

## **Labor Notes from the National Capital Area**

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None of the exuberance of last year's massive Solidarity Day March exists today in Washington. Much of the unequivocal opposition by a great majority of labor unions to the Republican Administration because of the PATCO strike firings of employees has been dissipated by legislative battles on Capitol Hill. There organized labor has been involved in an aggressive, though defensive, campaign to retain social benefit programs now being eroded by budget cuts initiated by the present Administration. The labor stance, however, has been split between the realities of a tax increase that leaves much of the domestic cuts intact, and the huge allotments for the military build-up purportedly needed by the Administration to defend "national security." This dilemma has not stopped many observers of the labor scene, including labor historians and trade unionists alike, from looking back into the past to understand the present course of the labor movement. If anything, it has forced many to build an agenda to study labor's past, and Washington, D.C. is no exception.

One of the organizations planning a series of events on labor and working class history is the National Capital Labor History Society. Starting on October 6 the Society will co-sponsor the opening at the Martin Luther King Public Library of the exhibit "Working in Uncle Sam's Company Town: A History of Washington's Working People, 1790-1970." In an effort to give broad exposure to the community the exhibit will then circulate to various public places in the area such as senior citizens' centers, universities, federal and city buildings, and local library branches. On November 9 there will be an evening with the Washington Printers, with William Pretzer, historian at the Smithsonian Institution, presenting a short introduction to the history of the early printing unions in the United States between 1800 and 1870. A film entitled *Farewell etaoin shrdlu* will be shown on the subject of technological changes by electronic typesetting which will ultimately destroy 500

years of hand and machine-type composition. Comments will be presented by Bob Peterson, Secretary-Treasurer of the Columbia Typographical Union Local 101, which is thought to be the oldest continuous union in the country (est. 1815); and by Jimmy Dugan, former President of the Washington Printing Pressmen's Union Local 72, who led the *Washington Post* strike of 1974. On January 11, 1983 the topic will be "Blacks in Unions in Washington, D.C.," featuring the film *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggles: The Untold Story of the Pullman Porters*. Rosina Tucker, narrator of the film and leader of the Women's Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and Congressman Ronald Dellums, nephew of the Porters' Regional Vice-President C. L. Dellums, have been invited to speak.

On March 8, International Women's Day, the Society will feature a panel on "Working Women: Past and Present" with various historians and trade unionists in the area discussing in historical and contemporary perspective the issues affecting working women, both organized and unorganized, in the American workforce. And concluding on May 10 a panel discussion on "Labor and Politics" will be headed by Irving Richter, former legislative director of the UAW between 1943 and 1947. In addition, in conjunction with the Society, a reading club is being established by Jackie Brophy, editor of the *Labor Studies Journal*, to meet regularly to discuss new books and old classics on labor history and current issues. For further information contact David Waugh, President of the National Capital Labor History Society, at the ILO Washington Branch, 1750 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Labor song and culture will be the focus of a three-day conference in Baltimore, September 24-26. Billed as "the largest forum for labor music and songs of work in American history," the Workers' Heritage Festival will begin with a lecture by Philip Foner on "Music and the American Labor Movement" and continue with numerous workshops dealing with songs from the coal miners, railroad workers, textile trades, black workers' and immigrants' experiences, women workers, steel and service workers, and many others. The concerts will include such noted musicians as Hazel Dickens, Joe Glazer, Bobbie McGee, the group Sweet Honey in the Rock, and Si Kahn. For further information one may write Lee Hunter, 663 Stirling St., Baltimore, MD 21202.

International Labor remains a prime topic for scholarly investigation at the Labor Studies Center of the University of the District of Columbia this fall semester 1982, when the course "History of International Labor Movements" will be offered for those graduate students interested in the origins, structure and ideology of various international labor organizations. The course covers three major areas: the history and ideological debates surrounding the First and Second Internationals, the Russian Revolutions, and Popular Front politics; the functions and activities of the international labor organizations formed after World War II—the WFTU, ICFTU, WCL, and the ILO, including the Secretariats—with attention paid to the ideology and politics of the times; and lastly, contemporary questions dealing with the successes and failures of coordinating efforts through these labor organizations in face of drastic changes in the international economic order. For further informa-

tion about the course and the graduate program contact Anatoli Ilyashov, Assistant Professor, Labor Studies Center, University of the District of Columbia, 724 Ninth St., N.W., Rm. 528, Washington, D.C. 20001.

The discussion over American trade union relations with other labor movements abroad will turn another chapter with the selection of Irving Brown on June 2, 1982 as the AFL-CIO's Director of International Affairs. Mr. Brown is known for his activities in the immediate post-World War II period in Western Europe as a major leader in the Free Trade Union Committee (FTUC) of the AFL and as a prime influence in the formation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in London in 1949. Having worked as the Director of the Labor and Manpower Division in the U.S. government's Foreign Economic Administration in the mid-1940s, he later became a critical force in the implementation of the Marshall Plan in Europe. (These activities became the focus of a series of articles and disclosures in various newspapers and magazines in the the 1960s. For example, cf. *Washington Post*, December 30, 1965 / December 31, 1965 / January 2, 1966 / April 21, 1969 / April 28, 1969; *The Nation*, July 5, 1965 and January 16, 1967; *The New Republic*, June 25, 1966; or Thomas Braden's article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, May 20, 1967). This area should continue to be a matter of concern and investigation for labor historians of the post-World War II era, especially in the crucial months ahead.

On October 20-22 the Eastern Regional Conference of the University and College Labor Education Association (UCLEA) meets in Washington, D.C. Although the subjects touched upon in the conference range from occupational health and safety issues to economics and technology, one of the workshops will exclusively deal with methods of teaching international labor. Theoretical questions of research and study in international and comparative labor movements will be combined with the practical aspects of teaching this often neglected and politically charged subject to American trade unionists and university students of labor. For additional information on membership and conferences one may write Richard Hindle, President UCLEA, The Pennsylvania State University, Department of Labor Studies, 901 Liberal Arts Tower, University Park, PA 16802.