

the rank and file in action

Labor Today

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July 1975



WOMEN FIGHT FOR EQUALITY

● in the work place ● on the union floor ● in the community

IT TAKES NERVE AND DETERMINATION

Women steelworkers face tough challenge



by ROBERTA WOOD
USWA Local 65
Chicago

Steel: massive beams of a rising skyscraper; a trainload of bars soon to be fashioned into car frames or machine parts; a coil of wire destined to become anything from bicycle springs to nails. Steel conjures up a picture of thousands of men sweating over the red hot metal. Few people are aware that that picture now includes thousands of women steelworkers as well.

In U.S. Steel's South Works (Chicago) plant, 300 or so women make up about 3% of the total work force. They are laborers, crane "men," hookers, banders, stampers, spark testers, observers, fork lift operators, burners, machine operators and helpers, and inspectors. There is a sprinkling of newly-hired female apprentices in the crafts: "wire women," millwrights, welders, motor room operators, and instrument repairers. Women work in the rolling mills, in the labs, in the BOP (Basic Oxygen Process) Shop, in the foundry.

Except during World War II, it has only been in the last few years that women have had any chance at all to work in the steel industry. This has been a result of the pressures of both the women's movement and the overall attack by the Civil Rights movement on the steel companies' discriminatory hiring and upgrading policies. Of approximately 5,000 women employed in the nation's steel mills, 35% have been hired in the last year, mostly in the North and Midwest.

But getting hired is only half the battle. Barely token numbers of women are now in the higher-paying craft jobs and women are still consistently (and illegally) barred and discouraged from advancing to better jobs in general. The complicated bureaucratic structure of the seniority system, deliberately designed to facilitate racial discrimination in upgrading, is also effectively used against women as a group. They are placed in departments with limited opportunities for advancement and high possibilities of layoffs.

DOUBLE DISCRIMINATION

The majority of women production workers in our plant are Black and a large number are



Roberta Wood



Latinos; thus they are doubly subjected to this kind of treatment. I know one woman with over 30 years of service who never advanced beyond job class 5, whereas many young white males are working at job class 18 after only five years.

U.S. Steel takes full advantage of the lack of protective legislation for women, often giving them work that is too heavy to be done safely even by men. The women hesitate to protest because they'll be told they're only complaining because they're women and that they were hired to "do a man's job." Women are disciplined for missing work for babysitting reasons which the Company does not consider a legitimate excuse. The Company has also been very stingy in pro-

viding the necessary washroom facilities for female employees.

Layoffs are a major concern of women workers who have low seniority due to past discrimination. In our plant, while women and other workers were laid off in some departments, brand new employees were hired in others. It seems that by hiring and then laying off, the Company can fulfill its quotas and still avoid increasing, or even succeed in decreasing, the percentage of women in the work force.

NO STRANGERS TO THIS STRUGGLE

Women are certainly no strangers to the struggles in the steel communities. The resolution passed in 1936 by the Women's Auxiliary of our Local (then Lodge 65 of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers of North America) during the organization drive of the USWA showed this involvement: "having met and deliberated on our conditions, we realize that this great drive to organize the steel workers offers us the means of overcoming these injustices (low wages, long hours, arbitrary shift changes, inadequate sanitation in housing facilities, poor education) and that we as women of steel must bend every effort to further our organization and to enlist the support of all our friends through the realization that the benefits of this drive will be shared by the community as a whole."

(continued on p. 7)

PICTURE GROWS WORSE

Low pay for women keep all wages down

by MONDA TALKIE
LT Staff

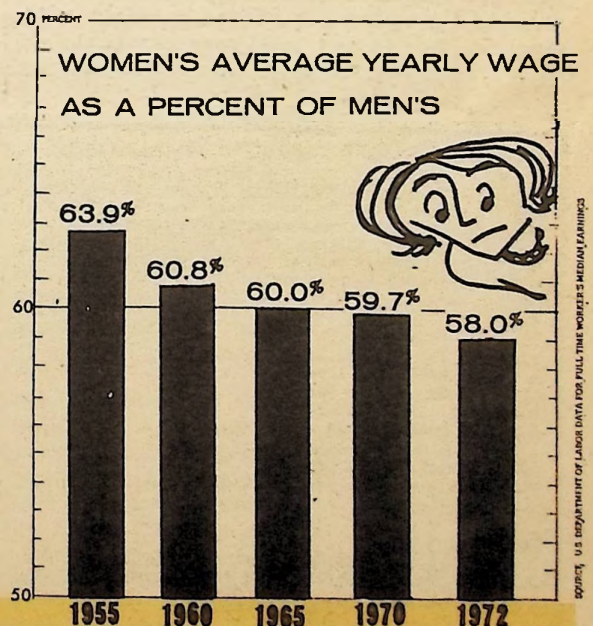
The fight for the equal rights of women on the job has a long history of militant struggle in the U.S., since monopoly corporations have a vested interest in keeping workers divided and inequalities maintained. The average earnings of women in 1970 were only 59.4% of what men earned. Contrary to what the media would lead us to believe, these earnings have dropped from 1960 when women averaged 63.9% of men's wages. At the very bottom of the scale are Black and minority women.

Economic necessity has forced nearly half of all American women to work--an increase of 140% in the past 20 years. The percentage of women workers in the U.S. is higher than in any other Western country. The number of Black women in the work force today is greater than their percentage of the population.

Working mothers have accounted for the largest rise in women in the workforce--from 9% in 1940 to 42% in 1972. There has also

been a sharp rise in the number of working mothers with pre-school children.

(continued on p. 7)



Women workers need health, safety protection

The growing workers' movement for improved health and safety conditions has received strong support from rank and file union women. LABOR TODAY asked Dr. Shirley Conibear, a Chicago physician working with the occupational safety and health movement about the special problems faced by women who work.

by SHIRLEY CONIBEAR, M.D.

LT: In recent years women have made some advances in sections of industry where they've been previously barred. Also, people are not generally aware that in most production industries, women comprise about 40% of the work force. What are some of the special occupational safety and health problems that these women have encountered?

CONIBEAR: I think you raised initially a good point: that we are seeing a lot of new exposures to hazards. The two things that you have to keep in mind throughout all of this is that the Civil Rights Act, which says that women are now eligible for any job, is coupled with the OSHA Law, which says that all workers have the right to the protection of their health on the job. This means that any special kinds of problems that women have are going to have to be accounted for by industry and taken into consideration, and are not going to be allowable as reasons excluding women from industry.

Is it protection... or is it discrimination?

One of the special problems women have--I'm not even sure they should be called problems--differences that women have from men, is the strength differential. There have been some recent studies that have shown that working women on the whole have about 2/3 the physical strength of men. Some people feel that women should be excluded from certain jobs because they're not strong enough, when in fact that is the basis that men are hired on--there's a large strength differential from one man to another, and people are generally fitted to the job.

One of the other issues around women workers that has been raised in the past is that women are more susceptible to certain toxic materials. Lead is the one that comes immediately to mind. The idea that women are more susceptible to lead is a thread running through a lot of the scientific literature, yet if you look very carefully at



Dr. Shirley Conibear

the research data you find that there are no studies that demonstrate any special susceptibility.

At best all you can say is that more research is going to have to be done on women as they become exposed. So I think that's another false issue.

Men have chromosomes that can be damaged...

The other big point that concerns women and should concern everyone is the reproductive process. Everyone is afraid that as women enter heavy industry and are exposed to more toxic substances, we're going to see more birth defects and more effects on children. I've broken that issue down into several parts. One of the ways that harm can occur in the reproductive process is the fact that certain of the chemicals or radiation that workers are exposed to can cause chromosomal breaks and birth defects through changes in the chromosomes and the sperm cells.

This is certainly an important issue, but it should be pointed out that it affects men equally much as it affects women. In fact, it probably is more critical in men because men make sperm cells continuously, and in women the ova are already developed

Also, if someone looked, they would probably see an increased abortion or miscarriage rate in certain industries as a result of exposure to radiation or to toxic chemicals. This would probably also affect men; if we look at the wives of men who are exposed to certain substances we would also see an increased miscarriage and abortion rate.

A woman may not know she is pregnant

The one issue that only concerns women workers is the toxic effects on the fetus due to early exposure to toxic substances or radiation. The problem here is that any young woman in the child-bearing age may be pregnant and not know it in the first few weeks. The pregnancy test isn't good until about the sixth week of the pregnancy. A good part of the fetus is already developed by then. Thus a woman may be pregnant and working with a toxic substance and not know she's pregnant.

Some industries are trying to say that because of this all women of child-bearing age should be excluded from that industry--they make the assumption that every woman is pregnant. And on this issue there's very

'Women must run for union office'

Election of women to higher union office is one of the key goals of the rank and file movement. Mary Curtin, a member of the AFT, was recently elected secretary-treasurer of the Riverside, (CA.) AFL-CIO Labor Council, probably the first woman to hold that title in Southern California. We asked sister Curtin for her views on legislative questions and the role of women.

by MARY CURTIN

LT: What about the need and possibilities of women advancing to leadership posts in the AFL-CIO structure?

CURTIN: Of course I think there's a need. A large percentage of labor membership is women, women who must work to support their families. They should logically be represented by women. They should logically be represented by anyone who hears their needs and are sympathetic and will fight for them at the negotiating table. I support heartily the philosophy of CLUW. And one of their platforms is to have a more active membership, and a more vocal women's membership.



little research that has been done; nobody knows which of the toxic substances cross the placenta, nor what kinds of damage they may cause.

...must we worry that jobs will damage our children?

LT: What about the problems for pregnant women in relation to how hard their work is? Are there special steps that need to be taken there?

CONIBEAR: Probably on some jobs women will have to take pregnancy leaves that will be longer than others. Generally, in an uncomplicated pregnancy, a woman shouldn't have a great deal of trouble completing her job. I think at whatever point she becomes uncomfortable or feels that she can't do the job anymore then that's the point where her pregnancy leave should begin.

LT: If a woman is working in a plant and she's concerned that she may be working with a substance or process that's toxic to her or possibly harmful to a fetus, where can she go to find if it is dangerous or not?

CONIBEAR: That's difficult to answer. For Chicago I would probably say that she could call up CACOSH--the Chicago Area Committee on Occupational Safety and Health--and someone would try to look it up for her. She could call one of the medical schools maybe or Public Health.

I would try the union if she's in a union, and see if they have any resources.

The main problem here is sorting out what's discriminatory and what's protective. My feeling is that women have to have the right to work at any job. That's one of the basic rights that women have won in the last 20 years and OSHA has said that it's going to protect all workers. I think that it's very important that the standards be set at such levels that a woman can get a good job and not have to worry that because of that job she's going to do damage to the children that she's going to have. The fight has to be waged and men have to understand that they have to participate in that fight.

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ACWA day care center serves working parents

by LABOR TODAY Staff

There are millions of working mothers in the U.S. who must spend a good-sized hunk of their paychecks to see that their children are cared for while their mothers and fathers earn the family's living. To add to the problem, many childcare centers are simply run for profit, and don't adequately provide for the children's food, comfort, safety and intellectual development.

One union, at least, is doing something about the problem.

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union in Chicago established a day care center in 1971 as a service to its members. The center, which is totally owned and operated by the union, is paid for out of the union's welfare fund--to which employers contribute under collective bargaining agreements.

There is no charge to the union parents.

The Center, directed by Ms. Muriel Tuteur, runs from 6 in the morning to 6 at night. It provides two hot meals and two snacks each day from its own kitchen. There is roughly one teacher for every five students and the children spend the day learning, playing and engaging in constructive activities--not simply parked in front of a TV set as happens in some places.

FREE MEDICAL CARE

The ACWA also provides weekly visits from a physician, who examines the children, prescribes medicines (which are free) and gives immunizations. The children also receive free dental care, eye examinations and glasses if needed. A psychiatric social worker also visits the center and is available to consult with parents.

"We try to provide a home-like environment for the children," Ms. Tuteur said, "as if the child were spending the day with his or her mother." The center tries to provide times for active play as well as quiet play. There is time for stories, music, arts and crafts.

A FRIENDLY LAP

"The key to having a good center is having enough staff around to see that each child

Multiracial student body listens to story by Volunteer Bessie Feinglass



gets a lot of individual attention, that the child just doesn't become part of a group and get dealt with in a group way," Ms. Tuteur continued. "We like to have enough adults on hand so that a child can just crawl into a friendly lap and perch there for a while if the child wants to."

The ACWA Center, which is licensed to serve up to 60 children, has a full load, and a waiting list of about 20 more. It is open on a first-come, first-served basis to union members, with a preference going

Muriel Tuteur

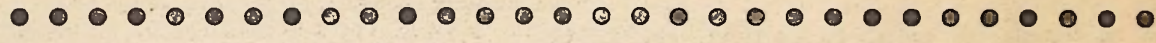


to divorced parents. Parent/teacher conferences are a regular part of the center.

One side benefit of the center is that it has attracted volunteer assistance from retired Clothing Workers and other unionists who are happy to lend a hand and spend time with children.

"As far as we know, we're the only union in the country that provides these kinds of services to its members," Ms. Tuteur said. "Adequate day care is just as taxing to the family budget and peace of mind as health care. Child care is not just an individual family problem when it affects a third of the work force. At a time when living costs rise faster than wages, unions can make a significant contribution to their members' available income as well as to the future of their children by providing quality day care."

As more and more women in the trade union movement organize and press for more programs to deal with the problems they face as workers and women, it is likely that the rank and file will be placing day care programs like ACWA's on the union agenda.



THE MONDALE-BRADEMAs BILL

Proposed legislation can aid day care programs

by LABOR TODAY Staff

The Child and Family Services Act of 1975, introduced by Sen. Mondale and Rep. Brademas, has been endorsed by CLUW nationally. In 1971 a similar bill was vetoed by Nixon but sentiment for federal support of child care has continued to grow, especially among working women.

The Child and Family Services Act, S-625 and HR2966, provides \$1.85 billion over a 3-year period for child and family services. Included are day care services for pre-school age children, before and after school care for school age children, services for parents, prenatal and postpartum medical care for mothers. It provides special programs to meet the needs of Black, Latino, Indian and other minorities, also migrant children and their families.

Of the 6 million pre-school children of working mothers, only 1 million are in licensed child care facilities. Many of the other 5 million are not receiving proper

care. It is estimated that 1/10 of all children ages two to twelve are left alone while their parents work.

WHO WILL RUN THE DAY CARE CENTERS?

Community control is a very important provision of the Mondale-Brademas Bill, which requires 50% parent representation on the day care center boards. Unions, churches, neighborhood organizations as well as schools can sponsor a center under this bill. However, Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers, is demanding that the public schools be the sole agency for day care.

Many early childhood educators have disagreed with Shanker's position because some urban schools are alienated from the community. These experts insist on close parent day care center cooperation and advise that centers remain under 100 children. Fear that the bill could be defeated if labor's ranks are divided by the Shanker position have also been expressed.



Arts, crafts make happy times

A year of progress more to come

by JOAN PHILLIPS
AFSCME L. 2081
CHICAGO

In the space of one year, the Coalition of Labor Union Women has made a strong contribution to the struggle for equal rights for women, organizing to deal with the problems of women workers, and strengthening the trade union movement in general.

A brief listing of the activities of CLUW and its various chapters, since the organization's birth, give some idea of the scope of its activities and their importance:

On March 8, International Women's Day, CLUW chapters across the nation took to the streets to conduct demonstrations highlighting CLUW's demand of "Jobs for All."

CLUW also endorsed and played a major role in the massive trade union demonstration in Washington, D.C., on April 26, which saw 65,000 workers rally to demand jobs and an end to the ruinous economic policies of the Rockefeller-Ford administration. CLUW's participation with the National Coalition to Fight Inflation and Unemployment contributed to the ground swell which led the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO to sponsor the rally.

In Chicago and many other cities, CLUW chapters have organized workshops, seminars and classes in labor education to encourage more women to become active in their unions.

CLUW, by endorsing the Mondale-Brademas Bill, has contributed to the movement for a network of federally funded day care centers.

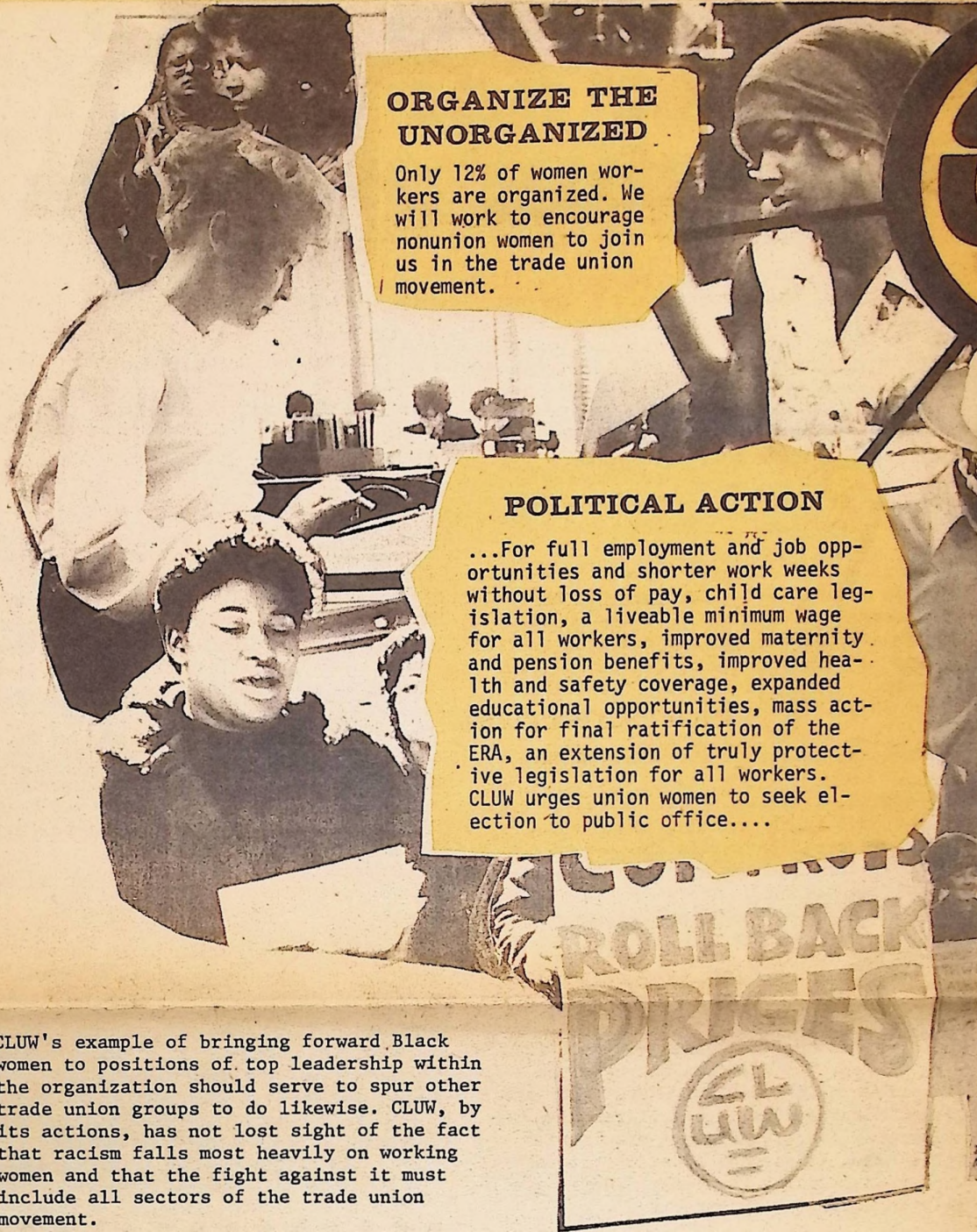
CLUW endorsed and participated in the May 17 March Against Racism in Boston, giving concrete aid to the National Association of Colored Peoples' efforts to desegregate the Boston schools.

The fight against unemployment has been central to CLUW's activity over the past year. CLUW is among the growing number of labor groups that has endorsed the Hawkins Full and Equal Employment Act (HR 50) and is holding forums, hearings and demonstrations for federal programs to employ the jobless.

While the above list by no means includes all the activities that CLUW and its chapters have engaged in since its formation, it is nevertheless a splendid record of achievement for a young organization.

JOBS FOR WOMEN, JOBS FOR ALL

CLUW has shown ability in linking the struggle to improve the lot of working women with struggles to improve the lives of all working people and to end racism. The fight for jobs for all is especially important to women, because in this period of layoffs and mass unemployment, women are suffering far beyond their numbers in the population.



ORGANIZE THE UNORGANIZED

Only 12% of women workers are organized. We will work to encourage nonunion women to join us in the trade union movement.

POLITICAL ACTION

...For full employment and job opportunities and shorter work weeks without loss of pay, child care legislation, a liveable minimum wage for all workers, improved maternity and pension benefits, improved health and safety coverage, expanded educational opportunities, mass action for final ratification of the ERA, an extension of truly protective legislation for all workers. CLUW urges union women to seek election to public office....

CLUW's example of bringing forward Black women to positions of top leadership within the organization should serve to spur other trade union groups to do likewise. CLUW, by its actions, has not lost sight of the fact that racism falls most heavily on working women and that the fight against it must include all sectors of the trade union movement.

With such a record of accomplishment behind it, CLUW chapters and activists contend that CLUW should attempt to do even more. The slow expansion of the membership is an indication that the full potential of a trade union women's organization has not yet been reached.

Efforts to build CLUW will depend upon CLUW's ability to involve the rank and file and to open and encourage the participation of all trade union women. The cornerstone of this participation rests upon rank and file democracy and upon progressive leadership.

In practice, broad participation in CLUW is often hindered by small groups of disrupters who have been allowed to turn some CLUW chapter meetings into boring and prolonged arguments instead of the action sessions they were meant to be.

MACHINE ATTEMPTS POWER GRAB

In some cities, democracy and the continued growth of CLUW has also been threatened from another source. In New York and Philadelphia, the Meany-Shanker forces have packed election meetings in a bid for machine-type control of CLUW. In view of

Shanker's opposition to effective affirmative action programs for minorities or women, Shanker-machine control of CLUW would spell sure death.

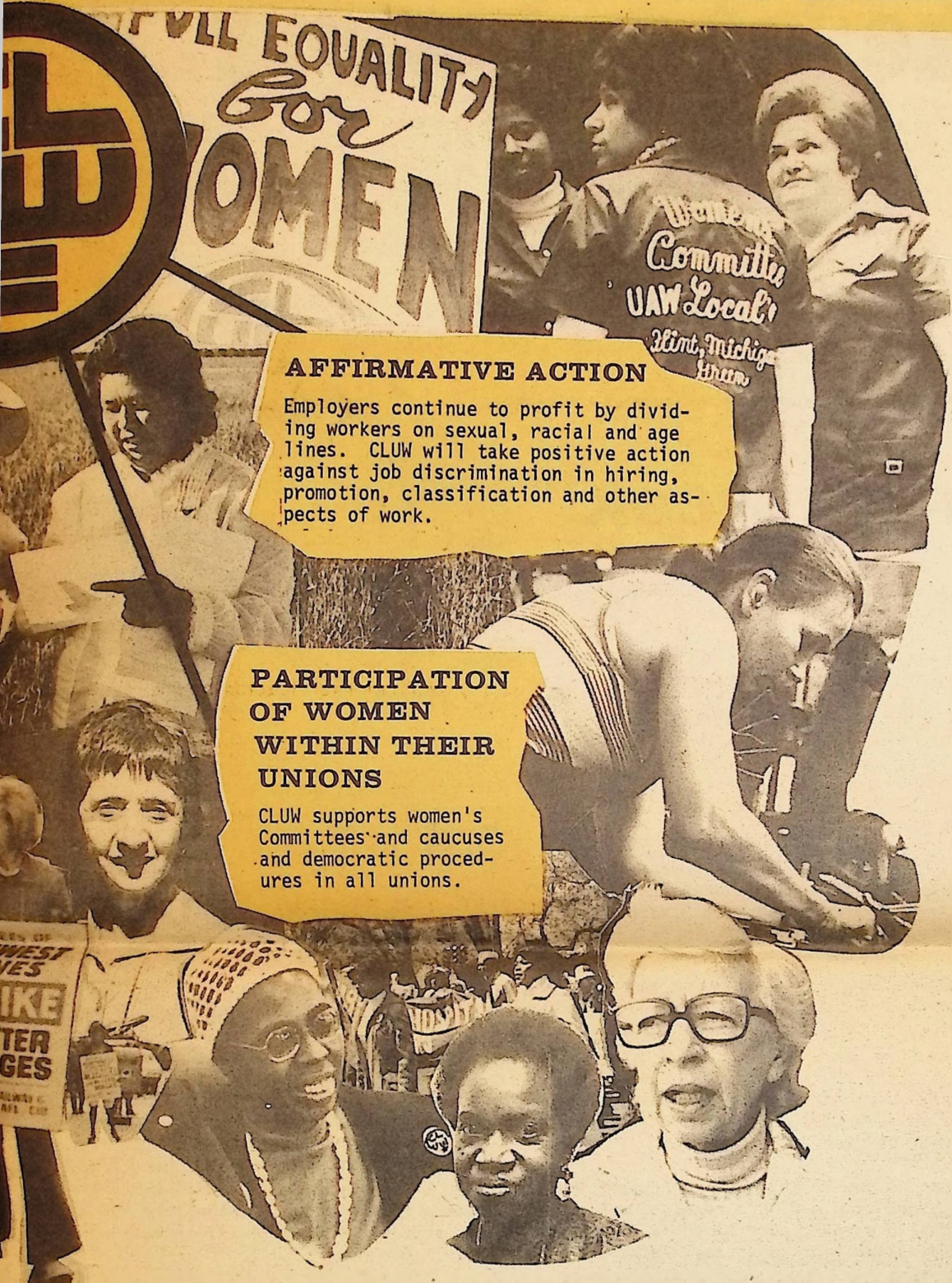
In a perverse way, the activities of the splinter group disrupters and the Meany followers serve the same purpose: they both hamper CLUW from carrying out its stated purpose, goals and activities.

Trade union women, rank and filers as well as leaders, have shown that they can overcome these diversions and develop the action programs that working women demand and require.

MASS PRESSURE NEEDED

"Organizing the unorganized," a major demand of CLUW, can be realized only by massive pressure on union structures to start real organizing drives, especially among industrial workers and minority women. To achieve this kind of pressure, CLUW must greatly increase its membership. With increased membership CLUW can take a stronger lead in fighting for jobs, day care, education of women for trade union leadership and against discriminatory lay

FOR UNION WOMEN



AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Employers continue to profit by dividing workers on sexual, racial and age lines. CLUW will take positive action against job discrimination in hiring, promotion, classification and other aspects of work.

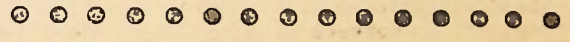
PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN WITHIN THEIR UNIONS

CLUW supports women's Committees and caucuses and democratic procedures in all unions.

Tips on building CLUW

We would like to share with our readers some reports on successful organizing by CLUW chapters. CLUW activists give the following tips on having a lively chapter:

- 1.) Have a concrete plan of action for implementing the national program of CLUW. A leadership vacuum and lack of program opens the door to disruption.
- 2.) Rank and file members must organize to work with CLUW leaders to guarantee that the action program is put into practice.
- 3.) Membership meetings must have firm agendas on points in the CLUW plan of action and a reasonable time limit, such as 2 to 2½ hours. (Some chapters report 5 to 8 hours!)
- 4.) Educational forums can supply needed skills and provide opportunities for those who would like informal discussions.
- 5.) Union locals will donate funds to CLUW if asked. Ask. No organization can operate without funds.



and in the national demonstrations against racism in Boston and for jobs in Washington.

On March 8, International Women's Day, Chicago CLUW organized a mass picket line of trade union women at the Federal Building with slogans: Fight Layoffs—Jobs for All; No Wage Controls; Roll Back Prices; Full Equality for Women. There was excellent TV coverage as Chicago CLUW made its first public appearance.

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

Educational workshops to train women for union leadership were well-attended by shop workers. Topics included Labor history, union contracts, grievances, women's committees, parliamentary procedure and how to run for union office. These workshops provided an example of constructive work by CLUW and a model of work by the educational committee, chaired by Heather Booth of AFT Local 189.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The newly elected officers have presented an action program which plans a full hearing on unemployment to which senators and congressmen will be invited, demonstrations and delegations to follow the hearings and a petition drive with the goal of ten thousand signatures for HB-50, the Hawkins-Reuss Full Employment Bill. Tied in with this program will be an analysis of the CETA (Comprehensive Education and Training Act), which allocated \$36,937,170 to Illinois, demanding a voice for union women as to how the money should be spent. At present CETA pays poverty level wages.

As an educational project, a study of the special effects on women caused by the activities of the multinational corporations is planned.

With this action program there is confidence that the hundreds of women who have already expressed interest will become active in support of CLUW.

Chicago CLUW meets new challenges

by BEA LUMPKIN
AFT L. 1600
CHICAGO

It was a thrilling sight to see the hundreds of women unionists who responded to the call to set up a Chicago CLUW. At last an organization of our own! The attendance of Black women, white women, factory workers, teachers, clerks, held high promise for the future.

Now, a year later, Chicago CLUW has an impressive record of achievement for a new organization. But for a while, an organized band of disrupters threatened to turn the dream into a nightmare.

They took advantage of a leadership vacuum to divert attention from the national CLUW

program by forcing lengthy argument on other issues, on which Coalition members were divided, and prolonging meetings until hundreds of rank and file members left.

CLUW ACHIEVEMENTS

CLUW leaders and many rank and file women realized that if Chicago CLUW was to survive, they must work together for a positive program to implement the CLUW action program. The constructive action program of Chicago CLUW has created a base for growth and provided the leadership needed by the young chapter.

Chicago CLUW has participated in a campaign to stop electric rate increases, in a community-labor coalition demonstration for jobs organized by PUSH (People United to Save Humanity), in the ongoing fight to pass ERA

Women make labor history

by Margaret Kailin

The thing I want to stress in talking about women in labor history is unity. A lot of people are under the impression that they are more privileged than others because they make more money than somebody else.

No working person is "privileged" as long as her or his job can be offered to someone else in a crisis situation. If an

employer can tell us "there are plenty of people who'd be glad to be in your shoes," it becomes very important for us to find out how we can protect our job security. The only real security we have is in solidarity with all other segments of working people.

If a Black woman--according to the 1970 census of wages of all workers--makes \$3,285 a year, a Black man makes \$5,485, a white woman makes an average of \$3,370,

and a white man makes an average of \$8,254, it might seem that the white male worker is privileged over the others. But he still doesn't make a decent living. He is still the victim of disunity.

UE'S McDANIEL SAYS:

"Shorten the work week!"

What are ways in which unions can deal with the present economic crisis? LABOR TODAY asked Maryann McDaniell, General Vice President of the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers for her views on what labor can be doing:

by MARYANN McDANIEL

LT: Could you give us a few comments about the unemployment situation out there and particularly how it's affecting women members, especially minority women?

McDANIEL: I'm probably the wrong person to ask out here; we've really been lucky in my shop. In UE we don't really have a major problem with the layoff affecting minorities more than it does anybody else because the hiring lines are pretty straight. It's not like in some other shops that I know in a state that's got the highest rate of unemployment in the country.

LT: That's because you were able to win fairer hiring policies from the start?

McDANIEL: Yes. We worked on the hiring policies ever since the local first organized back in the early 1940's.



MARYANN McDANIEL

LT: What's the employment situation like in general--how's it affecting your members?

McDANIEL: Well, we've got about 300 laid off out of about 1200 people. We're doing a lot of furloughing; since November they've shut the plant completely down, a total of 8 weeks that we've lost since Thanksgiving. They're working on a month-to-month inventory thing and they look at inventories. If the inventories are stable then we continue to work; if the inventories are rising and they're afraid they'll continue to rise then they just furlough the entire plant for a week. That's over and above the 300 that are laid off.

LT: Is that pretty much the pattern through the district?

McDANIEL: Well, there's a lot of furloughing going on in the other plants in the area which we don't represent, but some of the other unions do. They will furlough for a week on, a week off or two weeks on, three weeks off, that sort of thing. My plant has really been lucky, considering. Back East in some of our plants they haven't been so lucky; they're down to about 40% laid off.

LT: A number of trade union leaders are beginning to talk about the shorter work week or the shorter work day. There's a district of the Steelworkers that's called for the six hour day, I think the Mineworkers have called for it along with some other unions.

McDANIEL: I think almost every union in this country has a resolution on it and has had for years. But what people have to realize is that now is the time to move, because it was in days like these that the 40-hour work week was won.

LT: What do you think needs to happen? How do you move from having a resolution on it to actually winning something--is it the bargaining table or is it legislation--how?

McDANIEL: It's a combination of bargaining and legislation. If only the labor unions would all stand up together I think and make that one of their main goals in negotiations. My idea is that we ought to just shut it all down for a day and show a bit of strength and start pulling the darn thing together.

LT: I want to turn to another problem; it's related to unemployment in general. The immigration service has been cracking down pretty hard lately on foreign-born workers without documents.

McDANIEL: They had a big raid in Los Angeles last week I believe. Several hundred people. A lot of this takes place in the unorganized shops. It's always been a gimmick in the unorganized shops where a lot of these workers worked, because any time a union tried to organize it they'd just send the Immigration Service in and raid the place and pull all the workers out and then just start all over again. So most of this is actually taking place in the unorganized shops. We fought for a long time in our union to prevent this type of thing.



Moranda Smith was a Black woman who helped organize the CIO's American Food, Tobacco and Agricultural Workers, Local 22, in Winston-Salem, N.C. In the 1940's it was the largest single union in the South. The secret of its success was the Black-and-

white-unity approach of the organizers. This was done at a time when the CIO "Operation Dixie" respected the "traditions of the South."

Ms. Smith began working for the Reynolds tobacco plant in 1940 at 40¢ an hour. She became shop steward and then educational director of Local 22, and then finally director of the South-Atlantic region.

She was loved by Black and white workers and was a very effective leader. The Ku Klux Klan was always harassing her. One day at a meeting someone handed her a note. It was a threat from the Klan. She had a heart attack and died--still in her early 30's.

The biggest funeral Winston-Salem ever saw was held for her with workers of all colors participating.

Her death was an especially great loss to the union. Her leadership might have helped them to deal with the raid with was being conducted by the corrupted CIO. The CIO had succumbed to the Cold War hysteria and provided the House Un-American Committee with the names of Local 22 leaders. The union was expelled from the CIO. The Reynolds Company refused to bargain collectively with the workers when they saw how weak they had become.



MORANDA SMITH

Low pay for women

(continued from page 1)

The median income for female-headed families in 1972 was \$5,380, as compared to \$10,350 for male-headed families. The median wage of minority women employed full-time was \$4,674.

Although in recent years more women have entered basic industry, the traditional low-paid "women's occupations" still prevail.

UNIONS HELP

The large and pervasive income disparities between employed men and women are less when the women are union members.

Although women comprise the majority of the membership of 26 unions and have proven themselves to be among the most militant fighters and skilled organizers in many strike struggles, only 4 million of the 34 million working women are organized into unions. This is not due however, to women's refusal to join the trade union movement, but to the refusal of the Meany leadership of the AFL-CIO to energetically organize low-paying industries. An industry is more likely to be unionized if most of its workers are men, yet studies show that more women vote pro-union than men.

In 1970 only 8% of hospital and service industries were unionized, 10% of sales and 15% of government workers. Office workers have just begun to organize. Women are only 7% of elected U.S. executive union boards and are rare in state and local labor councils.

Since the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, gains have been made to outlaw discrimination against women. Recent amendments to the Minimum Wage Law have resulted in more victories. Yet at the same time corporate monopoly has stepped up its attacks on the working class as a whole in the form of intensified racist campaigns and heightened male supremacy, in attempts to confuse and immobilize workers.

Women Steelworkers

(cont. from p. 1)

During World War II, women took over many jobs and proved their competency. In 1943, in U.S. Steel's Gary Works, there were 4500 women workers. However, women were soon pushed out of the industry and today only a few of these old-timers who managed to withstand all the pressures to leave are left.

Women steelworkers are still looking for the best way to fight to better their conditions. More and more of us are attending our local and division meetings. Some of us are contributors the the "65 Rank and File Voice," a monthly rank-and-file newsletter. Many women were enthusiastic supporters of Ed Sadlowski in the District Director election last fall because they saw the possibility of making union leadership more responsive to their special problems.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

There has been a lot of discussion, especially in departments with large numbers of women, about the necessity of women on the Grievance Committee and in other positions of union leadership. Many of us feel that our local needs a Women's Rights Committee. On the national level, the USWA must make the commitment to take on the problems of its female membership. A national conference on women in steel would be a beginning. Many, many plants represented by the USWA, from the big mills to tiny bucket shops, still simply refuse to hire women.

COMMUNITY ACTION NEEDED

A & P inner city closings hit Blacks, women

(NOTE: LT interviewed an activist in the Chicago Retail Clerks' Union, Mildred Williamson, about A&P's recently announced policy of shutting down nearly 1,000 innercity stores across the nation. Here is what she told LT:)

What is your job situation at the A&P?

Well, they are not hiring people at the present time. They have a program to lay off 30,000 people nationwide and close down 1250 stores in the Chicago area--mostly in the Black community.

How does it affect your location?

I worked for 4 years in a store at 63rd and Kimbark. It was closed down last February. I was off for 2 weeks before I was placed in another store. I was lucky because many have been laid off and many of those who were working full-time have been broken down to part-time.

What is the outlook at your present store?

My store, ironically, is doing OK; but in some stores, where full-time help has been broken down to part-time, part-timers are working less than 13 hours a week, and some cashiers only 8 hours, although the contract calls for at least thirteen.

Is it true that new stores are being opened?

They have opened at least 5 new stores in the outlying suburbs in which they hired virtually all new part-time--incidentally, mostly white. The only full-time in these new stores are the manager, the assistant manager, the bookkeeper and the butcher.

What is the union doing?

There are two unions involved, Retail Clerks Union and the Amalgamated Meat Cutters. My union has kept a number of people from being laid off but they haven't seemed to stop the breaking down to part-time.

The big closing of stores started last year and usually affects part-timers first since they have least seniority. Some full-timers, mostly butchers, have been laid off. I don't mean just cashiers. Full-time bookkeepers are broken down to full-time cashiers then to part-time cashiers.

A produce manager was broken down to full-time stockman and almost instantly after that another step down to part-time.

One thing is certain: women in a steel mill are militant and they're fighters. After all, it takes a lot of nerve and determination to stand up against the weather and the dirt, the hard work, the rotating shifts, the Company's hostility, and the hard-to-die prejudice that we just don't belong there. Most women steelworkers will tell you that they work there for the same reason that everyone else does--for the money, to be able to have something better for themselves and their children. It's not easy, but women are proving they can do it, and their fighting spirit should be welcomed by all good Steel Workers Union members as a progressive addition to our union.



I understand that Operation PUSH is involved.

A group of butchers got together and confronted the PUSH organization with this situation. Out of this weekly meetings started. Two weeks ago, a representative of A&P came to one of the meetings. He said they can no longer use this racist regional seniority. I call it racist because the new stores hire mostly white, new help, instead of using people they have already laid off or threatened to knock to part-time.

From now on a person with seniority can bump another with less seniority in the suburban stores. So although this is somewhat of a victory, people are still being broken down to part-time. Stores are still closing. A store on 80th and Cottage Grove that does at least \$50,000 a week is supposed to close.

How does this effect women?

Women are the ones who are really getting the bad end, the first to be broken down from full-time to part-time. Some are the sole supporters of their families.

The effect on customers is to run down the service because district supervisors allow store managers only so many hours labor, so that customers almost always have to wait. When they come out and say they're going to close a store, the excuse they use is that the store isn't doing enough business. Well, in order to do enough business you have to service the customers well enough.

What do you think can be done about it?

There must be more participation from the community itself. For example, another store is threatening to close: 87th and Stony Island. They have a petition drive going on for the shoppers to sign to stop the closing. The problem with the meetings we've been having at PUSH is that only the Black workers come and not enough of them in the first place. We need the support of the white workers and community and more of the Black workers because many people don't know about the situation here.



The only way we can afford to have you stay home & have the baby is if you go to work full-time....

ONE LOCAL'S EXPERIENCE

Women's rights on campus



by BEA LUMPKIN
AFT Local 1600
Chicago

An informal women's conference was organized a year ago by rank and file members of my local, the Cook County College Teachers Union, AFT L. 1600. Our purpose was to eliminate sex discrimination in the union contract and on the job and to encourage women to take more leadership in the local. Also, as teachers, we wanted to do more in the classroom to help encourage our women students. The conference also included women in the clerks union at our colleges.

One of our brave women members had single-handedly challenged the discriminatory maternity leave provisions of our union contract and was getting nothing but flak from the union leadership. Although seniority is maintained during other leaves (military, academic, etc.) time out for maternity leave was deducted from seniority.

Immediate victories followed from our very well attended rank-and-file women's conference. Within days, our employer, the City College Board, agreed to correct the seniority lists so that women would not lose seniority during maternity leaves. This was made retroactive for those women who, years ago, had been forced to "resign" when they took maternity leaves. Insurance benefits, which had treated maternity stays as different from other hospitalization, were also corrected. All this was accomplished

through pressure from an informal caucus separate from the official union structure.

The formation of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) encouraged women in our local to work for an official Women's Committee. There were some fears that the undemocratic, one-man rule of the union by its president would thwart the purpose of the committee, but the women felt it was worth a try.

Requests of the women that they be allowed to elect their own chairperson were turned down by the president who appointed one of his followers. Further disappointments followed as it became clear that committee plans for a women's conference in April of 1975 were being undemocratically changed. Nonetheless the conference had many positive features, with excellent workshops on child care and labor history, and generated further pressure to end discrimination against hiring women for administrative jobs.

Some members of the women's committee, turned off by the lack of democracy, want to quit the committee, but others want to stay and continue to press for union action on women's rights. The key is continued rank and file organization, whether it be a caucus or some other form, to guarantee continued progress for women's rights in this local--especially in the important areas of child care and promotions of women on the job.



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