaigns" is diffusing throughout the labor movement.

It is one of the hopeful signs that the unions are hiring outsiders who would have been viewed as unacceptable "New Leftists" in the Meany era. Randy Barber's work with the AFL-CIO and Michael Locker's consulting for the USWA bespeak an openness that did not characterize labor in the recent past. Similarly, not long ago trade union leaders would probably not even have heard of strategic, financial, and public relations consultants like Brian Freeman, Lazard Freres, or Victor Kamber, and they certainly would not have entrusted them with important union business.

What's so troubling is that the unions' position is so weak despite all the new openness, the experimentation, and the stirring victories. Thus, the machinists at Eastern Airlines, after superhuman efforts to mobilize the membership in resistance to Frank Borman's brinkmanship, ended up having to choose between bankruptcy and a takeover by Frank Lorenzo. Similarly, the USWA, after rapid organizational improvement, still finds itself in a weak bargaining position vis-a-vis U.S.X. These are hard times.

Part of the reason is that despite recent gains, unions still have glaring organizational weaknesses to overcome. The distance between rank-and-filers and leaders in many unions is a seemingly unbridgeable chasm, and there are still many union officials who don't seem to want to make the effort. And public scandals like Doris Turner's manipulation of the Local 1199 election machinery, and the indecent civil war between P-9 leaders in Austin and the UFCW don't build up membership confidence.

Secondly, American labor is not well

structured to meet the current challenges. There are too many unions, and the resulting fragmentation blunts the force of labor campaigns and makes it all too easy for employers to play off one union against another. The lack of coordination between the IBEW and CWA played right into AT&T's hands in the recent strike, but it's been in the airline industry that fragmentation's been most destructive. Looking to the future, we can anticipate that in health care, where hundreds of thousands of workers remain to be organized, the competition between unions will be a major problem.

Yet when all is said and done, the primary reason for labor's weakness is the transformation of the global political economy. As America relinquishes basic industry to the Third World, while "high tech" companies like IBM gain the ability to invest, manufacture, and market goods all over the world, the clout of American workers grows ever more feeble. Labor's weakness can no longer be seen as the product of hard times; it is now structural.

As long as the U.S. government, and the other industrialized nations, give transnational corporations and banks free reign, all the organization-building in the world won't suffice for the labor movement. Clearly, labor must continue exploring new tactics for mobilizing the membership and attacking the boss's weak points, but in addition, labor must fundamentally reorient economic policy.

In the end, that's the lesson of the steelworkers' bitter struggle. As long as the federal government allows our steel industry to rust away, steelworkers will suffer job loss, decreasing living standards, and deteriorating working conditions. Successful union resistance to U.S. X.'s war on labor can bring order and stability to the process of decline, but that decline can only be reversed if labor finds a way of reversing our nation's undeclared industrial policy — deindustrialization. ●

David Bensman is Director of the Graduate Program in Labor Studies at Rutgers University. He has written a book of labor history, The Practice of Solidarity, published by the University of Illinois Press. His most recent book, Rusted Dreams: Hard Times in a Steel Community, co-authored by Roberta Lynch, will be released by McGraw-Hill Books in February.

“If you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas”

by Dan Gallin

The clandestine activities of the AFL-CIO international affairs department have periodically led to scandal, most recently when the Paris daily *Liberation* disclosed covert funding of trade unions and political groups in France and elsewhere. *Liberation* reported that the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which was established in 1983 by the U.S. government to help groups “struggling for the return of democracy in totalitarian countries” or in “countries where democracy is still fragile,” had made France its second largest center of activity. Through the AFL-CIO’s Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI), the NED had earmarked \$1.5 million between April 1984 and April 1985 for France. Even more disturbingly, \$570,000 of this went to a tiny, far right-wing students’ organization, the Union Nationale Inter-Universitaire (UNI).

Liberation also brought to light a letter from FTUI Director Eugenia Kemble to NED President Carl Gershman, listing France as one of seven countries where allocations were to be kept secret, allegedly because local conditions required it for recipients’ security. Consequently, what the \$570,000 NED money was used for is still unknown. What is known is that UNI is a tiny group of 500 to 1,000 members which was set up as a university-based reaction to the May-June events of 1968, when most workers and students in the country joined in revolt against the old Gaullist order. Despite its tiny size, UNI made a name for itself for highly visible hardline opposition to the Mitterrand government, playing a major role in the 1983-84 demonstrations against educational reform, and distributing posters and handbills during national election campaigns declaring “The Left Lies.” UNI has been closely associated with the right-wing Gaullist strong-arm squad “Service d’Action Civique” (SAC) which disbanded in 1982 after being implicated in a number of assassinations.

NED’s Gershman announced after the *Liberation* article that further funding to

the UNI was being suspended pending investigation into alleged ties to SAC, and that all other funding will now be made fully public (as required in the act of Congress establishing NED). However, he insists that in general the NED’s policies are correct and will be continued.

World-wide Activities

These revelations led to other investigations of NED activities elsewhere. In Britain it was found that \$129,000 in NED money has gone to the *Soviet Labour Review*, a newsletter published by far-right Russian emigres connected with the Alliance of Russian Solidarists party — founded in 1932 as a vehicle for Russian fascism. Another \$49,000 went to the Labour Committee for Trans-Atlantic Understanding, a group dedicated to cultivating support for NATO among European trade unionists, and to opposing the Labour Party’s nuclear disarmament policy. The group was organized in 1976 by former labor attache Joseph Godson in the U.S. London embassy, and was originally funded directly by NATO itself.

The NED provoked strong criticism

both in the United States and abroad as early as 1984, when the U.S. ambassador to Panama protested to his superiors that the NED had gone around him to directly fund a “hare-brained” AFL-CIO program of support for the military’s candidate in the Panamanian elections. The largest single program of the NED is in the Philippines, where \$3 million a year has gone to the TUCP labor group — a politically bankrupt organization which could not even make up its mind in the last elections whether it should support Ferdinand Marcos or Cory Aquino. The U.S. labor attache in Manila complained that he could not find out specifically how the NED funds were spent.

The NED is financed directly by the U.S. Congress for about \$18 million each year; some three-fourths of that amount is channeled through organizations linked to the AFL-CIO. Other recipients of NED money include the Chamber of Commerce and, until last year, the Democratic and Republican Parties. Right-wing Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) says the AFL-CIO-linked bodies are the preferred channel for NED funds. “The unions,” he said, “have a political effectiveness the CIA has often lacked.”



"Democratic"?

Why do these international activities of the AFL-CIO give rise to scandal? It is clearly not the fact that the AFL-CIO extends financial support to trade union organizations who may need it; many other labor organizations do the same as a legitimate expression of solidarity. The problem is two-fold: from a trade union point of view, the objectives of the AFL-CIO program are wrong, and the methods are wrong.

Apologists for the activities of the AFL-CIO sponsored institutes in the five continents say that they are designed to "protect democracy" and to "resist communist take-overs." Nothing could be further from the true situation.

There is nothing democratic about organizations like UNI in France, whose political home is somewhere between extreme conservatism and fascism. Anti-communist they may be, but what are they for? Since the end of the war, communism has never been so weak in France as it is now. In electoral terms, the Communist Party has declined to an all-time low of some 10 percent of the popular vote and its trade union organization has gone into a

prolonged and probably irreversible decline — not through any activities of the AFL-CIO, but through political changes in the French working class and through the re-emergence of the Socialist Party under Francois Mitterrand. In that context, to finance organizations like UNI meant funding the shock-troops of Chirac on the eve of the parliamentary elections. The real target was obviously not the comatose French Communist Party, but the Socialist government of Mitterrand.

Is this incident an accidental blunder? If so, the AFL-CIO would have to be incredibly uninformed and incompetent. Unfortunately, the truth is worse. Such "accidents" in fact arise from the underlying ideology of the architects of AFL-CIO foreign policy, which requires the defense of conservative interests and political values and has nothing to do with the defense of free and democratic trade unionism, except in terms of propaganda for home consumption.

servatives in the West and the communist establishment in the Soviet bloc; the second perception is the traditional one of the labor movement. When the East/West perception is made the guiding principle of the labor movement, it leads to serious consequences.

The first consequence is that its policies are ineffective in terms of their own claims to "contain" or combat communism. This comes as a surprise only to those who do not understand that conservative policies and power structures are the root cause why communism can still appeal to oppressed peoples regardless of what is now known about the nature of Soviet society. This is how it comes about, for example, that the countries in Latin America where the AFL-CIO has poured out millions of dollars are also those where communist organizations have best been able to hold their own. Any labor organization like the AFL-CIO's Latin America institute, that was lifted out of the baptismal font by

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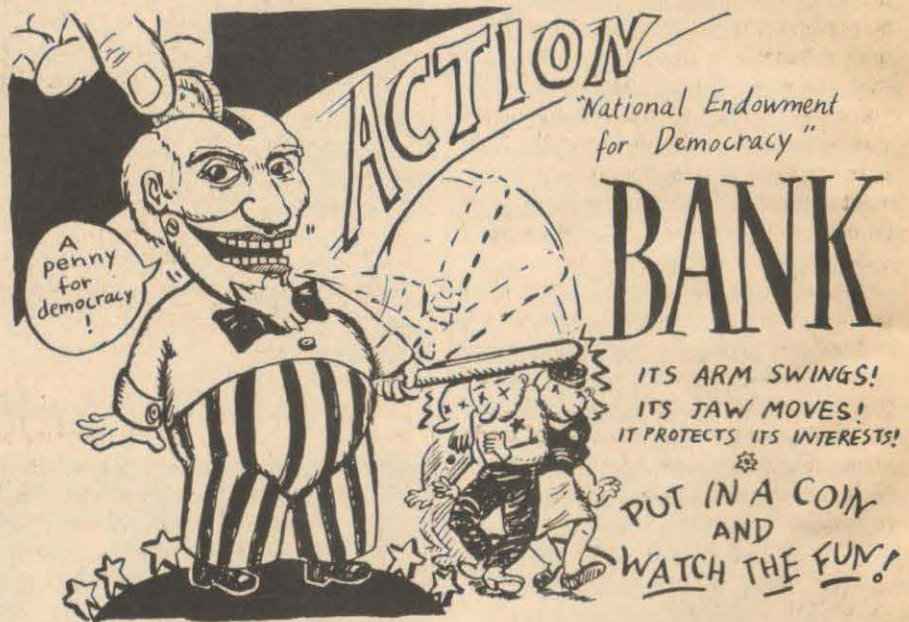
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Two Perceptions

There are, broadly speaking, two political perceptions today on what constitutes the major conflict in the world: according to one, the main conflict is the struggle between "East" and "West," and the main line of cleavage is the vertical one which divides the two superpowers and their zones of influence. The other perception is that the struggle that matters is between those below and those above, the exploited and their exploiters, the workers and their enemies, and this horizontal line of cleavage runs straight across both superpower blocs. The first perception is shared by con-

industrialist J. Peter Grace, that boasts of having put military dictatorships into power, and that promotes an ideology of non-political trade unionism in the midst of acute social struggles, would have to be the perfect foil for any Communist Party, no matter how obtuse and incompetent.

Another consequence is the choice of methods. Conservatives and communists share the *police conception of history*, that is, the view that history is made by conspiracies and agents. (Democrats believe that history is made by independent mass movements, and that neither conspiracies nor the police make history.) In the police

conception of history, the essence of political struggle is to mount the better conspiracy, the most efficient machine, the more ruthless apparatus. Mass movements are treated with contempt — they can always be manipulated. As Stalin once said, the apparatus is everything. Allies are not in demand — they are not reliable. Only agents and mercenaries are reliable. Hence the attraction for stealth and secrecy. Thus far-right organizations like the UNI become acceptable recipients of NED funds.

The ideological founders of the AFL-CIO international department, whose training ground was the Communist Party, and who broke with its politics but not with its conceptual framework, had the same police conception of history as the new generation of neo-conservatives who have entered AFL-CIO international politics. That is why they have always failed, and will always fail, to understand what political struggles are all about.

The final, and most serious, consequence of carrying the East/West perception of the world into labor politics is that it perpetuates the confusion about the objectives and methods of a free and democratic trade union movement. The ideological divisions in the international trade union movement are not derived from the Cold War; the labor movement has been fundamentally split since 1919. The split is based on opposite and irreconcilable projects of society: the democratic socialist, where democracy and freedom are meaningful realities in the lives of workers, and that exemplified in the Soviet Union, which stands for a new form of unprecedented oppression. The blurring of the priorities of the Cold War with the priorities of trade union struggle is the most serious handicap the international union movement has had to contend with over the years.

A New Policy

In the past, international policy in the AFL-CIO has been conducted by and large without the participation, or indeed the knowledge, of the greater part of its membership. The rise of transnational corporate power and the growing integration of the world economy have forced many American unions to become more directly involved in international affairs. The contradiction of fighting conservatives at home in a battle for the survival of the trade union movement, and of allying oneself with the same conservatives abroad, allegedly to save the same trade union movement, becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. It becomes increasingly apparent that no valid trade union purpose can be served, for

A NEW OPPOSITION

In recent years, a substantial movement has emerged in American unions for a more progressive, genuinely democratic foreign policy.

Nationally, leaders of 23 unions have formed the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador. Led by DSA member Jack Sheinkman of the Clothing and Textile Workers, the National Labor Committee has actively opposed U.S. military intervention in Central America and aid to the Nicaraguan contras. In two reports of U.S. trade union delegations to Central America, it has sharply criticized the policies of the Reagan Administration — and, by implication, the AFL-CIO.

Anti-interventionist sentiment is strong amongst union rank-and-file, and local labor committees against U.S. policies in Central America are now active in more than twenty cities. In addition to lobbying and educational efforts, these local committees have sponsored tours of the U.S. by trade unionists from various Central American countries, giving American workers an opportunity to learn first-hand about the region's conflicts.

One indication of the growing anti-interventionist sentiment in the labor movement was the unprecedented debate on AFL-CIO foreign policy at the

federation's convention last October. Ken Blaylock of the Government Employees said that "when I look at Iran, at Vietnam, at Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, I would like for one time for my government to be on the side of the people, not the rich dictators living behind high walls." Citing a *Business Week* report that the AFL-CIO spends nearly as much on "ill-conceived foreign programs" as it does domestically, with 90% of the international funding coming from U.S. government sources, DSAer Ed Asner of the Screen Actors Guild declared that "I don't want the labor movement to do the dirty work of President Reagan or our multinational corporations. And I don't want any of Orrin Hatch's National Endowment for Democracy money to do it with, either."

While the AFL-CIO debate ended with a compromise resolution stating simply that "a negotiated settlement, rather than a military victory, holds the best hope for the social, economic and political justice that the people of Nicaragua and El Salvador deserve," labor activists are intensifying their anti-interventionist efforts.

For more information on the work of the National Labor Committee, write to the Committee at 15 Union Square, New York, NY 10003.

the AFL-CIO or for the international labor movement, by the type of operations that have given rise to the latest scandals.

Quite apart from these and similar scandals, the AFL-CIO and its affiliates have often taken sound and, on occasion, admirable positions in the defense of human rights and social justice. When the AFL-CIO gives itself, as it eventually must, an instrument of international policy that is consistent with its true nature and its true objectives, when the sleazy little cloak-and-dollar conspiracies finally fade into the past and a democratic international policy is conducted with democratic methods, a great victory will have been won for both the American and the international labor movements. ●

Dan Gallin is the General Secretary of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations. This article was previously published as an editorial in the IUF's News Bulletin.

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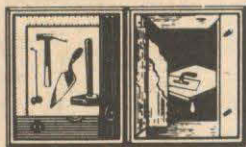
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Organizing Clericals: Problems and Prospects

by Roberta Lynch

One of the central goals of contemporary feminism has been the full integration of women into the workforce. While broader economic and social forces were decisive in propelling women into full-time employment, the women's movement took as its particular task shaping the nature of that participation. The movement sought to achieve economic equality for women workers through two primary strategies: 1) gaining entry to traditionally male-dominated jobs and training; and 2) upgrading the pay and status of traditionally female-dominated jobs. The clerical sector — with its overwhelming concentration of women workers, its rock-bottom pay scales, and its gender-based work culture — was a logical focus of that second strategic course.

Historically, the rate of unionization among clericals has been low. Some feminists blamed this on the indifference of male-dominated unions to the particular problems of women in the workforce. Others believed that there were unique circumstances which made clerical workers resistant to traditional trade union approaches. Out of such analyses, a small but determined network of activists shaped an alternative conception of organization for office workers, beginning in the early 1970s.

This new formation, known as a "working women's organization," sought to dramatize the lack of respect and elementary job rights that characterized clerical work. Like the early women's movement, its central mission was consciousness-raising — convincing office workers they deserved such rights and respect. Its chief weapon was the media, which was used with great skill and frequency. It backed up such public relations activity with anti-discrimination laws to win concrete vic-

tories that demonstrated the possibility of change.

By the end of the 1970s many of the activists in the working women's movement agreed that if office workers were to permanently alter their status, they would need organizations based in workplaces that could contend directly with employers. Although some of these feminists had reservations about both the capabilities and the sensitivities of organized labor, they came to see trade unions as the most potentially viable means of changing the dynamics of power in America's offices.

They hoped that the tactics and philosophy they were pioneering could provide the impetus and the model for a new wave of labor organizing among clericals. In particular, they envisioned a massive assault on the banking and insurance industries with their huge armies of underpaid and unrepresented office workers.

It was an exciting vision. But translating it into reality has proven a far more complex challenge than it seemed in those early, heady days. There have been anti-discrimination law suits filed and back-pay judgments won. There have been demonstrations abounding and sexist practices abolished. There have been innumerable magazine and newspaper articles — and even a major motion picture — about the frustrations of clerical work. There has not, however, been any significant breakthrough in the unionization of the private sector clerical workforce. Moreover, the working women's groups themselves never materialized into genuinely popular formations; and were continually plagued by shifting membership and financial difficulties.

Why has it proven so difficult to shift from consciousness-raising to the institutionalization of new power relations for clerical workers? Put another way, why haven't the working women's groups provided a natural bridge to unionization?

The answer to this question doesn't lie

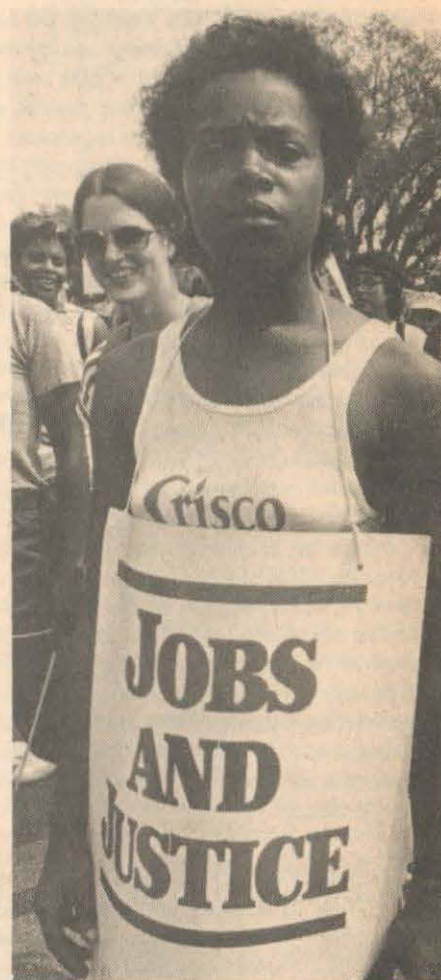


Photo by Jim West/Impact Visuals

in tactical errors. Rather, it has to do with fundamental assumptions. The feminist interests in organizing office workers was not simply based on some ideological construct. It derived from a sophisticated analysis of changing historical circumstances; the widespread participation of women in the workforce; the growth of female-headed households; the expectation of equity generated by the women's movement, and the routinization of office work. In other words, there was an objective basis for believing that the time was ripe for such organizing.

All of these factors remain valid more than a decade later. But they have to be viewed in the context of further societal changes and actual organizing experiences. There are four key variables that have shaped clerical organizing in this period: 1) the general economic and political climate, 2) the strength of employers, 3) the approach of the labor movement, 4) the character of the clerical workforce.

Economic and Political Climate

The office worker movement expected to come of age in the 1980s. It did not anticipate that the 1980s would be the age of Ronald Reagan. The current administration's policies have created a tight web of negative forces; an aggressive assault on the prerogatives of the labor movement; a drastic weakening of equal opportunity enforcement; the pursuit of economic programs that have fostered unemployment and reduced public support systems; and the promotion of an ethos of individualism that elevates personal success over all forms of collective action. In this context, the value and function of labor unions is increasingly called into question.

As a result, all union organizing faces a steep uphill climb. But this anti-union climate has a particularly detrimental impact on the potential for organizing clericals, for it reinforces prejudices that have always lodged in their ranks. They have been particularly susceptible to media myths that unions can no longer produce. For instance, more and more unions are being forced into lengthy or losing strikes, sometimes marked by extreme rhetoric or illegal activities, exactly the aspects of unionism that have always seemed most alien to office workers.

Employer Offensive

Thus, this is an era that provides sustenance to employers in their conflict with labor. Management is on the offensive, forcing lower wages, speed-up and shrunken benefits packages. Employers have become more aggressively anti-union than at any time in the past 25 years.

They have been especially hostile to the idea of unionization among clerical workers. The widespread depression of wages in the clerical sector is a fundamental factor in business profit margins — and in this highly competitive age, management does not want to risk losing such an edge.

This hostility has a dual character. Employers have not hesitated to fire, demote or transfer those deemed to be "troublemakers." That's the stick. The carrot is a

wide array of pre-emptive measures — sophisticated schemes for "job enrichment," "employee participation," and the like. A booming industry of management consultants has emerged to shape such strategies. When these dual tactics have been introduced during union campaigns, they have greatly hampered the organizing effort.

Labor Strategy

It's important to keep in mind that organized labor has probably done more than any other institution in our society to improve the status of women workers. Not only did women benefit from the legal and political gains the labor movement has won, but those women who are covered by union contracts receive far better wages and benefits than their non-union counterparts. In addition, there have always been unions that focused on organizing industries with high female participation.

But there was also widespread sexism

"Women — especially women who are more traditional in their orientation — respond differently."

in the ranks of the labor movement. Women have traditionally been underrepresented in unions, and drastically underrepresented in staff and leadership positions. Feminists have argued that this absence has prevented organized labor from appealing to women workers and from crafting campaigns that address women's unique problems.

Over the past decade, however, a shift has occurred — at least partly in response to such criticism. Some unions are recognizing the importance of reaching out to include women workers — and are beginning to change their style and staff accordingly. The major changes in this regard have been in public sector unions, where the organizing potential is greater and internal flexibility more common.

Unfortunately, there has not been any dramatic change in orientation toward the private sector, perhaps because the most crucial issue goes beyond women's issues to more fundamental questions: To what extent is the labor movement committing its resources to organizing drives? And how skillfully is it carrying out its efforts?

So far, the answer is not encouraging. Some unions remain complacent, content to maintain current membership levels or to quietly suffer a slow leakage. Others are at a loss; they want to expand, but do not

know how to translate their specific image and style to different constituencies.

Character of the Workforce

The wholesale characterization of women workers as more conservative, more hostile to unions, has been widely challenged over the past two decades both by the growing numbers of female teachers, librarians, social workers, autoworkers, electricians, bus drivers who have become part of labor's ranks and by the willingness — indeed eagerness — of women to take on labor leadership roles when the doors were opened to them.

At the same time, recent history has also demonstrated that there are unique features of the clerical workforce that seem to make it particularly resistant to unionization. Although such broad generalizations are always risky, there are several "collective characteristics" that should be noted.

For a variety of reasons, the clerical workforce has a high proportion of women who are more traditionally "feminine" in their orientation. Often, they don't see their job as a career, but as a way-station before marriage or between babies. They tend to place a high value on their personal skills and less on job-related skills. As a result they have little identity with their job.

In general, clerical work is designed in a manner that reinforces these female traits, especially passivity. The salaries are among the lowest in the entire labor market; the pace and nature of the work is tightly structured leaving little room for creativity or initiative; the workday can be highly regimented; and supervision is often intensive. Clerical workers are rewarded for their agreeableness, their willingness to follow orders, their attention to detail.

"Appropriate" female behavior is also emphasized through appeals to "niceness" and a pressure to conform. Lower-level supervisors will often seek to exercise control by developing friendly relations with employees. For instance, in some offices, it is the supervisors who organize birthday parties, showers, etc. Where charm doesn't work, supervisors will rely on scorn or playing workers off against one another. Women are thus hesitant to go against the

supervisor either because they don't want to personally offend her or because they don't want to risk being ostracized.

In our society, the ways in which individuals experience their "personhood" are very much linked to their gender. In any work situation, low wages are a powerful impetus for organizing. But seldom are they sufficient. Normally, it is conditions that threaten identity that compel people to action. It is an assault on one's basic sense of self that leads people to get angry, to take risks, to extend their reach.

Not long ago, I was interviewing unemployed male steelworkers about their attitude toward their union. Almost uniformly, what they stressed about the union was that "it let you be a man." What they seemed to mean by this was that the union had given them a means to stand up to management, to resist being pushed around. Their manhood was seen as synonymous with pride, with independence, with defiance.

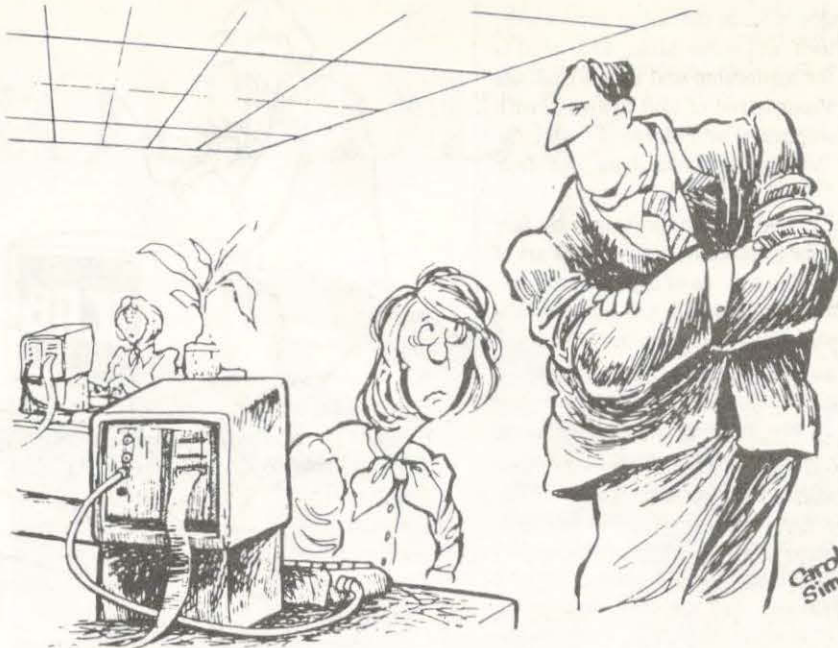
Women — especially women who are more traditional in their orientation — respond differently. Pride and independence are not as important to their identity, their sense of self, their womanhood. What matters much more are human connections, relational issues, fairness. Women in this society are used to being patronized, even to humiliation. That doesn't mean they don't find such attitudes hurtful or enraging. But it does mean that they will be less likely to view such conditions on the job as a fundamental assault that mandates a response. Although more and more "independent" women — especially minorities — are entering the clerical ranks and adding a new dimension of assertiveness, the tone is still set by the traditional women.

Which Way?

All of this adds up to a formidable convergence of obstacles. Given such circumstances, what is remarkable is not that there has been only limited success in organizing the clerical workforce, but that there has been a continuing commitment to that goal.

In part this is due to the increased influence that women have within organized labor. But, most importantly, it is due to the fact that there continue to be clerical workers who defy the odds and seek union representation. Though such campaigns are rare, and victories are even more rare, they are extremely vital for the inspiration and the experience they provide.

We are in many respects in the formative — and experimental — stage of this effort. At this point, what is needed is much



"Naturally you make less than the men, Miss Johnson — it's just not safe for a woman to carry around that much money these days."

more careful analysis of why specific campaigns succeed or fail, what the lessons are that can lay the basis for further activity.

One of the most critical issues that has emerged is the previous level of internal organization — ranging from formal employee associations to the kind of informal linkages provided by social clubs, sports leagues, etc. One reason for the greater receptivity of public sector clericals to unions is that they have very often been part of an employee association and covered by civil service procedures. Such experiences have given them some degree of internal coherence, a sense that they have rights as employees, and less fear of arbitrary fringes. It is very likely that the potential for successful organizing drives among private sector clericals will be greatly increased if there is some form of internal organization in place, even if it is limited in strength or scope.

The reality, however, is that in most offices, no such structures exist. Thus, the broader question is whether there needs to be some form of interim association established among clerical workers prior to union organizing. Many other white-collar workers began their journey to collective action through such "associations" — with their attendant connotations of professionalism and their less antagonistic posture toward management.

To some extent the working women's groups sought to become such a membership association, raising the status of the clerical profession. But given their inability

to attract large numbers of members or to establish themselves as broadly representative of office workers, there's little reason to believe that such an association is feasible. Moreover, where would the resources or initiative for such a formation come from?

It is more reasonable to imagine that associations could be formed in specific workplaces, as suggested in the AFL-CIO's *The Changing Situation of Workers And Their Unions*. However, if unions were initiating such formations, it seems likely that management would immediately perceive the threat and would burden them with all the same negative baggage that it heaps on a union's organizing committee. While it would certainly be worthwhile to further develop and test out this approach, it should not be seen as a substitute for direct initiatives by unions to organize clericals.

But if unions are going to make any significant breakthroughs in clerical organizing, recent experiences suggest that major internal changes are needed as well.

The labor movement will have to intensify its efforts to improve its image. To some extent this is a matter of more sophisticated and skillful use of public relations. But it must go beyond such cosmetics to more basic renewal to weed out corruption; to shape its issues so that their relevance to the public good is more apparent; to develop leaders, staff and spokespeople with whom new constituencies can identify.

It's probably worth stressing here that

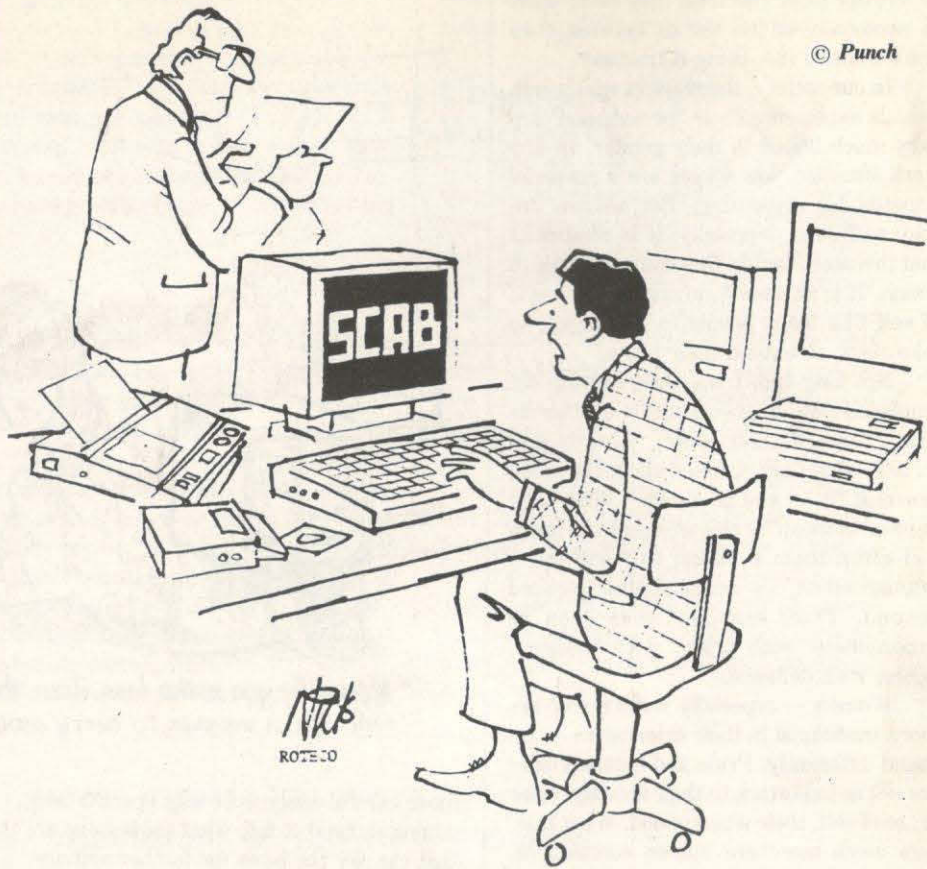
while it is crucial to have more minority and female leadership in the labor movement, that by itself will solve little. The need is broader: for leadership and issues that are more representative of and in touch with the contemporary workforce — and for dynamic leadership that does not fear change.

Finally, and most importantly by far, is the need for greater attention to the art of organizing. The science of organizing is the basic techniques in which the labor movement is well-schooled. But the art of organizing is the ability to shape a drive to a particular constituency and set of circumstances. In the case of clerical workers, there are several unique considerations.

- Although there are certain general characteristics and conditions of office workers, there is also immense variety. And, for the purposes of organizing, the variety may be more important. For instance, university clericals have very different work situations than clericals in an insurance company — and the former have demonstrated much greater interest in unions. Black clerical workers often do not have the same kind of anti-union bias or identification with management that many whites do — and so can provide a stronger base of support. Clerical workers in a town or neighborhood with a strong union tradition often dress, act and respond differently than those who work for a downtown employer.

- In this same vein, it is also essential to realize that each work situation generates its own work issues. Recently, we've seen a new kind of orthodoxy that says that to organize women you have to focus on "women's issues," such as childcare, VDTs or pay equity. In fact, though these are very vital issues, the experience of organizers has been that they usually lack either the breadth or depth of support that is needed to spark or sustain a unionization campaign.

- Probably the most decisive factor in successful campaigns has been the ability to develop strong internal networks. A personal dimension is needed. Three factors are critical to this process: 1) Employees need to be able to get to know and trust the organizers, to view them as concerned individuals rather than just labor representatives. 2) There need to be effective means of internal communication, ways that organizers and committee members can speak regularly and directly with employees, to learn what their concerns are, to counter management propaganda, and to involve them in the development of the campaign. 3) Leadership development is absolutely crucial. Union supporters who can relate well to their co-workers need to



"Oh Lord — it seems we're on strike again."

be given intensive training and ongoing support.

- It is also essential to note that good internal organizing must often be supplemented by effective outreach that can build public support for employees and focus public opposition on employer resistance or unfair tactics.

Conclusion

Given the difficult conditions that face organizing attempts and the fact that campaigns will often have to be undertaken as long-term efforts that will not produce immediate results, one of the dilemmas is whether any individual union has the resources to spearhead a major organizing effort in the private sector — not just in a few small companies, but against key employers. Some activists believe that this challenge would require an amalgamation of unions — however loose-knit — something akin to the spirit, if not the exact form, of the CIO when it took on basic industry.

It would be a mistake to minimize or simplify the terribly difficult conundrum the labor movement faces. It needs desperately to develop a new momentum, to draw new members, to reach out to new constituencies. Clerical workers represent the

potential for that essential renewal. So there is a strong self-interest — as well as a principled interest — in committing the resources necessary to mount a major organizing effort.

At the same time, the odds against significant success are great. And the resources of many of the major unions are severely strained. It involves a tremendous risk for any individual union — or even a coalition of unions — to take on a challenge like this in an era like this one.

How or when clerical workers can be unionized is obviously still very much an open question. But it is a question with immense weight for the economic equality of women in our society, for the overall standard of living of working people, and for the future potential of the American labor movement. ●

Roberta Lynch is the public policy director for Illinois AFSCME and is co-author, with David Bensman, of Rusted Dreams: Hard Times in a Chicago Steel Community (forthcoming in February, 1987). This article is reprinted with permission from Labor Research Review, issue #8. Subscriptions to LRR are \$9.00 from M.C.L.R., 3411 W. Diversey #14, Chicago, IL 60647.

GROUNDED

by Cindy Hoinsell

Passage of the 1978 Airline Deregulation Bill put a noose around the necks of airline workers and their unions, and in the case of Trans World Airlines (TWA) may have led some workers to inadvertently help tighten the knot. When TWA flight attendants (FAs) struck last spring, it was against a new chief executive that the union had initially supported in a corporate takeover. 5,000 FAs were left jobless after a ten-week strike, although they hope eventually to win their jobs back through litigation. Their predicament illustrates special hurdles faced by unions with a predominantly female membership and raises questions about alternative strategies in today's virulently anti-union climate.

Deregulation

With deregulation, new airlines such as People Express and New York Air cut into the profits of the big carriers by offering low fares and operating with cheap, nonunion personnel. The management theme for the 1980s became concessions and givebacks. The "major" airlines wanted cheaper labor in order to remain competitive with the "upstarts." When union-busting Texas Air, headed by Frank Lorenzo, attempted a takeover of TWA, employees backed well-known corporate raider Carl Icahn, who, as an unknown quantity, seemed a safer choice.

Faced with a \$217 million loss in 1985, Icahn moved quickly to restore profitability to TWA, getting the pilots, represented by the Airline Pilots Association, to agree to new work rules and wage cuts of 35 percent (on an average salary of \$80,000), as well as to an agreement not to honor any strike by other unions. The International Association of Machinists (IAM), representing mechanics as well as baggage handlers, cleaners, and ramp servicers, agreed to a 15 percent giveback and pledged not to honor other strikes. Icahn asked TWA's Independent Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA) for concessions of 22 percent in



IFFA strikers at Kennedy Airport.

salaries and \$62 million per year in other labor costs. When IFFA President Vicki Frankovich said that 15 percent was the union's bottom line, Icahn said that since FAs were not "breadwinners" he wanted greater concessions.

Weakened Position

In the attacks against airline unions, the employees marked as the easiest target have been flight attendants. It is a mostly female work force that, until recently, had high turnover rates and was comparatively young. Changes starting with Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and subsequent court decisions striking down discriminatory hiring and firing policies, as well as the influence of the women's movement, have led more women to stay longer on the job and men to start moving into the occupation.

Before the civil rights bill, many airlines fired workers who married and all the airlines fired those who became pregnant. The average time on the job was 18 months

and the work force stayed young. This picture has now changed, and at TWA the average age of the striking attendants was 35, with 14 years on the job.

Another factor in the strike was the decision of the TWA FAs in 1977 to leave the local of the Transport Workers Union that Mike Quill helped organize especially for flight attendants. Their new union had no affiliation to any other labor group. FAs at Continental, American, and Pan Am also voted to become "independent" unions. This movement away from the AFL-CIO umbrella was the result of the large internationals ignoring FAs and their issues and the FAs belief that their profession was superior to that of blue-collar workers. At TWA, FAs were more militant than their counterparts at other airlines. They had survived a rough but unifying strike during the early 1970s when TWA was still part of a mutual aid pact among airlines (which meant the other airlines gave a share of their profits to the struck carrier).

The strengthened commitment of the

Photo by Michael Kaufman/Impact Visuals

flight attendants to both their jobs and their union would help solidify the strike, but TWA began early to undermine their position. While negotiations were being conducted, TWA management started training nonunion employees from other departments to become qualified as FAs (unlike pilots and mechanics, FAs are not licensed, but must meet Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) requirements). The opportunity to get away from a mundane job to train for two weeks in Kansas City appealed to many of these workers — even those ardent activists who were helping to organize a union of their own. These “contingents” became a scab army in reserve in the event of an FA strike.

TWA also started to aggressively hire additional FAs. City officials in Kansas City voted to lease the Municipal Auditorium as a center to train them. In spite of the fact that TWA has a strict weight and grooming requirement, requires each applicant to pay a \$2,500 training fee and \$800 for Ralph Lauren uniforms, hundreds saw this as the opportunity of a lifetime.

The Strike

By March 7, 1986, when IFFA struck TWA, the airline had hired 1,500 extra FAs (average age, 22) and had the insider “contingents” ready to cross the picket line. Nevertheless, the union was optimistic. During the first week of the strike, IAM members honored the picket line and TWA was forced to cancel more than half its flights. Unfortunately, a federal judge soon ordered IAM members back to work and, as the strike wore on, everything seemed to go against the union. Terrorism in Europe increased as the value of the dollar decreased. Travel across the Atlantic slumped so that TWA was able to consolidate its flight schedule, thereby reducing the number of FAs needed.

TWA had cut the training time of the new hires, raising safety questions in many minds. But despite reports of safety violations and congressional hearings forced by the IFFA after several emergency situations were mishandled by the inadequately trained replacements, the FAA looked the other way. The American public continued to fly the striking airline, enticed by cheap fares, special bonus mileage, free drinks, and champagne.

TWA stated throughout the strike that the replacements would have permanent status. IFFA told its members that TWA was guilty of unfair labor practices and they would not lose their jobs. On May 17, 1986, when the union recommended that its members return to work without a

contract, only 200 strikers were called back. TWA claimed it had no more vacancies, although 463 of the “scabs-in-training” were put to work before IFFA members. IFFA members voted 97 percent against TWA’s final offer: 45% reductions in salary, \$100 million in concessions on work rules, elimination of dues check-off, and elimination of paid union representatives.

IFFA’s current strategy is to pursue a settlement through the courts and apply political and economic pressure. IFFA has started a Boycott of Conscience, asking the public to boycott TWA until the 5,000 FAs are returned to work. Support for the Boycott has come from celebrities who created the Coalition for Corporate Responsibility: Cesar Chavez, Jane Alexander, Ed Asner, Patti Duke, and many others. The Coalition wants to focus attention on the deterioration of workers’ rights.

In August the union won a victory in U.S. District Court, when Judge Howard F. Sachs ruled against TWA, stating that the Railway Labor Act did not allow changes in the contract that had not been discussed during negotiations. The effect of this ruling was that the “scab/crossover” FAs would have to pay union dues as well as an initiation fee of \$100. TWA appealed and IFFA won a stay to get the dues collected. At press time another court ruling ordered that 463 senior FAs be reinstated. The company is appealing that order.

IFFA’s future court cases include sex and age discrimination, bad faith bargaining, and a three-point seniority issue. Fa-

vorable rulings could put 3,000 FAs back to work.

Other Choices?

Were there other alternatives for the TWA workers? One solution would have been to accept the 1985 offer. TWA is the only major airline without a two-tier wage scale. At the time of Icahn’s original offer of 22 percent, TWA FAs were still unscathed from the concessions that had been forced on most other FA unions. Another possible solution would have been to stay on the job and fight from within while the company instituted changes — a tactic used by the Transport Workers Union against Eastern Airlines. In that case the company was forced to bargain as rulebook slowdowns wreaked havoc at the workplace. Last year United Airlines FAs also went back to work without an agreement after their pilots’ strike and won a settlement later in court. They managed to secure their jobs despite threats of replacement.

TWA FAs are still supporting their leaders, believing their cause is just and that they will win. It has taken twenty years for this militancy to appear, yet it may have come at the wrong time. Even legal strikes have a poor prognosis in Reagan’s America. ●

Cindy Hounsell has been a flight attendant for 18 years and is head of the New York local of the Independent Union of Flight Attendants, which represents Pan American flight attendants.

The National Officers

of the

COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN

salute and congratulate

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA

Joyce D. Miller
National President



UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

by Ruth Spitz

Women are working throughout our society. Virtually all of them, save the ill and the incapacitated, work at home, doing most or all of the household chores for themselves and their families: cleaning, laundering, shopping, cooking and nurturing others. By a strange twist of interpretation, however, the economics profession has refused to define this universal "female-type" occupation — unpaid household tasks performed for oneself and one's family — as work. Thus the vast majority of women employed outside the home currently work at a minimum of two jobs: one paid and included in the calculated GNP, and the other unpaid and consuming as many as six or seven additional hours daily; and those doing household tasks and no paid work are simply not counted as members of the work force.

Poor women have always worked, both in the home and outside when they could find jobs. But until World War II the typical woman with a full-time paid job was single and in her twenties. Frequent pregnancies, large families, and tradition kept most women home, where they often supplemented the family income with industrial home work, boarders, or laundry.

The war saw a dramatic temporary reversal of labor market discrimination against women. By 1945, 35% of American women were working: at jobs in shipyards and auto plants, as truck drivers, and at a huge variety of office and service jobs. Many had children, and Congress passed the Lanham Act which financed the construction and operation of day care centers near war plants. However, despite the U.S. Women's Bureau's findings that most women wanted to keep working at war's end, government propagandists permeated the media with the message that women all wanted to give their jobs to the returning GI's and return home to raise families.

Women's work force participation consequently dropped temporarily in the late 1940s, but almost immediately women



Will the Administration bring back 19th century conditions?

again sought work, and this has accelerated nonstop since that time. Women increased their participation rate in the work force to 38% in 1960, 43% in 1970, and 52% in 1980, with the rate currently at 55%. The inflation that has made two incomes essential for most families' survival, the availability of jobs during Korea and Vietnam, the increase of work in the service sectors, the decline in family size, and, finally, the passage of equal opportunity laws and the emergence of the women's movement have all contributed to this surge in women's employment for pay.

Progress?

Popular journals give skewed messages about the nature of working women's jobs. Articles such as "Are Women Taking Over the Professions?", "Executive Secretary: A New Rung on the Corporate Ladder," and "Female Entrepreneurs Thrive" suggest that many women have reached the top. But despite media hype about glamour and status of the "dress for

success" crowd, the reality is that 70% of working women have jobs because they have to. They are either single, divorced, widowed, or have husbands earning less than \$14,000.

That is not to say there has been no progress. Women are more than half the current crop of college students, and they now receive 51% of all master's degrees. Many of the women who now make up one-third of medical, law, architecture and business school graduates are entering potentially lucrative work in the professions and business. In fact, if we combine jobs in all the professions, women now fill more than half of them, but two-thirds of all professional women are in two traditionally female jobs — nursing and teaching. One in four entrepreneurs are now women as well, virtually all of them in the most risky and short-lived category of "small business."

On the other hand, 70% of working women are still in conventional "women's work" — those occupations closest to traditional housewife activities — such as sec-

retaries and clerks, retail and household service, textiles, child care, food preparation, and service workers. Women are still only 8% of precision production, craft, and repair workers (the best-paid blue collar jobs), and only 6.4% of all apprentices. And despite the increase in women college students and their earned PhD's, recent studies indicate that the proportion of women in tenured faculty jobs has not increased over the past decade.

In fact, the overall degree of sex segregation in work has changed only minimally in all of the 20th century. In the past 15 years, while half a million women have moved into conventional male jobs, over three million have entered the work force in such traditional women's jobs as clerks and typists. Racial occupational and wage differences have proven persistent as well, crossing gender lines, though they are far less severe than those between minority and white men. There are significantly higher percentages (50%) of minority women in service and factory work and lower proportions (33% less) in managerial and professional jobs.

Sex segregation is an important, but by no means the sole, source of male-female wage disparities. The Census Bureau tells us that on average, women working full-time year-round receive 64% of men's

work force, and today 30% of the female work force is in that sector. But the growth in information processing jobs has now slowed and the outlook for continued growth is doubtful. New technology, for example, already allows the replacement of data entry workers by optical scanners. The number of conventional bookkeepers and file clerks has already diminished, and some computer terminal work has moved from offices to homes, or even overseas where wages are lower and fringe benefits unknown.

Health hazards for workers at VDTs range from eyestrain to severe stress. In addition, the restructuring of office jobs with the advent of new machines often involves elimination of lower layers of management staff which had been the ladders of clerical job mobility. Finally, working at computer terminals has changed the routine of office work. The clerk or stenographer could typically vary the order of her tasks, get up to walk about, and move to another activity or communicate with another person. Those attending a terminal are not permitted to leave their stations. Duration of telephone calls, number of strokes made at the keyboard, and movement away from the terminal can all be monitored. In one such office, union objections to such stressful working conditions

the U.S. Department of Labor, which likens such workers to independent entrepreneurs. The Departments next target is the 40-year ban on home manufacture of women's clothing, jewelry, handkerchiefs, gloves, buttons and embroidery. It appears now that the Reagan Administration intends that poor immigrant women will end the 20th century as their sisters began it: with multigenerational families working in unventilated ghetto apartments, huddled around tables with inadequate lighting, doing tedious hand labor.

Moving Forward

How can we begin to fulfill the promises of this ambiguous revolution? Surely part of the answer must lie with the trade union movement. Wages of unionized full-time women workers average 32% higher than those of non-union women, yet only 13% of women workers are in unions. (Significantly, the rates are 21% and 14% for Black and Hispanic women, respectively, compared to 12% for white women.) Clearly, both women and unions have a stake in increasing those numbers.

Several new union developments make the outlook significantly more promising for women in unions than was previously the case:

- The Coalition of Labor Union Women, now a dozen years old, has focused on training women to move up in union leadership through its "Empowerment" books, leadership programs and summer schools, and the publication of effective contract language materials. It is now working on coalitions with other progressive groups to promote policies that will help women with problems concerning child care, pregnancy, and automation.
- AFSCME, with a large female membership, is successfully negotiating pay equity contracts in states and cities across the nation. The National Committee on Pay Equity reports some progress in all but five states in undertaking pay equity programs, whether initiating a comparable job study or any of the steps along the way in finally carrying out pay equity adjustments.
- The establishment of SEIU Local 925 has combined new techniques in addressing office worker issues with the know-how and strength of an established international. The Communications Workers, Office and Professional Workers, District 65 of the UAW, and AFSCME are organizing women clerical and financial workers.
- Successful organizing of nonteaching college employees at NYU, Yale, Cornell, Columbia, and other colleges seems to have opened a new area for organizing women.

"It appears now that . . . poor immigrant women will end the 20th century as their sisters began it . . ."

wages, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the figure at 68%. Where both genders are employed in identical categories, the women appear to be crowded into the lower end of the wage spread. Even where the starting wage for men and women is the same, wage differences in each occupation show up in a few years and increase over time. In 1985, median weekly earnings for women in all professions, for example, were only 72% of professional men's earnings.

To make the situation worse, nearly a fourth of all employed women are part-timers, and the new temporary help office and service work is largely female. This "contingent" work usually provides none of the "fringes" that the rest of the work force may enjoy — health benefits, unemployment insurance, pensions, holidays, training programs, job ladders, job security, and union membership.

Conditions Today

The expansion of office jobs has been the major magnet pulling women into the

resulted in a telecommunications giant disconnecting a statistical key that let operators check on their work pace.

Of course, all problems are not new ones. One of the major employment hazards women have always faced is sexual harassment on the job. It is a hazard to their health, self confidence, and ability to perform their jobs. It has been so pervasive in many work situations that other workers often fail to see that it can be corrected. In a positive development, the Supreme Court early this year held that sexual harassment in the workplace is illegal, defined it as creating a "hostile" or "intimidating" work environment, and ruled that an employer might be liable in suits even when unaware of what was happening.

A shocking new version of a centuries old issue is the reversal of the 44-year ban on exploitative industrial homework. Originally established by the Fair Labor Standards Act to prevent sweatshop-style exploitation, the ban on homework in the outerwear industry has now been lifted by



'I'D LIKE TO TALK WITH YOU ABOUT OUR COMPARABLE WORTH, MS. ABERCROMBIE.'

- Unions are seriously addressing some of the needs of women unionists concerning child care. Newsletters including proposed contract language are being issued by AFGE, SEIU and CLUW and the ILGWU has negotiated a day care center for its members in Chinatown.
- Finally, a review of 200 recent NLRB elections shows that working women are now more inclined than men to support unions. Where the voters in the bargaining unit were 75% or more women, unions won most elections, but when they were less than half the work force, unions won only 40% of the elections.

Moms at Work

Of course, workplace organizing is not a solution by itself; women must demand changes in relevant areas of public policy. And if there is a single women's work issue that most cries out for public action today, it is the care of children of working parents.

Seventy-two percent of American women work outside the home during their child bearing years, and this figure is ex-

pected to rise to 80% by 1995. In 1984, 44% of Black families, 23% of Hispanic families, and 13% of white families were headed by women. It is our shame in the U.S. that we are the only industrialized nation in the world with no social provisions for the care of the children in these families. The absence of such policies, together with the increase in the number of female-headed households, means that vast numbers of children grow up without the concerned care of responsible adults while their mothers are at work. It also means that parents, mainly mothers, suffer endless stress, distraction on the job, absenteeism, and forced job changes as they worry about their children's welfare and continue the never-ending search for better child care arrangements.

But it is in the area of maternal or parental leave that the U.S. is even more radically remiss and behind the rest of the world. Steve Max, in a recent *New York Times* article, reminds us that over 100 countries provide some form of leave and job security to new parents. European na-

tions and Canada provide 4 months to a year's leave, a high percentage of the worker's pay, and a guarantee of continued employment. Here, parental leave depends on company policy, union contract, and state law, but only 40% of working women now receive any parental leave at all.

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1986 is now pending in both houses of Congress. It requires companies with at least 15 employees to provide 18 weeks of parental leave and job security to either parent for newborns, as well as adopted or seriously ill children, and it would continue the parent's coverage in the company health plan during the leave. Compared to the rest of the industrial world, this is a bare-bones start, but passage of the law would make a tremendous difference to the unprotected 60% of women workers.

Broader Agenda

As socialists, we have a far bolder long-term vision — a vision of a society with equal opportunities for education and rewarding work, equal parenting burdens for mothers and fathers, generous child allowances, social child-rearing arrangements available to all. But women workers today, particularly those with children, are crying out for help *now*. I want to suggest here the broad outlines of an immediate agenda for America's working women. We need to:

- breathe back into the Civil Rights, National Labor Relations, and Education Acts their intended spirit, and appoint boards and staffs that will carry out their missions;
- raise the minimum wage to bring many women's jobs out of poverty and keep industrial homework outlawed;
- provide equal opportunity in education, training, and jobs, and affirmative action to make these a reality;
- educate our children to understand and to experience equality in learning;
- stimulate union organizing drives among women;
- push pay equity efforts — even into the private sector;
- provide high quality day care programs for all children;
- establish a full year's paid maternal and parental leave.

The working woman's legislative agenda today is, to say the least, very full indeed. ●

Ruth Spitz is a member of DSA's National Interim Committee and is a professor of economics and women's studies at Empire State College. All statistics come from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics or the Census Bureau.

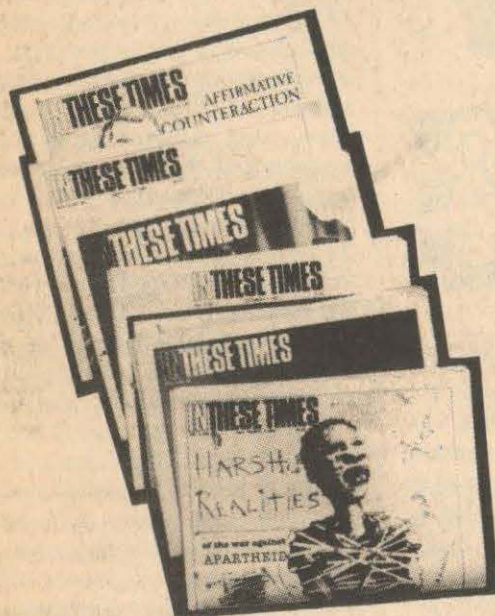
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Two Union Activists: Signs of Life in Labor

by John Haer

Reports about the impending death of the United States labor movement are grossly exaggerated. True, trade unions have suffered severe setbacks in recent decades. Structural change in the economic fabric of our country has created difficult problems for organized labor. An all-out political assault from Reagan's Washington has battered a once potent lobbying and electoral force. And the new face of today's workforce presents sharp social challenges to the largely male, white leadership of unions.

Still, millions of Americans every day are touched by the labor movement. Today's unions comprise an arena as broad and deep and complex as society as a whole. At their best, trade unions can mean an opportunity for real community, an avenue to learning and self-realization, and, yes, a vehicle for improving one's economic lot.

This article is about two labor activists: their work, their lives, and how they view the future. Their stories are neither particularly unique nor particularly common. But they are stories seldom told.

Long Days

Irene Thomas is a stenographer at an elementary school administrative center in Pittsburgh. She is also president of her 300-member local of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and chair of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU).

With her job, union duties, and her responsibilities with CBTU, Irene has more than a full day. "You don't really want to know what my schedule's like," she jokingly tells the interviewer. "It could scare people away from union office."

A typical work day begins, she confides, at 4:30 a.m. when she rises for an hour alone with her coffee and the notes she must review before an 8 a.m. grievance meeting. If she's at a grievance meeting, she may be representing her members in one of several different labor/management



Irene Thomas addresses an AFSCME convention.

meetings. When work ends at 4:30 in the afternoon, a union or CBTU meeting usually is next at 6:00 p.m. "By 9:00 in the evening, I've usually had it for the day," she says. "I'd guess a typical week has at least six meetings not on work time, and two or three work meetings. It's getting so I take my calendar out and schedule an appointment with myself just to have a little time off."

Irene describes her union role as being "administrator, volunteer coordinator, and chief of police." She tries to "find the best qualities" in the people she works with and encourages them to "give that to the local." This is important, she feels, because "the membership is the union, and I never want to lose sight of that."

But all volunteer organizations, including local unions, rely on key activists. Perhaps that's why Irene still finds herself in demand as steward, even though others are available. As local president, she chairs the membership and executive meetings. She also convenes the steward meetings

where "we review the contract and discuss grievances and try to prepare cases for arbitration, if necessary." Then there are the phone calls every day from and to members and to the union staff representative. "Really," Irene says, "I'm lucky. Even though our contract gives me the right to deal with union business on work time, I have a very supportive supervisor and helpful co-workers."

Irene wasn't always so involved. When she began work for the Pittsburgh schools nine years ago at age twenty one, her concerns mostly focused on her marriage and her one year old son. She had several prior jobs and some college, but never had been in a union. "I did want to join right away, though," she recalls, "because I just knew it was right. I remember my step-father talking about his union, and how he would never cross a picket line. He went through a long strike when they got rid of a company union and elected the Steelworkers."

As a new clerical worker, Irene didn't

immediately get involved in union activities. Eventually, however, she was appointed steward, and when she attended AFSCME's training sessions for union stewards and officers, "things really began to click." She attended several other training sessions, enrolled in evening courses, got more involved in the affairs of the local, and eventually ran for local union office. In 1983, she was elected president of her local, the first Black to hold that title.

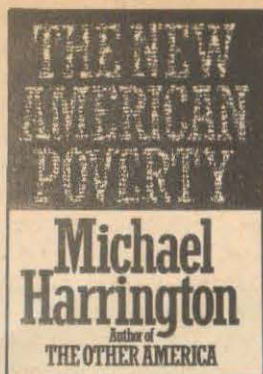
Irene feels her commitment was really cemented at the training workshops conducted by the union. "That's where I began to ask myself why I was involved and what I could do to help make the union a success." In recent years, Irene has graduated from several courses taught through the labor institute at the community college. She's studied labor law, collective bargaining, grievances and arbitration, and labor history. Compared to her earlier college days, the labor education is much more meaningful. "I had a definite purpose in learning more about labor," she relates. "I want to know as much as I can."

Irene is also very involved with electoral politics. "That's very important," she says, "especially in my union, where public officials are our employers. Just one kook who gets elected can wipe us out. We have to be very active." She also believes that politics is part of what organized labor is really about. "To learn to run to represent your co-workers, to show that you know what you're talking about, you have to be political. Organized labor and politics go hand in hand, from the lowest to the highest level."

With so many duties and organizational responsibilities, does Irene ever resent her role when some of the people she helps may not really care? "Well," she says, "that's sometimes true, but, honestly, I find my union work exhilarating. I enjoy researching issues and arguing grievances, and it's my way of fighting for the underdog."

Irene and other union activists founded the local CBTU chapter last year. "The Coalition gives an opportunity for unionists to work on issues that my union may leave silent. In some ways, it's better because we're not restricted by what our union says. The Coalition serves to help Black union members become more motivated to play a role in labor. With the current situation in labor, we think Black members should be more visible, more trained in the election process, even encouraged to run for union office."

There was some resistance in labor to CBTU. "Some people didn't understand why we would need an organization like



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that," she recalls. "As far as the community goes, we were well received, I think because of the good reputation of CBTU's work in Chicago, New York, and San Francisco. But our labor brothers and sisters needed to learn that CBTU wouldn't be used to attack the labor movement, but to help it, to motivate Black trade unionists to become more involved. That strengthens the labor movement. We have to have a place apart from the existing structure of labor where we feel comfortable."

Asked to discuss problems of Blacks in labor, Irene responded that she's especially aware of the obstacles faced by Black women. "I really wonder," she asks: "Are men so threatened by women? Actually, labor is going to have to look to Blacks and women for organizing efforts. That's where the jobs are that are ripe for unionizing — the bank tellers, the clericals. They're the future for labor."

Irene sees this as perhaps the largest challenge to labor, one labor will have to meet "out of necessity, for its own sake," if it is to maintain and grow in membership. And despite her disappointment, Irene remains convinced that "organized labor can accomplish the elevation of Black people and all people."

In describing the qualities of a good leader, Irene stressed the need for dedication and the desire to help make change rather than seeking glory. "There's a great need for patience," she says, "and often a need to sacrifice some of the pleasures of regular family life. I know about that part. I often bring my ten year old son to meetings just to be with him."

She is firmly optimistic about the future. "I'm one of the few who believe that organized labor hasn't been totally kicked down. We're just regrouping," she says. "Once we've reorganized our forces, we'll be as powerful as ever."

Militant Machinist

The next time you fly into Washington, D.C., look out the window as you taxi in. You might see Paul Baicich down there with earmuffs and wand directing the plane in for docking. That's one job that ramp servicemen perform. They also load baggage, freight, and mail onto planes and attach various service equipment. "That's what I do, eight hours a day," says Paul with pride, "and I've done it for ten years."

Paul works for a large airline company. He is a trade unionist, too. After serving as shop steward for seven years, Paul recently stepped down because of other union duties. He's the recording secretary of his 400-member local of the Inter-

national Association of Machinists (IAM) and chair of the local's political/legislative committee. The local covers people who work for three separate airlines at both National and Dulles Airports.

Paul got the job in 1976 "as a lark." He was in school, needed money, and wanted to see if he could handle "proletarian labor." "Now," he muses, "here I am, still crazy after all these years." The work is "hard on the back and the knees," he says, and you get all too familiar with "plane bins and samsonite."

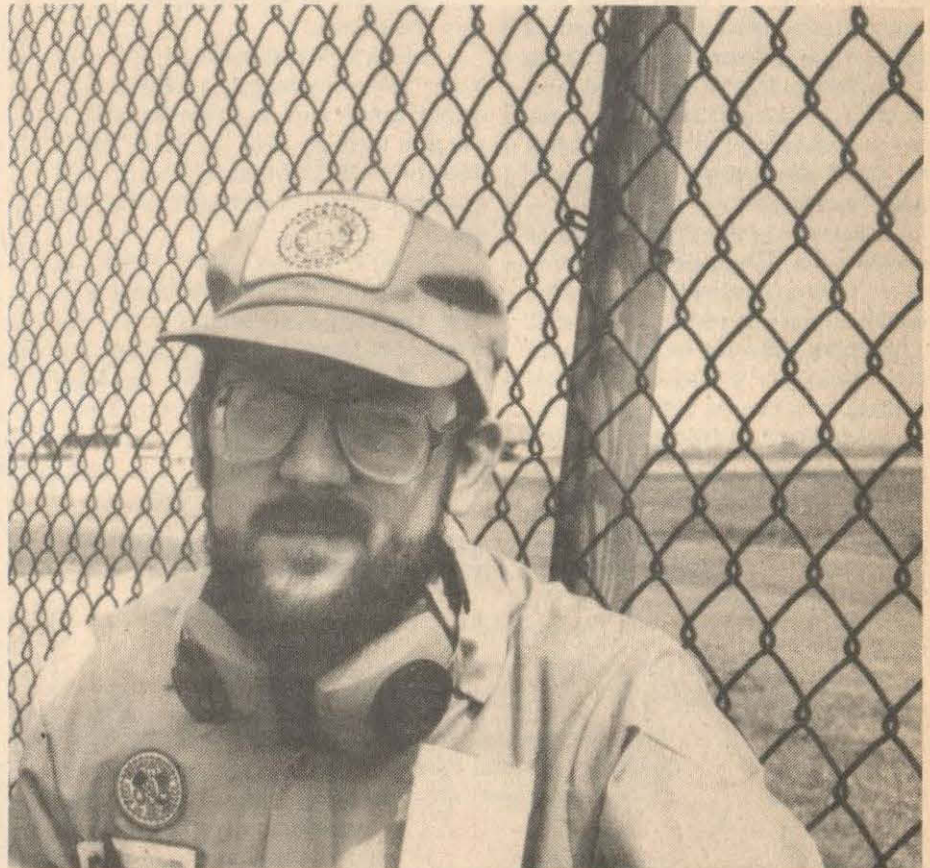
Paul might be called a thinking person's unionist. He finished his Master's degree in Latin American studies while working, and has opted to apply his intellectual talents to work life at the airport. He contributes a labor history column and helps publish his local's newspaper. His writings on the airline industry and labor have appeared in *Labor Notes*, *Labor Research Review*, and "get this," he says, "the *Harvard Business Review*." "Actually," he comments, "my Masters and 75¢ will get me a train ride in Washington."

He stays on the job at the airport because "I got a contract that protects me. I don't have to kiss ass. I don't have any obligations to anybody except my creditors and my family." Co-workers, and especially

supervisors, sometimes ask why he's there, why he doesn't go for a management job. "I tell them they must be out of their minds," he laughs. "I can go home after eight hours." Actually, he comments, "the schooling really doesn't impress too many people here, and it shouldn't."

Paul's schedule and union activities leave little time for anything else except family. "I see nobody else, I do nothing else but job, union, and family, and we have little social life," he says rather smugly, noting that he's usually working and can't attend lots of public meetings. When he's not working, he's taking care of his two daughters aged four and eight. Wife Yvonne splits several part-time jobs — dance exercise instructor, secretary to a CPA, and a volunteer position helping El Salvador's FENESTRAS (a radical labor union) representative in the U.S., Francisco Acosta, who has an office in IAM's Washington headquarters.

Paul decided he was a socialist while he attended City College in the late Sixties. So when he began work for the airlines he was ideologically committed to unions and working people. His parents, both teachers in the New York City public system, weren't leftists. But they participated in the unionization of the teachers and were on



Paul Baicich at work.

strike several times. Ten years on the job, however, was Paul's best teacher in trade unionism.

"I didn't go into the work place waving the red flag," he remembers. "It takes a lot of time for people to learn to accept you. You don't parade in announcing, 'Hey, fellas, get your pens and paper, here's a list of our demands.' There was an established union local. Our International Union is great, but our local really stunk. It was led by a bunch of old timers who basically were caretakers who didn't want to do anything. As it turned out, one of the officers was a crook. He stole \$80,396.62, an amount I always remember. I should. I used it many times talking with the members."

Paul and the other officers now feel "the local's really something to be proud of. We helped turn it around." As example of the change, he remembers how hard he had to argue for approval to go to regular leadership schools run by the IAM. "Nobody had gone for fifteen years from our local. Now we send three or four people to the leadership training school conducted by the International Union every year. Our people are now much more informed and active."

In 1983, during a contract negotiation with their airline company, this organization and education really paid off. "We participated in an unprecedented mobilization of our people to prepare for a possible strike," he recalls. "We disseminated special research information about the financial situation of the company and talked it up with the membership. We prepared for a confrontation with a plan and with real solidarity, and eventually the company backed down. That's when going to work is really exciting," he recalls.

Another sign of a revitalized union is the local's political/legislative committee. "I believe we're doing a good job in showing our members that everything we've won at the bargaining table can be lost through politics," Paul says. "We talk about politics as meaning, for example, airline deregulation, which has been a nightmare for us. We

talk about how our airport's future will be decided by a new municipal authority, a real political football. And slowly, our people are responding." Since the committee formed two years ago, more than one third of the local membership has voluntarily signed up for check-off of political contributions of \$3.20 ("2¢ an hour") a month to the Machinists Non-partisan Political League.

But building an active union, especially in the face of a hostile management beset with an intense crisis in the industry, takes extreme patience and dedication. "Really, you have to take time to establish your *bona fides*," Paul says. "That means, first of all, you have to be a good reliable person to work with. You have to know your job and carry your weight, literally, in our job. Then you must show you're a good unionist. You should know your contract, attend meetings, and be willing to stand up to management."

One lesson Paul says he had to learn is that not all of his co-workers are necessarily hostile to management. "I am more ideologically oriented to suspect management's motives," he says, "but many others aren't. You can't just assume that because a worker is angry over his grievance this month that next month he won't think management isn't just terrific." That means that there is an absolute need for ongoing education and mobilization on the part of the union.

Baicich feels that the lesson of the 80s is that "concession bargaining simply won't satisfy management appetites for more. If you give them an inch," he says, "they'll take a mile." He feels that unions are now in a quandry about other avenues and strategies.

"Really," he says, "we're looking at totally new and different problems from those the early labor leaders faced." He mused that fifteen years ago, people like Debs, Reuther, Rosa Luxemburg, Mike Quill, and A. Phillip Randolph were his inspiration. Today, he feels we need new

GREETINGS



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leaders.

And instead of looking for role models, he says he is inspired in another way. "For instance, Yvonne inspires me to do better," he relates. "I'll come home. We talk: Is this right? Should I have done this? And then she'll say I'm not doing enough or let me know somebody else has to learn. That's the bottom line. She's a tough-as-nails socialist and she keeps me going."

Asked to define a good trade unionist, Paul emphasized how a person at work can learn first about their job and their contract to understand themselves in relation to the company. Then, he emphasizes, it's necessary to go beyond the contract to understand the industry and how it is impacted by policies and economics in society. Finally, he asserts that every good trade unionist must have another quality: "You really need stamina," he says. "I've seen too much labor burnout. A person gets interested, becomes maybe a steward, but then gets really blown away by what can be a very hostile situation with management and sometimes even with our own members. You need stamina to survive."

Asked where he gets the stamina to keep on, Paul replied without a second's hesitation: "I guess I'm just an ideological hardhead with a great support system."

Paul Baicich and Irene Thomas are only two of thousands of labor activists plugging away every day. They keep the movement alive and kicking. We're happy to think about them this Labor Day. ●

John Haer is a union representative with Service Employees International Union, Local 585, in Pittsburgh. He also helps publish the Allegheny Socialist, Pittsburgh DSA's bimonthly.

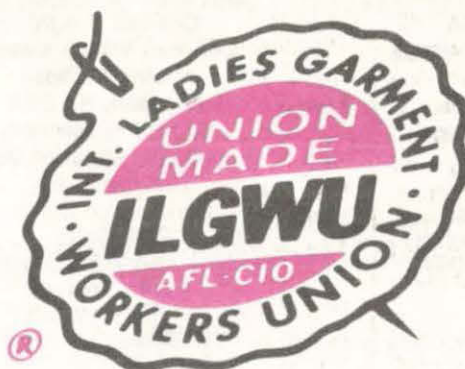
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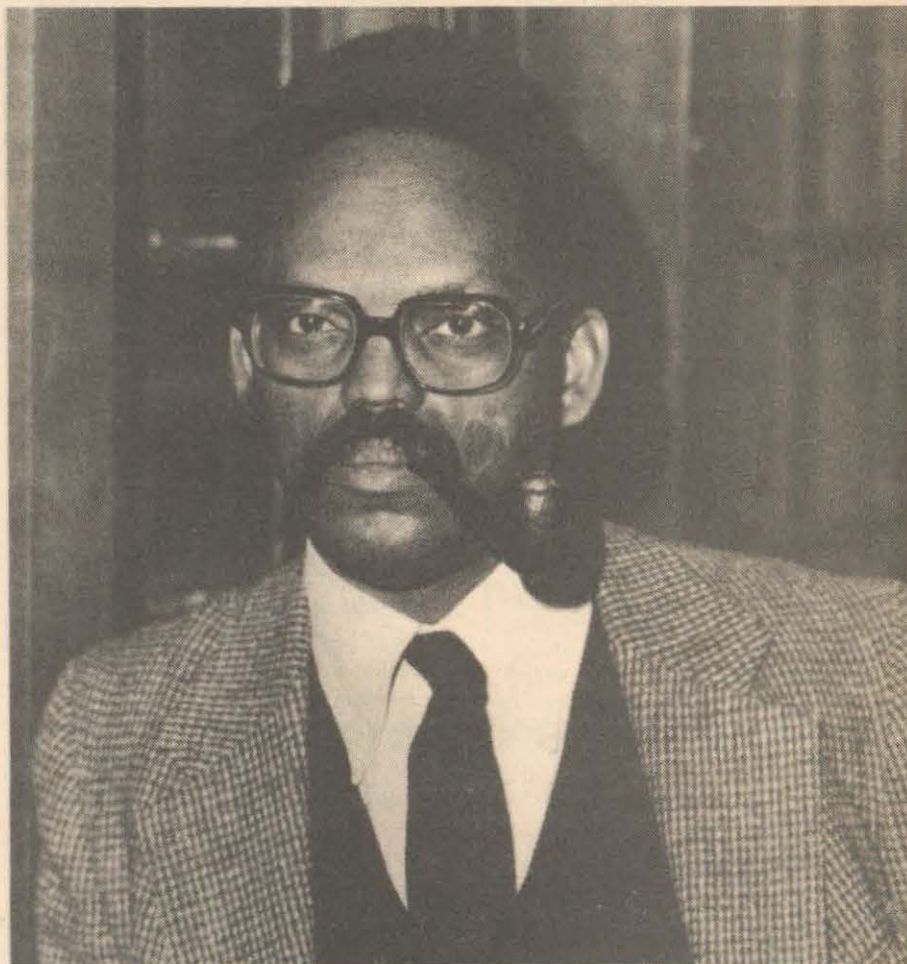
An Interview With William Julius Wilson

by Jan Rosenberg

William Julius Wilson, about to lock horns with Frances Fox Piven over the problems of poverty and joblessness at the 1985 Socialist Scholars' Conference, told of a phone call he had received in the fall of 1984 from one of Ronald Reagan's advisors. The White House was hosting a meeting of leading Black conservatives and wanted Wilson to come. "But I'm not a conservative, I'm a democratic socialist," came Wilson's typically deadpan response. "Why do you ask me?" Like many others who responded more to the title than the substance of Wilson's book, *The Declining Significance of Race*, Reagan's staffers had assumed this was another free-market polemic that vigorously discounted the role of race in American history. Now, almost a decade after the book's initial publication, its title continues to mislead those looking for (or fearing) a quick conservative fix. (This is certainly not surprising in Washington, where a recent survey revealed that policy makers do not even read newspapers regularly, let alone books!)

Controversy and confusion over Wilson's thesis helped publicize the book from its beginnings. In 1978 Wilson was simultaneously granted a prestigious award from the American Sociological Association (the Sydney S. Spivak Award in intergroup relations) and denounced by the Association of Black Sociologists over the alleged distortion of black experience in *The Declining Significance of Race*.

According to Wilson, chairman of the Sociology Department at the University of Chicago, economic class differences among Blacks have grown substantially in the post-WW II period, creating a widening chasm between the growing Black underclass (he insists on using this term — more about that later) and the increasingly prosperous and assimilated middle and professional classes. For the first time in Black American experience, basic life chances



Professor William Julius Wilson.

(education, occupation, and housing, for example) have come to depend more on economic class than on race. The civil rights movement, the growth of government and public sector jobs, and the increasingly white-collar economy combined to create unprecedented opportunities within the mainstream for trained and educated middle-class Blacks. But many of these same economic changes, Wilson argued, have stunted even further the possibilities/life chances of those increasingly isolated in the growing underclass, a disproportionate number of whom are Black.

The shift from a production-based to a service-based economy threatens to per-

manently lock out uneducated, unskilled, or semi-skilled people. Deindustrialization and job loss threaten Black men disproportionately; just when they had finally worked their way into the more highly paid, unionized jobs, these very jobs were beginning to vanish. Since the time *Declining Significance* was published, Wilson has emphasized the critical importance of jobs, particularly but by no means exclusively for Blacks (and Black men, at that). The loss of entry-level production jobs in central cities (to which rural Blacks had migrated in massive numbers in the 1950s) has created massive social dislocation. Wilson argues forcefully that a "tight labor market"

(named to avoid the stale connotations of "full employment") is the crux of a solution to the myriad problems of the underclass. No job training or placement programs, no child-care centers, no family allowances or revised tax policies can substitute for the *absolutely essential creation of new jobs.*

When others eschewed use of the term "underclass," calling it racist or dismissing it as another instance of "blaming the victim," Wilson insisted that the catastrophic rates of "inner-city joblessness, teenage pregnancies, out-of-wedlock births, female-headed families, welfare dependency, and serious crime" since the mid 70s demand a unique, dramatic label that differentiates the contemporary urban poor from poor communities earlier in the century.

"In my conception, the term 'underclass' suggests that changes have taken place in ghetto communities, and the groups that have been left behind are collectively different from those that lived in these communities in the 1940s. It is true that long-term welfare families and street criminals are distinct groups, but they live and interact in the same depressed community and they are part of that population that has, with the exodus of the more stable working- and middle-class segments, become increasingly isolated socially from mainstream patterns and norms of behavior. It is also true that certain groups are stigmatized by the label 'underclass,' just as some people who live in depressed central city communities are stigmatized by the term 'ghetto' or 'inner city'; but it would be far worse to obscure the profound changes in the class structure and

the social behavior of ghetto communities by avoiding the use of the term 'underclass.' Indeed, the real challenge is to describe and explain these developments accurately so that liberal policymakers can appropriately address them. It is difficult for me to see how this can be accomplished by rejecting a term that aids in the description of ghetto social transformations." ("Cycles of Deprivation and the Underclass Debate," *Social Service Review*, Dec., 1985.)

During the last decade, William Julius Wilson has emerged as a central figure in the ongoing debates about race, class, and the underclass in America. Governor Cuomo recently appointed Wilson to his newly created commission on poverty and welfare, and Bill Moyers referred to Wilson's work on his television documentary on the Black family, prompting an avalanche of inquiries. Even Nick Lemann's 2-part article in the June and July, 1986 issues of the *Atlantic* borrowed heavily (though without acknowledgment!) from Wilson's thesis, conceptualization, and language about the class transformation of the inner city.

In order to extend the discussion which Wilson began with many on the Left at the Socialist Scholars Conference in 1985, we interviewed him about his current research, about changes in his views of the intertwined questions of "culture" and "poverty," and about his proposals for and solutions to the worsening problems of poverty in America.

JR: How do you feel now, 8 years later, about the arguments over your book

The Declining Significance of Race?

WJW: People now recognize that the major story they ignored initially is the one they should be talking about, and that is the deteriorating situation of the ghetto underclass. I was concerned that the initial controversy over my book focused almost exclusively on what I had to say about the Black middle class and very little attention was given to my much more important thesis about the Black underclass. . . . I was concerned about the lack of attention that this population was receiving. I was concerned that the race-specific policies, including affirmative action programs, were benefitting primarily the more advantaged Blacks. And that the truly disadvantaged groups such as the ghetto underclass were not really being helped. I think that race-specific programs are important but they don't go far enough. They don't address the broader problems of societal organization, including economic organization.

JR: You have argued elsewhere that because of vitriolic attacks on the Moynihan Report, liberals shrunk from confronting the reality of a growing underclass until forced to do so by Charles Murray's book *Losing Ground*. How, if at all, did Murray's book affect your own work?

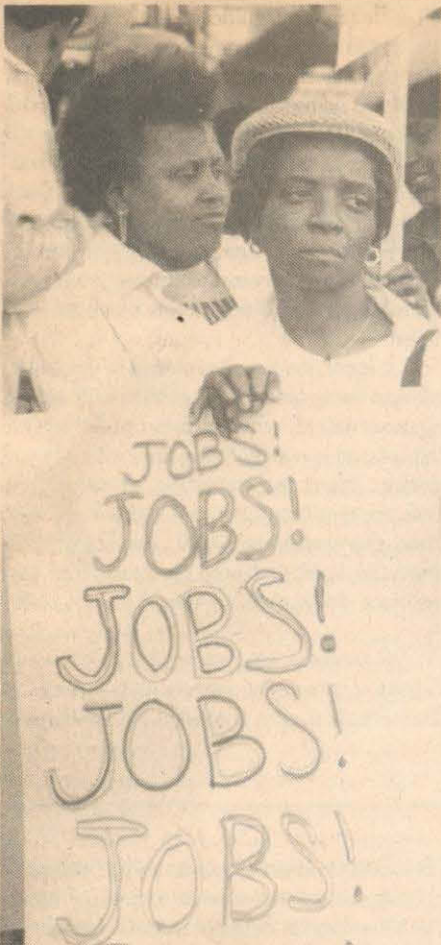
WJW: About a year and a half ago I was talking to Charles Hamilton, who's directing a project on the welfare state for the Ford Foundation, about *Losing Ground*. I was telling Chuck that I had some ideas about the kinds of research that needed to be conducted so that liberal policy makers would really have a firm foundation for advancing policy contrary to the recommendations that flow from Murray's analysis. I felt Murray's thesis was fundamentally wrong, just on the basis of preliminary research we had conducted in the inner city, and also on the basis of our careful analysis of census data. I was concerned that Murray's thesis was widely accepted even though he had not done any empirical research to support his conclusions. And so that's what helped to get me started on my current research project.

But I also have a long-standing interest in the plight of the ghetto underclass. I really wanted to see some research on some of the problems I had outlined in *Declining Significance*. The ghetto underclass is falling further and further behind the rest of society, creating a gap between "haves" and "have nots" in the Black community. I felt that you can't simply go out and interview people. You can't simply do a survey. You have to augment the survey with in-depth interviews over long periods of time, participant-observation, and macro-historical research so that your interviews



Photo by Judy Janda/Impact Visuals

Youth in New York demand job training funds.



and participant observations data can be placed in a proper context. This is what our current research project is designed to do. It combines survey, ethnographic and macro-historical research. It is, in fact, the most comprehensive research project ever conducted on the inner city.

JR: Your research contrasts sharply with the kind of journalistic approach of Bill Moyers, who has popularized these problems through "stop-action portraits" of current life among some ghetto residents.

WJW: I'm concerned that the kind of impressionistic report that Bill Moyers did distorts reality in a sense. You just simply cannot go out and interview a handful of poor people selected at random and hope to come up with a comprehensive picture of the dynamic and complex aspects of ghetto living. That's what bothers me. There were just so many important issues that were not addressed. There was very little attention given to the broader situational factors that produced some of the things that they were describing in the documentary. I mean he talks about the problem of joblessness in the inner city but he doesn't relate that to how it affects people's orientation toward work. You pick out a Timothy and you say "well this is typical of ghetto males," but you don't look at the broader situation that

produces Timothys, or you don't explain why there are Timothys. And that's what bothers me.

JR: Your paper "Cycles of Deprivation and the Underclass Debate" seems to entertain more cultural than economic-structural explanations for the existence, character, and growth of the underclass. Has your thinking on the causes and persistence of the underclass changed?

WJW: What I said in that article is that cultural values do not ultimately determine behavior or success. Rather, cultural values emerge from situational factors and reflect one's position in the racial/class structure. My thesis is that the problems of the ghetto underclass are fundamentally economic problems, and that the economic situation creates modes of adaptation between the economic-social situation and the cultural patterns. . . . Fundamentally I think it's the social situation that you have to attack, not the culture. In order to really deal with the problems of the ghetto, we have to create a tight labor market situation. That won't be enough, but it's basically the bottom line.

It's true that a tight labor market or full employment economy by itself will not solve all the problems. You'll also have to have child-care centers for mothers. In addition, manpower training and adult education programs will be needed, programs to get people oriented to work, people who've

had no work experience. So you have to deal not only with the structural problems (though I think if you address the structural problems, in the long run all of these other problems will disappear), you also have to recognize that there are some cultural patterns of behavior that have been created because of racial subordination and isolation. I'm not suggesting, therefore, that culture is totally irrelevant. I'm just saying that it's not the ultimate explanation. If you change the social situation you change culture. But in the meantime, while you're working on changing the social situation, it's not fair to say to those who need help immediately, "wait until we open up the opportunity structure." For such people special programs designed to address their problems immediately will be needed.

JR: Where does workfare, or the Massachusetts Employment and Training (ET) variation, fit in?

WJW: Well the Mass. program is the most progressive one. It's not really workfare because it's a voluntary program. ET not only provides training for mothers who seek employment, it also provides money for day-care services, which is very, very important. Furthermore, ET provides transportation to get to and from these training sites. . . . It has been reported that women going through ET come out with work that pays about twice as much as what they received from welfare. I view



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this as a much more progressive program than workfare, and I'd like to see it used as a national model.

I'm not very enthusiastic about the typical workfare programs. I would much rather see a commitment to generate full employment and create a situation where public assistance would only be needed for the physically or mentally handicapped. I think that people are eventually going to have to start talking about the need for comprehensive, rational government involvement in the economy to bring about economic growth and create a tight labor market situation. Once you do that, it's much easier to talk about and accomplish welfare reform.

JR: *Given the kinds of jobs that are being created, and given the level of the minimum wage which is such that the head of a family can work full time and still not be able to support a family . . .*

WJW: (Interrupts, anticipating the rest of my question) What we want to do is get the jobs and then worry about the other things. I think the American people will be much more willing to support social programs for poor families if they're working. . . . When you start talking about economic planning, there's a tendency to say that the political climate is not right. But look at public opinion polls. They show that Americans would overwhelmingly support programs that create jobs and get people back to work.

I don't think it is wise to prematurely raise the issue about the quality of work. (Laughter.) You're talking about people on welfare and all of a sudden you're supposed to take them from welfare and give them high quality jobs! How about the rest of the

working population, many of whom do not have high quality jobs themselves? No! I think the best way to proceed is to create jobs for the poor and then augment their incomes with measures such as the Earned Income Tax Credit or increased personal income tax deductions.

JR: *Anything else you want to say to the readers of Democratic Left?*

WJW: I'd like to say something about why I've been perceived as a conservative. Jesse Jackson said to me once, "Wilson, you're incorrectly perceived as a conservative and I'm incorrectly perceived as a radical. Why don't we confuse everybody and write an op-ed piece together?"

When my book was first published a lot of people who hadn't read it assumed that I was saying that everything was rosy, a view consistent with the conservative mood. In fact my thesis was extremely pessimistic about the underclass. I was concerned about the underclass, and what better way to show how unique and bleak their situation is than by comparing it with that

of the Black middle class? And I think that the initial reaction to the book by a lot of Black scholars reflected the class concerns of those scholars. In other words, their class interests influenced the way they read the book and their interpretations of the book. How else do you explain the fact that they virtually ignored what I had to say about the underclass and that the whole controversy centered around my interpretation of the problems of the Black middle class?

A lot of people who wanted to discredit me and the book did not hesitate to label me a conservative, when in fact I'm far to the left of the overwhelming majority of my critics. What is interesting, however, is that some of my strongest supporters are from the democratic Left, people who've read the book and who recognize and appreciate the structural thesis. ●

Jan Rosenberg teaches sociology at Long Island University and is a member of Democratic Left's Editorial Committee.

Left

Continued from page 33

The Socialists won 184 of 350 seats in the Congress of Deputies. Although the Socialist majority was slightly reduced, the right-wing Popular Coalition failed to gain on the Socialists, dropping from 106 to 105 seats. Both parties suffered minor losses to centrist and regional parties.

Australia

Joan Child of the Australian Labor Party became Australia's first woman to be elected Speaker of the House of Representatives.

RESOURCES

● The long awaited DSA local organizing manual is hot off the press. Produced largely through the heroic efforts of DSA NEC member Marshall Mayer, this 300-page manual covers virtually every aspect of what's necessary to build a vital DSA local. Topics addressed include: how to start a local, building blocks of a successful local, developing leadership, membership recruitment, out-reach and communication, fundraising, and "getting the work done."

The manual also includes "nuts &

bolts" appendices on everything from applying for a local charter to how to do a bulk mailing. A detailed index is also provided. This comprehensive manual is now available for the bargain price of \$10.00 (including mailing costs) from the Berkeley DSA office (3202 Adeline Street, Berkeley, CA 94703). No local should be without several of these unique manuals. Order your copies now!

● "Toxics and Minority Communities," a recent report from the Center for Third World Organizing, documents for the first time that exposure to toxic hazards is an issue of race and class. A few of the findings: 675,000 inner city children suffer from lead poisoning, 50% of them minorities; two million tons of uranium tailings have been dumped on Native American lands; three fourths of toxic dumpsites are located in low-income, minority communities. The report is available for \$5.95 from the Center at 3861 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Oakland, CA 94609.

● New literature from DSA: *Taking Control of Our Own Lives*, DSA's transitional economic program, is now available, as is *First Steps Toward a New Civilization*, an essay on economics and politics by DSA Co-chair Michael Harrington. See the literature ad in this issue for ordering information.

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Union Mergers: False Promises?

by Steve Early

As recruiting unorganized workers becomes more difficult, particularly in the private sector, American labor organizations are pursuing a different strategy for membership growth: union mergers. This trade union equivalent of corporate "merger and acquisition" activity has recently led to a flurry of marriages between sometimes unlikely partners.

The International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Technical, Salaried, and Machine Workers (IUE), for example, is now the Electronic, Electrical, Technical, Salaried, Machine, and Furniture Workers as a result of joining forces with the smaller United Furniture Workers Union. The Upholsterers recently merged with the

The major players in union merger deals — the larger industrial unions which have suffered membership losses in their traditional jurisdictions — obviously favor such combinations. And at least one academic study, by Gary Chaison of the Clark University School of Management, found considerable enthusiasm for merger activity among officers of the smaller unions that are leading take-over targets.

The question remains, however, how much actually changes in the day-to-day functioning of a smaller union as a result of it becoming the subsidiary of a larger labor organization. Long established "general unions" which represent diverse groups of workers — like the 1.5 million member International Brotherhood of Teamsters — have experienced serious bargaining and organizing setbacks of their own in recent years. Thus, there is no guarantee that any

strength through recruitment of unorganized workers in the union's traditional jurisdiction. Thus, rank-and-file critics of the Teamsters' costly and unsuccessful bid for the ITU argued that union funds should be spent instead on the difficult work of organizing the many non-union trucking companies that are undercutting Teamster employers.

As this criticism suggests, labor movement mergers will be a real step in the direction of rebuilding union strength only if they ultimately lead to membership gains through organizing the unorganized in new and old sectors of the workforce. An acquisition like the United Auto Workers' District 65 has already helped that union enter the field of clerical organizing in universities and other white-collar workplaces outside the auto industry. Leaders of the CWA likewise hope that, with the ITU as the union's new "Printing, Publishing, and Media Workers" division, they will be able to expand their membership in a more broadly defined "information industry."

For their part, members of any small, struggling union can obviously benefit from access to a larger union's strike fund, field staff, and the more extensive resources of its headquarters' research, legal, public relations, and other departments. But if — like the Furniture Workers — a union currently represents only a small fraction of the workforce in a low-wage industry, merger alone won't make winning better contracts that much easier.

It remains to be seen, therefore, whether the current union merger wave will actually be a boon to labor's revival or simply produce more jerry-rigged structures characteristic of some already-merged union bureaucracies. Conglomerate unionism may boost the membership statistics of individual organizations. But it's no substitute for the industry-wide organization still needed to provide workers with a strong and effective voice in many rapidly-changing sectors of the American economy. ●

"As in the corporate world, take-over bids are sometimes hostile rather than friendly."

Steel Workers. The Insurance Workers are now part of the Food and Commercial Workers. The Cement Workers have joined the Boilermakers. And the Communications Workers of America (CWA) is simultaneously pursuing affiliation deals with the United Telegraph Workers and the International Typographical Union (ITU).

This union merger trend has been actively promoted by the AFL-CIO as a way to strengthen and streamline the labor movement. In its 1985 report on the "Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions," the federation noted that 50 of its 96 affiliates have less than 50,000 members, and another 30 have less than 100,000. "These unions," said the report, "have been hardest hit by membership loss," have "the least ability to grow," and suffer from "a reduced capacity to serve their members." The report recommended that more small labor organizations consider mergers with bigger ones to gain "increased collective power and heightened organizing ability."

new unit added to a conglomerate union will automatically be able to deal more effectively with the powerful employers its members face across the bargaining table and on the job.

Skeptics also point out — and the AFL-CIO itself acknowledges — that union affiliations are not always tidy affairs. As in the corporate world, take-over bids are sometimes hostile rather than friendly. And the existence of multiple suitors, such as the ITU has had, can greatly complicate the internal political battles and legal maneuvering that are often triggered in smaller unions by merger attempts. In recent years, it has not been uncommon for two or more unions competing for the same organization to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on affiliation campaigns replete with lawsuits and bitter public denunciations of each other.

Merger activity can also prove to be unpopular among a larger union's existing membership if it appears to be detracting from efforts to maintain bargaining

Steve Early is a labor journalist and lawyer who works as a union organizer.

ON THE LEFT

by HARRY FLEISCHMAN

COMING EVENTS

● DSA will hold its bi-annual National Board meeting in Washington, DC on the weekend of January 17-18, 1987. This is the organization's highest decision-making body between conventions, and it will feature business sessions as well as educational plenaries and workshops. For information on submitting resolutions, electing delegates, or other board-related matters, contact: Jim Shoch, DSA, 3202 Adeline, Berkeley, CA 94703.

● The first Great Midwest Labor Song Exchange will be held at the University of Illinois' Medical Center, on November 14-16, 1986. The conference, which will include workshops by Labor's Troubadour, Joe Glazer; Larry Penn, Milwaukee Teamster and song writer; and others, will be sponsored by the Chicago Labor Education Program, ILIR, in cooperation with the Labor Heritage Foundation. The major purpose of the conference and song swap is to bring together union member artists and interested folk singers, to seek ways of expanding the use of song, story, and drama in the labor movement. For a registration form with program and housing details, please contact Stanley Rosen, Chicago Labor Education Program, ILIR, University of Illinois, PO Box 4348, Chicago, Illinois 60680, telephone: (312) 996-2623.

NATIONAL ROUNDUP

Alaska

DSAer Niilo Koponen, Fairbanks representative to the State Legislature, reported recently on his successes in passing legislation on managing hazardous materials, public employee "whistleblowers," and education. His push to make Alaska a Nuclear Free Zone fell two votes short of passage.

California

Los Angeles DSA is working with Jobs With Peace to build a citywide precinct network . . . California AFL-CIO president John F. Henning was a special guest at the DSA Labor Day weekend garden party . . . Shireen Miles, Mike Woo and Larry Frank spoke at the DSA luncheon for delegates to the convention of the California Democratic State Central Committee . . . San Diego DSA co-sponsored a July demonstration in support of Salt II and an end to nuclear testing.

District of Columbia

DSA members played major roles in the successful initiative to save D.C.'s

ington and the Consul of China, as well as labor historians and union activists . . . DSAer activist Ron Sable is running for 44th Ward alderman. A recent fundraiser drew 400 people and took in \$6,000 . . . Chicago DSA's Thomas-Debs dinner not only drew an overflow crowd of 375, it also netted \$7,500 to the local's coffers.

Iowa

DSAers elected to office recently include Tim Sodawasser, re-elected to the Davenport City Council, and Jeff Cox, elected to the Democratic State Central Committee in a hotly contested race . . . DSA-endorsed candidate Bob Burns took first place in the Johnson County Supervisors' race.



strong rent control system . . . DC/Maryland DSA now has branches in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties as well as in Takoma Park and Bethesda-Rockville . . . New officers of the local are Rich Burning, chair; Lisa Foley and Joe McLaughlin, vice chairs; Stu Elliott, recording secretary; Jeffrey Hops, membership secretary; and Debby Goldman, treasurer.

Illinois

The 100th anniversary of Haymarket was recognized with a fascinating exhibit at the Chicago Historical Society, plus a May Day opening organized by DSAer Nina Helstein which drew Mayor Wash-

Kentucky

Central Kentucky DSA joined with the Council for Peace and Justice in an annual Hiroshima Day commemoration August 6th in Lexington . . . A socialist feminist brunch in August discussed "Feminism, the Workplace, and Compromise" . . . Local DSAers joined Cesar Chavez, president of the United Farm Workers, on a picket line to boycott grapes.

Maryland

Baltimore DSA held a day of camaraderie August 23 at the Historic Millersburg Ferry on the Susquehanna River . . . Howard County DSA discussed

how the market fails the American people in housing, health, welfare, public transportation and education.

Massachusetts

The Boston forum on women in housing was well attended and lively. Joan Sprague, executive director of the Women's Institute of Housing and Economic Development, and Joannie Seager, a Clark University urban geographer, focused on the special needs of women, the elderly and single parents . . . The Debs-Thomas-Bernstein Award dinner raised almost \$3,000 for Boston DSA . . . A Cambridge Tenants Union is forming to protect rent control . . . Proving that socialists can be jocks too, the DSOX enjoyed their first season of softball in the Boston Bureaucratic League. Their record did not rival the Red Sox's.

Michigan

DSA has helped spark a local coalition to campaign for comparable worth in Ann Arbor. It will pressure City Council to fund a professional study of the relative compensation of male- and female-dominated job categories as well . . . At its annual Bastille Day picnic, SOCPAC, Ann Arbor DSA's political action committee, endorsed Dean Baker for the Democratic nomination in the 2nd Congressional District, Perry Bullard for re-election to the Michigan House in the 53rd District, and Lana Pollack for re-election to the Michigan Senate in the 18th District.

Missouri

Kansas City DSA showed the film, "Harlan County, U.S.A." at its August meeting. After the film and meeting, an election night victory party was held to celebrate the election of DSAers Kemp Houck and Wade Hannon to the Democratic County Committee . . . The local joined the Anti-Apartheid Network in a march and rally June 28 of 500 Kansas Citizens to back the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

New York

The New York State Board of DSA Representatives met August 16 in Ithaca. Jack Robbins of Westchester is state chairman . . . Ithaca's Channel 13 carries "More Than the News" every Tuesday at 6:00 P.M. Among its stars are DSAers Malina Runyon, Steve Jackson and Ben

Nichols . . . National DSA held a leadership summer school in Pawling, N.Y. in July. Socialist scholars such as Frances Fox Piven, Stanley Aronowitz and Michael Harrington discussed issues ranging from economic and social policy to Marxist theories of the state.

Oregon

DSAer Elliott Currie, author of a new book, *Confronting Crime: American Challenge*, spoke in Portland recently. His visit was sponsored by DSA, the Office of Neighborhood Associations, the National Lawyers Guild, Red Rose School and the Rainbow Coalition. According to Tom Wicker of the *New York Times*, Currie "has made an important response to a decade of harsh anti-crime legislation which has left us with higher rates of crime and imprisonment. His book offers the only realistic hope in years that something can be done." . . . The June meeting of Portland DSA discussed "The Lottery and Economic Development — A DSA Strategy."

Pennsylvania

Central Pennsylvania DSA held a picnic at the Millersburg Ferry along the Susquehanna River . . . Philadelphia DSA held a meeting recently on "Korean and American Workers in the International Economy." Speakers from the Philadelphia Committee for Peace and Justice in Asia dealt with such questions as the human rights situation in South Korea today, is rapid economic growth benefiting Korean workers, and what would "international labor solidarity" between Korean and U.S. workers look like? . . . DSAers throughout the state were active in the successful primary race by Bob Edgar for the Democratic nomination for U.S. Senate . . . Pittsburgh DSA's annual picnic was held August 10th at Frick Park . . . The third annual Reading Socialist picnic was held July 26th.

South Dakota

Terry Miller: The Pacifist Politician, has been written by Rod Janzen about a man who was a Goldwater supporter in his youth, and later served from 1980 to 1984 as a Republican member of the South Dakota legislature and was also a DSA member. Miller was active in Hutterite colonies and now travels the world for Global Missions, a non-denominational Christian group. After

the Republicans converted the University of South Dakota at Springfield into a medium-security prison, Miller changed his voter registration to the Democratic party.

Tennessee

Nashville DSA held a "video night" in August, showing a short on the Hormel strike and *Poletown Lives*, a film about the destruction of a section of central Detroit to build a new G.M. plant.

Texas

Houston DSA's cultural critique group met in July to discuss Andre Gorz's "Farewell to the Working Class" . . . A religion and socialism forum was held in September.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Canada

On a large field below Alberta's Legislature, written in grass with a fertilizer machine, is a slogan: "Tory times are tough times."

In the recent elections, reports Toronto's *Globe and Mail*, the times were indeed tough for the Tories. The Conservatives went into the election holding 75 of 79 seats. The voting for 83 seats in an expanded provincial parliament reduced the Tories to 61 seats and raised the socialist New Democratic Party from 2 to 16. NDP leader Raymond Martin predicted the results would have a significant impact on coming elections in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. The NDP won the last election in Manitoba.

Jamaica

The opposition People's National Party of former Prime Minister Michael Manley won a major victory recently in municipal elections. The PNP, a member of the Socialist International, won 56% of the vote and carried 12 of the 13 local government districts. The elections were seen as a major test of Prime Minister Edward P.G. Seaga's pro-Reagan economic and foreign policies.

Spain

The Socialist Party headed by Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez won a solid victory in Spain's recent national elections.

Continued on page 30

REVIEWS

The People's Report

by Jay Mandle

THE ECONOMIC REPORT OF THE PEOPLE by the Center for Popular Economics. Boston: South End Press, 1986.

The Center for Popular Economics has emerged as the Left's most important economics training institute. Founded in 1979, and based in Amherst, Massachusetts, the Center sees its role as demystifying economics and providing ammunition to those attempting to promote what it calls progressive social change. The Economics Department at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, one of the very few departments in the United States with a substantial number of Left economists, provides the bulk of the intellectual resources for the Center. *The Economic Report of the People* is the Center's first major publication effort. Edited by Samuel Bowles and Lyuba Zarsky, the first a professor at the University of Massachusetts and the second a graduate student at the same school, the book contains thirteen different articles which criticize conservative economics, report on recent economic trends, discuss the likely long-term consequences of current policies, and offer an alternative program.

The Economic Report of the People is probably the single best source for socialists and radicals to turn to in seeking an assessment of what has occurred in the economy since the late 1970s. Following a brief introduction, Part II of the book, entitled "Winners and Losers," is composed of five different essays, each of which describes the harmful effects of the free-market ideology and policies initiated in the late Carter years and intensified under the Reagan Administration. Chapter 3 provides a clear exposition of the increase in income inequality and the growth in poverty which have occurred in these years. Chapter 4 takes up the same theme with regard to race, while the next chapter discusses the increasingly difficult circumstances confronted by women and children. The two concluding chapters in this section analyze respectively problems faced by organized labor and the farm community in this new economic environment. Each of these chapters is written by a different author or authors, but for the most part the editors have been able to impose sufficient uniformity, both stylistically and substantively, so that they fit together comfortably and provide a devastating overview of recent trends and the impact of conservatism in power.

Similarly, Part III, an in-depth examination of macro-economic developments, is successful in explaining the failure of policy during the Reagan Administration. The fiasco of mixing tight money with increased military spending is not neglected by the authors as they recount the 1981-82 recession/depression. They also underline the fact that tax cuts for the wealthy and for corporations have not had the hoped-for effect of spurring productivity growth. The redirection of government spending — and

not its reduction — is also carefully noted as a major effect of Reaganomics. The authors are right to describe policy in these years as an attempt "to reverse the momentum toward an expanded egalitarian and regulatory role in the economy."

Especially well done is the assessment of bank deregulation, which clearly elaborates the consequences for bank stability, speculative activity, the offering of bank services to the non-rich, and the squeezing out of business of small banks. The *Report* is equally clear concerning the international debt crisis, noting the increasing danger that the pressure on debtor nations might "promote the reemergence of authoritarianism." *The Economic Report of the People*, thus, is effective in its primary mission. Three-quarters of the book is devoted to an elaboration of recent economic trends, and aside from a quibble here or there, the story told can be cited with confidence.

Nonetheless, given the political purpose which underlies its publication — to provide guidance in political practice — a serious problem is created by the fact that nowhere is there presented a theory of America's relative economic decline. Aside from a very brief mention of the fact that Keynesian economics does not address problems of production — it emphasizes the "demand side" and not the "supply side" — the authors of this book do not explain what has gone wrong, or why policy makers shifted to the Right as early as the Carter years. As a result, much of the *Report* reads very much like a defense of liberalism. For, when the pernicious effects of adopting a laissez-faire posture towards the economy are emphasized, as they are here, the inference which suggests itself is that a restoration of former policies is called for. This is clearly not what the authors intend. The last chapter of the book lists ten steps to a democratic economy, with policies ranging from full employment to holding corporations responsible for the social consequences of their investment decisions, a program which extends far beyond liberalism. The problem here is that because the *Report* presents no theory of what has gone wrong, it does not establish that liberalism is incapable of dealing effectively with America's economic ills. The necessity of a radical solution is assumed but not demonstrated, which, given the political intent of the publication, is unsatisfactory. There is not, in short, a sufficient linkage between analysis and program for the book to be an effective guide to political action.

Despite its weakness in linking analysis and prescription, *The Economic Report of the People* is a valuable asset in the effort to teach the American people that our economic problems will get worse and not better if we persist in policies which, in effect, say that large corporations are the only institutions in society whose welfare should be of concern to government. The *Report* documents this pattern clearly and effectively, and as a result brings us closer to the time when we will be able seriously to debate how to rejuvenate and democratize the American economy. ●

Jay R. Mandle teaches economics at Temple University.

REVIEWS

Worker Knows Best

by Maurice Isserman

CHAOS ON THE SHOP FLOOR: A WORKER'S VIEW OF QUALITY, PRODUCTIVITY, AND MANAGEMENT by Tom Juravich. Temple University Press, 1986, \$19.95.

In one of the more lyrical passages in his writings, Karl Marx imagined the end of the division of labor, once scarcity and the profit motive had finally been abolished: "Society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic."

I don't know if Tom Juravich has reared any cattle, but over the last few years he has come closer than anyone else I know of to achieving the abolition of the division of labor in his own personal life: he's been a machinist, a folk-singer, a political activist, a graduate student in sociology, an assistant professor of labor studies at Pennsylvania State University, and most recently, the author of *Chaos on the Shop Floor*, a book based on his observations of the "short term myopia" and "long term confusion" prevailing in a small New England wire mill. The Fair Book Reviewing Standards Act of 1988 requires me to disclose that: a) Tom is a personal friend, b) he and his guitar have visited my classes on several occasions, and c) I contributed the following pre-publication blurb to his book: "One of the few books I can think of which should be of equal interest to subscribers to *Labor History* and *Business Week*."

And, I should have added, readers of *Democratic Left*, because Juravich addresses questions of perennial interest to socialists in this short and readable account of his stint as a maintenance worker in the pseudonymous "National Wire and Cable Company" of Holyoke, Massachusetts. Like, a) won't socialist work relations founder on the shoals of human nature? (hegemonic assumption #1: workers are lazy), and b) isn't it true that capitalism, with all its faults, is the most efficient method of getting the most goods to the most people? (hegemonic assumption #2: managers are smart). If Juravich is right, and I think he is, the answers to a and b are, quite simply, "No."

"In contrast to our conventional wisdom," he writes in the introduction to *Chaos on the Shop Floor*:

I was surprised to discover how much pride the workers at National took in what appeared to be meaningless tasks. Although most of the jobs were essentially trivial, I observed workers making them meaningful in order to survive.

The main product produced on the floor on which Tom worked at National was a type of wire fitted with electrical

terminals at either end. Over time, and without benefit of any instruction from supervisors, the women ("unskilled" laborers working for minimum wage or a little above) who worked the machines had learned a variety of little tricks which kept production running smoothly. They didn't benefit in any material sense from these unsought contributions to National's productivity, but derived a sense of satisfaction from a day in which their work went smoothly. Such days were rare. National's supervisors, contemptuous of the workers, threatened by any display of independent thinking among their subordinates, and preoccupied with short term production goals, proved more of a hindrance than a help in overcoming problems on the shop floor. The "bottom line" at National, contrary to what they may be teaching these days in MBA programs, was not *profit* but *control*. Better that productivity suffer than that workers gain a sense of their own indispensability.

In the early twentieth century, Frederick Winslow Taylor offered manufacturers a vision of the possibilities for the "scientific management" of their labor force. Even in its purest form Taylorism made exaggerated claims for its own scientific rationality, but Juravich argues that present-day management strategies are far less insightful:

One of Taylor's fundamental insights — the notion that workers' knowledge is the place to begin any production reform — has been forgotten. On the other hand, those aspects of the Taylor system that stress management control of the shop floor have been most thoroughly accepted.

Contrary to my blurb for Temple, I don't suppose *Chaos on the Shop Floor* will actually interest that many *Business Week* subscribers, even though a sober consideration of the unpalatable truths Juravich offers might lead to increased profits in places like National. (That must be one of those "contradictions" you read so much about in Marx. Tough luck for capitalism.)

Meanwhile, I hear that Juravich is recording a new album of labor songs. His first album, "Rising Again," which includes songs of his own composition as well as such standards as "Solidarity Forever" and "Bread and Roses," is available for \$7.50 (which includes postage and handling) from UAW Region 9A, 111 South Road, Box 432, Farmington, Connecticut, 06032. ●

Maurice Isserman teaches American history at Smith College.

DON'T FLY TWA!

Plenaries, Politics, Parties

by Paul Baer

The DSA Youth Section kicked off its work for the coming year this August 21-24 at the eleventh annual DSA Summer Youth Conference. More than 80 students (and ex-students) from over 35 schools came to Slippery Rock University in western Pennsylvania to spend three days and three nights in discussion and debate. The long weekend — including a mix of educational plenaries and workshops, internal business, and parties — left the participants both excited and exhausted.

From the opening night discussion of the current student movement to the closing remarks from long-time activist Dorothy Healey, the conference sessions were consistently substantial and engaging. Among the major plenaries were a general discussion of U.S. politics and the role of socialists, with Michael Harrington, Irving Howe, and Joan Mandle; reflections on the feminist movement with Gaye Williams of the National Black Women's Political Congress, Molly Yard, National Political Director of N.O.W., and Judith Van Allen, a professor of political science at Ithaca College; and a discussion of U.S. militarism with Greg Akili of Jobs With Peace and Kevin Danaher of the Institute for Food and Development Policy.

A special guest at the conference was Tseki Morathi, from the youth wing of the African National Congress. In his address, Morathi both sketched out some of the key moments in the history of South Africa and discussed the ANC's understanding of the current situation. He made clear that the struggle of the ANC is not just a struggle for majority rule, but for socialism in Southern Africa and for a New Economic Order "in the interest of all those oppressed the world over." His appeal for international solidarity drew a standing ovation.

The internal business at the conference included adopting the political priorities for the coming year, rewriting *Which Way America*, the political statement of the Youth Section, and election of a new executive committee. The political priorities adopted included work on anti-apartheid and anti-racism, reproductive rights, and Central America as highest priorities, and poverty, disarmament, labor support, and the fall elections as second-ranked priorities.

As always, the conference played an important function in bringing students and young activists together, and them together with older activists. As well as parties and small talk, the conference featured a "generations of activism" discussion to help put the political discussion in perspective. Irving Howe, Judith Van Allen, and DSA Political Director Jim Shoch kept the

audience spellbound for over two hours on Friday night (a remarkable achievement) with stories of the historical and personal circumstances that had drawn them into politics and shaped their beliefs.

The new named officers, all of whom have been on the executive committee for one or more years previously, are: Chair, Paul Kumar; Vice Chair, Janet Wilder; Secretary-Treasurer, Josh Bornstein; and Corresponding Secretary, Paul Baer. At-large members are: Lisa Laufer, Elizabeth Szanto, Sherri Levine, Dinah Leventhal, Miriam Peskowitz, Jane Welna, Paul Meyer, Steve Hanna, Joe Slater, Neil McLaughlin, Matt Countryman, and Jason Meyers.

The conference was widely acclaimed as the best in several years. In spite of a packed schedule, there were plenty of opportunities for people to meet, talk, sing songs, and dance. Between the fun and the serious political discussion, almost everyone left the conference excited about the organization and about the prospects for the coming year. In the words of Youth Organizer Bill Spencer, starting his second year on the job (and the prime architect of the conference), "If this conference is any indication, this will be our best year yet." ●

Paul Baer is the Youth Section's Corresponding Secretary and works for DSA's New York Local.

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- ▶ Rebuilding our industrial base through a system of democratic national planning in which workers and consumers have a voice, and where long-range planning for people replaces short-term planning for profits.
- ▶ Strengthening the coalition of trade-unionists, farmers, women, minorities, students, and others to keep the Democratic Party on track as a vehicle for social progress -- not simply a "me-too" version of the GOP.

The UAW salutes the Democratic Socialists of America, *Democratic Left*, and all those dedicated Americans who, in the best traditions of our country, are helping to address the challenges of the future with a program of vision and progress.

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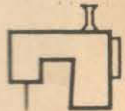
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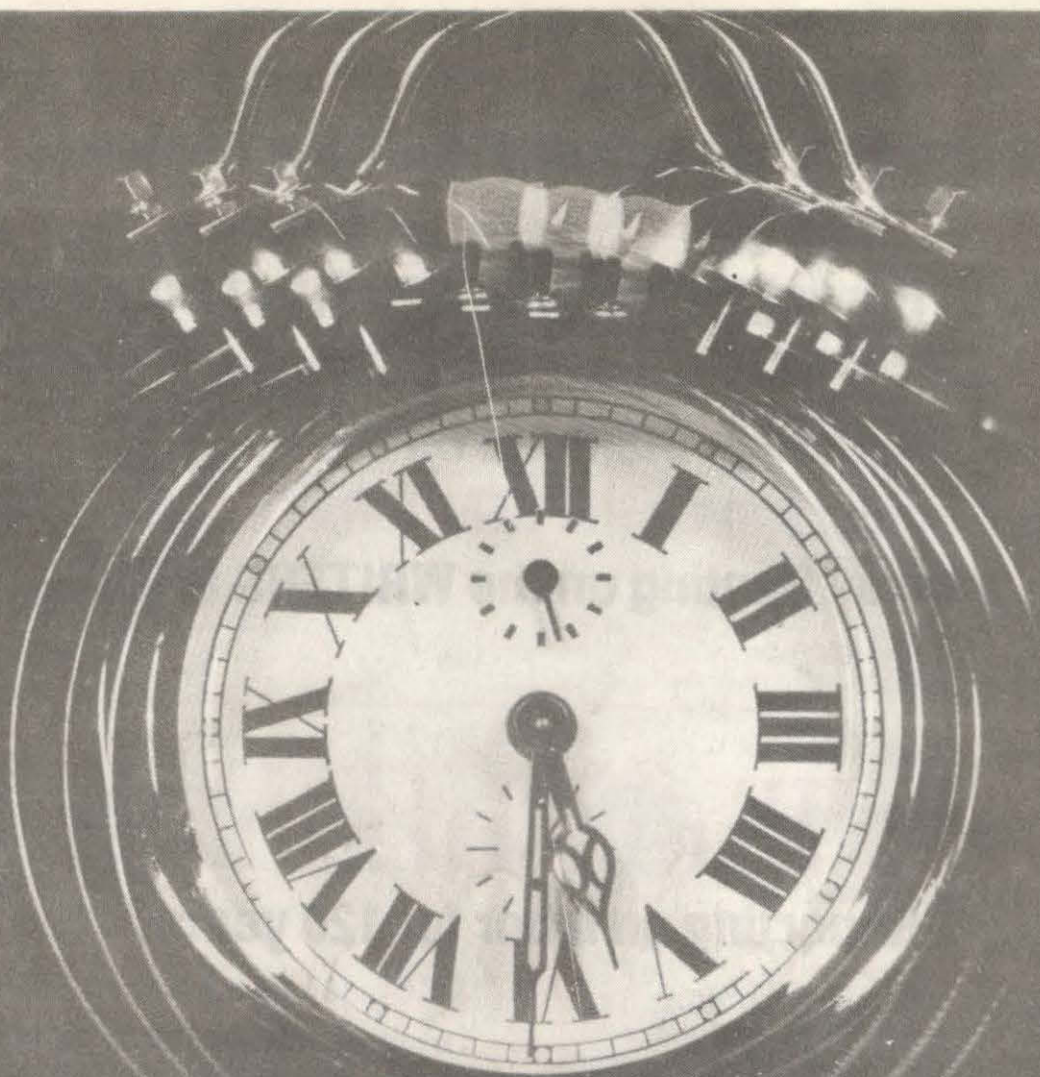
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And you've earned it! As an American worker, you've helped create one of the greatest, most productive societies in the history of mankind. And that's where we come in. We're the nearly one million men and women in all 50 states, Canada, Puerto Rico and the Canal Zone who are members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

We are people helping people. On the job, our contracts with more than 12,000 employers help assure that you receive a fair share of the wealth your labor helps produce through better wages, working conditions, and employer-paid health and pension plans, to name just a few.

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In communities across the USA and Canada, union community service committees help assure that workers and their families get help from a variety of sources when their needs transcend those covered by the collective bargaining agreement.

And even in the founding of Labor Day itself, the Machinists Union was there. It was a machinist by the name of Matthew Maguire, secretary of the Central Labor Body in New York City, who helped organize the first Labor Day parade on Sept. 5, 1882.

Past, present and future. It's a tradition in the Machinists Union to be involved.

Today we're involved in scores of ways to help all workers, their families and our communities: in the fight to hold down gas, fuel and energy costs; in the fight for sound economic conversion, so that workers and communities dependent on defense-related industries are protected from the ravages of layoffs and shutdowns when the government cuts back, stops a project or moves production to another area.

And for the future, you can rest assured this Labor Day and beyond that whatever the need, wherever the place, if it helps people, the Machinists Union will be there.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS AND AEROSPACE WORKERS, AFL-CIO