

N. Y. COMMITTEE FOR TRADE UNION
ACTION and DEMOCRACY
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the rank and file in action

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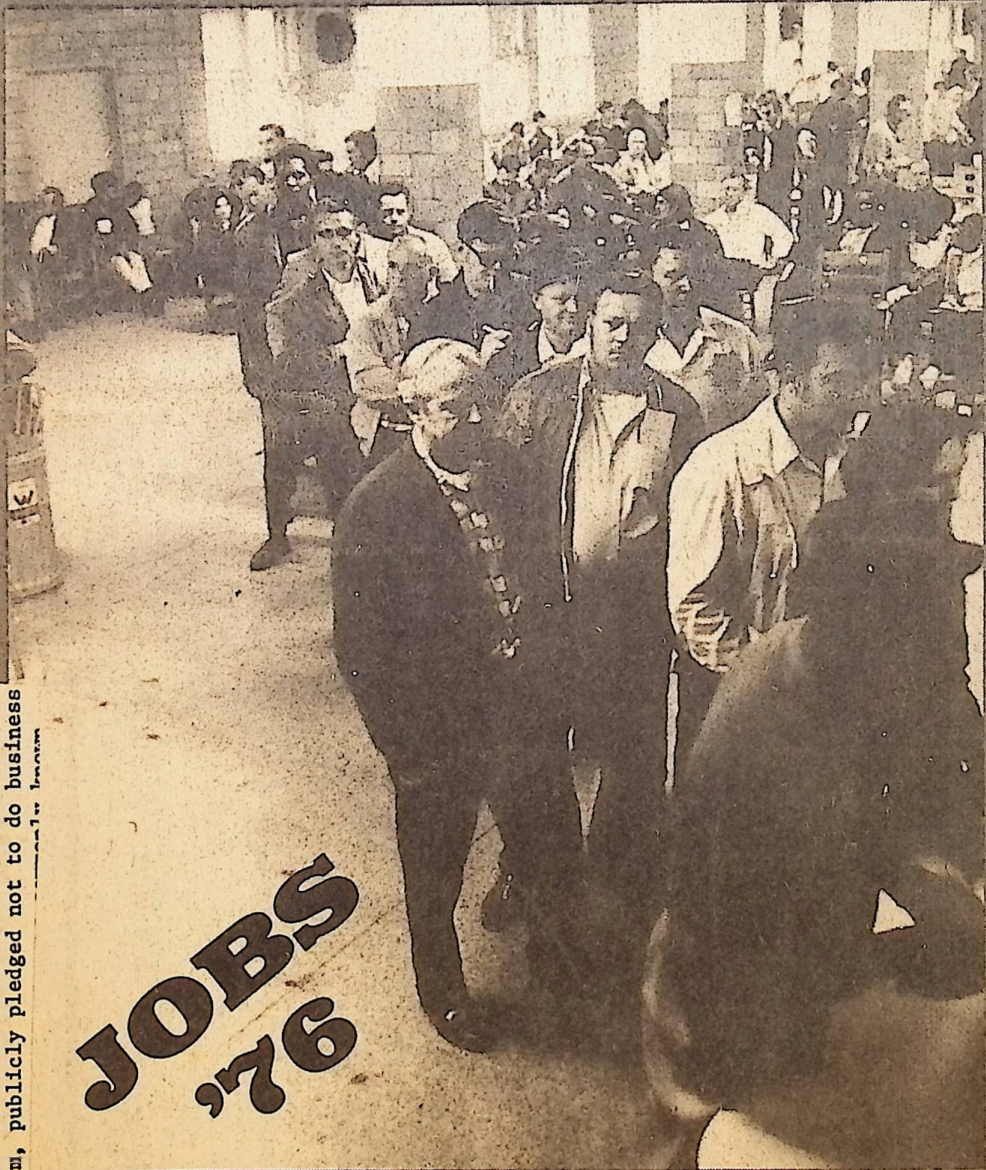
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LABOR Today



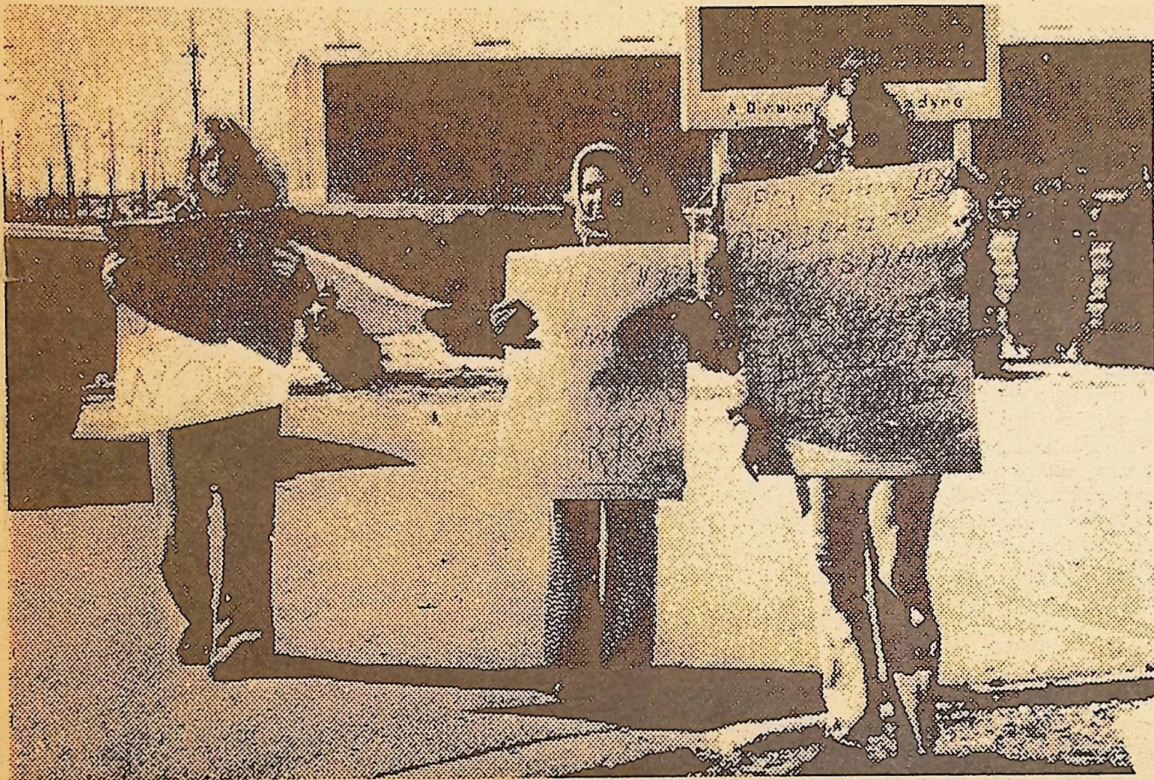
**JOBS
'76**

means, and some members of organizations of their own. Seamen in particular played a leading role in the demonstrations and street battles of the pre-revolutionary period. And late in 1775 the blacksmiths of Worcester, Massachusetts, all forty-three of them, publicly pledged not to do business

HUSBANDS LAID OFF

Steelworker wives battle overtime

Labor Today



by LABOR TODAY Staff

Wives of laid-off members of United Steelworkers' Local 7690 have been picketing Western Cold Drawn Steel in Gary, Indiana, where men working in the same units have been working overtime, up to twelve hours a day.

Mrs. Debbie Steele, who started the picketing, said, "we hope something will result--we don't know just what."

Quieremos articulos en Español!

LABOR TODAY convida a todos los lectores y amigos a mandarnos articulos de fondo y cartas escritos en español. Pretendemos satisfacer la creciente demanda de parte de nuestros lectores a ver más materia en español.

Si Ud. se enrede en una lucha al taller, o en su unión, haga el favor de avisarnos.

El artículo de fondo corriente en LABOR TODAY tiene más o menos 800 palabras. Preferimos articulos de fondo escritos en máquina a dos espacios, pero todo esto no es necesario. Sería muy bueno recibirlos en español y inglés a la vez, pero estamos contentos con articulos de fondo en español a solas.

Manden Uds. sus articulos de fondo y cartas a: LABOR TODAY, 343 S. Dearborn St., Rm. 600. Chicago, IL 60604.

The picketing began after 20 of the 89 members of the local were laid off. Officers of Local 7690 said that nothing could be done since the company had followed the contract to the letter. The women say their informational picket line might cause the company to change its mind.

An article in the January LABOR TODAY, "The Overtime Trap," by Charles Dewey, played a role in mobilizing the women. The spouse of one of the Local 7690 workers works at Bethlehem Steel where she is a member of the rank-and-file caucus of USWA Local 6787. She showed the article to the workers at Western Steel, who then passed it out at the plant.

Western Cold Drawn Steel, which fabricates piping materials, had previously worked everyone overtime on six-day weeks to fill a large order backlog. "Our husbands cooperated then," Ms. Steele said. "I don't see why the company can't cooperate now."

The picketing women have also protested against the hiring policies of Western Steel. Barbara Thomas said she had earlier applied for a job and was told the company doesn't hire women. There are no women working as steelworkers in the plant. The women are looking into a formal complaint to the Gary Human Relations Commission, they said.

"LABOR TODAY has once again proved its value as an organizing tool," said Paul Kaczocha, a leader of the rank and file at Bethlehem Steel. "The fact that one story can help people organize to fight unfair company conditions is a lesson for the whole rank and file."

"This is an instance where LABOR TODAY has helped to promote the unity of the rank and file in two different local unions and we need more of that," he said.

Compulsory Overtime Rejected

by LABOR TODAY Staff

A revolt by USWA Local 2601 at Bethlehem Steel's Lackawanna, New York, plant against compulsory overtime has prevented the company from placing hundreds of workers on overtime schedules while over 1,000 workers at the plant are laid off.

On February 12, the company sought to place about 300 workers on a four-day week of nine or more hours a day--sparking a special union meeting and a vote to oppose the company. A grievor at Local 2601, Robert Compise, said the union thought the company was trying "to permanently minimize its workforce."

A meeting with company officials made the union's position clear to management. Bethlehem backed down.

As a result, some of the laid-off workers have been rehired.

Compise said the union would resist Bethlehem's efforts "to force some of our members to work overtime while hundreds of their fellow members are remaining on layoff."

"We will not turn back the clock 20 or 30 years," he said.

CWA seeks shorter hours

The Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO, will make a shorter work week a major goal in 1977 negotiations.

Martin J. Hughes, International Vice-President, told a CWA conference in Cleveland that 40,000 jobs will be lost as a result of new technology being used by the Bell System.

Such higher productivity for each worker means the union must make a paramount goal of a shorter work week or a combination of fewer hours and longer vacations, Hughes said.



CFE'S RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT

Organizing the unemployed in Philly

by EDWARD HORTON
IAM Local 1717
Philadelphia

My introduction to the struggle was at a state unemployment office where I went to sign for my compensation check. The office was being leafletted by a group called the Committee for Full Employment, and what they said made a lot of sense. I had been laid off from Eaton, Yale and Towne Corporation's fork lift truck division for over two months. After working there for a couple of years as an assembler, I felt, as did many others, pretty secure in my job. And then the rumors started about a plant being built down south where the company could make more money by paying lower wages, escaping union protection through "right-to-work" laws, and escaping the payment of union benefits, etc. In other words, the company was running away from the rights and benefits working people had fought for and won for the last half century.

This story is about the unemployed, their way of fighting for the benefits they are entitled to, and the way I and many others joined the struggle for jobs for all at union wages.

Congress hasn't hesitated to help bail out big business, aircraft corporations, oil companies, railroads, etc., but has yet to do anything worthwhile for the people of this country. Billions in "welfare" are given to the rich, but only cutbacks to the people. Our committee is ready to march in Washington again--we can't afford to be ignored and we won't be forgotten.

In our extensive work with the unemployed we have found that 25 to 30% of the people on compensation have problems getting their checks on time. We wanted jobs, but we also have to eat. After a demonstration of more than 100 people at a local unemployment office, the Secretary of Labor in Pennsylvania agreed to meet with us to negotiate about the problems of the unemployed. Through the combination of mass demonstrations and negotiations we have won the right to leaflet inside the offices and devised a system to aid claimants with problems.

Every day the papers report that the recession is over and claim that unemployment has "dropped." But looking closely at the figures we find that a significant part of the so-called drop is in reality people who have run out of benefits entirely. The system currently provides for 65 weeks of

benefits, but this is nowhere near enough. The Committee for Full Employment organized a busload of unemployed workers to go to the state capital to pressure state officials to extend benefits indefinitely. That was last October. This February 5 we held hearings before the State Senate's Labor and Industry Committee and have been promised that a bill would be introduced to extend benefits for another thirteen weeks in the state of Pennsylvania. Many trade unionists, trade union leaders and representatives from community organizations attended and testified at the hearing, including the UAW, UE, Graphic Arts, Operation PUSH and others.



The Committee for Full Employment was formed over a year ago by the Philadelphia Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy, when a large portion of its members were laid off. Brothers and sisters from the UAW, UE, IAM, USWA, Laborers and Ironworkers united to call for a federal jobs program to put the unemployed back to work at union wages. Our first action was the sponsoring of a hearing with Operation PUSH before Congressman Hawkins' committee here in Philadelphia to put Philadelphians officially on record as supporting full employment legislation.

We then organized three busloads of unemployed people to go to Washington, D.C., on April 26 to join with the Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO, and the National Coalition to Fight Inflation and Unemployment. On that day employed and unemployed, Black and white, men and women, young and old rallied 65,000 strong to demand action on jobs from our elected officials. It is now almost a year later and many have forgotten about that day, particularly Congressmen, Senators and President Jerry "Veto" Ford, our appointed President. We have had about a year of buck-passing from the "veto-proof" Congress that doesn't have the guts to stand up to Ford's vetoes and is content to wait until 1977 and the end of the next two party charade in November until they'll do anything.

Recognition of the problems of the unemployed and action on those problems came from the Central Labor Council of York Co. The Council had invited us to speak about organizing the unemployed. An unemployment committee has been formed there as well, and we have been working closely together.

What we need, and what we are working toward, is a mass movement uniting unemployed and employed, Black and white, male and female, young and old. I would like to see organizations of unemployed spring up all over the country and unite with the trade unions to press the demand for "Jobs now!"

AFL-CIO to publish unemployment data

The AFL-CIO charged that the government's official monthly statistics on unemployment "seriously understate" the true extent of joblessness, and announced that henceforth each month it will calculate the "real measure" of unemployment in the nation.

"Unemployment has been much greater and has had a much wider impact on American families than the Administration admits," the Executive Council declared.

The AFL-CIO has for some time criticized the Bureau of Labor Statistics for its failure to factor into the jobless rate the large number of "discouraged" workers who have left the labor market and part-time workers who are involuntarily without employment part of the work week.

"This number of discouraged jobless workers is not even added to the Labor Department's official report on the number of unemployed," the statement pointed out.

Even this accounts for only part of the understatement of the official jobless figures, the council said, because BLS does not give proper weight to the number of "involuntary part-time" workers counted each month.

But the government officially counts a worker as "employed" even if he works for as little as one hour during the surveyed week.

"In terms of time worked, therefore, half the number of 'involuntary part-time' workers should be considered as unemployed," the AFL-CIO said.

"Adding that figure to the adjusted unemployment total, there were 10.786 million unemployed people--11.5 percent of the civilian labor force, or about one out of every nine workers."

Thus, the Executive Council concluded, 11.5 percent--and not 8.5 percent--was the true measure of unemployment for 1975.

The council noted that not even the true measure of joblessness adequately reflects the impact of unemployment on workers and their families, since many workers are hit by two or more periods of lay-off in a single year.

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Why the boss likes overtime

THE FACTS ABOUT OVERTIME

People often wonder why employers go to so much trouble to force workers to work overtime, even though they have to pay time and a half for overtime hours. Wouldn't it be more sensible to hire extra workers and install more machinery at straight time?

The fact is that the company makes more profit on overtime hours than on regular hours, in spite of time and a half. The main reason for this is that the boss has certain costs--wages, fringes, overhead--which are paid for by selling what the worker produces in the first few hours of the worker's production. Anything the worker produces after that is clear profit; therefore, the longer the working day, the more the profits.

The chart, for a "typical" factory of 1000 workers, tells the story. (See more detailed explanation under the chart.) In the last four hours of a 12-hour day, the company pays time and a half. But it doesn't pay anything for fringes (pension, hospitalization, etc.). So if you count fringes in with wages for the first 8 hours, the company pays only 1 1/5 as much to the worker during the four overtime hours. And look what he saves in those last four hours: rent, real estate taxes, interest on debt; and much clerical and administrative work is no greater for the 12-hour day than the 8-hour day because the white collar staff only works 8 hours. So, essentially, the company has almost no "overhead" during the last four hours. Looking at the chart, we see that this means that for the 8-hour day, it takes the first five hours' production to cover costs, leaving three for profits. In a 12-hour day, it takes two hours longer--seven hours--to cover costs, leaving five hours of clear profit.

STRAIGHT TIME (8 hours)			OVERTIME DAY (12 hours)			
		No. of hours Production Equivalent	First 8 hours + 4 OT-hours		= TOTAL	No. of hours production equivalent
VALUE ADDED	\$128	8 hours	\$128	+ \$64	= \$192	12
COSTS						
Wages	\$ 32	2 hrs.	\$32	+ \$24	= \$56	3 1/2
Fringes	\$ 8	1/2 hrs.	\$ 8	+ \$ 0	= \$ 8	1/2
Overhead	\$ 40	2 1/2 hrs.	\$40	+ \$ 8	= \$48	3
Total	\$ 80	5 hrs.	\$80	\$32	= \$112	7
PROFITS						
	\$48	3 hours	\$48	+ \$32	= \$80	5
<u>Total yearly profits</u> (1000 workers, 250 days)		\$12 million per year	\$20 million per year			
<u>Capital Investment</u>						
Fixed	\$24 million	\$24 million	+ \$0 million	= \$24 million		
Circulating	\$16 million	\$16 million	+ \$8 million	= \$24 million		
Total	\$40 million			\$48 million		
<u>Rate of Profit on Invested Capital:</u>		30%	41%			
<u>Rate of surplus value:</u>		120%	125%			

As the chart shows, any way you measure it, the company makes more working the workers overtime than it would hiring additional workers and buying more machines at a normal straight time.

HOW ELSE DOES THIS HURT THE WORKER?

In addition to getting shafted for the sole benefit of a few owners and managers, regular overtime means fatigue, lower mus-

cular co-ordination, therefore illness and accidents. That means less family life, less time for relaxation, further education and all the other benefits and pleasures every worker has a right to. Last but not least, it means fewer men and women on jobs. More unemployment, less cash for the working class to buy goods with: it contributes to recession.

Farmworkers facing renewed struggle

California farmworkers have been stripped of all legal protection against the growers' violent campaign to defeat the United Farmworkers Union (UFW, AFL-CIO).

The Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB) was set up in August 1975 to give agricultural workers the right to petition for union elections. But as of January 31, it laid off all 200 of its staff, closed all field offices, refused to accept or act on any petitions and cancelled all hearings on election disputes. The Board ran out of money in January, 1976, because investigations into unfair labor practices and challenged ballots were required in nearly every election. Emergency funding has been blocked by the growers' lobbying efforts in the state legislature.

In all the elections that were held so far, the big growers flagrantly violated the law. For example, at Gallo's Livingston Ranch, the employer used a combination of legal and illegal dirty tricks to defeat the UFW. When the company found out that the workers were petitioning for an election they called a meeting of all its workers. At the meeting Joe Gallo, head of the company, told everyone who had signed the petition to raise their hands. He fired them all on the spot and told the remaining

workers to sign a no-union petition if they wanted to keep their jobs.

After the election at Gallo the Teamsters challenged the farmworkers, who had been on strike in 1973. A Labor Board hearing was scheduled for February. Also at issue is a UFW complaint that the growers denied them access to workers during the campaign. The UFW is demanding immediate certification by the Labor Board because they say that the growers harassment has made fair elections impossible.

The Labor Board designated the Gallo election a test case to decide the issue of whether striking farmworkers were eligible to vote. The hearings on this and election disputes at many other ranches were cancelled when the board ran out of funds.

The UFW strategy, now that the law exists only on paper, is to continue its organizing drives while pressuring the state to fund the Board. The union is also keeping up its boycott of Gallo wines, non-UFW lettuce and California table grapes. As the head of the Boston boycott put it, "The growers think that somehow they can still smash this thing. They think they can put in the Teamsters over us now and later get rid of the Teamsters and have no union. They don't realize yet that those days are over.

PRODUCTION, COSTS AND PROFITS FOR A "TYPICAL" FACTORY.

EXPLANATION: This chart is for a hypothetical factory of 1000 workers, working 250 days a year. The figures are representative of many durable goods manufacturing plants.

The chart assumes the average worker is paid \$4 per hour, and receives another \$1 in fringe benefits. He produces \$16 worth of goods for every hour he works. In an 8-hour day, the company spends \$40 in overhead for each worker. There is \$24 million invested in fixed capital (buildings, equipment, etc.), and for an 8-hour schedule, \$16 million invested in circulating capital (inventories and cash).

VALUE ADDED is price of the product minus the cost of the raw materials: it is the increase in value that the raw materials obtain when they are transformed by the workers into finished products.

OVERHEAD consists of many items. This represents salaries of essential clerical and technical workers, interest, rent, expense accounts, etc. Most of this is covered the first 8 hours. However, there is some overhead in overtime hours: extra foremen, some extra clerical work, etc. So we estimate overtime costs per overtime hour as a little less than half the overtime cost per regular hour.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT is the amount the corporation has to lay out to start and maintain production. The fixed capital is the same in each case, because the same amount of buildings and machines are needed for an 8-hour day as a 12-hour day. The circulating capital is a little more for a 12-hour day, because more has to be spent on stock and inventory. But the extra profit more than makes up for it: with an 8-hour day, it takes the company 3 1/3 years to get back its original investment. Running a 12-hour shift, it takes less than 2 1/2 years.

THE RATE OF SURPLUS VALUE is the total profits divided by the total of wages plus fringe benefits. In other words, it measures the amount the boss gets compared with the amount the worker gets. With an 8-hour day, the boss gets a bigger slice of pie than the worker, but with the 12-hour day, the boss gets a still bigger slice compared with the worker.

Transit workers tour

Officers and stewards of transportation unions in the United States have been invited to visit the Soviet Union this summer as guests of the Transport Workers Union of the USSR. The tour will run between two and three weeks and will involve a close look at transport unions in the USSR and how they serve their members.

If you are an officer or steward in a U.S. transport union, you may contact Marion Calligaris, 4250 Saratoga, Apt. 1205, Downers Grove, IL for more information.

Who are the unemployed?

Although production and profits have begun to recover from the worst recession since the 1930's, unemployment is still high. Gross National Product rose at an annual rate of over 10% in the third quarter of 1975, and corporate profits grew by 15%. The unemployment rate, however, has remained stable since June, fluctuating between 8.3% and 8.6%.

WHO IS UNEMPLOYED?

As usual, the hardest-hit groups are female, non-white, young, and unskilled workers. And the recession is eroding the significant gains in employment that these groups achieved during the past ten years.

Unemployment among non-white workers has always been higher than among whites. In October minority unemployment was 12.3%, as compared with 6.3% for whites. While non-white people are 12% of the population, they make up 19% of the unemployed.

Women make up 40% of the labor force (the people who are employed or looking for jobs) If they were unemployed in proportion to their numbers in the labor force, 2.9 million of the 7.2 million unemployed workers would be women. Instead, they are almost half of the unemployed--in October, 3.4 million women looked for jobs without success.

Economic recession also hits young workers hard. The October unemployment rate among job-seekers aged 16-21 years was 17.7%. For non-whites in the same age group, it was 33.6%. Because younger workers are often employed in low-security jobs, they are among the first to be laid off.



The decline in industrial output in 1974 and early 1975 has also resulted in a particularly high jobless rate for blue-collar workers. From December 1973 to March 1975 (the low point of employment), while total employment was dropping 1,800,000, blue-collar employment dropped 2,600,000. In the next six months, total employment rose 1,600,000, almost regaining its 1973 level, but blue-collar employment rose only 900,000, to remain far below the 1973 level. October's unemployment rate for blue-collar workers was 11.2%.

UNDER-COUNTING THE JOBLESS

During the course of a year, unemployment affects many more than the eight-percent-plus of the labor force counted as unemployed at any one time. The average length of time that an unemployed person is out of work is around 15 weeks; so the number

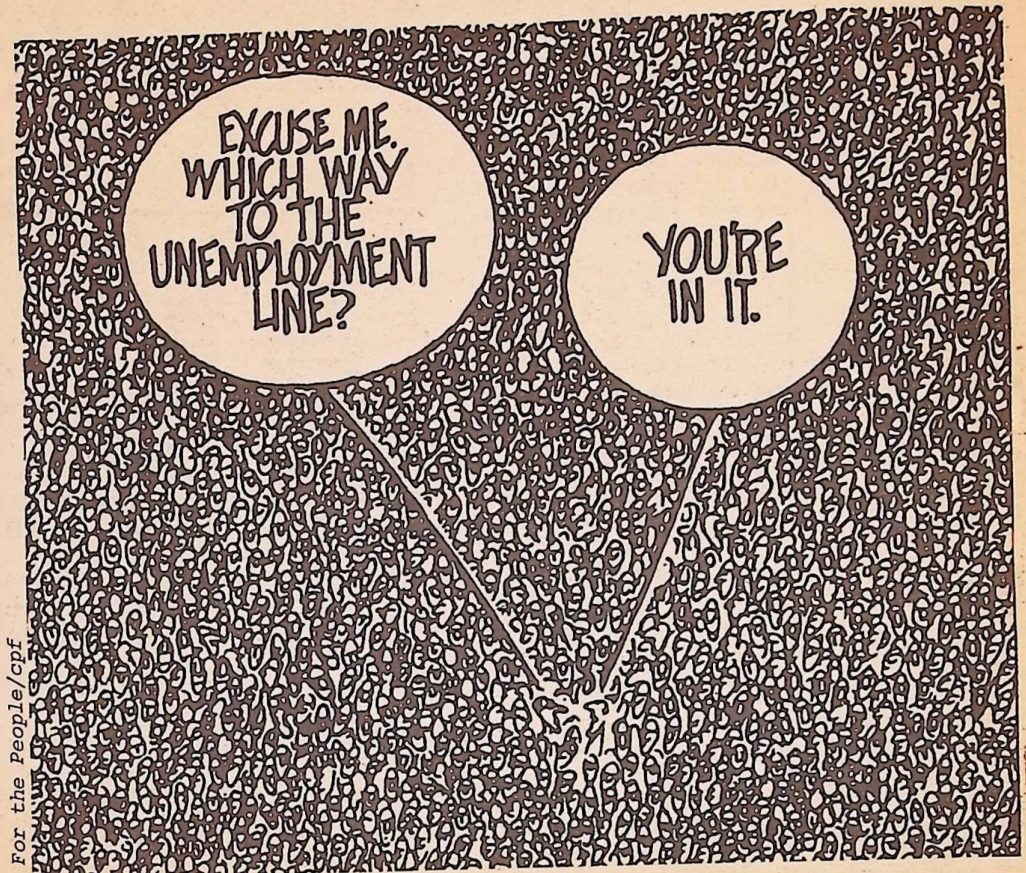
of people unemployed at some time during the year is between three and four times the number unemployed on any given date.

In 1974, when the average number of unemployed people was about 5 million, 18.3 million were out of work at some time during the year--4 million more than in 1973. For 1975, a conservative estimate would be that 24 million people, one worker in four, were unemployed at some time during the year.

People who have given up actively looking for jobs are not counted in the unemployment statistics. This is a major omission in the statistics, and is part of the reason the government's unemployment rate always understates how hard it is to find a job. The same groups who have the highest unemployment rates--women, blacks and the young--account for most of the discouraged workers. Two-thirds of the discouraged workers are women; almost one-fourth are black. Only 9% of discouraged workers are men between 25 and 59.

Unemployment figures do not count people who are employed part time. Yet three million people are working part time simply because full time jobs are not available. A related aspect of employment in a recession is that many people may not be able to find jobs they were trained for, and are "subemployed" (the Labor Department's word) at jobs for which they are overqualified. Yet the government's unemployment rates treats them as though they were fully employed.

The recession affects employed workers, too. As the recovery of production begins, employers prefer to speed up those who still have jobs rather than to hire additional workers; and workers, remembering the recent threat of unemployment, are less likely to protest than in a period of near-full employment. From the second to the third quarter of 1975, output per labor-hour in all non-financial corporations rose



For the People/cpf

at an annual rate of 12.4%, about the same as in the previous quarter. Meanwhile, real hourly wages continued to fall. This difference is what accounts for the big jump in profits.

MORE NUMBER-JUGGLING

Some business-oriented economists are trying to use an "employment rate" figure (which they define as the percentage of the working-age population holding jobs) to claim things really aren't so bad. For instance, Manufacturers Hanover Trust Vice-President Irwin Kellner recently argued in the *New York Times* that because the "employment rate" is now at its thirty-year average level, unemployment isn't really a very serious problem.

The flaw in this argument is that it compares employment to the total adult population, not to those who can or want to work. In the early post-WWII years, the baby boom meant that many more women were at home taking care of young children. As a result, the "employment rate" was low because many mothers could not, or did not want to work outside the home.

Now, when a much lower percentage of women have young children, the fact that the "employment rate" is not much above the baby-boom level means that lots more people seeking work can't find it.

Conservative economists are not concerned about this because of their limited definition of the labor force. They cling to the idea that the only really serious unemployment is that among male heads of households. Kellner complained in his article that the official unemployment rate "can include those who would like to have jobs, regardless of how seriously they search for work, or whether they are the primary support of their households." The Bureau of Labor Statistics, which calculates the unemployment rate, is trying to eliminate "casual jobseekers" from its figures.

No gold for youth at McDonald's

by PATRICK GAYNOR and
NORM ROGERS
AFT Local 1985
Tamalpais, Calif.

Next time you're part of the swarm waiting for the food handed out by Ronald McDonald and Ray Kroc, think about the facts. You eat what you are.

McDonald's, the nation's 11th largest private employer, has 3,000 outlets where 150,000 people work. Most of the workers are under 21 and many are students in our

classrooms. Few are paid much more than the minimum wage.

On the other hand, McDonald's president Ray Kroc is one of the 15 richest individuals in the country, worth a half-billion dollars. His entire wealth is based on McDonald's. McDonald's profits rest on keeping wages low, and the company knows it.

In 1972, Ray Kroc made a \$255,000 donation to Richard Nixon's re-election campaign. Soon after his re-election, Nixon amended a proposed minimum wage law so that, while

the minimum for most workers was raised to \$2.20 an hour, it stayed the same (\$1.80) and in some cases actually decreased, for young people. This bill promptly became known as the "McDonald's Minimum" although Nixon denied any connection between Kroc's donation and the proposed law. Congress rejected Nixon's amendment and passed a minimum wage that included young people, which Nixon then vetoed as "inflationary."

The McDonald's hamburger chain consumes each year 315 square miles of forestland for wrapping paper, napkins, bags, and straws. McDonald's uses more energy to prepare its "food" than the electrical output for the cities of Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., combined.

What do the young McDonald's workers think of the company? "I hated it," says Nancy Boris, a former employee. "I hated every damn minute of it." At one time, she could not have worked at McDonald's at all. For many years the company refused to hire women, especially teenage women, because Kroc believed "they attract the wrong kind of boys." The company was forced to drop that policy by federal legislation.

Other forms of discrimination remained. Boris spent most of her time in the jobs generally filled by women--bagging french fries, cleaning the lobby, and taking orders at the window. Men at the same restaurant tended to work the grill ("It takes a lot of muscle to scrape that grill properly," said one manager.) and back room.

"Working the window was a little better than in back because it wasn't as hot," Boris said. "But I hated always having to smile and say, 'May I help someone please?' and 'Thank you, come again.' They think it is so important that their workers smile, but they don't care whether you've got anything to smile about."

The company tries to increase productivity by getting workers to compete. At many sites, managers checked receipts every hour and sang out the name of whoever had the most sales. Since pay raises are based on performance, it's not surprising that there was much competition for this recognition.

Whenever workers try to challenge low wages, the complete lack of fringe benefits, or working conditions, the company is ruthless. The employees' handbook warns that you can be fired for "enticing, coercing or influencing others to fail to maintain production standards"--in other words, for union organizing. There have been a few isolated spontaneous strikes, but there have been no organizing drives with widespread or long-term success, due to the rapid employee turnover, the corporation's intimidation and the little interest shown by labor unions.

The frustration of the McDonald's worker is summed up in Nancy Boris' statement about Ray Kroc: "I feel like I've hated him all of my life."

Louisville workers to back busing

by SCOTT MARSHALL
Birmingham, Alabama

Black workers in Louisville have formed a new rank and file organization in response to the racist atmosphere being built in the unions by the anti-busing forces. It has been named the United Black Workers of Jefferson County.

The UBW is made up of rank and filers from all the major shops in Louisville including members from the big IUE 761 Local and UAW members from the large Ford truck and car plants.

Most of the workers who got together to form the organization were people who had filed suit or taken action through the union structure to stop the use of union funds to finance anti-busing activities.

Charles Walton of Local 862 UAW in the Ford Truck plant is one of the founders of the UBW. He first got involved by writing a letter to the International Executive Board protesting the use of \$14,000 from the union treasury to finance buses from Louisville to Washington, D.C., for an anti-busing demonstration. A rump meeting of the local was called that passed on the money; needless to say most of the Black workers knew nothing about it.

"But even so," said Walton, "a union meeting could vote to cut your head off...that does not make it right." They don't have the right to use my money to build something to fight me with."

Walton also points out the recent statement by Douglas Frazier about the union reconsidering its position on busing and his contention that Black workers are beginning to have doubts about busing. "I don't know what Black workers he's been talking to; Black workers know that busing is our only tool for quality education for our children. Like these people who say we should just buy houses where we want our kids to go to school. We got a Black family, the Colemans, trying to live in one of those neighborhoods, and since this busing thing they have been threatened and harrassed until we have had to have people staying out in the house with them for protection.

In late November Leonard Woodcock came to Louisville for the Democratic Party's

Issues Conference. In a news conference he reaffirmed the union's position in support of busing to achieve quality integrated education. He also pointed out that one of the foremen at the Ford Truck Plant, Bill Kellerman, was one of the big leaders in the anti-busing movement. At times Kellerman has identified himself as leader of the so-called "United Labor Against Busing."

Woodcock, when questioned by reporters, would not say that Kellerman's role meant that Ford Motor Co. was behind the anti-busing ferment.

Charles Walton was not so shy. "Kellerman is running around trying to get us to spend money on this stuff, when he knows as well as we do that we are going to need that money if we strike the company in the up-coming negotiations."

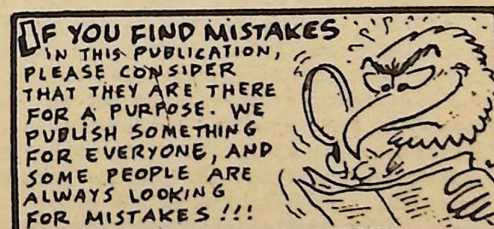


Scott
Marshall

Walton says that the atmosphere in the shop is like going back in time about ten years, his fishing and hunting buddies that are white don't even speak to him anymore. Black and white workers don't even sit down together at lunch anymore. "The company won't fire Kellerman," said Walton, "they know what they're doing, or trying to do."

While Walton doesn't think that things look too good at the Truck Plant in terms of next year's contract, he doesn't think the situation is hopeless. "The white workers can't eat anti-busing," he said, "they can't clothe and send their kids for a good education on racist slogans."

The Auto Workers Action Caucus leaflet on the demand for the shorter work week was handed out at both of the Ford plants in Louisville; Black and white workers all responded well to it.



Working people made our revolution

by CARYL ESTEVES
LABOR TODAY Columnist

The coalition of Americans which led and successfully carried out the War of Independence from England was composed of individuals from diverse economic and social groups. Those in the leadership and policy-making positions were mostly planters, merchants and professionals. A number of the more radical of these sought to strengthen their position by an alliance with another group, the workingmen and artisans of the colonial cities.

Conditions for working people in the pre-revolutionary period were no picnic. The 1760's and early '70's were times of depression and widespread unemployment for American workers. British policy hurt them as well as the merchants and planters. The barriers to shipping hurt not only merchants, but all others whose employment was related to shipping. Sailors, of course, and dock workers, but also ship builders, carpenters and caulkers, certain artisans and small tradesmen. The especially severe restrictions on the importation of cloth harmed the tailors. Barriers to domestic manufacture meant the purchase of British goods at prices 25-40 percent higher than those manufactured in the colonies, and the closing of Boston Harbor resulted in widespread unemployment.

American workers, like their more affluent fellows among the planters and merchants, hoped to improve their lot through political means, and formed numbers of organizations of their own. Seamen in particular played a leading role in the demonstrations and street battles of the pre-revolutionary period. And late in 1775 the blacksmiths of Worcester, Massachusetts, all forty-three of them, publicly pledged not to do business "for any person or persons commonly known by the name of Tories."

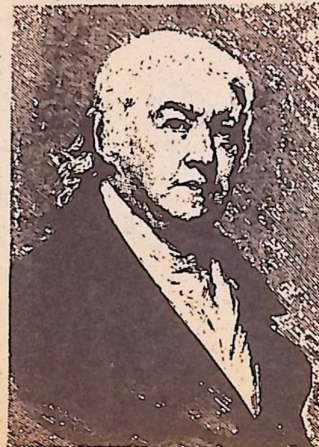
By the early 1770's every major city had a Committee of Mechanics (workingmen) or a Mechanics Party. The Committee of Mechanics in New York was, in fact, the first organization to raise the question of independence from Britain. These organizations became the core around which the Sons of Liberty, the left-wing goad of the coalition, was to grow.

The Sons of Liberty was founded by merchants and aristocrats, like Sam Adams and Christopher Gadsden, who represented the radical side of the coalition. But the actual troops of the organization--those who manned the demonstrations, got out the handbills, enforced the rules against trading in British goods and bullied non-complying merchants were the rank and file--sailors and dockworkers, unskilled and skilled workers, servants, and even a few slaves. It was this group which had been the hardest hit by the economic insecurities of the period, who had the most to gain and the least to lose from an economic and social upheaval.

The Sons of Liberty were the prod of the revolution. Holding the allegiance of the workers they could gather crowds quickly in case of need, and engage in mass action if that sort of activity was felt to be tactically appropriate. They organized strikes in New York against the British and in South Carolina led and organized the boycott of British goods. On April 23, 1775, when the New York Sons heard the news of the Battle of Lexington, they broke open the city arsenal, seized and distributed arms, took

over the government of the city for awhile, and seized vessels of supplies bound for British troops.

The conservatives among the Sons of Liberty had hoped to use the workingmen for their own ends in fighting oppressive British policies. But as the struggle continued, these leaders became alarmed at the continued radicalism of the rank and file in the face of the leaders' tendency to compromise, and their occasional contempt for the sanctity of property. The leadership split, and the more conservative left the organization, leaving it pretty much to the radicals and the workers.



PAUL REVERE

While the merchants, planters and aristocrats often vacillated in their attitude toward Britain, the working people did not. On those occasions when these classes were heard from they favored independence, and were a constant prod to the vacillation of the merchants. They had provided the troops for the boycott of British goods and came out of that struggle with a new sense of their own strength and capabilities.

The workers were not always content to be represented by the merchants. During one election an article appeared calling on the workers and artisans to elect their own representatives to the provincial assembly. The call was successful, not only in that election, but in the following one. The workingmen of Philadelphia formed a secret organization called the "Patriotic Society" for the purpose of voting as a bloc in ensuing elections. This seizure of the franchise by persons who, by law, were not allowed to vote alarmed the merchants as much as it did the British. In Charleston, the mechanics elected their own representatives to the General Assembly. When the news of this action reached the Boston mechanics, they marched on the Town Meeting, ignored the restrictions on voting, and effectively took over control of that body. "At these meetings," sniffed a disgusted aristocrat, "the lowest mechanics discuss upon the most important points of government with the utmost freedom."

The working people became convinced by the events of the early '70's that war was coming. They began to stockpile weapons and to organize militia. They organized a remarkable spy system to keep watch on the British and local Tories. Paul Revere, a prominent Son of Liberty, was a member of the Intelligence Committee. It was they who learned of General Gage's intent to move military stores to Portsmouth, and on April 18, 1775, learned that 800 British troops were moving to seize the rebel's arms cache at Concord, and sent Revere on his famous ride.

The goals of the working people were profoundly democratic; they too had heard the slogans about the relation between taxation and representation, and about liberty. When they had opportunity to put their ideas into political practice, they passed some of the most democratic legislation in existence at that time. In late 1776 a Pennsylvania convention made up largely of farmers and Philadelphia workers, drew up a constitution which called for universal suffrage, democratic representation and complete religious freedom. In a number of states working people passed laws postponing payment of debts. In Massachusetts in 1784-85, two county conventions declared that the state senate should be abolished, and that property should be owned in common.

The loyalty of these people to the revolutionary cause was remarkable. Other members of the coalition recognized the strength and centrality of this group to the struggle. "If her merchants offer to sell us," Dr. Joseph Warren wrote of New York, "her mechanics will forbid the auction." And Sam Adams wrote to another Son of Liberty that the merchants "had been utilized to the utmost as fertilizers of discontent... henceforth the struggle of the colonies must be divorced from the self-interest of the merchant class and rest on a broader base."

Loyal as they were to the revolutionary cause, war profiteering almost fractured the delicate unity forged between the factions. Legislation was passed to control it, but since no enforcement machinery existed, the people decided to do some enforcement of their own. In Beverly, Massachusetts, working women raided the store-rooms of profiteering merchants and forced the sale of merchandise at legal prices. In 1779 a mass meeting in Philadelphia announced a new schedule of prices and warned merchants that violators would be dealt with severely. The shop keepers took the hint, and prices dropped.

Did the workers gain much from all their struggles? While they did not lead the coalition, and while a property-oriented constitution was eventually adopted, they left their mark on the society which grew up following the war, and made gains which were of great importance to their successors.

A primary achievement of the radicals and working people was that they made the rights of the common people a central factor in revolutionary politics. The indenture system, weakened by the Revolution, had all but disappeared within a decade after the end of the fighting. There was no more state church, freedom of worship was guaranteed, and religious qualifications for voting were abolished.

The ballot vote, and the idea of popular sovereignty as the only legitimate basis for political power were established.

The value and experience of collective action must not be underestimated; for many years after the close of the Revolutionary War, workers, in their early organizations and unions, looked back to and identified themselves with the goals of the Revolutionary mechanics and called themselves Sons of Liberty.

"I AM FIRST OF ALL BLACK"

French press interviews CLUW's Merrill

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Barbara Merrill, Chairperson of the Chicago Chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, was interviewed about her life and work by the French trade union women's magazine ANTOINETTE. The article, by Slava Liszek, appeared in the December 1975 issue. ANTOINETTE is available (in French) for \$10 per year, at ANTOINETTE, 50 rue Edouard-Pailleron, 75019 Paris, France.)

Barbara Merrill



"I am three things: Black, a woman and a trade unionist, but Black first.

"That was our principal misunderstanding with the Women's Liberation Movement. White women could not believe that we, Black women, had been liberated as women for a long time. We had developed the habit of relying on ourselves in order to make ends meet, in order to satisfy our needs." This is Barbara Merrill speaking. Government employee, forty years old, divorced with two children. Militant trade unionist. President of the Chicago Chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). "To be a woman and to be Black at the same time is very difficult," she continues. "But it is not because, as so many say so lightly, of a double oppression. It is for reasons much more serious and painful than that.

"One must understand. Since the very beginnings of our history in this country, the Black woman has always been separated from the Black man. He was sent into the fields. She was taken as a servant into the house of the whites. She had it better. Because,

while he worked naked, exposed to all kinds of weather, she had the shelter of clothing. It is so important to be warm, to have a roof over one's head! That makes you privileged, almost superior, in the eyes of another. Therefore, for we Black women, the important thing is to erase this distance that centuries of slavery have created between our men and ourselves."

"I am three things at once," Barbara says. "Black, a woman and a trade unionist. But I am first of all Black. That is the most important thing for me. All of my life has been marked by that. And yet I must often make an effort to remember that I am first of all Black. Because there are moments when I tend to think that I am first of all a woman..." Moments like those after which she had just been elected president of her union and was on her way to her first negotiations with the Administration. She heard one of the directors say to another, "Hmm, I didn't know that the union president had a new secretary."

New aid for labor press

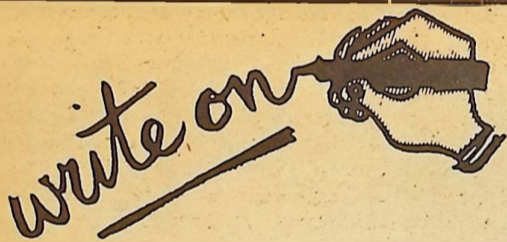
"How to Do Leaflets, Newsletters and Newspapers," a new publication of the Boston Community School, contains a lot of useful information for organizations interested in any or all of the above forms of journalism, and we recommend it highly.

Nancy Brigham, who wrote, designed and illustrated the book, carries the reader through every conceivable step and stage of putting out a publication.

The book also gives meaning to a lot of those mysterious words of the trade--dummies, column-inches, kickers, picas and flopped photos. Once you know what they mean, they aren't so scary.

But more importantly, Brigham gets down to the brass tacks of journalism--making sure the reader reads what you've written. Thus, she's firm on a lot of points, as when she cautions in the chapter on design: "Anything which abruptly stops the flow of information can remind a reader that s/he has other things to do."

"How to Do Leaflets, Newsletters and Newspapers" costs \$1.25. If you're interested in buying a copy, you should contact The New England Free Press, 60 Union Square, Somerville, MA 02143.



RALLY AROUND UNDERDOG

To the Editors:

LABOR TODAY looks great. We just opened up our Stewards' Library which hosts some thirty feet of shelves devoted to the leading "Labor Rags" and your newspaper will be sure to hold its own among those other titles, that's for damn sure.

How do you do it? In one issue you can rally around more underdogs in the struggle against "Mr. Big" than Pete Seeger can get on ten long-playing records.

Lou Kiefer
International Association of Machinists
and Aerospace Workers
Hartford, Conn.

SMELTER WORKERS NEED LT

To the Editors:

There is great need here at the Bunker Hill smelter where I work for a paper such as this.

Would it be possible to send us each a few extra copies each month, whatever you feel the ten dollars will cover? We will pass them out here at the smelter and other Bunker properties. We think that the information they contain about the rank and file movement in other areas should help to rebuild it here.

Elwin Shultz
Kellogg, Idaho

JANUARY ISSUE GREAT

To the Editors:

Two great articles, on the UMW and England. The UMW article was late and overdue. Good! The British Shop Steward article did not explain their "open end" agreements. Which could some day be made into an article to expose the long contracts here in the States. Then too, their "open end contracts" have many advantages, as well as to take management on "when the workers are ready" and management isn't!

This is a different angle. Yours of this issue is great. The entire January issue is good. The UAW supplement is great as well. I understand other supplements will follow.

Bob Hollowwa
Corona, California

FOR THE SIX HOUR DAY

To the Editors:

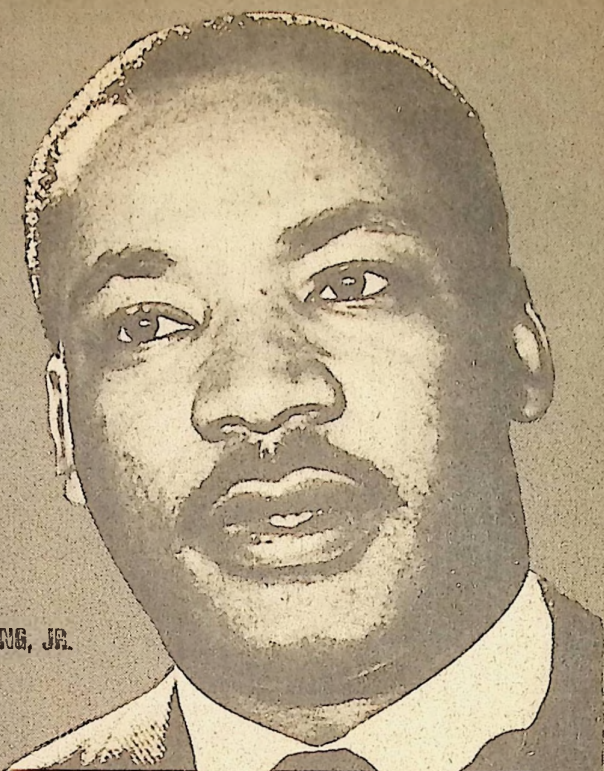
I want to thank you for putting together such a fine January issue. I particularly appreciated two short pieces, "GE Profits Up, Wages Down," which exposes the phoney claims of "low profits" by big companies, and "Tricolor is a Killer." I understand that some candidates in the April local union elections here at Kaiser Steel's Fontana mill will be reprinting "Tricolor Kills" on the back of their campaign leaflets.

If the Steelworkers Union can unite behind honest fighting candidates like Ed Sadlowski and Juan Chacon, and get rid of I.W. Abel and the rest of his pro-company crew, the fight for a "six-hour day with no cut in pay" may be won in the steel industry next year.

Yours for a democratic, fighting
union movement,

Kevin Akin, USWA
Riverside, California

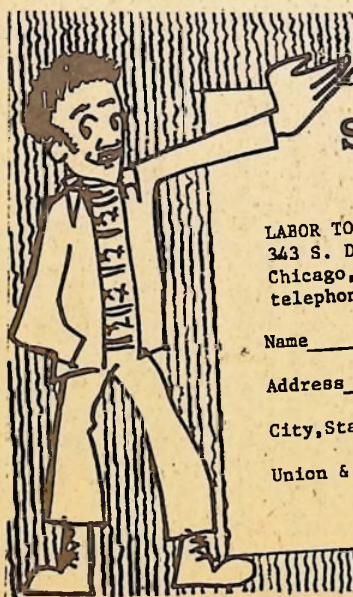




MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
1929-1968

" . . . Just as we dealt with the social problems of segregation through massive demonstrations, and we dealt with the political problem--the denial of the right to vote--through massive demonstrations, we will deal with the economic problems--the right to live, to have a job and income--through massive protest. It will be a Selma-like movement on economic issues."

---Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
LOOK magazine, April 16, 1968



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the colonies, and the
Harbor resulted in widespread unemployment.
American workers, like their more affluent
fellows among the planters and merchants,
had to improve their lot through political