

the rank and file in action

Labor Today

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412



**Steel workers:
"A MESSAGE
TO ABEL..."**

**The Miners
did it again!**



How to fight utility hikes

RANK AND FILERS INSTALL SADLOWSKI

Fresh winds blowing for steelworkers!

Labor Today

by JIM WILLIAMS, Co-Editor
LABOR TODAY

"If you don't let race hatred break you up, if you don't let name-calling break you up...you'll make it!"

That's what Ed Sadlowski told a crowd of over 1,000 cheering, triumphant supporters December 8. The occasion was his installation as director of United Steel Workers' District 31, a post he won away last month from Sam Evett, a product of the USWA official family.

Sadlowski's installation ceremony was typical of fresh winds that are blowing in the Steelworkers. Usually, such ceremonies are presided over by USWA International officers and conducted amid pomp and circumstance.

Instead, Sadlowski was administered the oath of office by rank and filers from each of the District's five sub-districts. They included Blacks, Chicanos and women.

A chuckle went through the hall when they reached that part of the oath which says, "I will deliver to my successor in office all books and other property of this Union that may be in my possession at the close of my official term." Earlier in the week, Sadlowski arrived at the District 31 offices to find that they had been left bare by Evett.

This rally was carefully balanced to provide speakers from all groups within

Sadlowski and supporters greet news of landslide upset victory as early returns indicate rank & file mandate for change



Reproduced with permission, The Chicago Sun-Times. Photo by Bob Black.

the union including veteran SWOC builders like George Patterson, and Black Steelworkers' leader Ola Kennedy.

Sadlowski told the assembly that they had "sent a message to Pittsburgh," that they wished deep changes in the union. He said he hoped that there would be many such "messages."

While many assumed Sadlowski would begin to "clean house" as he took office, he has remained cautious. To date, his only staff appointment is to name Ray O'Malley, the only staffer to support him, as assistant district director. Sadlowski also has power to name five sub-district

directors and to request that staffers be transferred out of the district. There is rank and file pressure to appoint a Black and a Chicano to the sub-district posts.

And what of Sam Evett? Abel moved quickly to name Evett USWA "midwest representative," a job that carries a \$30,000 price tag and continued presence in the Chicago area. Rank and filers have called this move a slap in the face of the membership. But it is more than just that. Some fear that Evett's continued operations in the area are an attempt to undermine Sadlowski's authority, particularly with the staff and those local union presidents who supported Evett. It is a clear sign that the Evett forces are not giving up and will seek to regain their grip over the district.

In many ways, the Sadlowski victory represents a victory as significant as that of Arnold Miller and the Miners For Democracy in late 1972. District 31, with its 130,000 members, is almost as big as the entire UMWA. Control of it, the largest district, is a possible stepping stone to winning the entire 1.4 million member USWA.

The position of Steelworkers is as key to the economy as that of the miners. The fact that, in recent years, the top USWA leadership has settled for insufficient contract gains, the no-strike "Experimental Negotiating Agreement" and the like has held back the ability of the rest of the labor movement to better its position.

Sadlowski, while continuing to be cautious in exerting leadership and pushing new programs, is clear that the rank and file will have a complete say in the affairs of the union and that it is their pressure, not that of the company or the USWA top-siders, that counts with him.

For steelworkers, even though they live in Gary or South Chicago's cauldron-like mill neighborhoods, that is a breath of fresh air.

It was worth it!

R & F DEMOCRACY AIDS MINERS STRIKE VICTORY

by JIM WILLIAMS, Co-Editor
LABOR TODAY

It was two years ago that coal miners wrested control of their union from the company-minded Tony Boyle clique.

On December 4, they consolidated that initial victory by voting to ratify a new contract that may be worth as much as 64 percent over the next three years.

It was the first time in anyone's memory that working miners ever voted on the conditions they were to work under, and they took full advantage of the opportunity to chew the settlement over, to debate its points and argue over the fine print before they put their stamp of approval on it.

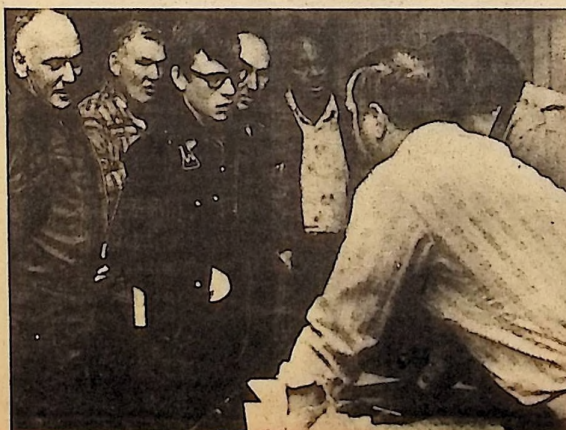
It was genuine proof of the gains of rank and file union democracy, and the miners savored every morsel.

The coal operators, the government and the news media didn't see it that way,

however. As James Branscome, writing in The Mountain Eagle said, "Not one of them (major newspapers) supported the idea that miners should use their only weapon - the strike - to better their wages and their economic situation."

(continued on page 8)

Miners hear explanation of new pact



SADLOWSKI: HOW WE DID IT

Beating the machine

by EDWARD SADLOWSKI, Director
District 31, USWA
Chicago, Illinois

On November 23, right on the heels of his election, Ed Sadlowski made the following remarks to a meeting of Workers' Education Local 189 of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, in Washington, D.C. At the end, he also answered their questions:

When I was about 20 years of age, around 1960-61, a group of fellows got together and decided that we were going to take the old leadership of our local union on, and I was selected to run for grievance committeeman in my respective department. We ran against an incumbent that had been in there for about 15 years and we were successful in winning.

A year and a half later we put a group together and we ran against the officers of that local union, and we got 5 of the 11 positions that were up for grabs. We garnered them by 70 and 80 votes but we were only capable of doing that by virtue of one thing: learning the mechanics that existed within that local union and being able to implement the mechanics to our benefit for a change.

We were the first successful group, as people tell me in that local, that was never counted out. We didn't get counted in either, we got voted in. And for 8 years we were successful in putting together our own political caucus.

In February of 1972, I decided to run for the position of District Director in District 31. That district is the largest district in the steelworkers union. There's approximately 130,000 members in that district, in 400 plants and over 290-odd local unions. The sizes of those local unions range from 7 or 8 members up to 17,000 members, as some of the larger base of steel locals.

We thought we knew the constitution. We thought we knew the internal elective processes. We thought we knew what the written word in that constitution meant. The problem is, we took it literally, where the people in power did not. As we found in the nominating process, there were certain pitfalls and roadblocks that made it virtually impossible for a guy to get on the ballot.

The first thing we did in announcing our candidacy was send a letter to Walter Burke, who is the Secretary-

Treasurer of the Steelworkers Union, asking for the location of the plants in which the workers work. He said that there was no provision in the constitution for that and he denied us that. Secondly, we asked for the time and place of where the local union nominating meetings were going to be held. He said there was no provision in the constitution for that and he denied us that.

For all those things going for the hand-picked successor to the incumbent, we went out and we garnered 40 nominations. We got the type of information we were seeking by knowing a guy who knew a guy or knowing a saloon someone drank in or having a pal that worked in another plant. Nominations were denied us, by virtue of giving us the wrong time by



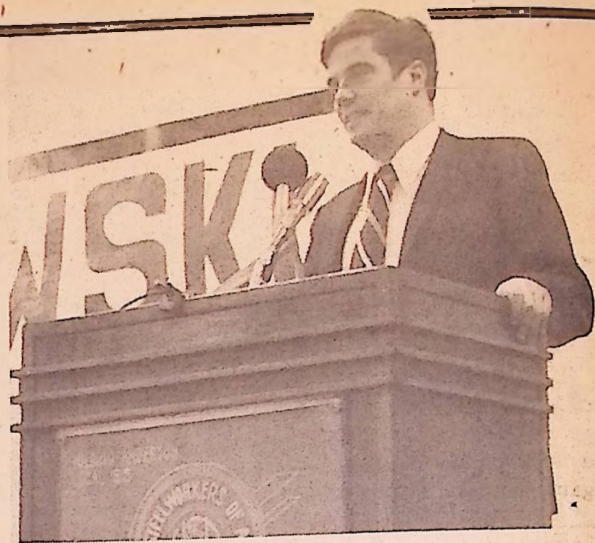
staff representatives, by some of our people being locked out of local union meetings.

I was the first successful opposition candidate in December of 1972 to get on the ballot. We went into an election that was going to be held in February of 1973. Once again I appealed to the International Union for specific information: where elections were going to be conducted for each respective local union, between what hours they were going to be conducted. I needed types of information like that in order to place observers. I got the same stock standard letter from Burke that those provisions weren't provided for in the constitution. They wouldn't even let me know where the polling places were going to be. They wouldn't let me know what time locals were going to be voting.

As returns started coming in the night of February 13th, it became obvious that we were carrying all the bigger local unions along the basin of the lake. We were carrying a lot of the fabricating locals which we did know where they were located. We weren't carrying a lot of locals that were staff controlled. We went to bed the night of February 13th winning the damn election by 4000 votes and we got up the morning of the 14th losing it by 2000.

It became obvious to everyone closely involved in the election that something had gone amiss. And I want to give you a pointer on that, never go to bed until the last vote's counted.

So we started gathering up the required information we would need in order to file a protest. So we literally spent the week after the election talking to people from various local unions and



stories started to drift in on how we had been ripped off. People started voluntarily coming up with information because they didn't like what had happened. People came up with statements that more people had voted in the local than actually existed in the local, that people who went to cast their ballot found that their ballot had already been voted by virtue of their name being checked off.

We filed our protest internally, which is a requirement under the steelworkers constitution; that's one of the requirements that Burke did admit to. And on the 16th of March, 1973, the International Tellers ran on the same ticket that my opponent ran on, because at that meeting what the International did was they garnered up 150 local union people and all the staff in District 31 and they got them in a big room, and me and 4 other people came into this room so there were 210 people sitting behind us throwing spears for 12 hours while we presented our case. It literally fell on deaf ears. They didn't do one moment of investigating, they did not allow us access to any of the rebuttal information. They refused to give us the minutes or a transcript of the hearing and all they did was publish their Tellers' report in April of 1973, declaring my opponent the winner by 1700 votes out of 45,000-some-odd cast.

I immediately appealed the Tellers' decision to the International Executive Board, which my opponent was sitting on. I received a letter from Walter Burke stating that I should be in Pittsburgh at 9:00 on the morning of May 30 to hear my appeal because the term of office was going to start on June 1, the next day.



I went to Pittsburgh. I arrived there at 9:00 in the morning and was told to sit on a bench outside the Executive Board Meeting. At 5:30 that evening they called me in to hear my case -- 8 1/2 hours later. By that time I was reading matchbook covers, and exit signs on the walls - things like that. And then I was allowed approximately 20 minutes. Burke then, the very next day, sent me a telegram that my appeal had been denied and the Board had upheld the International Tellers' decision.

(continued on p. 3)

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THE QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Have you ever been in an educational function run by your union, and did you feel that that may have contributed to your ability to put on a good fight?

SADLOWSKI: The best education I had was at Carnegie Tech working there 12 years. That's U.S. Steel, the Carnegie mill on the south side of Chicago.

No. (Laughter.) I do say that facetiously. What I found is most workers' education programs are very functional as far as grievance machinery, labor history or singing songs.

But there's a much greater need. You can't by education instill in people the want and desire to do something politically. You can't look for that through traditional labor education. I don't think you can set up programs of how to make a guy street-wise or a worker moxie-wise and stuff like that. That has to come by virtue of having experience and letting it rub off on you.

I don't find the leadership of organized labor really wanting a strong educational program to siphon down to the guy in the shop.

QUESTION: What about the ENA?

SADLOWSKI: The ENA in basic steel is the Experimental Negotiating Agreement. That was negotiated in, I should say, signed in March 1973, a month after the International elections. It was agreed to by I.W. Abel and R. Heath Larry in closed session without even the International Executive Board of the union knowing what was going on.

Abel said that it was advisable to have that type of provision put in the basic steel agreement because after we had negotiated contracts over the last 10 years, the basic steel worker was faced with



massive layoffs because the industrialists stockpiled prior to the expiration of the contract. That's a baloney argument. Because it's the industrialist that sets the pattern, it's the industrialist that sets the schedule, it's the industrialist that stockpiles, not the worker.

QUESTION: What do you think about the Landrum-Griffin Act now?

SADLOWSKI: I think the Act is a bad law. It's not strong enough. It's a very unfortunate thing that I have to take that position. Title IV and Title V of the Act are very good titles. One, it makes sure a guy has the right to some redress of grievances as far as election processes are concerned, and it makes sure that guys aren't going to be using money that belongs to members in some corrupt fashion.

QUESTION: What role did civil rights and the consent decrees play in the election?

SADLOWSKI: I've been working on that consent decree for four or five months. That's a decree which was entered into by nine basic steel companies, the Steelworkers Union and the Justice Department, supposedly to correct the promotional inequities that exist in the steel plants and make some form of restitution to people that have been denied promotion.

The consent decree supposedly is said to eliminate that. That's not true. The decree really isn't going to do a hell of a lot for anybody. As far as restitution

is concerned, it's not enough. The basic minimum of \$200 for those people is not a hell of a lot for restitution purposes.

In the plant that I come from, the plant that I'm negotiating for, there's little or no change by virtue of that decree. The decree is not strong at all. It could have been a lot stronger.

QUESTION: What are you going to do next, now that you've won? How do you expect to function with the 60 or so staff people appointed by Abel who work in the district?

SADLOWSKI: That's probably the most logical question of all. What we're doing right now is, we're going back to those same gates that we campaigned at. We're going back to those same neighborhood saloons that we asked a guy for a vote at. Now we're going to ask for his advice.

And if we're capable of putting that type of structure together, it's going to work. I think there's a segment of those staff guys that are good solid guys, but they fell in that bag somewhere down the line as well. I feel that we are going to have some internal fighting. I come out of that school. The worst thing that can happen to Ed Sadlowski and the 130,000 people in that district is for me to just plug in, and that's probably the easiest thing. I'm 36 years old and I don't intend to plug in.

When Abel starts concerning himself more with productivity in the steel industry, something goes amiss. That goes back to that type of attitude that he knows what's best for working people. It's completely foreign to my concept of what a union such as ours should be all about. And looking in the annals of history, any time the labor movement has taken a position like that to arbitrate economic matters with an employer rather than use economic muscle, that union has found itself in a weak position. The longer it does that, the weaker it gets. And that's not my concept of what the American labor movement is supposed to be all about.

How it happened (cont. from p. 2)

I then found myself with one decision to make, either stop right there and let my opponent be declared the winner as the Board and the Tellers said he was, or pursue it with the Department of Labor. And on the 25th of June, the only staff guy in that district who supported me, and myself, went down to the Department of Labor and laid our charges down upon them.

The Department of Labor then started an extensive investigation into 62 local unions in that district. In those 62 local unions they investigated, they found massive vote fraud, misuse of union finances, forgery - I can go on and on and on. In those 62 locals alone over 4000 votes were phony.

We then had suit brought in our behalf by the Federal Government asking that the Steelworkers have that election set aside and a new election called.

That suit was brought in the Federal Courts in Pittsburgh in November, and

finally in the spring of this year a Federal judge up there ordered the end of all discovery periods and delay and everything else and he gave both sides 90 days to produce whatever materials were necessary.

Five days prior to going to that judge, my opponent threw up his hands. We held that election a week-and-a-half ago, starting on November 16, and it ran for four days this time because it was Federally supervised. We were successful in that election and we beat that guy 39,000 to 20,000 votes.

Believe me when I say that it was the first honest election in that district.

There's some very interesting things to be said about the elections that were held in the Steelworkers Union. I don't believe that I.W. Abel has ever won an election in the Steelworkers Union. I don't believe in 1965 he beat David McDonald. People will ask me what I base that on. I base that belief on knowing the elective process better than any sonofabitch in the world. And I base it by virtue of the amount of votes cast in that district for I.W. Abel, whose campaign

manager happened to be Joe Germano. I'm not even sure that he beat a guy by the name of Narrick in 1969. I am sure that we beat him the first time and I am sure that we beat him the second time. And I am sure that a lot of things that we don't have in the Steelworkers Union in the area of collective bargaining are basically not there by virtue of the type of attitude that has developed among the leadership.

I'm firmly convinced that when a guy in power feels that he doesn't have to put his butt to the fire, he doesn't have to go to the plant gates, he doesn't have to answer for the grievances because he knows he's going to be capable of stuffing the ballot box. Benefits that workers should have forthcoming aren't going to be there. An attitude exists in our union and unfortunately in some respects the entire American labor movement. An attitude that people think that they know what's best for working people and that people should be working for them rather than them working for working people. And that's wrong. That's wrong as hell. And we've got to do something about correcting it. I hope I'm successful in doing it.



Auto workers visit the Soviet Union



by JIM WILLIAMS
Co-Editor, LABOR TODAY

Passports in hand, we slowly made our way down the ramp of the Aeroflot IL-62 that brought us, a rank-and-file delegation of auto workers, to Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport. Geographically, we had travelled thousands of miles. It hadn't struck us yet just how far we had come in terms of the distances that social systems are measured in.

Our delegation was composed primarily of auto workers, their wives, a couple of teachers and me. We were to be the guests of the Machinery Workers Union of the USSR, a union nearly five times the size of its U.S. equivalent, the United Auto Workers.

A beaming representative of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions was on hand to greet us. Quickly, we and our luggage were swept upon a bus and we were taken to the Hotel Sputnik. Later we learned that this hotel is owned by the trade union federation. It is quite a place, with television sets (I watched a good part of the World Soccer Cup matches), refrigerators and (despite the usual gloomy warnings in the U.S. press)

Since we arrived on a Thursday night, and since most of the union officials were attending a conference in the city of Togliatti, our hosts did the obvious thing: we saw Moscow in and out.

Seeing Moscow in a weekend is a staggering feat, yet that is precisely what we set out to do. In true Stakhanovite fashion we visited the National Economic Exhibition and God knows how many museums of Russian Orthodox art. Our favorite, ultimately, was Kalinin Prospekt, since Americans are inveterate window shoppers. It was hard not to want to look in each store and see what went on there. Only the most hardy souls braved the enormous crowds, though. Who was it that told us Russians didn't have any money to buy goods with?

On Monday, we began our official program with a visit to N.V. Dragunov, President of the Machinery Workers Union. Dragunov is a modest figure, with a bit of an impish smile. His warm eyes bid us greetings as he ushered us into seats around a conference table. After a few introductions, he got down to business. We were to be shown, he said, a cross-section of the Soviet industry--some of the best, some not so good.

The purpose, he said, was to give a fairly realistic view of Soviet life and industry, its successes and its shortcomings, so that we could share this picture with our co-workers in the U.S. So, no "Potemkin Villages" for us. After we had seen something of the industry, we would talk further, Dragunov said, with a wry smile.



Members of US delegation included auto workers, wives, teachers and journalist. (Above) Auto workers Charles Wilson and Ted Silverstein headed group's USSR stint.

Our first look was at the First Bearing Factory in Moscow, an older factory, built apparently during the first five-year plan. We leaned heavily upon our fellow-delegate, Simon Boorda, a worker at a bearing factory in South Bend, Indiana, for his views of this plant.

The plant was undergoing heavy reconstruction--from the inside.

The reconstruction contributed to a good bit of crowding and added to the noise made by the bearings as they skeltered around the overhead racks.

But despite these shortcomings, some very good bearings were being turned out under reasonably good conditions. Simon Boorda told us that about two or three workers performed the work one worker performed in his plant back in South Bend.

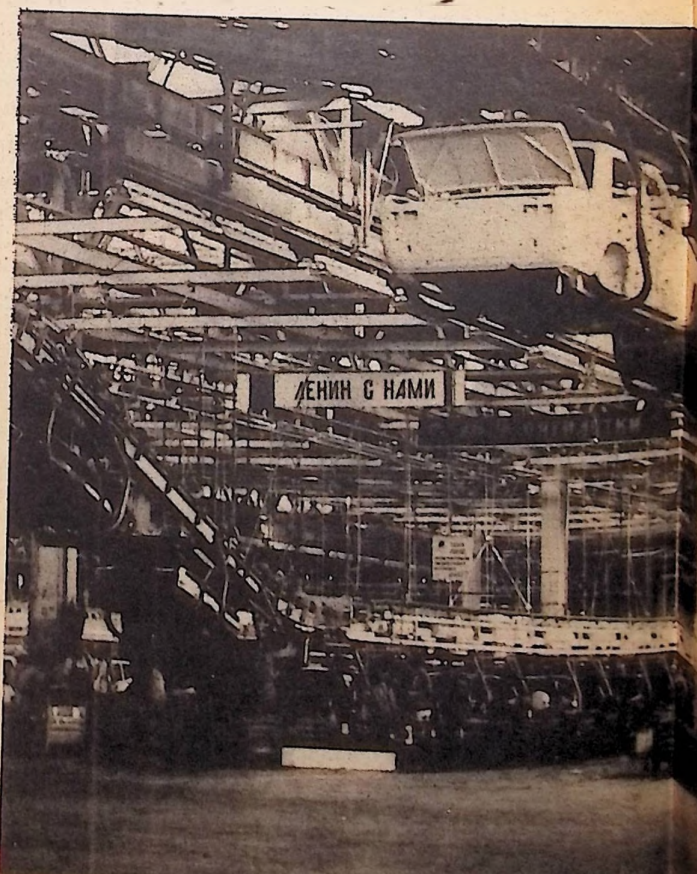
We met with a group from the Works Committee and management and exchanged questions about the role of the trade union in the plant. We weren't used to talking with a factory manager without shouting at him.

Then, it was off to Leningrad for a look at the birthplace of the October Revolution and its industry.

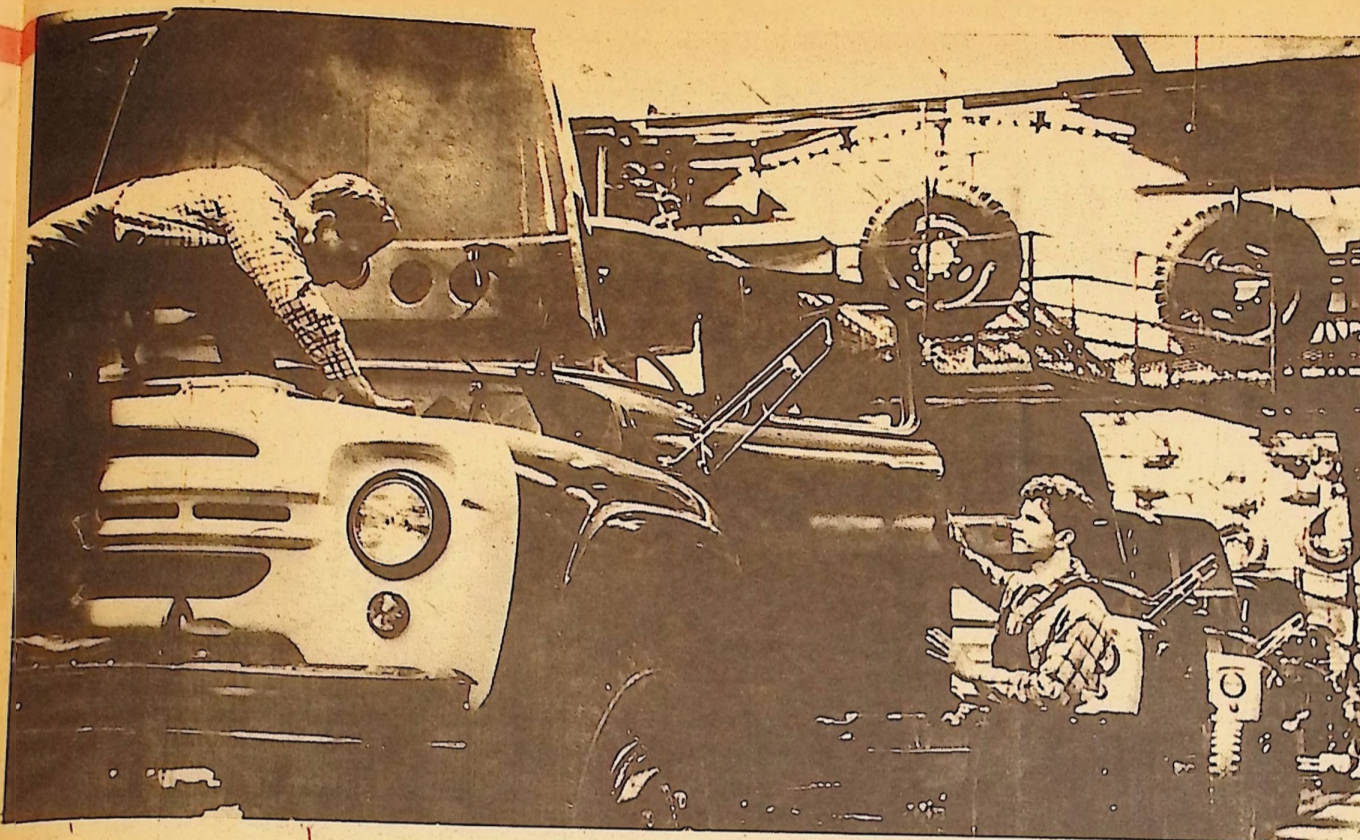
Volzhsky Motor Works in Togliatti is USSR's biggest auto producer.

Arriving in Leningrad, we were greeted by Brother Zinov'yev, head of the Machinery Workers Regional Committee. We were housed in the opulent Leningrad Hotel, which is peopled mostly by rich American tourists.

A key point of the tour was a visit to a watch factory nearby. None of us had the slightest idea what went on in a watch factory, so we were a bit at a loss to compare it with U.S. factories--except to say that the final inspection room (which was all we were shown) was one of the most



Photos by Novosti Press Agency



(upper left) Truck assembly plant in Moscow.

(below) Women get equal work & pay in Soviet Union.



pleasant-appearing work situations we had ever seen.

But what really floored us was a visit to the child-care facility at this plant. Such facilities are practically nonexistent in the U.S., and it presents great difficulties for working mothers. Here, we saw children provided, not only with excellent custodial care, but with educational and cultural programs which contributed to their character development.

Brother Reshnikov of the local Machinery Workers deposited us in the local Intourist Hotel and immediately look us aboard a boat for a cruise on the Dniepr River, along the banks of which we saw many sanatoria and vacation spots. We were somewhat surprized to see so many motor boats and people water-skiing.

But finally we toured the "Zaporozhets" plant! As a delegation, we were quite uncontrollable, as each of us sought out his particular favorite piece of machinery or work process.

In the body stamping department, Ted Silverstein, who works at the American Motors plant in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, said the machinery was almost virtually identical to his plant, especially the big stamping presses. He said his plant installed the identical West German-made model only a few years ago.

"What we chiefly regret," delegation chairman Charles Wilson, a retired Chicago auto worker said, "is that U.S. State Department policy forbids Soviet trade unionists to visit our country, so that we could begin to repay your hospitality and to facilitate greater exchanges between U.S. and Soviet workers."

It's true. For some reason, the U.S. State Department forbids the presence of Soviet trade unionists; while journalists, scholars, artists and tourists are relatively free to come and go. Perhaps the stories we are told about Soviet trade unionists in the U.S. press would not hold up so well if we saw Soviet trade unionists face to face (they don't even have horns).

It is hard to congeal a rounded impression of a nation in such a short visit, but it is undeniable that Soviet workers enjoy living standards that are adequate by Western standards and have begun to surpass them in some respects—particularly those "non-paycheck" items such as social insurance, free education, health care and other benefits that are now largely taken for granted by Soviet workers.

Transport workers town

The Transportation Workers Union of the USSR has extended an invitation for a delegation of American transportation workers to visit the Soviet Union.

If you are a railroad worker, a teamster or work in any aspect of the transportation industry and are interested in participating in the delegation, you may want to go along.

For further information contact Marion Calligaris, c/o LABOR TODAY, 343 South Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. 60604.

Later, we visited a pioneer camp on the Gulf of Finland operated by the union. Again, there is nothing to compare it with in the U.S. Few unions operate such camps. The teachers among us were particularly struck by the way in which the camp continued the educational process and development of the young people.

Our next major destination was the city of Zaporozhe, in the Ukrainian SSR, site of the "Zaporozhets" auto plant. We took the train from Moscow and found a very pleasant ride through the Ukrainian countryside. The trains were crowded with vacationers.

Many of the safety features immediately struck us as superior to much of what we were used to. To activate a major press, one had to turn around and press two opposite buttons, with both hands. Little chance of accident there.

On some of the smaller presses, a sort of tong came out of the press upon which the worker laid the metal for pressing—his (or rather, her) hands never went near the stamping operation itself. A very good practice, we thought.

The "Zaporozhets" car itself was interesting. It seemed, with its rear, air-cooled engine, to be similar to the Volkswagen. We didn't get the opportunity to drive any Soviet cars, but we particularly wondered if the Zaporozhets couldn't beat out the Volkswagen; or the Zhiguli, its Fiat counterpart. Maybe trade relations between our two countries will develop to the point where we will have an opportunity to see for ourselves.

As automobile fanciers as well as auto workers, we frequently stopped on the street to give Soviet models the "once over." Generally, we found them to be well-constructed. Those inspectors among us found no alarming number of defects, although the engineering designs on some small items (windshields, for instance) seemed a bit out of date.

We summed these experiences up in another meeting with Brother Dragunov. He eagerly solicited our impressions



Miners' strike victory

(continued from page 1)

In fact, a reader of The Wall Street Journal or the New York Times or TV viewers were treated to a picture of miners up in arms against the UMWA leadership. Provocations of all kinds, such as contract burnings, were given wide publicity. Newspapers such as The New York Times went out of their way to portray UMWA President Arnold Miller as "fumbling and incoherent." False reports of the contract's terms by the news media also stirred up anti-contract sentiment in the coal fields.

What the coal bosses were hoping was that the miners could be fooled into repudiating their leadership and destroying the fighting power of the union.

Those hopes faded fast when the votes came in.

While the total "for" vote was about 56 percent, a respectable enough majority, it ran as high as 67 percent "for" in the coal fields of Kentucky, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Alabama. This higher margin was offset by "no" votes from three districts, western Kentucky, Illinois and the Far West - strongholds of supporters of Tony Boyle.

The draft contract was submitted to the membership after an initial draft had been rejected by the UMWA's collective bargaining council. The council suggested areas of the initial draft that might be improved. Subsequent negotiations produced a contract that won the support of the bargaining council.

The UMWA says the new pact will provide an increase of 54.4 percent over the next three years in wages and fringe benefits. One breakthrough is that the new pact provides for the creation of 7,500 new "helper" jobs to improve safety conditions. (How many major union contracts in recent years have provided for new hiring rather than layoffs in the name of "productivity"?)

The pact provides a 10 percent increase the first year, four percent the second year and three percent in the third, increasing the average miner's pay by \$1.17 an hour to \$6.80.

The contract also is a breakthrough in providing a Cost-Of-Living Adjustment for the first time. It will pay one cent for each 0.4 percent rise in the Consumer Price Index, limited to an annual increase of eight percent. In addition, the miners will be paid a "catch-up bonus" of \$80 to deal with the inflation that has occurred since 1971.

With the COLA formula thrown in, the pact will provide wage increases of 10 percent, 12 percent and 11 percent. While this is superior to any wage settlement won in recent bargaining in major industry, it still fails to meet the challenge of rising prices and inflation.

By the end of the contract, pensions for those miners presently retired will go from \$150 a month to \$250. Those who retire a year from now will be eligible for a new pension plan which will provide up to \$530 a month.

A little-known feature of the pact is that it also reaches back to 1946 to provide \$125 monthly pensions and free medical care for over 50,000 miners' widows who were previously denied any benefits.

UP TO 1,000% ABOVE LAST YEAR

Miners set sights on coal owners' profits

The public should understand why miners appear--and evidently are--so adamant in their demands.

They know who their employers are. They no longer are mainly independent mining firms as they were 20 or even 10 years ago. Today, 70% of the nation's coal reserves are owned by oil companies. Steel firms own some 20% of the remaining 30%.

The 120,000 miners in the bituminous coal industry know that they work for enormously large companies and cartels that--as all Americans learned during last year's gas shortage--are piling up enormous profits.



According to Keystone News Bulletin, an authoritative coal trade publication, there were some 4,000 coal-mining concerns in the U.S. in 1973, but a mere handful--15 in number--controlled just half (49.7%) of the total production.

"We'll stay out as long as it takes."



The contract also preserves the right of the individual miner to walkout over safety conditions. Some miners still voice discontent involving an interpretation over whether or not there is a right to strike over local issues. The settlement contains no provision on that point and past practice indicates that miners will strike when they feel it is necessary.

Rank and filers rallied to the miners' cause from all over the country. In Chicago, rank and filers won support for the miners from several large Steelworkers' locals and the Chicago Teachers Union among others. The most vigorous activity took place in Pittsburgh where rank and filers formed the Western Pennsylvania Coalition to Support the United Mine Workers which drew support from such groupings as the Pennsylvania State Education Association (NEA), several steel locals, the Meatcutters, students at local colleges and Monsignor Charles O. Rice. Kay Tillow, an organizer for a hospital workers union, spearheaded the group which distributed leaflets at area factories, including a statement by USWA President I.W. Abel supporting the miners.

Keystone figures show that the four largest coal producers--Peabody Coal, owned by Kennecott Copper Corp.; Consolidation Coal, owned by Continental Oil; Island Creek Coal, a subsidiary of Occidental Petroleum; and Pittston, an independent--by themselves accounted for more than 30% of the entire coal output.



Not only do the oil companies own a huge chunk of the nation's coal industry, they also are prominent among the lease-holders on potential coal. A recent report study by the Council on Economic Priorities, based in New York, found that 15 lease-holders control 70% of the public and Indian land under lease.

Five oil companies--Continental, Shell, Sun, Gulf and Atlantic Richfield--were among those top 15 leaseholders. In addition, the council reported, Exxon held three coal leases in the name of the Carter Oil Company.

As for the profit picture in the coal industry, it almost defies belief.

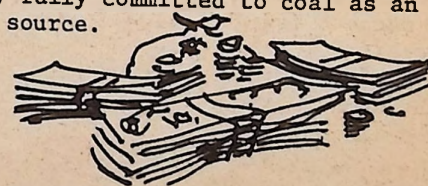
Statistics collected by the UMW's research department indicate that top coal companies raked in 1974 third-quarter profits that in some cases ran at an "astronomical" plus-1,000% above the same period last year.

Westmoreland Coal, the 11th largest producer and second largest independent, earned \$12.8 million for the quarter, up 1,242% from \$1.03 million a year ago. Pittston's \$27.5 million in profits was an 887% increase over the same period in 1973.

Owners of the top three coal producers--Kennecott, Continental Oil and Occidental Petroleum--reported third quarter profit increases averaging 212% above last year, with the latter two's coal subsidiaries also showing gigantic earnings increases. Kennecott's Peabody Coal, the country's largest coal producer, refused to disclose earnings, saying only that the company would operate at a profit this year.

U.S. Steel, the 6th largest coal producer, reported third quarter profits that were up 144.7% over last year, while Bethlehem Steel, the 7th largest producer, recorded an 87.2% rise. Neither showed a specific breakdown on their coal holdings.

While the oil and steel companies, along with their coal subsidiaries, were economically hurt while the strike continued, their mine employees know that as soon as it is over they will be recording still greater profit gains in an economy fully-committed to coal as an energy source.



As UMW President Arnold Miller put it at one point during earlier negotiations, "The coal industry has been eating off the fat of the land. The men who risk their lives every working day for that industry deserve more than the curse of 'black lung' and an early grave."

write on 

DIGGING UP MORE DIRT

To the Editors:

I have recently come across the December 1973 issue of LABOR TODAY with your article on "Digging Up the Dirt" which I found very interesting. I have used the fact-finding you described over the past few years in researching corporations for organizing purposes with both labor unions and community groups. Two very significant results have come from these efforts which I would like to mention.

First, which you mentioned, is that this approach of investigating the opposition produces important information. It can be used as factual propaganda but it is also essential for making sensible decisions about the tactics of the organizing campaign. This is really intelligence data and should be used as such. When workers turn up accurate information on who owns the company, who sits on the Board of Directors and therefore makes the important policy decisions, what inter-connections these directors have with other corporations, etc., they usually find weak points to be exploited in the organizing fight.



A second benefit from this investigating is the "eye-opening" that workers and community folks go through as they see this information for what it tells them. The often anonymous and awesome power structure that runs the company or community gets exposed for what it really is--a bunch of greedy, self-serving men, human beings just like the people whose lives they control. These men have access to power only because they are in certain slots in the corporation or the community and not because they are super-human or someone with extra abilities or super-intelligence. When folks see these power brokers reduced to just plain people with only the system on their side, then folks lose their fear of "the boss" or of "city hall." They get the self-confidence to confront these characters through organization.

As you well mentioned, this fact-finding can and should be done by the workers themselves. It's quite easy and certainly doesn't call for a fancy degree. A little practice to find out where and what resources are available and how to use them will put workers in a good position to use the dirt they dig up.

We have worked out some simple techniques for keeping track of the dirt (the intelligence data) and some easy guidelines to follow while doing the actual research on a corporation. If it would be of interest, we would be glad to share them with others through LABOR TODAY. Let me know if this would be wanted.

I would also like to know if you have any copies of the reports from the Committee on Government Operations for sale. If so, I'd like a set or else where to obtain one.

Thanks for your consideration. Keep up the good work.

Dave Cormier
Pittsburgh, PA



the rank and file in action

by FRED GABOURY

Field Organizer

TUAD

1974;

THE RANK AND FILE GROWS STRONGER

Year end wrap-ups are toughies. The complexities of 1974 make the job tougher; tougher to assess, to summarize or to draw conclusions from.

No year that saw Nixon driven from the nation's highest office could be called a bad year. No year that saw real wages decline by 5-6% could be called a good year, either.

Or, looking from a different vantage point: that Shanker power-grab in the American Federation of Teachers. How does that stack up against the Sadlowski victory in USWA District 31?

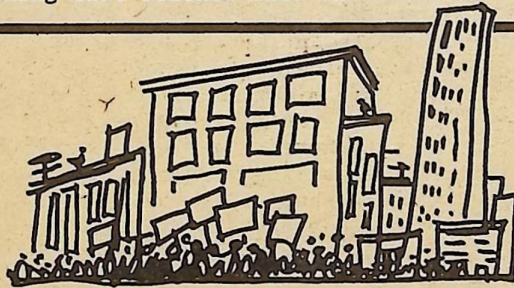
In March, Abel and a couple of other USWA top-siders beat back a rank and file legal challenge aimed at outlawing the Experimental Negotiating Agreement, brewed in secret between I.W. Abel and steel industry brass in 1973. ENA imposed compulsory arbitration on 1974 basic steel negotiations. The ban on strikes was later extended through the 1977 contract. By year's end, the United Mine Workers Union had shut down the coal fields as coal miners exercised their first-time-ever right of contract ratification. How does all that add up?

What about the continued "no-fight" drift of the UAW that witnessed the union's leadership cramming "5.5" settlements down the throats of UAW members while other workers, freed in May of government imposed wage controls, launched a series of strikes that eclipsed 15-year records and won 10% increases?

How does it all add up...was it a "good" year or was it a "bad" year?

These are some of the questions that rank and filers have to grapple with as they work at setting their unions on the fight-back trail.

Nixon's fall set in motion waves of questioning that reached into the ranks of the



STARR ON HOLODNAK

To the Editors,

Mike F. Holodnak (see letter July, 1974) hardly proves his "greatest services" charge. Does he think a fierce class struggle appeal would serve or even get into the public schools?

Mike Starr
AFT Local 189
Long Island City, NY

(Editor's Note: A former Welsh coal-miner, Brother Starr taught at the Brookwood Labor College in the 1920's and was later the Education Director of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, AFL-CIO.)



FRED GABOURY

labor movement, giving new heart and experience to rank and filers who had felt powerless before the corporate-government gang-up against their working and living conditions. By year's end, the pressure of declining-living standards had cracked through and a number of unions--the ILWU and the IUE among them--were pressing to re-open their contracts. The November 16 demonstrations against high prices and unemployment are harbingers of the sharp struggles coming; struggles that are bound to be major rank and file battles in the year ahead.

Shanker may hold the reins of AFT power. He may even be one of a half-dozen who have been promised Meany's desk, but his policies are diametrically opposed to the best interests of teachers. These policies will, sooner or later, face insurmountable challenges from rank and file forces within the AFT. The existence of a rank and file movement under the leadership of the United Action Caucus is an indication that the fight continues.

It would be hard to overstate the potential of the Sadlowski victory. It landed right in the solar plexus of 30 years of class collaboration that kept the USWA wedded to the Democratic Party machines of Chicago and adjoining Northwest Indiana. Its impact will be felt beyond the USWA. The winds that will batter the moss-backed leadership of the Chicago Federation of Labor will shake Meany's Washington office, as well as that of the USWA "official family."

That was the year that was. The rank and file movement left its mark on '74.

WE SURE NEED LT

To the Editors,

Enclosed is my request for a regular monthly bundle of 20 LABOR TODAY's. Also enclosed is my check for the first month's payment.

I am a member of the Abraham and Strauss Organizing Committee. A&S is a major unorganized department store in Brooklyn.

One of our big problems in the drive is the lack of understanding of the members of the O.C. about good trade unionism. I think LT would help overcome this.

We have just suffered the firing of one of our members. As yet, we have not decided how we will respond. If you would like an article in LT about our struggle, please feel free to contact me.

Please send me my first bundle as soon as possible--we sure need them.

Larry Lee Cary, Jr.
Brooklyn, NY

How to challenge increases in public utility rates



A concise, informative guidebook on the hows, whats and whys of effective consumer action against utility companies has recently been published by the Environmental Action Foundation. Written in simple language with many clear examples, How to Challenge Your Electric Utility, by Richard Morgan and Sandra Jerabek, is a primer for consumer, labor or environmental groups wishing to confront utility companies on issues such as rate increases, pollution, new construction and advertising.

The book is divided into two sections; the first explains how power companies operate, the second outlines what you can do about it. In the first section, the reader learns how utility rates are set by regulatory commissions at federal and state levels.

Part two zeroes in on the many ways consumer and environmental groups can challenge utilities. It explains the four basic issues that must be decided in a rate proceeding; rate base, rate of return, cost of service and rate structure.

How to Challenge Your Electric Utility is available at a discount rate from Consumer Federation of America, 1012 14th St., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20007. Cost is \$1.00.

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