

WOMEN
IN
STEEL



BY
JENNY
ELIZABETH
JOHNSTONE

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LONDON GUILDHALL UNIVERSITY
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FOREWORD

This little pamphlet is addressed not only to the women in steel, but to all working women in the United States. I have tried to show how the women can help their menfolk organize for a better life, and have used the experiences in the steel industry to show how much women can accomplish.

The steel workers and their womenfolk scored a big victory when the Steel Workers Organizing Committee forced the steel trust, through its subsidiary, the Carnegie-Illinois Corporation, to recognize the union and give better conditions and wage increases to the workers. This was the great turning point in the history of the steel towns. It showed that organization can and will win. It showed that the tyranny of the steel trust will be defeated.

But the job of the steel workers is not yet over. There is much to be done before the entire industry will be unionized one hundred per cent. And in this job we women can help our men much more than most of them realize. These are stirring days throughout the land, and everywhere women are found helping to build unions, fighting on picket lines together with their men, and showing that they are indispensable in the struggle for a life free from tyranny and misery.

This little pamphlet has been written in the hope that it will arouse more women to think of the need to go out and fight for the maintenance of their homes, for a better life for their families and children. Especially do I hope that the women in steel, who have made such splendid beginnings, will continue and expand their work until the banner of trade unionism flies proudly in every steel town.

J.E.J.

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REFERENCE
ONLY

Women in Steel

By JENNY ELIZABETH JOHNSTONE

The Tribute

YOUR husband has cluttered up the house again with a big pile of papers, all colors. One catches your eye. It is a little four-page book called *The Tribute*, by Van A. Bittner, Regional Director of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee. You read it through in a hurry. You read it again, slowly this time, because at the end you begin to get icy cold with anger when you finally understand what you have read: "Charles M. Schwab, Chairman of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation—salary \$125,000." Not a month, not a week! No, it is \$125.00 per hour! You read it over and over again.

Here is the *wage scale* of the American Iron and Steel Institute taken from the records of the United States government, based on an 8-hour day, 40 hours per week and 50 weeks per year, so we are giving the members of the steel corporation's union, the American Iron and Steel Institute, the benefit of the doubt.

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WAGE SCALE *

	<i>Per Hour</i>	<i>Per Day</i>	<i>Per Year</i>
Chas. M. Schwab, Chairman, Bethlehem Steel Corporation	\$125.00	\$1,000.00	\$250,000.00
Myron Taylor, Chairman, United States Steel Corporation	83.39	687.12	166,786.00
Geo. G. Crawford (Retired), Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation	125.00	1,000.00	250,000.00
E. R. Crawford, President, Mc- Keesport Tin Plate Corpora- tion.	112.70	901.60	225,416.00
Tom Girder, President, Repub- lic Steel Company	70.39	563.12	140,778.00
I. E. Block, Chairman, Inland Steel Company	30.00	240.00	60,000.00
George Verity, Chairman, Ameri- can Rolling Mill Company..	34.56	276.48	69,124.00
E. T. Weir, Chairman, National Steel Company	26.84	214.72	53,671.00
H. E. Sheldon, President, Alleg- heny Steel Company	55.85	446.80	111,704.00
Henry A. Roemer, President, Sharon Steel Corporation	44.50	356.00	89,000.00
Frank Purnell, President, Youngstown Sheet & Tube	30.00	240.00	60,000.00
Wm. W. Holloway, President, Wheeling Steel Corporation..	22.24	177.92	44,486.00

You can't help comparing this with your own life.

* Van A. Bittner, *The Tribute*.

Just look at the breakfast table. The same eternal oatmeal and half an orange (if any) per child. Your figure? How can you keep it when you must save, save—to pay the doctor's bills, to feed your family. It's mostly starch—beans, potatoes—but it costs money.

That miserable change in shift—it upsets everything. You no sooner have one plan of work laid out for yourself and children, and the shift changes again and the house is in an uproar.

Perhaps, after you dress the children and see them off to school, you have to go off to do some one else's housework. Maybe you go away ahead of them—to the stockyards, to the office. A few more dollars a week come in mighty handy. Whatever your day, dear lady of steel, it has been one round of worries after another.

Perhaps you are a Negro woman, driven to the worst part of town but paying the same high rent. You are strong. There is nothing new in suffering to you. Your man is driven even harder than the white workers but your man gets lower pay—hired the last and fired the first. You have always had to work outside to keep your family alive. Sometimes you wonder if any living thing can encompass the anger that engulfs you when you see your children insulted because their skin is another color. Many's the hour you have pondered on this. With all the other worries you have this added great injustice to endure.

Where Is Our Home?

Among us there are some who are itinerants. They live in a dismal furnished place, cramped, and worn with the forced hard living of other traveling steel workers—traveling, not like steel barons' wives around the world keeping ahead of ungrateful weather. No, just chased from one place to another in search of bread.

Maybe they had a home of their own and lost it along with the bank account representing petty privations through years.

While you are being torn, tossed about, pushed, worried, struggling, the boss's wife—well, you have just read—buys mink coats with well-matched skins for \$25,000. There is perfume at \$25 per dram. You read about one woman who always ordered eighteen pairs of shoes at once. Easy enough at \$125 per hour.

You wish you could capture those first happy days of married life again but as you sit here in this dull room with not even enough electric light—crowded, with the children on top of you, and not even turning on the radio because that means a few extra pennies expense—your mind goes into a whirl again. Your husband's gaunt look follows you about. Such hard work, and he really is always a little hungry. Well, tomorrow he must have an extra sandwich. You think: if all the men would get together they could make the bosses serve them decent lunches cheap.

Oh! Was life meant to be such slavery? Is there no way out of this bondage?

Labor's Fortresses

Those papers your husband brought home suggest a way out. *Your husband is not organized, and neither are you.* But strongly organized men and women have come to the assistance of the steel workers through the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, a section of the Committee for Industrial Organization in cooperation with the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers of North America and they are beginning to make headway. They all want to make their own position more secure by helping the steel workers build up a tremendous union fortress against those forces—those great corporations—that want to eat up our flesh and blood and brawn. Among these workers who have come to the assistance of the steel workers are the half million miners of the great United Mine Workers of America. And on and on you read, "Against the money power of those who not only employ you, but act as if they were your masters we match the man power of American labor."—John L. Lewis.

For the first time in fifty years steel workers' rights to organize into a union of their choice have been recognized. Yes, it is possible to be happy, healthy, gay, well fed, cultured, beautiful in beautiful surroundings. Yes, prosperous as our forefathers

intended. There is a way out. There is the union.

The Steel Workers Organizing Committee

Who is Mr. Van A. Bittner who wrote *The Tribute*, and how does he know so much?

Mr. Van A. Bittner is the director of the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee for the Chicago-Great Lakes Steel Region. He is one of the officers in that powerful United Mine Workers of America, and a leading official of the Committee for Industrial Organization. His union is the United Mine Workers Union in which there are 500,000 men, Negro and white, all religions and creeds and nationalities and political affiliations, all organized in this big, powerful union on an industrial basis. That means that no matter what work they do in and around the mine—carpentry, coal digging, hauling—they are all in the same union and not on the craft basis which would mean that each little craft would have its own local. These locals would more than likely spend their time fighting each other in so-called jurisdictional quarrels and sign separate craft agreements, each expiring at a different time, thus allowing the company to set one craft against another, instead of all being in the same local fighting for their rights against the common enemy. The United Mine Workers of America is a great, strong, industrial union.

Mr. Van Bittner knows so much because he has

been in the working class movement for over 35 years.

In 1935 the forward surge of the workers for a higher standard of living brought the demand for organization to a head and at the 55th Convention of the American Federation of Labor the resolution to organize the unorganized, especially in the unorganized mass production industries, auto, rubber, steel, etc., came up again. The craft union officialdom led by Green, Hutcheson and Frey, who dominated the convention, would agree to no concrete plan to organize the unorganized. And so none came from this convention, except in the proposals from such progressive organizations as the United Mine Workers of America, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the International Ladies Garment Workers and other strong unions. These groups, together with many other large unions, seeing no effort being made to carry out the plan to organize steel on the part of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, set up the Committee for Industrial Organization to aid and assist in the organization of the unorganized in the mass production industries such as auto, steel, rubber, etc. This committee represented 1,125,000 trade unionists, which since has increased to nearly 2,000,000.

From these forces led by the United Mine Workers of America, working from the convention of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers held in Cannonsburg in 1935, money and

organizers were thrown into the steel field and thus the Steel Workers Organizing Committee organized. Today, this committee is augmented by thousands of volunteer organizers in every department, in all the main steel mills throughout the country, and it has signed up in the union nearly 200,000 steel workers, and won recognition from Carnegie-Illinois, as well as the 40-hour week and the \$5-a-day minimum.

**"The mill owners are interested in profits,
not in humanity."**

—William Z. Foster, *The Great Steel Strike*.

In order to understand the situation today we must hurriedly glance backward to some of the history of the union. In 1876, the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers was organized. By 1891 it had a membership of 24,000 members and considerable prestige. The center of its activity was Homestead. Frick and Carnegie began to war on the union in order to break the organized strength of the workers and thus came the great strike in Homestead in 1892 which lasted from June until November of that year. Although the workers from other towns helped their brothers in steel, the strike resulted in defeat and weakened the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers so that it is only now recovering.

"Thus," as William Z. Foster says in his book, *The Great Steel Strike*, "ended the period of trade union expansion in the steel industry and began an era of unrestricted labor control by the employers."

In 1901, the U. S. Steel Corporation was organized. This offensive was met with another strike. Again in 1909 the union rallied to another strike. In 1919, after a period of intensive organization, the great steel strike under the leadership of William Z. Foster drew out over a period of months.

The strike was lost but the workers now realized the importance of the union and out of this struggle was won the eight-hour day and the knowledge of the power of organization. So again the tenacity of the steel workers in the union kept in motion the rising surge of the workers in 1937 as expressed through the Steel Workers Organizing Committee for the steel industry and the Committee for Industrial Organization for all mass production industries, under the leadership of John L. Lewis.

In Organization There Is Strength

"You have got to think out this question as workers—what value the trade union movement is to you, and what value is it, not only to you as an individual but to all women who have to work. You cannot decide as though you were one person all by yourself. There are too many others involved. The army of working women is so great you cannot remain a selfish entity all by your-

self." (Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt at the Seventh Annual Convention of the Woman's Trade Union League.)

Now, after reading all that literature from the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, surely you will tell your husband: "You'd better join the union." He will join the union.

But after a few weeks he'll probably say to you: "You had better join the women's auxiliary of our lodge!"

Maybe it is your turn to be surprised. Maybe you are taken off your feet. But you join and go to meetings. If at first you feel strange, don't worry. You'll soon lose your shyness. You'll find yourself taking part in the general discussion because it is all so close to your life. It is on the things that you have been thinking about: lowering the high cost of living; getting better and more schools; building a strong union, and a strong women's auxiliary.

Big Responsibilities

Although the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers is more than half a century old, it was not until a district conference held in Cannonsburg, September, 1920, that E. Pat Cush presented the first set of resolutions advocating the organization of a women's auxiliary to the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers

of North America. And the Constitution provides for the organization of auxiliaries.

Declaration of Independence

On July 5, 1936, a Declaration of Independence was adopted by 4,000 steel workers at the Homestead Memorial Meeting to honor the memory of the workers slain by the steel trust's armed forces in the Homestead lockout of 1892.

This declaration says:

"Through this union, we shall win higher wages, shorter hours, and a better standard of living. We shall win leisure for ourselves, and opportunity for our children. Together with our union brothers in other industries, we shall abolish industrial despotism. We shall make real the dreams of the pioneers who pictured America as a land where all might live in comfort and happiness.

"In support of this declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our steadfast purpose as union men, our honor and our very lives."

Our steel women's declaration, presented at the November 6 conference called by the auxiliary to Local 65 of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers of North America, says:

"Resolution

"We, women of the Auxiliary of Lodge 65,

Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers of North America, mindful of how this great country of ours was founded, by whom it was founded, and the desire of our founding fathers, down to the last immigrant to reach our shores today, whatever his race, color, or religion, to better their conditions and to pass on to their children the fullness of life which can be wrested from the soil and natural wealth of our great country, and by our labor wrought into the means of the most gracious living, not to say super-abundant luxury; and aware of our conditions today, when it has come to pass, what our founding fathers foresaw and fought against, that our flesh and blood and brawn are being slowly consumed by great corporations whose aim is complete power over us, a supposedly free people; realizing the foregoing, we, women of steel, have called together this conference to present to you the following resolution:

"That whereas the steel corporation pays out millions of dollars in ever increasing dividends and other wasteful extravagances from the point of view of our communities; and our wages are so low that we cannot maintain a decent standard of living, with all living costs having increased, especially on food, which is according to our government 40 per cent over that of 1933; and the ever-increasing rents are all out of proportion to our income.

"That whereas due to criminally low wages and lack of employment, the workers, in endeavoring to

feed, clothe and rear their families in some measure approaching the accepted American standard of living, are forced to mortgage their lives to the credit companies, for years ahead, the interest on which further lowers their wages and aggravates their dire misery and endless struggle to exist.

"That whereas many steel companies pay only once every fourteen to seventeen days, thus making interest on the workers' money, instead of paying weekly so that the workers could properly budget their incomes and use their money to the best advantage.

"That whereas the present long working week and arbitrary change of shifts destroy home life and allow the worker no time to enjoy and help direct the lives of his family, to participate in social activities, or pursue intellectual advancement.

"That whereas the sweat of our men seasons the steel which is the base for all kinds of modern conveniences, in the use of which we have no share, and while America is known all over the world as the land of bathtubs and other modern sanitary and labor-saving devices, there is, in fact, a very low standard of sanitation among the steel workers, who because of their work, especially require these health-giving conveniences.

"That whereas the condition of our schools today and the totally inadequate number of teachers supplied is such that instead of our children leaving home to enter great centers of culture, they are sent

into bedlam to have their nerves shattered, their health ruined and their lives endangered, while our youngest and dearest, through involuntary submission to the dictates of nature, are forced to sit for hours, wet and miserable, because they are of such tender years that they know no better, and it is physically impossible for any one human being to give individual attention to the needs of half a hundred children, as our present school system demands of our teachers.

"That whereas after 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; 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.

"So, therefore, be it resolved, that we will allow nothing to distract us from our purpose of building the auxiliary and carrying on our work; that we will bitterly condemn any anti-union propaganda under the guise of patriotism, thereby making it seem that our smallest desires to increase our standards of living are un-American; and that the power we demonstrated at the polls—for the right to organize, for higher wages, for shorter hours and for the defeat of reaction—be turned to our advantage by our beginning immediately a real membership drive.

"Be it further resolved that at this conference

we propose the setting up of a committee of representatives of other organizations in sympathy with our aims to meet with a committee from our auxiliary and plan to carry our message to all clubs, labor unions, fraternal groups and individuals, especially in our neighborhood, and ask their cooperation.

"Be it further resolved, that we propose to this committee that it meet once a month; that it shall take whatever steps seem necessary to enlarge itself; that it shall do everything in its power to build our union and better our conditions."

How to Organize an Auxiliary

Now all of us steel women, who have come together through the great campaign to organize steel, want to build these auxiliaries into stronger organizations. There is no better advice than that given by Mrs. Minnie Ingersoll, herself the wife of a steel worker, president of the South Works Auxiliary and official woman organizer of auxiliaries for the Steel Workers Organizing Committee in the Chicago-Calumet area:

"The first question that arises is how do we go about organizing the women. The union local must take an interest in this work. As one of the presidents in a Brotherhood of Railroad Workers' Auxiliary has said, 'The auxiliary will be successful only when the men talk auxiliary as often as they eat.' The lo-

cal of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers should pass a resolution that they will organize an auxiliary and appoint a committee to see that this work is carried through. Then all the men must tell their wives how important it is that they take part in this great work. Each member of the union must remember where and when the auxiliary meets and urge his womenfolk to attend.

"Some women at the start of organizing an auxiliary find it well to meet in small groups in homes first, but generally it is better for the organizing committee to select a hall in the middle of town and call the women there. If only a few women show up the auxiliary should immediately be organized, because many times one woman represents several hundred women in another organization which can be committed to help the drive. The policy of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee as it applies to both the union and auxiliary is to organize *all* regardless of their race, color, creed or nationality. Those same steel barons who exploit the Mexican, Polish and Negro workers exploit alike the native-born American worker. Real collective bargaining and all the benefits that will result therefrom will come about only when all workers are organized into one powerful, industrial union.

"At the second meeting temporary officers should be elected in order that the organization may begin functioning as an organization. The first officers may be: president, vice-president, recording sec-

retary, treasurer, financial secretary (or financial secretary and treasurer may be combined into one officer), social chairman and publicity chairman.

"Charters may be secured from the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers if the proper blanks are filled out and submitted. Any woman over sixteen years of age and of good moral character is eligible for membership in the auxiliary. No initiation fees or dues are required for membership while the charter is open. Application and membership cards may be secured from any local headquarters of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee.

"The auxiliary is now ready to begin its real activity. Two meetings a month, on alternate weeks, has proven to be the best in most cases. One of these should be a business meeting, the other may be a social meeting. Occasionally joint meetings and joint social gatherings of the union and auxiliary should be arranged. This will prove helpful in building up attendance at local meetings and will further a good relationship between both organizations.

"At the business meeting all matters of interest to the welfare of the union and the auxiliary are taken up. It is the first duty of the auxiliary to lend its aid to the union in all possible ways. For instance, at this moment, the most important point confronting the locals is the organizing of the men of steel into the union. Therefore, the main point on the order of business of every auxiliary is how to build the

union, and through this to build up the auxiliary.

"How is this done? By visiting wives of steel workers, visiting organizations and explaining to them what unionization will mean to them in terms of better homes, security, and education for their children. Compare the present wages that our husbands and brothers are receiving for eight hours' work each day in the mill with the rapid rise in food, clothing, rents and all the rest of the necessities of life.

"What else can be taken up? That depends on what is of special interest to women. We find that the women are virtually tied to the kitchen because of the irregular shifts of their husbands' work. The company saves money by constantly changing their shifts. If the men make demands for bettering these and similar conditions the women can support them in every way possible, especially by enlisting the support of workers in their respective organizations—fraternal organizations, churches, parent-teacher associations or whatever they may be. Sometimes it is impossible for the mothers to get away from the children. What is the solution? Lodge 65, Women's Auxiliary, is attempting to solve this by securing teachers from the W.P.A. for a nursery school.

"We must always bear in mind that we are not organizations that just pass resolutions, but when we think of something good we want to make sure that it's done. That means that every time we adopt a resolution we must appoint or elect a committee that

will carry the work through. In order to grow we must be active. A young child that is kept inactive will die. So it is with an organization. To be sure that the organization is alive and healthy our committees must be alive and on the job.

"The membership committee which is generally under the leadership of the vice-president should plan ways of getting new members and report back to the business meeting where the whole membership will undertake to carry out the work that has been planned by the membership committee.

"The social chairman should appoint a committee to assist her in planning social affairs. This committee should also report to the entire membership through the business meeting and get the cooperation of everyone if the social affairs are to be the very best.

"The financial secretary must keep strict account of every penny going in and coming out. She must make reports each month and keep her books ready for inspection at any time.

"The publicity chairman is responsible for reporting the work of the auxiliary to the *Amalgamated Journal*, to the local press, to *Steel Labor* and to *Women in Steel*."

Organization Puts Plans Into Action

Some of us women in steel are organized into such auxiliaries and the certainty of our purpose has

brought us into the beautiful life of group work. We have organized a drama class. We have organized a trade union class. We visit from house to house to get new members. We go as delegates to big meetings of other workers also engaged in struggling for a better life. We learn that throughout the history of the United States the unions have been one of the strongest forces working for the welfare of American people. We learn that to millions of workers throughout the land the steel drive represents the hope and the future of this country—a free, happy and prosperous America. We see that there are hundreds of volunteer organizers organizing men by the thousands into the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers. We should be proud to be in the auxiliary to that great organization and to be working with these wonderful men and women.

We are in the center of the most amazing historical development in the history of our country. We are in the midst of the organization of the steel towns of the United States. Here where a few months ago we all lived with bated breaths, actually afraid to breathe, where terror was the order of the day, today we are moving freely about.

We are giving out handbills. We are talking openly about the union. Our power has been demonstrated by a 10 per cent increase in pay. In Homestead, where two years ago the Secretary of Labor of the United States, Mrs. Perkins,

was not permitted to speak, stopped by the steel barons, the members of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee are today addressing meetings and organizing men by the thousands. In Alliquippa, where less than two years ago Burgess Kane proposed that all union men, the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, the United Mine Workers of America, be labeled as outside agitators and *chased out of town*, today the union is growing and men and women are beginning to feel there is a way of coming into our heritage of liberty and the pursuit of happiness. There is Duquesne for the first time in its history beginning to be a truly American town. The Black Valley district along the Allegheny River where the noble Fanny Sellins perished has been opened and organization marches forward. We are beginning to feel that we are forging the instrument that will forever banish such terror—strong lodges and supporting auxiliaries.

Divide and Rule

In visiting the workers' homes we were horrified at the extent to which the lies spread by the bosses have gone, and how they have succeeded in pitting one nationality against another—the Americans against the foreign-born. We were amazed to find that they have even succeeded in getting workers to believe that Americans from another section of the country, women who are eligible to belong to the

Daughters of the American Revolution, those two million women who are not in the camp of the economic royalists, are considered foreigners and outside agitators.

One woman said: "All those oil workers are foreigners." "Where do they come from?" we asked. "From the Carolinas. They are those old Americans."

Sometimes we join the lodge in a flying squadron and go in front of the mill gates to give out notices announcing our big meeting. It may be freezing weather but we are exhilarated by the power we have. The men take the papers, joking and laughing with us, and we suddenly feel that we have more in common with our menfolks than we thought—we can work together for a better life.

In the evening we help sign up the men at the meeting of 1,800, and 300 new members join the union. The organizers thank us for our help. Life seems already so much better and now we know that nothing can stop us. We have seen the dawn over the steel factories' smokestacks and we call across the country: Steel workers, mothers, wives, daughters, join the auxiliary, pick up the challenge.

The Strength of Our Negro Sisters

Some new members among us are amazed at the swiftness with which the Negro women have taken the leadership in our chapters. There is not one auxiliary where the staying power of these courageous

women has not carried the organization over some critical period, especially in the first days of unseen and unsung organizing drudgery before the body took form. They were undaunted and gave great moral strength with their persistence. Some of us have not been able to hold back the tears when we see with what dignity and reverence they accepted office. "As long as I have life in my body, your welfare will be in my heart, in the first place, and to the best of my ability I will see that your welfare improves," is the way the welfare chairman of one auxiliary accepted her office. All of us have learned a lot about organization from our Negro sisters. In several auxiliaries they have been elected to the vice-presidency because this office has also the duties of membership chairman, and their social training in solidarity makes us recognize them as the best. They have been oppressed as workers, as women, and as Negroes, so their knowledge of the necessity of solidarity is great and they are so strong that they do not recognize such a word as defeat.

J. Elizabeth Jones, in 1850, in her address before the Ohio women's convention for women's rights, recognized this:

"We now and then hear of a Bibb, a Douglass, a Brown who has been reared under the crushing influence of southern slavery, astonishing the world with the manifestations of his intellect and genius. Such instances are but a foreshadowing of what colored men might

become if allowed equal opportunity with his white oppressor—and so with women.”

Susan B. Anthony recognized this when during the Civil War she devoted her energies to anti-slavery work because she knew the freedom of the slaves would result in advances for women as well.

Branching Out

We hold conferences. Working women came from many other organizations to confer with us. Miss Agnes Nestor of the Women's Trade Union League gave us good advice. We got a message from John Brophy, Director of the Committee for Industrial Organization, saying:

“In this campaign to organize the steel workers the women have a stake in the result as well as the men, and it is befitting that they organize into auxiliaries for the purpose of giving full support and encouragement to the work. The objectives of the S.W.O.C. campaign are higher wages, shorter hours and healthier working conditions, all of which are in the direction of obtaining a decent standard of living, leisure, and the independence and self-respect that come from organization.

“Women's auxiliaries may also play an active part in community affairs. They may seek better schooling for their children, and better housing through city, state or federal action. Sometimes the

union mothers conduct clubs for their children where they too may learn the purpose of the great organizing campaign.

“For too long the women as well as the men in wage-earners' families have been willing to take without question conditions that are given them. Now a change is coming in the steel towns, and the women can do as much as the men.”

New Friends

Out of the conference has grown a Friendly Committee to the Carnegie-Illinois Steel (South Works) Auxiliary. The auxiliary sisters meet women from other organizations. We are helped by trade union sisters from those great unions that are supporting the steel drive. Carrie Alexander, who was president of the waitresses' local for 15 years, gives us some of the benefits of her experience. We are asked to help get passed the eight-hour law for women. Anna Klabinoff, Sophie Silver, Effie Burns, all leading trade union women, help the auxiliary women and they themselves are further stimulated to do even better work in the spreading of the news of the need to organize the steel workers and the message of the necessity of industrial organization.

The steel women know that they have everything in common with their trade union sisters. The knowledge of a new power is tremendous. We meet all these fine women, from the Women's Trade Union

League, from the Y.W.C.A., from the League of Women Voters, from the International Workers Order. Members of craft unions in the A. F. of L. are beginning to champion the organization of steel because they have heard from their relatives in the auxiliary all about it. We are told that the work of the Women's Trade Union League has influenced members of central labor bodies to fight the suspension policy of the American Federation of Labor against the unions on the Committee for Industrial Organization.

The women in steel are beginning to feel themselves a force for unity.

We Grab Our Sisters From the Economic Royalists

Some of our sisters in the American Legion auxiliaries have gone into their chapters and challenged the right of the spokesmen for the economic royalists there to try to hide the invasion against the rights of a supposedly free people under such monstrosities as the *Red Network*, a book the Legion advises its members to follow. They have uncovered threats by these would-be dictators to have school principals discharged for daring to support unionism, for daring to allow Quaker peace meetings in the schools, threatening not to permit them to have a peace play. Our steel sisters in the American Legion say: "No, we will not surrender our 420,000 sisters to the economic

royalists. Our men made them eligible for this American Legion auxiliary by fighting when they were told it would make the world safe for democracy and now we are standing with our men protecting our democratic rights and demanding a better life."

Liberty is absolute and indivisible. We want to be free, free to eat, to wear decent clothes, to be cultured, to bring up our children in a prosperous way. We want a change. We begin to realize we can change it all. We can regain our birthright of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We ourselves can make it possible to add to our stature, to give our children the best of food. Their tissues will become finer, their skins clearer, their hair more glossy, their eyes happy. Now we are beginning to know that only the workers can help themselves and nothing can be done until we organize and exert our power. Then we will have a real industrial democracy. We can plan and live in a free, happy and prosperous America, as our ancestors intended when they gave up their lives to found this country.

We realize how true are Mrs. Roosevelt's words at the Seventh National Convention of the Women's Trade Union League:

"Big changes never come without hard work and a certain amount of sacrifice. You know amongst yourselves that many of you when you have organized have had to meet opposition; you have probably very often gone through pretty hard times in order to put over your

organizations against people who did not believe in organization, that thought they were going to be worse off, and some of your own fellow workers have often had that feeling and given you a hard time when you pointed out that it was worth while sacrificing something for a time in order to eventually have better times for a big group."

We want the right to life, the fullness thereof, and we will bend all our efforts to this end, building a mighty fortress, a strong union and supporting auxiliaries, and, united in a strong labor front under the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, we will enter those strongholds of the steel barons — the steel towns.

We will work in our towns in cooperation with other organizations for a life free from tyranny and misery—a life with cultural opportunities for our children, with plenty for all.

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