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New York, N.Y. 10014
December 13, 1975

To Branch Organizers, Trade Union Directors, and
CLUW Directors

Dear Comrades:

The attached report of the Steelworkers caucus at the recent CLUW convention is helpful to comrades in both the Steelworkers union and CLUW. Similar reports from other delegates to the CLUW convention about their union caucuses should be forwarded to us. We are especially interested in the UAW caucus and the Teacher caucus.

Comradely,

Frank Lovell

Frank Lovell

Cindy Jaquith

Cindy Jaquith
SWP National Office

December 9, 1975

Report on Steelworkers Caucus at CLUW Convention

I just wanted to send you a sketchy report of what happened at the Steelworkers Caucus at the CLUW convention. For me, it was certainly the most exciting thing about the convention.

On the composition. There were 21 voting delegates plus a few observers that I never got a chance to talk to. These were the political tendencies represented: SWP-3; International Socialists-3; Spartacists-2; October League-2; Communist Party-1. You will note that of the 21, 8 were opponents. The CPer was rather good. Her name is Roberta Woods from District 31. There were two representatives from the International, neither of them staunch supporters of the International. Approximately 1/3 to 1/2 were Blacks. Ola Kennedy, an older Black woman Sadlowski supporter from District 31 was the strongest figure in the caucus.

At our first meeting we discussed the Houston caucus for which there was almost unanimous support although few attended the actual meeting. Ola Kennedy mainly expressed doubts that any good would come of it as the present leadership had such tight control. With the exception of the CPer all voted for the Houston amendment and against the proposed agenda. There was a great enthusiasm for the ERA amendment and even an attempt to lobby for it at nearby tables. Once again the woman from the CP was the only exception.

But that is only part of what went on. As this was the first time that such a large group of Steelworker women had gotten together, common problems and dissatisfaction with the International was the main topic of discussion. We heard that Alex Fuller, head of the Civil Rights Dept. for the USWA, would be at the convention on Sunday. We decided to draw up a list of common concerns to present to him. (A rough draft of that is included for you. I couldn't find a xerox machine to get a final copy.) The sectarians were a little upset at the lack of leftist rhetoric and the fifteen other demands they considered central. However, every woman present signed it.

We are sending a certified, registered mail copy to Abel plus we instructed Fuller to carry a copy back himself and to try to get it on the agenda of the next NEB. Obviously, that isn't going to do much good, but I think the propaganda effect will be. We are also trying to get it printed in Steel Labor. What will come out of this is a national newsletter among steelworker women. (See attached.)

The Steelworker caucus also drew up a resolution on affirmative action which we were unable to get introduced. Basically it said that the onus of responsibility was on the employer, but that provisions in the seniority system would have to be made to accommodate the rights of women and minorities.

On another note. There is nothing going on with the affirmative action appeal to the OEEC in Pittsburgh. The agencies refuse to take any action until the Supreme Court rules on the question.

I am still trying to feel out the possibilities for support for the Sadlowski campaign in my local. So far the potential doesn't seem too great, although that attitude is primarily based on defeatism. "You can't fight the Abel machine." It's difficult getting an accurate assessment as I am unable to talk to those steelworkers who don't attend union meetings.

If there is anything that I've left out that you would like to know, just drop me a line.

(This is a very rough draft. The final document is far superior. When I get a copy I will send you one.)

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We, the undersigned steelworker women who met and caucused at the 1st Constitutional Convention of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, are submitting this list of common concerns to the International in the hopes that some action will be taken on them.

1. We call upon the International to set up a national Women's Department to deal with the special problems and concerns of the women in the USWA. Along with this we call upon the International to convene a national conference of women steelworkers where we can discuss said problems and concerns.

2. As a group woefully underrepresented in our union structure, in a full effort to democratize our union, we call upon the International to do all in its power to promote, encourage, and develop the leadership potential of women. This would include the appointment of women staff and the training of women at leadership conferences.

3. We call for the International to endorse and actively support CLUW and encourage locals and districts to do the same.

4. We ask that maternity be negotiated into our contracts and treated as any other disability.

5. Due to prior discrimination, there are many locals where there are no women eligible to run for union office. We ask that the International amend its constitution to allow for the special discrimination against women becoming involved in this union.

6. A large number of plants under contract to the Steelworkers Union have refused to hire women. We call on the International to aggressively fight this discrimination.

7. The Consent Decree is totally inadequate in fighting discrimination and is being used against the interests of women and minorities. As the Consent Decree was formulated without the knowledge and involvement of women and minorities, we call upon the International to set up a program whereby the Consent Decree can be restructured in favor of a real program of affirmative action and full compensation. This program can only be devised with the active participation of those affected groups.