

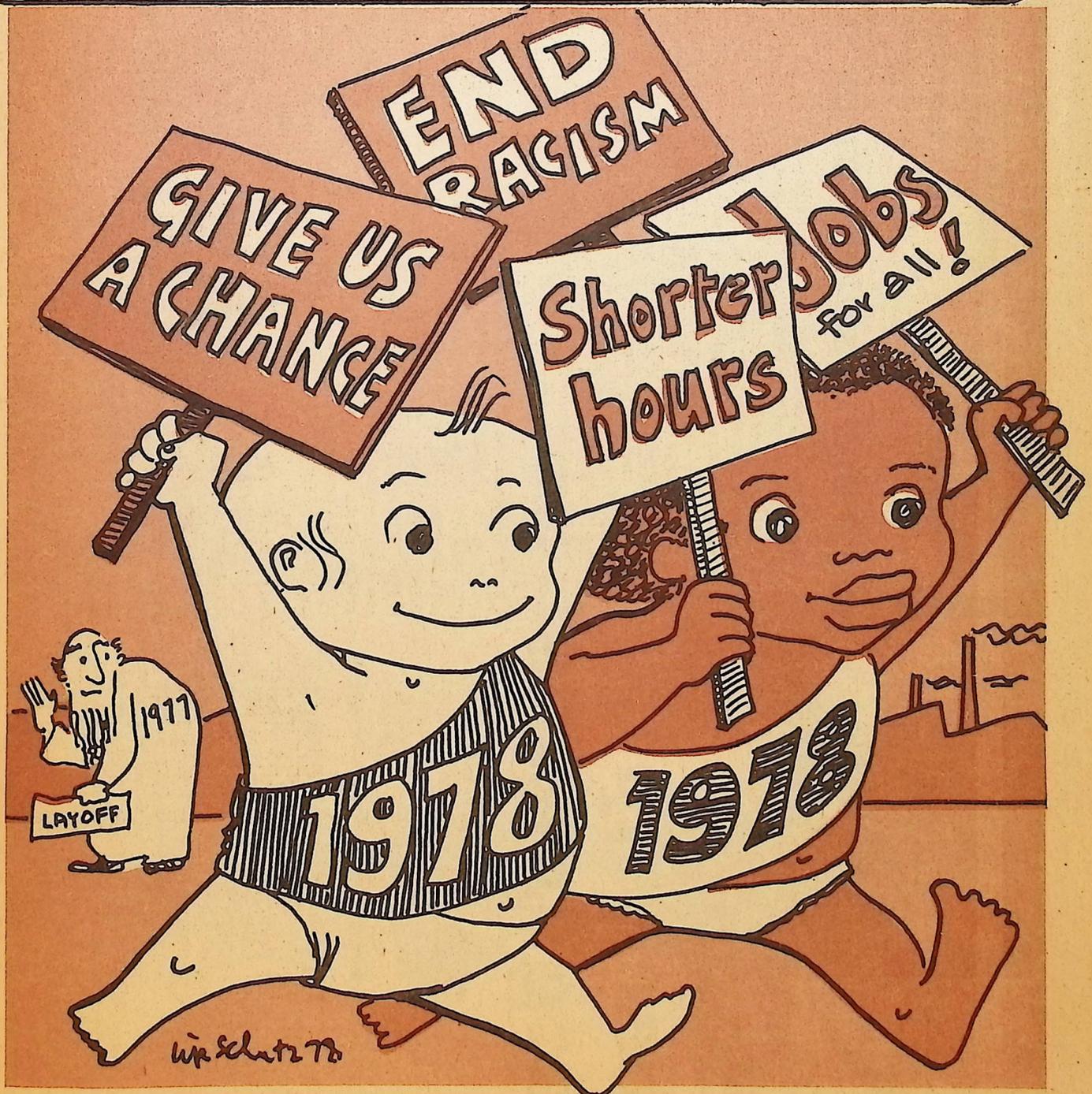
the rank and file in action

Labor Today

35¢

Volume 17, No. 1

January 1978



What's at stake in the coal strike

by BOBBIE REGAN, FRANK RADDISH, MARVIN COSTELLO and JAMES MERCHANT
Members of Miners for a Fair Contract,
a rank and file coal miners committee

What do the people who work in the mines want to see in this contract?

The issues are split. Some men say Miller should de-emphasize the right to strike. Some men say that that's clear propaganda. All I've heard is one local president wants to de-emphasize the right to strike. We should be going for the full restoration of benefits, in my opinion, with the right to strike. That will give us more time on the job; cut down on wildcat strikes.

How will it eliminate the number of strikes?

The way I look at it, if you have an issue at this particular mine that can't be resolved, call a union meeting and the men will vote. And, if it's a majority vote, call a strike and shut down the operations in that particular mine until the issue is resolved. The way it is now, the company has the right to arbitration on any issue and if they hold the issue up they know they're going to win 90% of the arbitration cases anyway. This leaves the men no alternative but to strike.

Why doesn't the arbitration system work?

The arbitrators are big money men. They're men who don't know anything about the coal mine. They arbitrate cases, cases which involve the coal miner and his working conditions but they just can't make an intelligent decision. You can't take a lawyer sitting in a warm office in winter and expect him to know anything about what's going on underground.

What are some of the other issues?

More economically sound health and retirement benefits. More time off. More pay.

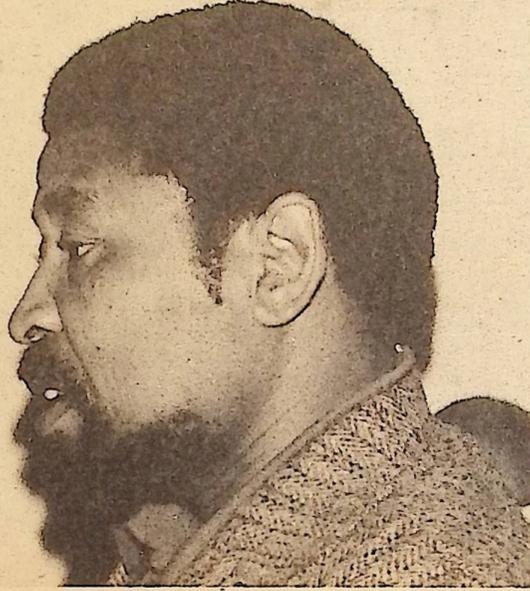
Put all your retirement funds together. Do away with the 1950 retirement fund and the 1974 fund; combine them. Bring all your retirees up to par with each other. As it is now, there's a \$250 difference in the retirement fund.

Another issue is more vacation time. In other industries, after four or five years, they get three weeks vacation. It takes us seven years to earn one extra day; two weeks being the standard vacation.

What about a pay increase? Some people say that higher wages lead to higher prices.

That's bullcrap! That's what it is. Our wages are not what has put the economy in this shape and they're not what drove the prices up. A man with a family almost has to make a hundred dollars a day to get by. You've got to negotiate a contract on 1977, you know. Prices change and you've got to change wages to go along with prices. Coal operators have been getting these big profits for years while trying to hold us down to a bare minimum. Therefore, wages are a top priority in the negotiations.

At present, what is the average yearly wage of the coal miner?



Right now, if you're lucky, if you're really lucky, you can make \$12,000 a year.

Can you support a family with two children on that?

No. At least it would be hard. To feed a family of four--for the bare necessities--it takes \$50 a week easy. You can exist on \$12,000 a year but you can't live on it. Twelve thousand dollars a year for a family of four is just barely above the poverty level.

What about cuts in your medical benefits?

Well, there's this woman who needs open heart surgery. It came out in the paper that the hospital wants her to pay so much money, several hundred dollars, before the surgery is done. Right now the funds are supported by the tonnage rates and the man-hours worked. The coal companies can do anything; they can force strikes to cut down the production while their profits still go on. They can cut production and, therefore, cut the amount of money going into our funds without hurting themselves financially. When you've got 130,000 active workers plus their beneficiaries and retired miners drawing off this fund that is supported by tonnage rates, there is no way you can keep it up while the companies are forcing wild-cat strikes and work stoppages.

The companies try to force the workers to strike?

Right.

Newspaper analyses of these strikes point to the fact that miners' salaries are high enough so that we don't have to work a full week.

People writing those newspaper articles don't have to go down in those mines and put up with the harassment and the unsafe conditions. The companies play around with our safety committeemen, suspending them for trying to make the work place safe. It's issues like these that force us to

MINERS STRIKE

A time for solidarity

by JIM WILLIAMS,
Editor
LABOR TODAY

Faced by an uncompromisingly tough bargaining stance by the coal operators, the United Mine Workers struck December 6 with every indication that a long, hard-fought strike lay in store. Since 1972, when the rank and file gained control of the UMWA, the miners have been on the cutting edge of the struggle for economic and union justice. Their democratic and militant example has led rank and filers in other unions to fight even harder to rid their unions of company-minded leadership.

The mine bosses have chosen this contract to fight back--to turn back the clock and destroy the gains the miners have won. This strike could very well be the test of rank and file democracy.

The mine bosses and coal operators are confident that they can win. They cite the fact that most coal buyers have stockpiled a three-month supply of coal. The bosses also view the union as still split after a hard-fought election campaign last spring,

that saw UMWA President Arnold Miller returned to power. Moreover, the coal bosses reason, the series of long rank and file strikes in the coal fields this summer have depleted the miner's pocketbook as well as the Union's health and retirement funds. (Replenishment of these funds is a major issue in these negotiations.)

The key issue in this strike is "labor discipline". The bosses want harsh penalties against "unauthorized" strikers and harsh penalties for absenteeism.

The miners, chafing under a grievance and arbitration system that was sabotaged by the mine bosses, want the right to strike at their local mine site over their local grievances--especially health and safety grievances. (Of over 70 health and safety grievances submitted to arbitration, only two have been settled in favor of the miners.) The miners also want the bosses to put more money into the depleted health and retirement funds, which are funded by a royalty on each ton of coal that is mined. During this summer, benefits were

(continued on page 6)

House Passes Labor Law Reform; Battle Now Moves to the Senate

Joint Board Fur, Leather & Machine Workers
109 West 26th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001,
A.M.C. & B.W. of N.A. (AFL-CIO)
Tel. (212) 242-5450 December 1977

As a result of the labor movement's most intensive campaign of political activity in many years, the House of Representatives at the beginning of October passed HR 8410—"the Labor Law Reform Bill"—and took a long step in the direction of guaranteeing that the right of workers to organize into unions will have some teeth.

The battle for labor law reform now moves to the Senate, where the bill will be acted on at the beginning of 1978. There are already danger signs that the organizations of big business are putting massive pressure on the senators to remove some of the more effective provisions of the bill. They will have to be countered by the equally powerful pressure of workers. As one freshman congressman from Indiana told U. S. News and World Report: "For once I heard more from individual union members than from their leaders. It's more impressive to me that way."

involved are of exceptional novelty or complexity may the election be delayed as long as 75 days from the date of filing.

• **Equal Access**—The Labor Board is directed to develop reasonable and union and management views before appropriate rules to insure that workers have a fair chance to hear both an NLRB-conducted election if the employer makes campaign speeches or communicates to employees in other ways on plant premises or during working time.

• **Illegal Discharges**—When a company discharges an employee for exercising his or her rights under the law during an organizing campaign or in the period after an election but before the signing of a collective bargaining agreement, the NLRB must seek reinstatement of that employee through

a court injunction.

• **Double Backpay**—Where employees are discharged for the exercise of protected activities, or where the Board finds violations of the law during an organizing campaign or prior to a first collective bargaining agreement, they must be reimbursed at double their wage rate less the wages the employee has earned during that period.

• **Employer Penalties**—Under certain specific conditions, employers that the Board finds to have willfully violated a final order of the Board or the Court in the past three years may be barred by the Secretary of Labor from receiving federal contracts for up to three years.

It is this latter provision, particularly, that employers are concentrating on eliminating as the bill goes to the Senate.

labor today

STATEMENT of PRINCIPLES

LABOR TODAY is an independent labor publication, written for trade unionists, by trade unionists.

LABOR TODAY seeks to unite the labor movement from top to bottom, leaders and rank and file, in a struggle to defend our unions, our jobs, and our standards of wages and working conditions.

OUR PROGRAM

Jobs

- Renew the struggle for shorter hours
- Ban compulsory overtime

Working class unity

- Outlaw racist practices on the shop floor—end accommodation to racism on the union floor
- End all discrimination against women and youth

Political independence

- Elect workers and trade unionists to public office
- Build a labor-community electoral and legislative coalition

Peace

- End the arms race—build homes, schools and hospitals
- Expand peaceful trade with all nations
- Establish relations with the world labor movement

Militant democratic unions

- Protect and extend the right to vote on all contracts
- Establish the right to elect stewards, bargaining and grievance committees, officers and convention delegates
- Guarantee the right of all members to participate in the conduct of union affairs -- remove all clauses from union constitutions that discriminate on the basis of political belief or affiliation.

The House-passed bill is designed to correct two major problems that have arisen under the current Labor Act: (1) Delays in processing both election petitions and unfair labor practice cases; and (2) the inadequate remedies which the Labor Board can invoke against violators of the law, particularly when violations occur during the critical period before a collective bargaining relationship is first established.

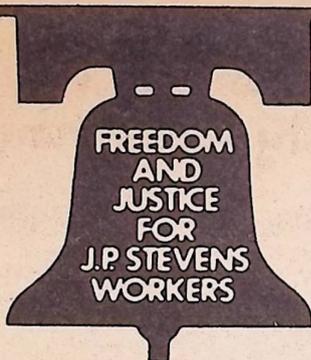
Here are the ways in which the new legislation seeks to solve these problems.

• **Prompt elections** — Where the union produces authorization cards from more than half the bargaining unit's employees, the election must be held within 25 days after the filing of a representation petition. Where the union produces authorization cards from more than 30% of the employees, the election must be held within 50 days after filing. Only where the Labor Board determines that the issues

Write to Your Senators Urging Them To Vote for Labor Law Reform Bill

The battleground in the fight for labor law reform now moves to the U.S. Senate, which is expected to act in January. We all have a job to do in convincing our senators to support S. 1883, the companion bill to HR 8410. Send a letter to your senators, urging them to vote for the Labor Law Reform Bill. All of them are addressed at:

Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510



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Some contracts coming up in 1978

Industry	Workers covered	Renewal dates	Union Involved
Postal service	800,000	July 20	Postal Workers Union, National Association of Letter Carriers, others
Railroads	500,000	Jan. 1	United Transportation Union, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, 15 others
Construction	408,800	March-June	Building trades
Airlines	76,000	January-December	Air Line Pilots Assn., International Association of Machinists, and others
East and Gulf Coast shipbuilding	49,250	Jan. 29-Dec. 30	Industrial Union of Marine & Shipbuilding Workers and local craft union federations
Steamship lines	34,000	June 15	National Maritime Union, three other unions
West Coast longshoremen	11,100	July 1	International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union

Data: Labor Dept.

1978 - a chance to make some changes

Echoing these days through the halls of Congress is a desolate clanking. It is the depressing sound of a labor movement dragging the leg-irons of subservience to the two-party system.

In truth, as Arnold Miller said, it isn't a two-party system at all. There's only one party--the "Money Party"--with two branches equally dominated by the big bucks.

LABOR TODAY believes that a conscious and consistent policy of political independence can break the shackles and free labor to accomplish its historic mission.

Here's what that could mean:

For the first time, the election of a significant number of workers as members of Congress and the state legislatures.

For the first time, the establishment of a political power base for organized labor.

For the first time, the organization of an independent political movement, national in scope, anchored in labor, and strong enough to compel action on the most urgent economic and social questions confronting the working people and the nation.



We're talking about action of, by, and for the union movement

When we say independent labor political action, we're talking about political action of, by and for the union movement and the working class. That kind of political action has got to come. Until it does come, the big problems--war, racism, unemployment, poverty--will keep on getting worse. The urgent needs--jobs, peace, equal rights, security--will continue to be neglected.

The old labor politics hasn't worked...

Let's face facts. Carter is marching in Ford's and Nixon's boots. The old labor politics hasn't worked, isn't working, and won't work in five million years to solve our problems.

By the "old labor politics" we mean the practice of "rubbing bellies" with establishment politicians, as the late James Matles of UE put it, in the hope that the politicians will dole out nickel-and-dime legislative favors, while the real problems fester unattended.

We mean the practice of passing out labor endorsements like peanuts to hack candidates that rank and file workers had no voice in choosing, whether or not those candidates ever stuck their necks out for working people in their whole lives.

We mean the practice of running COPE and similar structures from the top down, restricting the political function of union families to tossing a couple of bucks in the hat and going to the polls on election day to rubber-stamp the incumbents or somebody else just as bad.

We mean the practice of either fronting for the Pentagon and the arms merchants in foreign policy, or ducking foreign policy en-

tirely, as if working people don't pay for the superweapons, don't lay out the dough that props up the anti-union dictatorships abroad. As if working people's sons aren't sent off to die in the wars.

We need a new, clean people's party of our own

We who work for a living need to throw off the bipartisan leg-irons. We need a new, clean people's party of our own, a party whose platform we ourselves write and whose candidates we ourselves select.

We need a party based on the organized labor movement and its natural allies--the Black people, the other oppressed minorities, the youth and women's movements, the working farmers, the small business people--everybody and anybody who's being cheated and squeezed today by the merchant and the landlord and the cops and the banker and the boss.

We must construct a road to that new party

We need a new party, but we aren't going to get one overnight by issuing a manifesto. We're going to have to construct a road to that new party, through difficult terrain, patiently and together. And the basic earth-moving equipment for the job is independent labor political action.

That means, as we said at the beginning, advancing our own best union fighters for office and organizing the coalitions that can elect them. If the British can elect working coal miners to Parliament, why should we be satisfied with millionaire lawyers and corporate executives?

Worker-legislators nominated by us, elected by us, pledged to our program, will constitute the dependable power base we have always needed and have never yet had.

In the process of electing them and working with them to enact the laws that squarely address the big problems, we will build the independent political movement the whole country desperately needs. And out of that independent political movement the new party can be built.

LABOR TODAY pledges from this day forward to march in the front ranks of the campaign for independent labor political action. Month in and month out, we will offer our pages as a forum for serious union men and women to debate the complex problems that must be tackled and overcome.

We will welcome all serious forces in labor

We will advance our own positions and proposals. But we will welcome equally the positions and proposals of all other serious forces in labor.

We will search out and report in detail the actual experiences of individual unions and groups of unions as they test the waters of political independence in the electoral and legislative arenas. We will seek to draw from those experiences the lessons that point the way ahead.

We're talking about a shift in political power

We're talking about something big and historic. We're talking about organizing to challenge the political power now wielded, through the two-party system, by anti-labor corporate giants and their political stooges. We're talking about a shift of that political power to the working people and to all the other honest folks this country ought to belong to.

We certainly don't expect to do the job alone. But the job must be done, and LABOR TODAY has enlisted in this history-making battle for the duration.

Cut all U. S. ties to South Africa

An interview with Zola Zembe

by MIKE SCHNAKE
USWA Local 1011

Zola Zembe (that's not his real name), the national Secretary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), visited the United States in September and October.

Zembe, who had come to the United States at the invitation of the United Electrical Workers, has lived in exile for several years. He was the first leader of SACTU, a multi-racial coordinating body of fourteen South African unions representing more than 200,000 workers, to visit the U.S.

The South African Congress of Trade Unions was formed in 1955 and is the only trade union center in South Africa that has not gone along with the policy of excluding African members.

Although driven underground, with many of its leaders banned or in exile, the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, and the Organization of African Trade Union Unity recognize SACTU as the only legitimate trade union in South Africa.

Zembe told us as he told the UE Convention:

"The population of my country is 24 million. Twenty million of these people are Black-- and four million are white.

FREEDOM FOR THE FEW

"For the four million whites there is freedom and democracy in South Africa. For the other 20 million people of South Africa there is nothing--they cannot vote; their wages are one-tenth the wages of whites; it is illegal for them to belong to a trade union; they can only live in certain areas; they cannot make a move without their 'pass book.'

"You can't do anything in South Africa without a pass book, you can't even bury your child," the African labor leader continued. "Imagine that we are in South Africa, and I work as a cleaner in this convention hall. If I have to go to the toilet and I leave my pass book in my coat in the room, and while I'm gone a policeman comes and demands to see my pass book, and I can't produce it because it's in my coat--I've committed an offense. The policeman won't let me walk over to my coat and get my pass book. He'll take me outside and put me in a police van and take me to prison. And while I'm in prison I'll be forced to do agricultural labor--with no pay, of course."

The skilled, high paying jobs in South Africa are reserved for whites, Brother Zembe told the convention, while all of the heavy, dirty, menial work of the

country is done by Africans. It is illegal for Black South Africans to belong to trade unions, engage in collective bargaining, or go on strike.

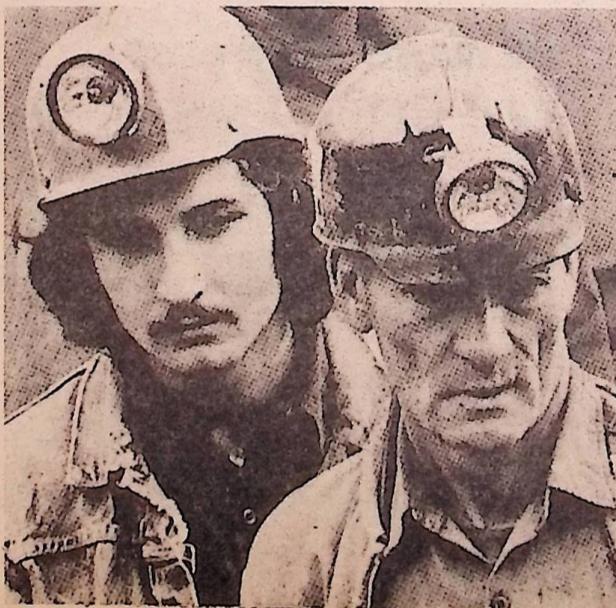
"It is difficult to give an exact number of the members of our affiliated unions today," Zembe told LABOR TODAY, "not only for direct reasons of security, but also because the conditions under which we must organize do not allow anything like the kind of regular structure you have in the United States.

"A strike by African workers, even for basic demands such as higher wages, is seen as an act of war against the Apartheid system.

"An African worker identified as a leader is arrested or even murdered by the police. For example, shortly before Steve Biko was killed, L. Ndzanga, former head of the Railway and Harbor Workers' Union and a member of the National Executive of SACTU was found dead in his prison cell. It is common belief that he was tortured to death.

"Under such conditions, when we strike we must negotiate through such means as leaflets left in the plant. There is no way that we can send a committee forward. We are able to win changes, concessions as to conditions at times, but not contracts for our unregistered unions."

(Although there are no laws that prevent African workers from belonging to unions, only white-led unions are able to "register" with the government and only registered unions can strike or sign contracts.)



Zola Zembe



SACTU is part of the overall movement for liberation of South Africa. "We encourage membership in the African National Congress, the political arm of the liberation movement," Zembe said.

U.S. WORKERS ROLE

When Zembe was asked what the U.S. labor movement could do to hasten the end of the present Apartheid, he told the delegates to the USWA District 31 conference, "We are fighting the same corporations as you.

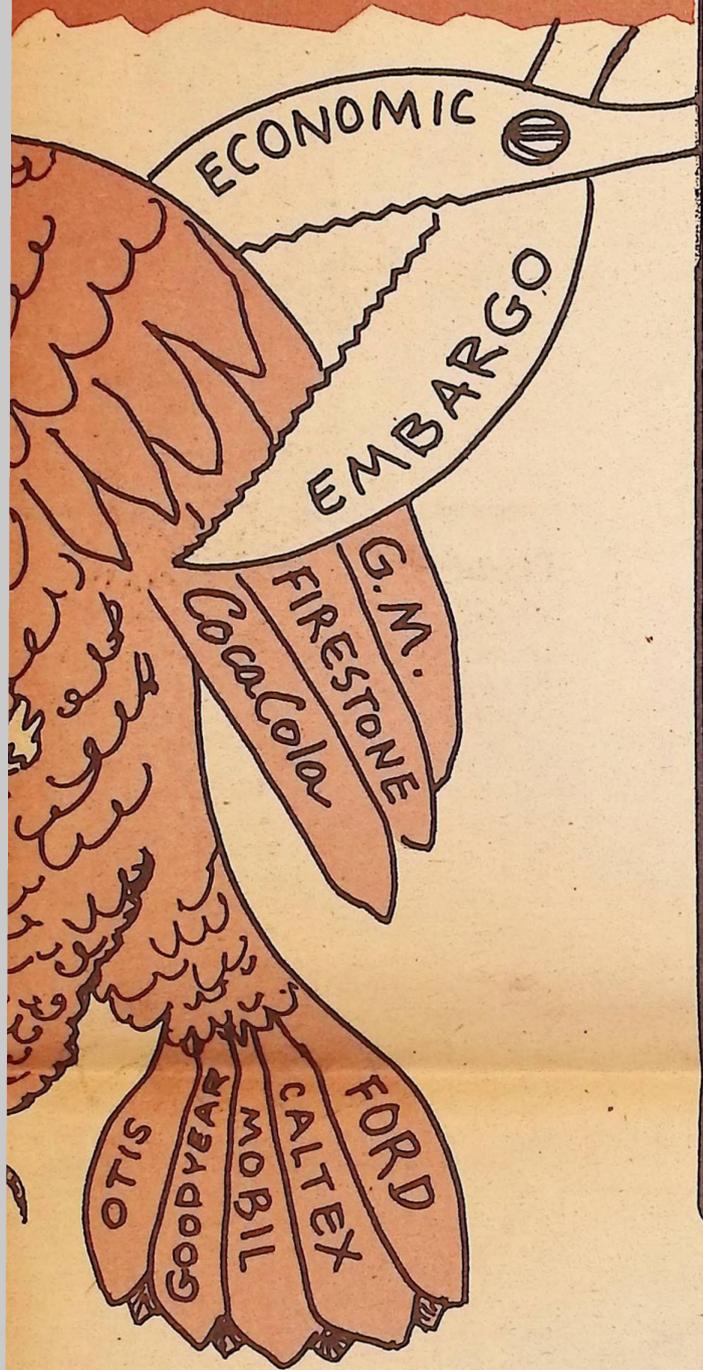
"Investments by U.S. companies are a major factor in maintaining the Apartheid regime. At the same time the jobs of U.S. workers are lost when the money created by your sweat and labor is taken and invested in South Africa.

"We call for the withdrawal of all foreign investment in South Africa and for a boycott of goods produced under the Apartheid system."

THE FINAL STAGE

As he walked out the door, Zembe said, "Our fight for freedom is not over but I believe we've begun the final stage. My visit--and the response I received everywhere--convinces me that U.S. workers and U.S. unions can build a movement that will help end U.S. trade, diplomatic, military, yes, all relations, with the Republic of South Africa. That would be a tremendous blow for our freedom--and for security for U.S. workers also."

Africa!



What the bannings mean

In its latest sweep of bannings and detentions, the apartheid regime has taken a step of very great significance.

Not because there is anything *new* about such measures. There isn't. *Not* because they will achieve their purpose of taming the mass resistance of the black people. They won't. What Kruger has failed to smash with bullets, he cannot hope to destroy with the pen. Why, then, are they so significant? Because the government is declaring in the plainest language that no truce is possible; that it intends to fight to the death. Because it has slammed shut the door marked "Concessions and Reforms" — a door which before was held temptingly ajar to entice the oppressed people from devotion to the struggle.

Nothing to offer

Of course, the liberation movement has long explained that the system in South Africa *has nothing of value to offer the mass of the people*, by way of concessions and reforms. In fact, the crisis of capitalism in South Africa forces our rulers to *intensify* still further the exploitation of the working people. For us they have no recipe but repression and more repression.

But now they are *admitting* that fact plainly, and a lot sooner perhaps than might have been expected. Their show of strength is in fact a demonstration of their weakness. Their much-trumpeted policies of "reform" will boil down in practice to a few paltry schemes to bribe collaborators, from the upper levels of the black middle classes, to take the side of the exploiters.

The task

The forcible overthrow of the apartheid regime, and of the system on which it rests, is the task which the liberation movement has set itself for many years. Today that task is posed more clearly than ever before in the consciousness of the people.

Knowing the task is the first step towards achieving it.

The underground

Bitter experience has taught our people to *use open forms of organisation but not to rely on them*, for they are fragile and easily attacked. For years now, real organisation has been going on *below the surface*. The 1973 Durban strikes showed this; so did the political general strikes last year and this year. And the work of the youth and students, mobilising their forces in the streets, acting against collaborators, maintaining the school-strikes — all this has been achieved with the help of underground methods of organisation.

While continuing to create and use open organisation wherever that can advance the struggle, *we must now emphasise more than ever before the need to build the underground.*

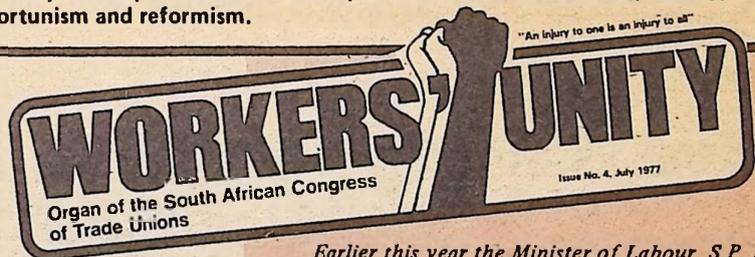
The way forward

For the militant youth the way forward is clear: turn towards the traditional organisations of the liberation movement; strengthen the permanent forces of the ANC and SACTU within the country. *Root yourselves in the workers' movement*; link up with the workers, support their struggles, and help to build their organisations within the factories.

Prepare for a drawn-out struggle; work to deepen the contradictions which our rulers face; maintain the pressure and let their weaknesses and desperation grow for all to see. Avoid adventures which may lead on our side to demoralisation and defeat.

Above all — study. Theory is the guide to action. Learn the lessons of the revolutionary workers' struggle and its history in every country of the world. Arm yourselves with revolutionary theory, and against every kind of opportunism and reformism.

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Struggle grows against Apartheid

Number of U.S. unions have already taken action against South Africa.

One of the best known was the strike in 1974 by some 8500 Alabama coal miners against the importation of South African coal by the Southern Power Company. Legal actions against the company were launched as well, and Southern no longer imports the coal according to the UMW.

The United Steelworkers Local 1011, representing 1000 workers at the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Mill, in East Chicago, Indiana, put forward a contract demand this spring that the company halt the use of all goods from South Africa and the Republic of South Africa, and that a monitoring system be provided to assure compliance. While this demand has not been fulfilled yet, this struggle has prompted further actions by steelworkers against South African trade and investment.

The District 31 conference voted to pull out all union funds out of U.S. banks with investments in South Africa. It also voted to back a demand by Local 65

(U.S. Steel, Chicago) that U.S. Steel withdraw investments in South Africa.

The AFL-CIO convention, meeting in Los Angeles, opened the door to boycott actions on a broader scale on December 13, 1977. Resolution #150, passed without opposition, called for the International Affairs Committee to "...explore positive courses of action, such as selective boycotts of South Africa..." Though this resolution fell short of the proposals put forward by Industrial Union Department head J. Clayman, it represents an advance on the part of the central body of American labor.

On the same day, the delegates voted to urge all affiliated unions "to give full support to the strike by the United Mine Workers..." Reports have circulated that steel companies and other major coal consumers have proposed the use of South African coal and coke if U.S. coal supplies are severely cut by the UMW strike.

If the companies do choose to import any such coal or coke, we at LABOR TODAY, believe the tasks of U.S. labor are clear.

Earlier this year the Minister of Labour, S.P. Botha, declared that trade unions were not the answer for African workers. Instead, he wanted workers to "sit down under a tree" with their employer. This is how the cartoonist Richard Smith saw it:



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London Office: 49 Rathbone Street, W1A

What's at stake in coal strike (continued from page 1)

strikes, where the companies will not attempt to settle an issue, where they keep putting it off, driving it further down the grievance procedure until it has to go to arbitration where they know they are going to win.

Will coal miners sign a contract that has penalties for striking in it?

No. That is where they are trying to make the coal miner look like a dumb hillbilly again. They are trying to strap us and hold us down, and make us live the way they want us to live. I don't think the coal miners today will go for that.

What are some things coal miners can do to win?

The main thing is to close down all the operations. The companies are dependent upon the non-union coal to keep on coming in to keep the power plants going and to keep the steel mills operating. If they don't have this coal coming in, the quicker we shut it down, the quicker we'll have a contract.

Another thing we can do is to stick together, to disregard company propaganda, news media propaganda that they're putting out about how broke the union is, and just stick together tight as one union and one bargaining unit and ride the thing out.

The news media, the companies, the state government, the federal government, will do anything they can to push into the coal miners' heads and the public's head just how broke the union is and how we are hurting ourselves and the general public. But to strike is the only weapon that we've got.

What about the rest of labor, what can they do for this strike?

I think if other labor unions would endorse us in our fight, like they normally expect us to do--and will do--when they are having

the same problems within their ranks, then that would help tremendously. I think we have the support of quite a bit of the labor force. I think most of your labor force is in sympathy with us.

On the same note, you have non-union labor, non-union mines that are actually sympathetic to us because their wages are really based on what we make.

What do you think of the news media's handling of the strike news?

You can go down to the local newspaper today and take 50 people with you--or take 100 people with you--and give your views on what the rank and file wants and what the rank and file really believe in. Ten minutes later one man could go to the same local newspaper and give them an opposite view saying that the majority of the men want to go to work, that the majority of men don't want this right to strike, and that the majority of men want a contract extension. Invariably the newspaper will print the latter point of view rather than the majority statement to try to make it look like a few radicals are leading the strike.

What's the story on these radicals?

Well, what the companies would like and what some of your high ranking union officials would like, what some of your district officials would like is for you to sit back, keep your mouth shut and let them take care of everything--which they're not going to do--and just accept whatever is offered. Any man who speaks up with a contrary opinion is automatically a radical. He's labeled a radical and sometimes a communist--and that's anybody who's got an opinion that differs from their opinions.

What importance does this strike have for U.S. labor?

"It's a bullet aimed at the heart of labor."



Time for solidarity

(continued from page 1)

slashed as royalties fell during the outbreaks of strikes over long unsettled grievances.

The bosses, however, are demanding that striking miners must reimburse the health and retirement funds for any money lost as the result of unauthorized work stoppages. The bosses also want the right to summarily dismiss any miner who engages in an unauthorized work stoppage at his mine, or at another where he does not work. This is aimed at the tradition of roving pickets which have proven so successful in shutting down other mines in solidarity.

Bargaining in the coal industry has changed dramatically over the years. Most of the major coal companies are now owned by outside interests--mostly the oil and steel monopolies. Thus, the coal bosses are able to bring tremendously great pressures on the workers. PEABODY COAL, the nation's largest producer, is owned by a variety of sources, including Newmont Mining and Boeing Aircraft; CONSOLIDATION COAL, ISLAND CREEK COAL, ARCH MINERAL and OLD BEN COAL are among the top producers that are owned by the big oil companies; while other large producers are the captive mines of U.S. STEEL and BETHLEHEM STEEL and big electric power companies like PACIFIC POWER & LIGHT.

President Carter's new energy policies figure heavy on expanded use of coal, and that's why he has already begun to put the pressure of government against the miners and for the coal bosses.

If the coal bosses can crush the miners, they will strike the labor movement a terrible blow that will be difficult for the rank and file to recover from.

This is why the rank and file movement throughout the country has begun to build the widest possible support for the miners. The entire labor movement must be won to the miners' side through community support committees, etc.

Support for the miners will not stop at motions of support at union meetings. Recognizing that the miners' funds have been depleted by the series of deliberately forced strikes over health and safety issues this summer, support groups have begun to raise money, food and clothing. (The UMWA does not have a strike fund.)

The coal bosses may well seek to break the strike through coal imports from other countries--especially racist South Africa.

More than ever before, rank and filers recognize that the miners' fight is their fight, too.

LETTERS, PAMPHLETS, ARTICLES

A live history of women workers

by SYLVIA KREKEL
Oil, Chemical and Atomic
UNION NEWS

AMERICA'S WORKING WOMEN. COMPILED AND EDITED
BY ROSALYN BAXANDALL, LINDA GORDON, SUSAN
REVERBY. VINTAGE BOOKS, 1976, \$6.95.

As a whole, the labor movement in this country has generally received short shrift in history texts. If not in the trade union movement, one could grow up knowing little more about labor history than the Pullman Strike and the Haymarket Riot. Oh yes, there was Sacco and Vanzetti.

And as for trade union women, one could reasonably assume that there was no such creature from all accounts in history books.

In fact, aside from a few outstanding heroines like Mother Jones and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, trade union women have been largely ignored even in "non-traditional" labor-oriented histories.

But its 1977, and the last few years have seen a lot of changes. Women have become much more visible. The formation of the Coalition of Labor Union Women in 1974 was a milestone for union for union women.

With women now making up over 40 percent of the work-force, it has suddenly dawned on the world that women do work, not just for "pin-money" or "self-fulfillment" (a luxury granted only to the privileged few)--but for survival. All the major news magazines have done their thing on "blue collar women," and the sociologists are having a field day analyzing the working woman and what makes her "tick."

When all the dust has settled, and the topic of working women is no longer news, one book will remain both as a tribute and as a challenge to all women, whether their work be in the home, factory, office or restaurant.

Women workers refusing to leave the factory in sympathy with striking garment workers.



AMERICA'S WORKING WOMEN bears the subtitle, "A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY--1600 TO THE PRESENT." And what a documentary it is. These three admittedly professional women have wisely chosen to let women workers speak for themselves. Wisely, because a mere narrative of events by a third person would have destroyed the vitality that makes history live.

The editors focus most of their attention on more recent history--the period from 1890 to today. Thus, the editors extensively document the effects of, and women's response to, the widescale industrialization of the country.

Among the letters, pamphlets and magazine articles of the early industrial period, a letter from a clothing worker to her shop steward is as timely today as it was in the twenties. Entitled, "What Do We Want, Brother Levin?" a Hungarian garment worker says it all: "We care not for special privileges, we want to be looked upon as a part and parcel of our organization.... For to me the sex question does not exist. To me it is a question of one group of workers undermining another."

From the Lawrence Textile Strike to the Feminine Mystique to the formation of CLUW, "AMERICA'S WORKING WOMEN" provides a historical perspective that is desperately needed.



the rank and file in action

by **FRED GABOURY**
Field Organizer
TUAD

KEEP THE COBWEBS OUT OF YOUR EYES

The people who own the mines, mills, factories and railroads of our country never give up in their efforts to suck another billion or two out of the hides of those who work for a living. Even a passing glance at the financial pages of the New York Times or a once-over-lightly of the Wall Street Journal or Business Week makes it pretty obvious that there are people in this country working nights in a never-ending campaign to confuse workers and the "public" about the causes of continued high unemployment and inflation.



Fred Gaboury

A case in point is the belly-aching that's going on in preparation for the 1978 round of contract talks. By accepted standards, 1978 is not a big year for collective bargaining. Contracts covering "only" about 1,800,000 workers will expire next year compared to the 4,200,000 workers covered by contracts negotiated in 1976 or the 4,700,000 whose contracts were renegotiated in 1977.

None of the biggies--like auto or steel--are up in 1978 but the way big business spokesmen are carrying on you'd think the end of the world was at hand. They keep whining about some "long-term trend" where labor cost increases have "far exceeded productivity hikes" and complain that this will contribute to "labor cost pressures" and even higher prices. They say that this is unavoidable because "productivity has been rising at only 2.1 percent per year for the last 15 years."

PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity is probably the least understood term in the English language. Everywhere you look--be it the continued closing of plants and business offices or cut-backs in government employment--there's always someone talking about the need to increase "productivity". Simply put, "productivity" is the measure of output per worker over a definite period of time--generally an hour or a shift. It has nothing to do with production although increases in production are often the result of increased productivity. However, productivity can actually increase (an often does) in situations where production declines.

FACTS

An article in the October 1977 issue of

the Monthly Labor Review, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, provides some interesting facts about productivity.

Output per employee hour--that's productivity--"grew 4.1 percent in 1976..." And, when specific industries are considered, the increases are even more astounding--and make even bigger liars out of those who talk about 2.1 percent productivity increases.

- Motor vehicle production posted a "substantial 9.1 percent advance...comparing favorably with the 6.8 increase in 1975." (After looking at those figures--a 15.9% increase in two years--it might be well to remember the 1976 UAW settlement and to ask if a combination of a three percent "annual improvement factor" and an "uncapped Cost of Living Allowance" will enable even fully employed auto workers to maintain their standard of living.)

- Or take steel and other metal manufacturing: The BLS says that productivity increased 7.3 percent in the steel industry and that the aluminum industry topped them all with a 19.3 percent increase in productivity in 1976.

- It's that way on down the line: pulp and paper productivity up eight percent; saw mills up 5.3 percent; petroleum up 4.5 percent and; telephone communications up at least 10.5 percent in 1975.

Finally, as if it really mattered, the productivity of new car dealers increased nearly five percent!

Some back-up arguments

DETROIT--Lowering the nation's jobless rate to a rockbottom 2.5% by 1981 would require the creation of 111,000 new jobs each and every week over the next four years, UAW Research Director Nathan Spero told a shorter hours conference here.

At this pace is needed, Spero explained, to provide jobs for 6.3 million currently jobless workers, plus 7.2 million new workers who will come into the labor market, plus 6 million workers who will be displaced by technological change as employers intensify their productivity drive over the next four years.

Only the shorter work week can make significant inroads into the jobless crisis, he said. Here, much abridged, are facts and figures from Spero's tightly-organized 15-page report:

THE UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION

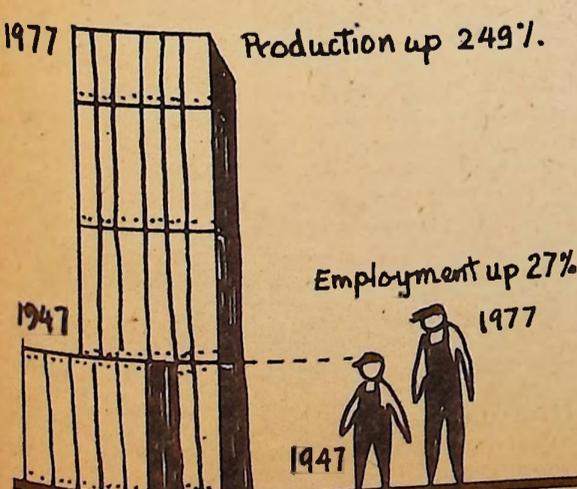
Official figures understate joblessness by 50 to 40%. Each economic trough during the post-World War II period has witnessed the U.S. economy recovering more sluggishly than before. The current "recovery" from the 1975 low point is 30 months long, yet the unemployment in September 1977 was still hovering at 9.7% of the labor force, with 8,850,000 still jobless.

Disadvantaged groups are worst off. Unemployment rates for women are higher than those for men; those for teenagers are far higher than those for workers 20 and older; those for Blacks are more than double those for whites; and true rates for Black teenagers are at the catastrophic level of 50 to 55% and are almost totally unaffected by the limping recovery.

IMPACT OF PRODUCTIVITY AND AUTOMATION

In the 30 years between 1947 and August 1977:

- U.S. factory production as a whole increased 249%;
- total U.S. employment increased 27%; and
- the number of production workers increased only 9%, and is now actually declining.



IMPACT IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES

- In transportation equipment (auto, aircraft, ships, railroad equipment), between 1953 and June 1977, production increased 93% while hourly jobs decreased 16%.
- In electrical equipment, between 1969 and August 1977, production increased by 27% while jobs decreased 4%.
- In primary metals (steel and non-ferrous), between 1953 and May 1977, production increased 58% while production workers decreased by 218,000 or 19%.

JOB-CREATING POTENTIAL OF SHORTER HOURS

- A one-hour cut in the work week of the 55 million men and women now working 40 hours or more would create 1,400,000 new jobs.
- A five-hour cut to the 35-hour week would create 7,850,000 new jobs.
- An eight-hour cut to the 4-day, 32-hour week would create 13,750,000 new jobs.
- A 10-hour cut to the 30-hour week would create 18,300,000 new jobs.

With 55 million working 40 hours a week or more

- **1 HOUR LESS a week**
= 55 million hours
= 1,400,000 new jobs
- **5 HOURS LESS**
(a 35-hour week)
= 7,850,000 new jobs
- **8 HOURS LESS**
(a 32-hr. 4-day week)
= 13,750,000 new jobs
- **10 HOURS LESS**
(a 30-hour week)
= 18,300,000 new jobs

IN SALUTE TO WORKING WOMEN EVERYWHERE

Pete Seeger to sing for Florence Reece

Readers of *LT* will soon get a rare opportunity to meet Florence Reece, author of 'Which Side Are You On?' and many other fighting union songs. She will be honored at a concert in Chicago's Auditorium Theatre on Friday March 17, 1978. The affair is called "A Tribute to Florence Reece: A Salute to Working Women".

The list of entertainers will be headed by Pete Seeger, one of labor's most beloved artists. Pete has traveled the U.S. and the world sparking Freedom movements and the fight for peace.

Florence Reece was born and raised in the mining camps of Harlan County, Kentucky. She wrote her songs to organize coal mining families into the union. Her own father was killed in the mines. As she tells it "He was loading a ton and a half of coal for thirty cents, and pushing it. And that's what he got killed for -- for nothing."

Florence's husband, Sam Reece, went into the mines when he was eleven years old. He organized his fellow workers and was constantly harrassed and threatened by Sheriff Blair's gun-thugs. Says Florence, "One time Sam was gone for a week. I didn't know whether he was dead or alive. Well, one night he slipped in through the back way, up through the corn. I stayed up all that night watching for the thugs to come after Sam. The thugs made up my mind for me right off



Florence Reece

photograph by Ron Stanford

which side I was on... And all in the world the people wanted was enough to feed and clothe our children -- just a decent living."

The tribute to Florence Reece is a benefit for the Labor Education Fund. (The LEF has made many contributions to *LT*) Among the sponsors are Lou Antal, District 5 Director of UMW, Charles Barton, President Local P500 AMCBW of NA, Cathern Davis, Vice-President of CLUW, Patrick Gorman, Chairman of the Board, AMCBW of NA, Barbara Kopple, Director of the film 'Harlan County, USA', Charlene Mitchell, Exec. Secretary, Nat'l. Alliance Against Repression, Sondra Patrinos, Midwest Organizer of WREE, folk-singer Malvina Reynolds, Frank Rosen, President District Council 11, UE, Frank Runnels, President Local 22, UAW, Ed Sadlowski, Director Sub District 3, USWA and many others.

Chairperson of the evening will be popular author and TV personality Studs Terkel.

*Quotes are from "Hillbilly Women" by Kathy Kahn.



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