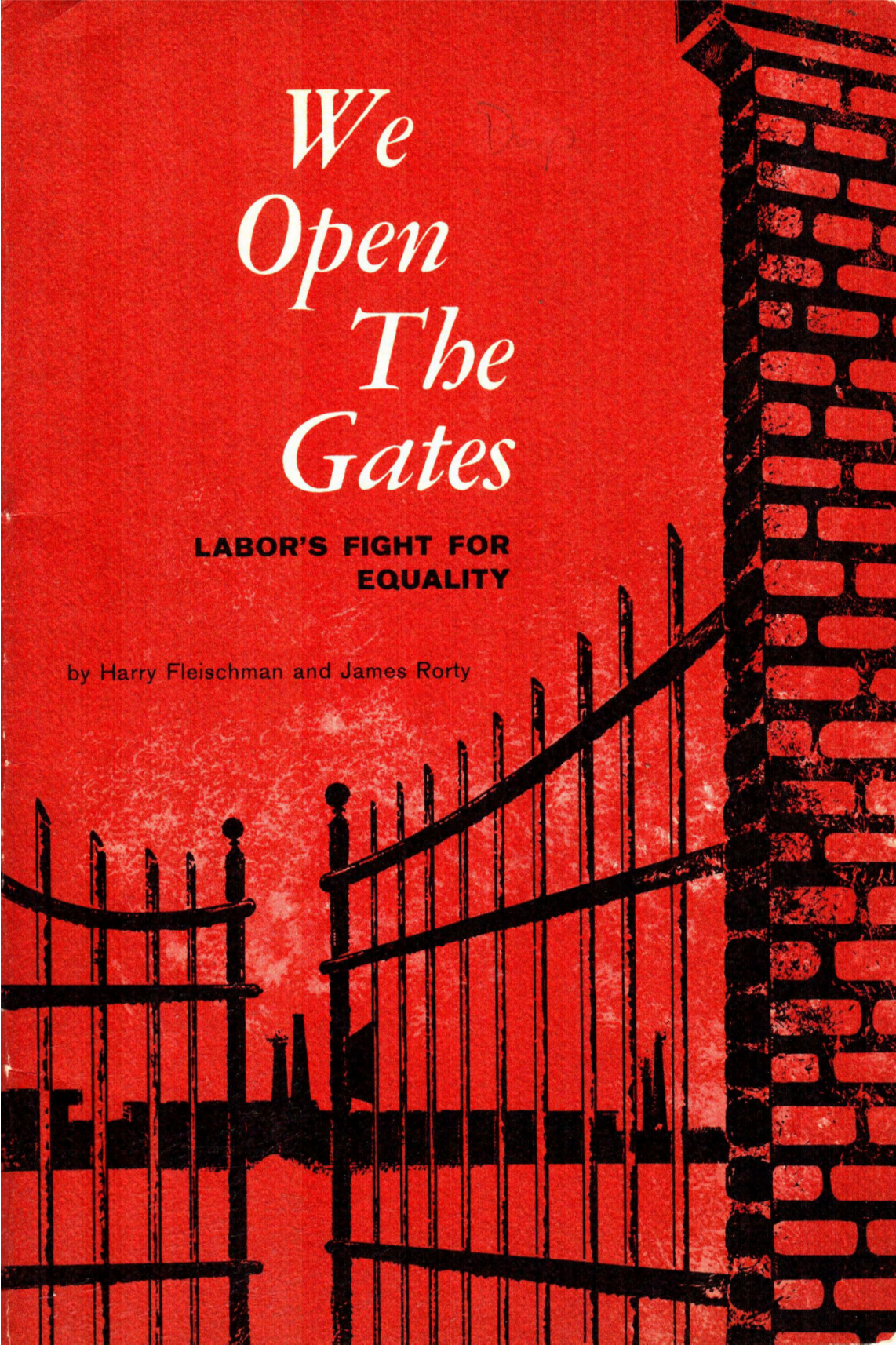


We Open The Gates

**LABOR'S FIGHT FOR
EQUALITY**

by Harry Fleischman and James Rorty



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Introduction

WE OPEN THE GATES is a frank effort to accentuate the positive in labor's long campaign against racial and religious discrimination on the job. These are the success stories—examples of vigorous union action in accord with the highest ideals of labor and the nation.

Racial and religious discrimination in employment and in union membership is contrary to the policy and the fundamental faith of the American trade union movement.

A common purpose unites the men and women who work for wages and binds them together in the trade union movement. Workers join unions to help and protect one another. By bargaining collectively, they try to establish fair wages, hours and employment conditions, and job security.

But union membership must mean "one for all and all for one." The standards that unions set and advance can last only if they become universal. If any group of wage earners is barred from union membership, those workers must usually work below union standards. Before long, the lower standard is bound to undercut the higher level won by the union. That's why discrimination in union membership hurts not only excluded workers, but also those unionists who favor the exclusions.

Thus, unions oppose discrimination first, because it is morally wrong, and second, because it endangers the very standards which unions have worked so hard to win.

America's trade union movement has always realized this fact. As far back as 1894, the American Federation of Labor refused to grant a charter to a national union because it barred qualified Negroes. But discrimination and prejudice have gained a temporary foothold in some segments of the labor movement, just as they have in other sections and areas of our national life.

The most widespread form of bias on the job is racial discrimination. Religious prejudice, less common in factory jobs, takes its toll in the white-collar field, both clerical and professional.

A survey by the Bureau on Jewish Employment Problems indicated that in the years 1952-1955, some 1,500 Chicago firms (27 per cent of the 5,500 firms studied) specifically asked for non-Jewish applicants. A later study revealed that 18 per cent of the 20,000 white-collar job orders placed with Chicago's commercial employment agencies during the last half of 1956 also barred Jews.

Since most white-collar jobs are not yet covered by union contracts, the workers discriminated against had far less protection than blue-collar union workers.

Nevertheless, the trend is clear. Each week, each month, more union contracts prohibit racial and religious discrimination in employment; more men and women whose color, creed or ancestry once barred them from decent jobs and union protection find the gates of equal opportunity open. This progress is spurred by the efforts of individual unions, and by the AFL-CIO's national Civil Rights Committee.

Labor believes that the best way to wipe out discrimination is to help union members understand its injustices, dangers and cost to every American worker. Experience has shown that the barriers fall as understanding rises.

It is an American axiom that nothing succeeds like success. If this is true, the successes recorded here should go a long way toward opening the gates still further. To that goal this record is dedicated.

Generous assistance in compiling these studies has come from so many union officers, civil rights directors, state fair employment practices commissions and human relations organizations, that it would be impossible to list them all. But we do want to add our special thanks to Jim Turner, Joe Glazer, Leon B. Schachter, Al Herrington, Betty Ziff, Bill Oliver, Ted Brown, Ben McLaurin, Ray Davidson,

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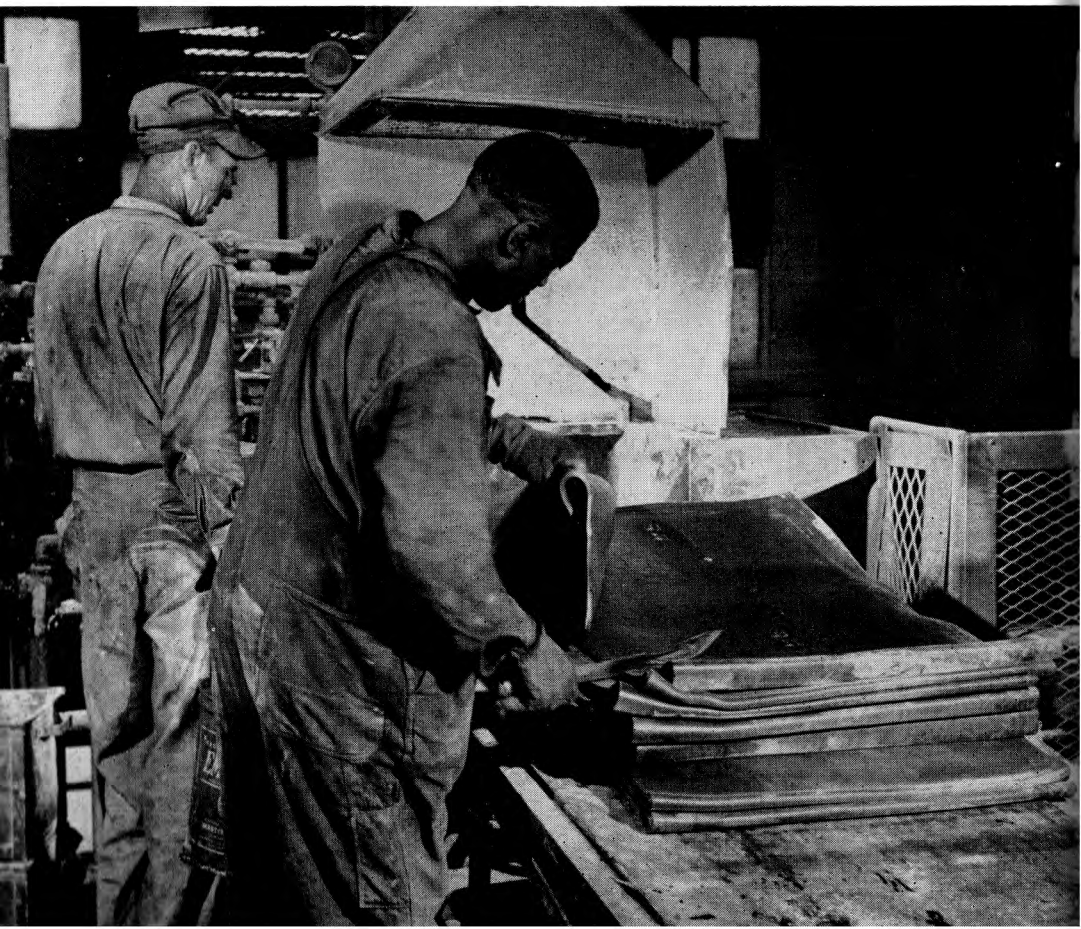
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HARRY FLEISCHMAN

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RUBBER WORKERS ERASE BIAS

In the spring of 1954, mounting tension between the white and Negro workers at the Armstrong Linoleum Company in Jackson, Miss., neared the breaking point. Although the firm's contract with Local 363 of the United Rubber Workers banned racial and religious discrimination, the long-standing custom had been for Negro workers not to bid for certain skilled jobs.



Now they were bidding.

Two appeals landed on the desk of General President L. S. Buckmaster at the same moment.

One, from Negro unionists, demanded that the International Union help them secure the rights guaranteed them under their union contract, and under the law as interpreted by the National Labor Relations Board, the U. S. Supreme Court and the union's lawyers.

The second appeal came from a group of white members of the local, urging the International to step in before the conflict broke publicly.

Soon the assistant director of the International's Fair Employment Practices Department, himself a Negro, arrived in Jackson for talks with local union officials and management—all of them white.

First, he warned management that it must stand by the terms of the anti-discrimination clause in the union contract or face charges before the President's Committee on Government Contracts. Then he talked with the workers—the Negroes who wanted to be upgraded and the whites who were threatening to walk out.

"How can you, as union members, expect to benefit," he asked them, "if you let yourselves be divided?"

The union leader also pointed out to the protesting whites that the petition demanding Negroes be denied the right to better themselves had originally been instigated by management, not by the workers themselves.

Soon the protest faded and the Negro workers made their formal bids for upgrading. They have been moving up into skilled production jobs ever since, in keeping with the contract.

Discrimination is an old story in the rubber industry, North and South. During World War I, Akron tiremakers recruited Southern Negroes to fill jobs few white men would touch—jobs in the milling room, for example, where workers sweated in a sulfurous inferno mixing lamp black

and other smelly chemicals by hand to make rubber for tires. "Automation" was unknown in those days. The work was backbreaking and the pay was low. But this was the only job in the industry open to a Negro outside of janitors' work.

It took another war before Negroes got their first big break. During the Battle of the Bulge in World War II, the labor shortage got so bad that "ammo" trucks were running on their rims. Skilled tireworkers were sent back from the front to meet the shortage.

At the Firestone plant, the chairman of the local's executive board made a sensible suggestion:

"Let's promote those Negro janitors."

The company refused. But the union appealed to the Army and the Army wanted the labor shortage licked. Soon Negroes began moving into most skilled production jobs.

Before long, there was another problem. The milling room was no longer the inferno it had been. New pelletizing machines and Banbury mixing machines were in use; but, white men came with them as operators. The union asked that Negro workers also be assigned to the new machines—and won the arbitration cases that grew out of these grievances. But, when the first Negro operator of a Banbury machine went on the job, the white workers walked out.

Calling the rebels in one by one, the union executive board pointed to an agreement with the company barring discrimination and gave the workers just one hour to get back to work. Only one man stayed out past the deadline.

Today, colored tireworkers enjoy plant-wide seniority, and are to be found in practically every department, including the highly skilled tire-building jobs. For a number of years, separate locker rooms and cafeterias were the rule at the Firestone plant; in time, however, the union convinced management that the workers wanted no such segregation.

Now let's take a look at Tuscaloosa, Ala., home of a Goodrich Rubber Co. plant. Not far away are the gates of Alabama University, where, in September 1955, rioting students and townspeople protested enrollment of the university's first Negro student, Autherine Lucy.

Early press reports, later given the lie by Tuscaloosa's Police Chief, charged that the Tuscaloosa local of the United Rubber Workers Union had aided, or at least condoned, the riot. Some university students who were also rubber workers may possibly have been part of the mob. But the union's executive board promptly condemned the riot.

Nor was this the first time that the Goodrich local spoke out against race prejudice. In 1954, Goodrich workers in Tuscaloosa were on strike for five weeks because management had unjustly fired a Negro. When the union won at arbitration, the whites carried their Negro fellow worker back into the plant on their shoulders. The Tuscaloosa local won this anti-discrimination battle without need of help from its international office.

Nor was help needed by a URW local in Waco, Tex., in 1955, when the upgrading of a Negro to the tire-building department caused a wildcat walkout at the General Tire plant. The local's white officers told the International: "We can handle it ourselves." And handle it they did, despite threatening letters from the "KKK" and gloomy predictions that the officers faced certain defeat in the next union election. Within two days, the rebels were back at work side by side with the Negro worker whose promotion they had protested. There were no more incidents.

About 95 per cent of the discrimination cases reported to the Rubber Workers Fair Employment Practices Department are successfully handled through regular local grievance machinery. Sometimes, as in Jackson, Miss., the International has to step in to keep a situation from exploding or to strengthen the hand of local leadership.

But many of URW's 350 locals have their own active Fair Employment Practices Committees, whose job it is to work with their local union officers in dealing with bias problems that come up in the shop and to join with other community groups in backing passage of state and local FEP laws.

Erasing bias, the union has found, is a "natural" for men who work with rubber.



EQUALITY ON THE FARM

Seabrook Farms, in New Jersey, is one of America's largest producers of fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruits. More than two dozen crops grow on its 20,000 fertile acres; contracts with 1,100 farmers bring the produce of another 34,000 acres to Seabrook for processing. A thousand permanent workers and 2,500 seasonal laborers

—the most unusual collection of racial, religious and national groups ever listed on a single payroll—operate the company's complex farm and cannery machinery.

All of these people, including the seasonal laborers, are covered by a union contract that assures them complete equality—in working conditions, union membership and rights, recreation, community activities and even, to a large extent, in housing.

White Northerners and white migrants from the deep South work and live side by side with Negroes, Filipinos, Jamaicans, Puerto Ricans, Japanese and refugees from a score of European countries. For more than 15 years, including the tense war-and-postwar period, there have been no serious racial or religious incidents at Seabrook.

Both the Seabrook management and Local 56, Amalgamated Food and Allied Workers Union (affiliated with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, AFL-CIO) are responsible for this fine record.

Local 56, organized in 1940 by Leon B. Schachter and his associates, had the challenging job of unionizing the canners, freezers and factory farms of South Jersey. It had been tried many times before, without success. But this time things were different. Within a year, Local 56 won a contract with Seabrook Farms, and the workers not only benefited from important wage increases, but were backed by an ironclad anti-discrimination policy.

In 1942, when an hysterical reaction to Pearl Harbor routed Japanese Americans from their West Coast homes, 2,500 of them were relocated on Seabrook Farms. Working beside them in the fields and factories were many other Americans whose soldier sons were fighting in the Pacific. In some communities—like Great Meadows, N. J., less than a hundred miles away—the arrival of the Japanese Americans led to public protests and violence. But Bridgeton, where the Seabrook plant is located, was carefully prepared in advance by union and management.

Well before the newcomers' arrival, union-management meetings were held to discuss the problem. Then union membership meetings were called at which union leaders underlined two main points: (1) The severe labor shortage made it necessary to import workers to beef up the country's war production; (2) The Japanese Americans were loyal citizens who had been victimized by war-inspired racial prejudice.

From the start, the newcomers enjoyed the full backing of the union contract prohibiting racial or religious discrimination. Those who were Buddhists soon established their own Temple in Seabrook, while Christians were welcomed into the Catholic and Protestant churches of Bridgeton. The Japanese Americans conducted themselves, as workers and members of the community, in a manner that commanded respect. Today, their sons and daughters are winning high-school prizes and college scholarships and hold down some of the best white-collar jobs in Bridgeton.

During World War II, to meet the grave labor shortage, the Federal Government and the company experimented with hiring soldiers on furlough and war prisoners from nearby camps. To make sure this would not depress labor standards, the union insisted that the soldiers and POW's be subject to all provisions of the union contract, including wages and dues collections. However, seasonal labor shortages continued to be an urgent problem until Local 56 thought up a new and better way to recruit workers.

Under the Organized Migration Plan, worked out together with the Southern Tenant Farmers Union (now the National Agricultural Workers Union), 10,000 Negro and white workers were recruited to work on Seabrook Farms. Given temporary membership in Local 56, they were brought North by both unions in chartered planes and other special transportation, to avoid Jim Crow discrimination and humiliation in public carriers.

At Seabrook, seasonal employees got the full protection

of the union contract. Besides, Local 56 launched a broad educational program directed at the new workers and their families. The local hired a social worker to handle special problems, and brought in a clergyman to provide spiritual aid and combat the feelings of "not-belonging" which often cause anti-social behavior.

In the company-owned dormitories where the newcomers lived, the races were temporarily segregated. But in the cafeterias and in the community building, Jamaicans, Negroes, Japanese Americans and white workers ate, played and worshipped together. Since the temporary workers lived in company-owned housing located in a company-owned village, the union felt a special responsibility to protect their living conditions, and so the local's grievance machinery also covered housing and other related facilities.

The large influx of Negro migrants, coupled with the prejudices of some newly-arrived Southern whites, fanned racial tensions in nearby Bridgeton—a situation which both the company and the union were determined to stop. To counter the common notion that Negroes were uneducated and slovenly, the union recruited a hundred Negro college women to work in the Seabrook plant. Union-inspired letters to the editor of the local paper urged a more democratic approach to race relations. When a sign in a local store stated that whites only would be served, a union boycott quickly helped to change the owner's mind. The company, as the largest employer in the Bridgeton area, also made it clear to city officials and community leaders that it shared the union's demand for equal treatment of all its workers.

Nor was the union's fight against prejudice limited to the Seabrook-Bridgeton area. Local 56 sponsored a series of educational radio programs urging the adoption of a state Migrant Labor Law, to protect the rights of seasonal workers. This law was passed and it helped improve conditions for the migrants.

The shop stewards' committee of Local 56 is a cross-section of some 20 national, language and racial groups in the union. At first, language difficulties made it necessary for each group to elect its own representative for the stewards' committee, to serve as interpreter and spokesman for its interests. As recently as 1953, election ballots had to be printed in seven languages. Today, this is no longer necessary; most of the workers know English and have faith in the union's anti-discrimination policy.

Local 56 also urged its members, as citizens of Seabrook and Bridgeton, to speak up on such community problems as rent control and river pollution. And as the community tackled common problems, many of the old prejudices about Negroes, Japanese Americans and other minority groups began to fade.

The Seabrook workers are a kind of United Nations in themselves. Japanese doll festivals, Estonian choruses and other unusual cultural events give an international flavor to the Seabrook Community Center. And the democratic machinery of the union continues to serve all its members equally, whatever their race, religion or national background.

A TWO-FRONT BATTLE

No American labor union has fought more consistently for fair employment practices than the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (IUE). Nor has any union done a better job at exposing the Communists' cynical exploitation of discrimination issues, at home and abroad.

IUE was born in 1949, in rebellion against the capture of the United Electrical Workers (UE) by the Communists. A group of democratic unionists tried vainly to re-establish democracy in UE. When they realized this was impossible, they formed a new union—IUE, which rapidly won over a majority of the workers.

IUE frequently has had to out-manuever the disruptive tactics of white and Negro Communists to combat racial and religious discrimination at the hiring gate and in the plant. In the New York metropolitan area, for example, IUE's District No. 4 has managed to increase the chances of promotion for Negro and Puerto Rican workers despite Communist efforts to exploit the grievances of these workers.

At one time, the Communist faction in the union actually ran a job and promotion racket for its favorites. That's what happened at the Federal Telephone and Radio plant in Nutley, N. J., until a rank and file slate finally routed the pro-Communist leadership at the plant's Local 447. During the election campaign the Communists won over many Negro members by claiming that they alone could be depended upon to protect the Negroes' promotional rights.

The Negro workers soon learned otherwise. When the victorious anti-Communist administration took office, its first act was to look into the situation of Negroes in the plant. In spite of the anti-discrimination clause in the union contract, few Negroes had ever gotten a crack at the skilled jobs. The Communists had used promotions as patronage.



Job openings were never posted. Instead, when a promotion opened up, word was passed privately to the shop stewards handpicked by the Communist-controlled administration. Favoritism was rampant.

With the cooperation of the New Jersey CIO Council's civil rights director, Local 447's new officers began posting job opportunities in a daily notice circulated to *all* shop stewards, and shown to *every* worker on the line. The notice also listed the names and seniority status of workers bidding for these jobs. Soon Negroes were employed as electronic

testers, welders, sheet metal machinists and in every other skilled job in the shop. In the past seven years, only one complaint of racial discrimination has come up—and the union's grievance committee found it had no merit.

This two-pronged battle against discrimination *and* communism has been a constant part of IUE's history. In June 1956, IUE's Civil Rights Conference declared all-out war on the White Citizens Councils and at the same time denounced the imprisonment of tens of thousands of trade unionists in Russia, China and the Soviet satellite countries. In another resolution, the conference warned community organizations working for civil rights and civil liberties that the Communists had launched a new campaign of infiltration and flatly ruled out "unity with those who condone practices of enslavement and murder."

In the South, IUE locals are waging the same two-front campaign. Despite disruptive Communist agitation, IUE has gained 25,000 new Southern members in the last few years and some substantial anti-bias victories as well. The most serious opposition to IUE's organizing efforts has come from the White Citizens Councils—which have tried to convince Southern workers that the union would back Negroes *over* whites.

In June 1957, when IUE was fighting for representation at a Vickers Company plant in Jackson, Miss., racist leaflets flooded the workers' mail. One of these leaflets featured a picture of IUE President James B. Carey dancing with an African delegate to a meeting of the UN's International Labor Organization. The same picture also appeared on the front page of the *Jackson Daily News* with an article openly slanted against the union. But this time the tactic failed. IUE won the election—and a 48-cent-an-hour package increase. However, months later, the identical picture plus similar race-hate material was used to defeat the union at the NECO company plant in Bay Springs, Miss. The IUE is challenging the election results and has filed charges that

the race propaganda used by the company constitutes an unfair labor practice.

A local in Tennessee won a non-discrimination clause in its new contract and later beat off a decertification attempt. In both campaigns the union-busting White Citizens Councils played up "communism" as a big issue.

In Alabama, the IUE's firm policy was carried out by an all-white committee, whose members won reinstatement of a discharged fellow unionist who happened to be a Negro.

In Texas, the IUE successfully helped a Negro member get a chance at a job for which he was qualified, despite the fact that no colored worker had ever held the job before. A militantly anti-Communist local won this battle, despite the opposition's cynical use of a "NAACP-CIO-Communist" smear.

IUE has refused, as a matter of principle, to hold segregated meetings, business or social. An IUE local in the deepest South made history in July 1954, with the first non-segregated barbecue in town.

IUE's national staff includes a number of Negro organizers; several doing fine work in plants with few colored workers. Every IUE local is expected to have a functioning Civil Rights Committee reporting directly to Secretary-Treasurer Al Hartnett. Local civil rights committees are responsible for getting anti-bias clauses into all union contracts, aiding other local unions with civil rights problems, combating discrimination in housing and schools and co-operating with other private and governmental community groups.

As president of the union, James B. Carey has taken every opportunity to act directly on civil rights issues. In Washington, he marched more than once at the head of the mixed picket lines that have helped end racial discrimination in the capital's hotels and restaurants.

Whenever and wherever the occasion arises, IUE proves its devotion to equality for all American workers.



INTEGRATION IN HOTELS

For months before it opened, the Hotel New Yorker's swank Lamp Post Corner dining room caused a stir in the hotel. Would it have an all-white crew like the Terrace Room? Or would it be staffed like the Manhattan Room—all-Negro, except for the headwaiter, captains and bartenders?

There was another choice, as the photograph above makes clear. Today, a skilled crew of white and Negro waiters and

bartenders work together to maintain the Gay Nineties atmosphere of the world-famous Lamp Post Corner.

How did the new dining room get that way?

When the union asked the hotel to end segregation in its Terrace and Manhattan Rooms, management refused. An all-Negro crew in the Manhattan Room created a "certain atmosphere" which it wanted to preserve, the hotel explained.

Then the Hilton Corporation took over the New Yorker, and the chain's industrial relations director agreed to try a more democratic policy. Staff for the new Lamp Post Corner was chosen from both the Terrace and Manhattan Rooms without regard to race. Workers with longest seniority were given the first chance to transfer to the new restaurant. Additional employees, white and colored, were hired through the United States Employment Service.

The experiment was a complete success. The Lamp Post Corner crew is highly efficient and everybody is happy—management, guests and, most of all, Local 6 of the Hotel and Club Employees' Union.

The union rightly considers the integration of the New Yorker's dining crews one of its outstanding successes in the drive for job equality. Union leaders are quick to credit the New York State Commission Against Discrimination and the mounting number of fair-minded hotel managers in the city for their help. In 1955, union contracts in New York added a provision that all hiring be done through the U. S. Employment Service (where both the union and the hotel association were represented), and that preference be given workers with hotel experience in the city. This arrangement has made it much easier to place job applicants without discrimination. The Taft, the Belmont Plaza, the Roosevelt, the Commodore and other first-rate New York hotels all have whites, Negroes and Puerto Ricans working together without friction. However, bias and segregation still persist in other areas.

More than 20 years ago, the International Union of Hotel Employees set itself squarely against the Jim Crow practices of the industry. During its 1936 convention in Rochester, the delegates voted overwhelmingly to drop a section of the union bylaws which allowed separate colored locals to be formed. Instead, the union opened its ranks to all "competent persons working in the skilled crafts." The same convention voted to take in the Oriental workers on the Pacific Coast, who, in the past, had been forced to accept lower wages and poorer working conditions than the union demanded.

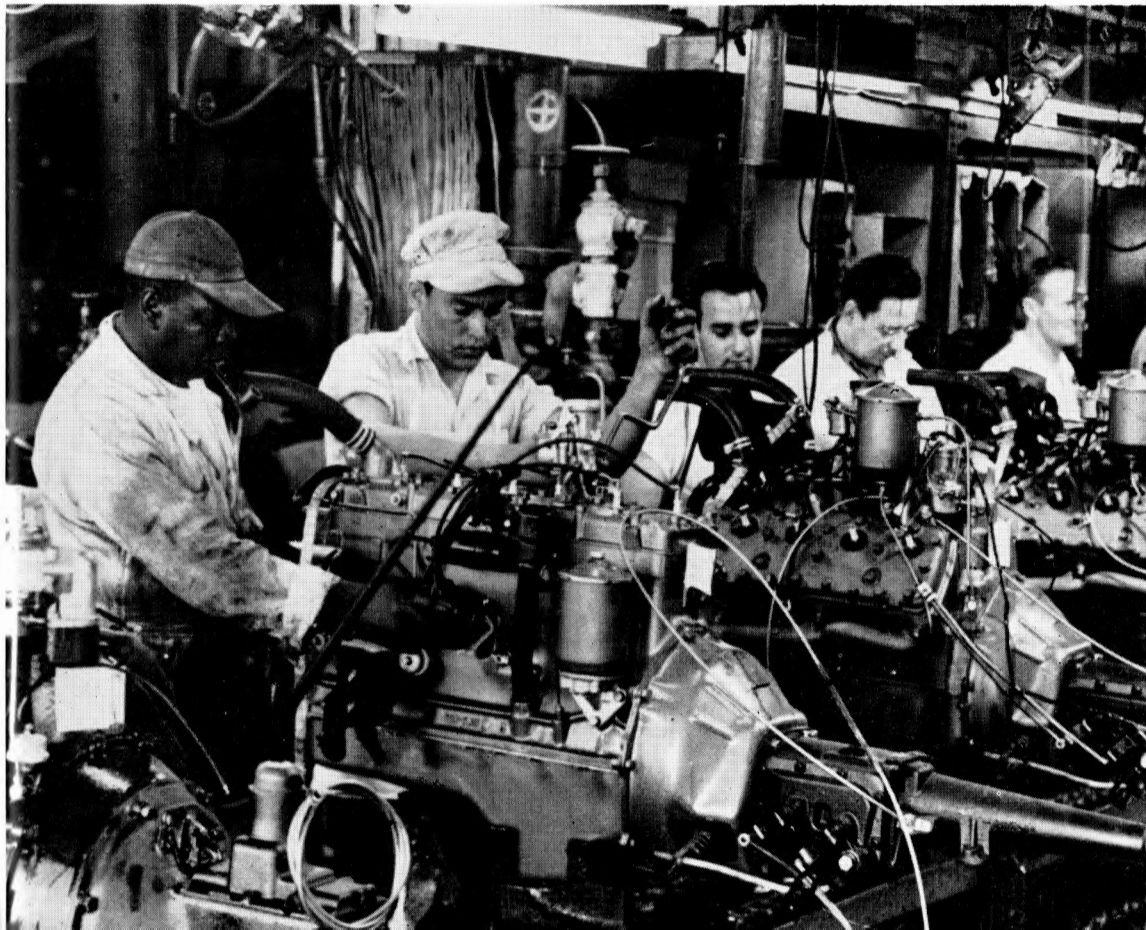
It was not easy, at first, for the union to convince the managers of many swank hotels to employ Negro maids. Today, however, white and colored maids work side by side in most of the nation's hotels.

Whenever the union detects systematic racial or religious discrimination, it fights back. Through contract provisions, off-the-record conferences with management and, in those localities where FEP machinery exists, through complaints filed with Commissions Against Discrimination, it has won great victories—for the union and *all* its members.

THE PRICE OF BROTHERHOOD

Today, most international unions include anti-discrimination clauses in their constitutions. Many have ably staffed civil rights and fair employment departments working to put democracy into action through contracts with management and educational programs for the membership.

But the United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers, AFL-CIO, is one union whose constitu-



tion provides that every member pay a one-cent tax per month to support its fair employment program. During the past decade, the union has spent some two million dollars on anti-discrimination projects.

Every so often, UAW's Fair Practices Department takes stock to make sure the membership is getting its money's worth out of the tax—at the hiring gate, in the plant and in the community, the state and the nation.

Take Oklahoma City, for example, where the population is 20 per cent Negro. Before 1950, the Fruehauf Trailer plant employed only eight Negroes out of a total work force of 300. Four other organized auto plants in the same city employed no Negroes.

As a result of the 1950 contract negotiations with the UAW, the eight Negro workers at Fruehauf were promoted to helpers and a year later one of them made the grade as an automobile mechanic. By 1954, seven of the eight were mechanics. The color bar was also on the way out in other Oklahoma City plants.

In Detroit, the trim shop at the Chrysler Corporation's Dodge plant employs 3,000 people. Until 1953 it was lily-white. When the company hired two Negroes, a few workers walked out. The protest was stopped cold when management and the union agreed to take a firm stand. The company fired the leaders of the illegal protest and the union made it stick. Since then, Negroes have been moving steadily into trim shop jobs.

Another success story involves the Kaiser-Frazer plant at Willow Run. In 1947, when John Burton, a Negro, went to work at Kaiser-Frazer, only 10 per cent of the union membership there was Negro. Three years later, Burton was elected plant chairman.

Although Kaiser-Frazer had signed the UAW's standard anti-discrimination agreement, Negroes were held to unpleasant, low-paying jobs. It took Burton 18 months of dickering with management subordinates before he finally

reached the office of Edgar Kaiser. To this meeting, Burton brought the latest evidence of company discrimination—a Negro graduate of the University of Michigan, trained in law, who had been turned down time and again for jobs demanding no more than an eighth-grade education.

Within a week the Michigan graduate was working as a car distributor. As the contract's anti-discrimination clause came to life, other changes followed fast. The company hired a Negro labor relations officer, two Negro clerks and a Negro IBM operator. These were front-office jobs, not covered by the contract, but the change in policy also showed up in the plant, as skilled jobs were filled by Negro workers. Later, when Kaiser-Frazer obtained an aircraft contract from the Government, many of these workers became aircraft mechanics.

By 1953, Negroes and whites were working in most of the skilled jobs together—millwrights, tinsmiths and electricians. Race relations in the plant were excellent; there were several Negro shop stewards, elected by a mostly white membership, and the local's social activities were also fully integrated.

For years, a midwestern plant with more than 10,000 UAW members had employed Negroes only as janitors and maintenance men. Plant officials blamed the union. But when the Urban League took the question to local union leaders, they agreed to press for a non-discrimination clause in the next union contract.

But opposition was expected and strike rumors spread. "Whites won't let Negroes work on their level," it was whispered. "They'll swamp the meeting and vote the proposal down."

Union leaders met again with Urban League officials. Fears were calmed and the union's education process continued. When Negro members attended the special meeting, they were *not* swamped by white workers and the new clause was carried by a 95 per cent "yes" vote.

Negro workers with sufficient seniority were invited to apply for transfers to available production jobs. But union leaders were surprised to find that many Negroes with the greatest seniority failed to come forward. They were afraid that they might not make good, or that there would be trouble in the plant.

Then, 15 carefully selected Negroes began work on production for a 60-day period. There was no strike; there were no incidents; not a single white employee walked off the job. Later, other Negroes transferred to the production line. Today, there are more than 100 colored workers in production and other Negroes will join them as soon as they accumulate enough seniority and vacancies open up.

Since 1954, UAW has cracked discrimination in many new job classifications. One of the highest skills in the auto industry is tool and die making. There are hundreds of tool and die shops in the Detroit area. Before 1954, none of these shops had ever employed a Negro, although Detroit's technical high schools graduated a number of Negro students qualified to enter the craft each year.

After a year's negotiation, a dozen plant managers agreed to employ Negro toolmakers, if the union could produce qualified workers. Many candidates were interviewed and a number were hired, further breaking down the racial barrier in the skilled trades.

One successful candidate was a janitor's son. The father, quick to discover the boy's mechanical aptitude, had bought him a new tool every payday. At 18, after graduating close to the top of his high-school class, the young man vainly haunted the employment offices of every auto plant in town, only to get a brushoff. Finally, Chrysler hired him and discovered that he was genuinely gifted. Now the company employs him on traveling assignments.

Although a significant part of UAW's membership is south of the Mason-Dixon line, the union has no Jim Crow locals. Union meetings are unsegregated. Negro members

hold leadership offices and serve as chairmen, committeemen, bargaining-unit representatives and members of local union executive boards. UAW's local in Rome, Ga., for example, elected a Negro as chairman of a predominantly white bargaining committee.

In Birmingham, Ala., a so-called "Southern Aircraft Workers Union" challenged the right of UAW Local 1155 to represent the workers of the Hayes Aircraft Company. When a few White Citizens Council members circulated a petition to oust the UAW, the UAW local answered with a sharply worded leaflet exposing the phony union's anti-labor background. As a result of the UAW's activities, the "Southern Aircraft Workers Union" withdrew its petition.

One factor which complicates the job of providing equality of economic opportunity for all workers in Southern plants is the reluctance of many Northern-based managements to violate segregationist patterns.

One executive of General Motors was quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* of October 24, 1957, as having said: "When we moved into the South, we agreed to abide by local custom and not hire Negroes for production work. This is no time for social reform in that area and we are not about to try it."

Aside from the moral implications of such a position, it is clear that most southern branches of northern corporations are willing to use the "local custom" excuse as a blind for opposition to trade unions. A local union, divided along racial lines, is conceded to be a good deal weaker and less militant than one where job opportunities are completely open. It goes without saying that so long as any corporations, for whatever reasons, adhere to their present view in the South, the task of providing full job opportunity is made enormously more difficult.

Despite the handicaps, however, the UAW, in concert with other trade unions, has committed itself to the establishment of fair employment practices. The UAW has long

argued for passage of effective civil rights legislation on the national, state and local fronts. Aside from fighting for legal prohibitions on discrimination, however, the UAW believes the labor movement has a long-range assignment to convince Americans that the democratic aspiration of true brotherhood is the only sound method for the eventual achievement of freedom and justice. The union knows also that true brotherhood cannot be achieved only by well-intentioned slogans or speeches. Brotherhood, to be genuine, must be lived. As the UAW has so often proclaimed:

“We can’t get brotherhood just by looking around for it as if we’d lost a cuff link. . . . We in the UAW are learning that we have to work at brotherhood as we worked at building the union. We are learning, what is more, that union *is* brotherhood, that all the nickel increases in a hundred years of collective bargaining cannot save labor if workers are divided by prejudice and intolerance.”



WORKING ON THE RAILROAD

I've been working on the railroad
All the live long day,
I've been working on the railroad
Just to pass the time away.

Negroes have been working on railroads in the South ever since the first spike was driven and the first rail laid. However, before diesel engines came into use, the team was always made up of a white engineer and a Negro fireman;

but the Negro was never promoted to engineer. Nevertheless, the fireman's job was a relatively good one. Between the two World Wars, it paid the highest wage earned by any Negro worker in the South.

In depression times, the fireman's job was eyed hungrily by worried white workers. The bad years—1921, 1931, and 1934—saw drives to “clear our lines of Negroes;” some Negro firemen were actually shot out of their cabs.

In 1941, to make matters worse, 20 major railroads and 14 all-white railroad brotherhoods signed a “promotional agreement” barring Negroes from the diesel engines which were replacing coal burners on Southern lines. In time, the agreement put many colored firemen out of work.

In 1949, the U. S. Supreme Court threw out the “promotional agreement” and ruled that all Negroes then employed would keep their seniority. The court also declared that newly hired Negro firemen would have to qualify for possible promotion to engineer.

Basing its move on the Supreme Court decision, the Provisional Committee for the Organization of Colored Locomotive Firemen, organized by the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, sued one of the white railroad brotherhoods for damages and won an award of \$30,000.

When the Railway Labor Act was amended in 1951 to permit a union shop, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters won a clause providing that Negro railmen would not be kept off the job because they were denied full membership by the white brotherhoods.

The major breakthrough came in the autumn of 1955. The Switchmen's Union of North America, organized in the North, East and West, petitioned the National Mediation Board for the right to represent the operating employees of the Central Railroad of Georgia.

There were 234 whites and 120 Negroes among the 354 employees eligible to vote in the election. Over a hundred Negroes were members of the Provisional Committee for

the Organization of Colored Locomotive Firemen, and there was no doubt that their votes would swing the election. Back in 1950, the Switchmen's Union had dropped the color bar from its constitution. It was ready to assure Negro switchmen and brakemen the equality denied them by other brotherhoods, including unsegregated meetings.

A series of historic meetings between white representatives of the Switchmen's Union and colored members of the Provisional Committee were held in Macon, Savannah, Atlanta and Columbus. Together, they ironed out a cooperative agreement and made plans for a widespread organizing drive. Seven months later, the Switchmen's Union of North America, winning the election by a comfortable margin, became one of the official bargaining agents of operating employees on the Central Railroad of Georgia. For the first time, Negroes became members of one of the Big Five operating rail unions.

Another great advance came in the North, when the Pennsylvania Railroad hired its first Negro brakeman. Pennsylvania, like most American railroads, always had a lily-white hiring policy on operating jobs. But in 1953, the New York State Commission Against Discrimination (SCAD) began checking complaints that Pennsylvania had turned down qualified Negro brakemen because of their race. On September 9, 1953, SCAD held an important conference. Among those present were representatives of the Pennsylvania; the New York, New Haven and Hartford; and the New York Central as well as spokesmen for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers; the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen; the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen; and the Order of Railroad Conductors. The railroads agreed to hire without regard to race, creed, color or national origin in every job category, and the brotherhoods promised to go along.

In November 1953, the Pennsylvania offered brakemen jobs to three of the Negroes who had filed complaints and

during the next three years the railroad hired another 140 Negro brakemen. As usual, the tensions and troubles that had been predicted never took place.

In 1957, when the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen joined the AFL-CIO, it reported 2,000 Negro members. At its next convention, the Brotherhood plans to drop all remaining racial restrictions from its constitution.



STEELWORKERS FIGHT DISCRIMINATION

In 1918, 24 unions covering different crafts in the steel industry set up an organizing committee. In September of that year, 350,000 steelworkers went on strike.

In their efforts to split the strikers' ranks, employer groups did all they could to exploit racial and nationality differences. Two detective agencies active as strikebreakers had specific instructions "to stir up as much bad feeling as you possibly can between the Serbians and the Italians."

Unfortunately, several of the unions on the organizing committee denied membership to Negro workers—which made it possible for the millowners to import carloads of Negro workers as strikebreakers. Although the men held out for several months, the strike was finally broken. The workers were defeated by a combination of employer-inspired violence, strikebreakers, racial and national conflicts and jurisdictional bickering among the various unions. The men in steel mills learned the hard way that “discrimination costs you money.”

Eighteen years later, when the Steel Workers Organizing Committee was formed, it welcomed Negro and white members alike. Sons of Negro steel men who had been strikebreakers in 1918 became volunteer union organizers in 1936.

Steel management, however, clung to its prejudices for many years. Negro workers employed for 20 years or more, were frozen as “blacksmith’s helpers” or in other dirty, exhausting jobs, while the white men they trained moved up to higher work and better pay. When union action broke this pattern in one Southern steel plant, some 300 Negro “helpers” got wage boosts of a dollar an hour and their first chance to bid for skilled jobs throughout the plant.

Blatant discrimination—by no means limited to the South—is still obvious despite the efforts of local steel union leaders, vigorously backed by their international officers.

In October, 1946, a historic battle was fought over the upgrading of a Negro worker at the National Tube Plant in Lorain, Ohio. A young Negro veteran, fresh from the battlefields of Europe, decided to exercise the plant seniority guaranteed him by the union contract. He applied for a skilled-trades apprentice gang.

Despite the contract, there never had been a Negro apprentice in the plant. Management was determined to keep it that way. Only after the case had been fought through three stages of grievance procedure and was about to go to arbitration did the company finally yield. Then, just as the

Negro was about to start his new job, 96 white craftsmen and apprentices walked out.

For a time, this walkout threatened a shutdown of the entire plant and its 11,000 workers. Under pressure from the union, management told the insurgents they would be fired unless they worked a full shift. The union backed the company's position, telling the men that it would not allow any further violation of the union's non-discrimination policy. On the next regular shift, the workers were back at their jobs. Now, as vacancies occur, Negroes are taken on as apprentice electricians, painters, maintenance men and welders.

Another series of wildcat walkouts took place in 1950, when wage differentials based on race were wiped out. White workers in Birmingham, Chicago, Youngstown and Detroit walked off their jobs in protest; but the International remained firm. Faced with the loss of their union charters, the insurgents backed down.

Top Steelworker leadership has refused to give discrimination a foothold even when large-scale rebellion threatened. Four thousand members of a Northern steel local threatened to walk out if management hired a Negro crane operator. This highly responsible job had been reserved for whites. But the union's President, the late Philip Murray, acted promptly and without compromise. If the walkout occurred, he warned, the International would immediately take over the local and administer it under a trusteeship.

The Negro crane operator went to work—and not a single white worker deserted his job. Today, the plant is fully integrated; initial resentments have been forgotten. The union is better off and so is the company, which can hire the best man for the job.

In 1954, another important step took place when North-South wage differentials were wiped out.

In August of the same year, United Steelworkers President David J. McDonald, together with the other top union

officers, sent a letter to every local and every staff member, calling attention to the union's constitutional pledge of full protection for all workers in the industry, regardless of "race, creed, color or nationality."

The official directive added:

This union is flatly opposed to discrimination in hiring, promotion, layoff, or any other term or condition of employment. Any collective bargaining contract which either by its terms or actual operation permits discrimination on account of race, creed, color, or nationality violates the policy of this union.

Fighting discrimination, emphasized the union's top officers, is not only convention policy, but also the union's legal duty:

The United States Supreme Court, the lower Federal courts and the National Labor Relations Board have all held that when a union acts as exclusive bargaining representative of employees in a bargaining unit, it is the union's legal duty to represent every employee in that union fairly and equally, and in such a manner that no discrimination results because of race, creed, color or nationality.

The effect of this directive on management and on local pockets of resistance within the union was quickly apparent. Personnel officers stopped screening out Negro applicants at the hiring gate. District union representatives tightened supervision over their locals and took another look at the hidden discrimination in some plants.

At the Steelworkers' 1956 convention, the union's Civil Rights Committee was able to report that as the direct result of union efforts, "many categories of employment heretofore closed to non-whites have opened in the past two years in the steel industry."

PHONE GIRLS SAY "HELLO, EQUALITY!"

It is not enough to write racial and religious equality into union constitutions and bylaws, as most international unions have done. Nor is it enough to bar discrimination in contracts. An important part of the job is to educate and sometimes prod union members into giving up old prejudices.

Al Herrington, one-time secretary treasurer of the independent union at the Illinois Bell Telephone Company (now a national staffer for the Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO), tells how a combination of edu-



cation and prodding worked in Chicago during World War II.

It all began when management called the union executive board (which also served as a bargaining committee) into the plant manager's office to report that the Urban League was pressing the company to hire Negro installers. "We told them we couldn't do it," the plant manager firmly declared. "We know your union members would refuse to work with Negroes. And besides, we're not going to put up separate facilities for Negro workers."

The company was in for a shock.

"Who said you could speak for us?" asked the union committee. "We don't object to working with Negroes. The Negro janitors are in our union, and if you hire Negro installers, we'll work with them too. What's more, you don't have to put up separate facilities. We can all use the same."

Arrangements were made to hire a limited number of Negroes as phone installers, giving first crack to Negroes already employed as janitors and porters. But despite this sensible agreement between the union executive board and management, a rank and file revolt started. At the next membership meeting, one member after another condemned the board's action. A committee was picked to see the plant manager and protest the hiring of Negroes.

"I'm sorry," replied the manager, "but this agreement was worked out with your board. It stands."

The rank and file committee reported back to the membership:

"The board sold us down the river. Maybe we can't keep those Negroes out of the plant, but we *can* keep them out of the union."

The next month, after a number of Negro installers came on the job, the opposition members had a new idea:

"Look," they said, "we have to pay out good money to support our union. Why should those Negroes be free-riders and get the benefit of all our gains without paying

a cent? They've *got* to join the union and pay dues. But we won't let them come to union meetings."

Another month and another membership meeting later, the rebels changed their tune again:

"*We* have to come to meetings to build up the union. Why should the Negroes go to the movies while we're attending union meetings? *They've* got to come to meetings too—but they'll have to sit in a separate section."

You guessed it.

Before long, Negro phone workers were coming to union meetings, sitting with the other unionists, taking full part in all activities. But it didn't just happen.

In the long weeks between meetings, countless talks among union leaders, shop stewards and rank and filers paved the way for the change.

Scenes like those have been enacted over and over again in phone workers locals from Michigan to Texas. Sometimes the workers involved were Negroes; sometimes they were Spanish Americans. In most every case equality became the rule.

Now, Negroes entering telephone company employment as porters get a chance to try out for technical jobs. In Chicago, where Negro installers were employed for the first time in 1942, their number has grown rapidly. In New York, communications companies now place "help wanted" ads in Jewish, Chinese, and Negro papers, as well as in the general press. The greatest resistance centered on the hiring of Negro telephone operators. Until 1943, hardly a single colored operator was to be found in the entire Be'l system.

Although the phone union—the Communications Workers of America—has done much to smooth the way, progress in certain sections of the country has been slow. In 1948, LaRoy Purdy, then CWA Director of the Mountain States District, was elected to the Colorado State Senate. It was he who introduced the State's first Fair Employment Prac-

tices bill. Two years later, a watered-down version of this bill, banning discrimination in state employment, was passed.

In the years that followed, the union, the Urban League and the Telephone Company joined to press for a broad program of integration in Colorado's communications industry. Union members were prepared for the changeover through a series of stewards' and general membership meetings. The Urban League provided qualified Negro applicants for the limited number of jobs the company agreed to open up. Slowly, with little public fuss, desegregation was achieved in Colorado and proved a complete success.

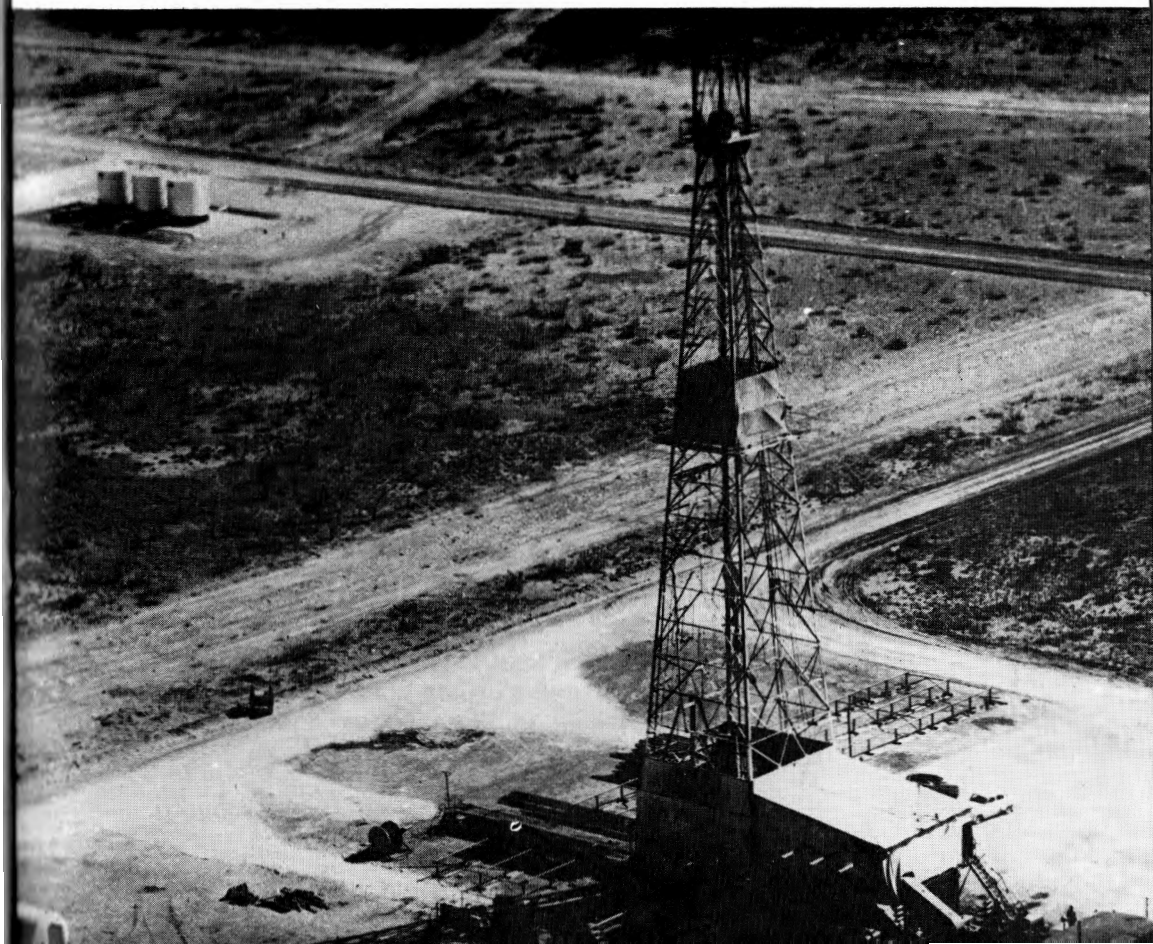
In New Mexico, where Spanish Americans make up a majority of the population, they nevertheless have traditionally met discrimination on telephone jobs. Pressed by Senator Chavez and a number of citizens' groups, the Telephone Company was finally persuaded to employ Spanish Americans. But Negroes were still excluded. Finally, in 1949, unions and other civic groups won a strong fair employment practices law. Since then, racial barriers have dropped markedly in New Mexico's communications industry.

Washington, D.C. is another success story. Here the AFL-CIO's Civil Rights Department worked together with CWA and the President's Committee on Government Contracts for the employment of Negro operators by the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company. This cooperative campaign finally persuaded the company to hire Negroes as telephone and teletype operators and to run its training program without bias.

By 1957, sixteen of the nation's 20 major telephone companies were employing Negroes and other minority groups in their technical services and as telephone operators. It is a record the Communications Workers of America points to with pride.

OIL AND BIAS WON'T MIX

"Don't let them tear your union apart," urged O. A. Knight, president of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union, AFL-CIO. The time was March 1956; the place, Atlanta, Ga. Mr. Knight was speaking to a group of white and Negro members of the union which represents some 200,000 workers in the petroleum, chemical and atomic industries.



To make quite clear just whom he meant by "them," Mr. Knight read off the names of a score of White Citizens Council leaders who were active labor-baiters.

"Don't let anyone convince you," he continued, "that there is one God for one race and a different God for another. Remember you are citizens of the best country in the world, offering the greatest democracy and opportunity. Don't go against the laws of the land. Remember, you are members of this union, and you have given your word never to knowingly harm a fellow member! That promise applies to everyone, regardless of color."

Over a third of OCAW's members work in the South; at least 15 per cent are Negroes. The union has fought consistently to wipe out the barriers that have restricted the employment of Negroes and blocked their promotion to more skilled and better paid jobs.

OCAW is made up of two unions which merged in March 1955—the Oil Workers International Union and the United Gas, Coke and Chemical Workers of America. The Oil Workers, in particular, had a large membership and long experience in the South. Back in the 1930's, the union organized the white and Negro workers of the big Gulf Coast refineries. At the time, many unions either neglected or refused to sign up Negroes. But the Oil Workers insisted that both whites and Negroes in the plants should be in the union. "A low wage paid to anybody hurts everybody" was the simple logic.

The Oil Workers were among the first to hold integrated union meetings in some parts of the South—a practice they started matter-of-factly and without fanfare.

Before the Oil Workers came upon the scene, Negroes automatically were paid a lower rate for the same work. The union negotiated this practice out wherever it could and during World War II, it won a Federal court order outlawing different wage rates for the same job. The union also put a stop to the "master-servant" practice of having

Negro refinery laborers mow the lawns of company supervisors on days off.

Often, during the 1930's and 1940's, white union organizers were jailed as they went about signing up all oil workers, regardless of color, for violating Jim Crow curfew laws barring whites from the colored section of town after nightfall.

Gradually the number of jobs open to Negroes grew; but, for a long time, colored oil workers stood little chance of promotion. White workers were hired and advanced at one speed, Negroes at another. Non-whites were limited to a few top jobs in a few crafts, while the whites rose to most of the better jobs.

At the Shell Oil Refinery, for example, new men started work in two rigidly separated departments—"Labor" for Negroes, and "General Helper" for whites. Only the whites could take tests qualifying them for skilled jobs higher up.

During World War II, the big Shell refinery in Pasadena, Tex., announced with much ado that it would enforce President Roosevelt's wartime FEP order and open all jobs to Negroes. The company's noisy approach set off a wildcat walkout. The local expelled its white secretary, a Southerner, when he defended opening jobs to all races and insisted that the men return to work. After a few days, the wildcat demonstrators returned to work. But the company reneged on its promise to open higher-paid jobs to Negroes. It was not until 10 years later, that discrimination in promotions finally ended at the Shell refinery and chemical plant.

In the summer of 1955, a group of Negro workers at the Shell plants filed a complaint with the President's Committee on Government Contracts—a Federal agency responsible for enforcing the President's ban on discrimination in plants holding Government contracts. Negotiations were arranged with the company, a union committee, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People which

served as spokesman for the Negro workers and an agent for the President's Committee. There was no fanfare, no dramatics. The International gave legal advice, and local spokesmen made the final decisions.

The new agreement provided that all new employees, white or Negro, would begin as laborers with the chance to move up to General Helper and higher categories on the basis of seniority. It was adopted by Pasadena Local 4-367, OCAW, representing workers in the Shell Oil Company and the Shell Chemical Company, by a nearly unanimous vote. Congratulating the local and the Shell Company's management, Union President Knight pinpointed the broad significance of this move:

It again debunks the charge Communists are throwing out all over the world about American mistreatment of minorities. We must grant that this problem is not completely solved in America, but America is making progress as rapidly as any country in the world, and organized labor is playing a major part in achieving this progress.

Another break with the Southern oil industry's discrimination tradition came in Beaumont, Tex., where workers of the Magnolia Oil Company (Socony-Mobil) are represented by OCAW Locals 4-243 and 4-229. OCAW's white and Negro members at the Magnolia plant—despite their separate locals—worked together closely on union grievances and in support of community welfare activities.

In December 1955, an OCAW international representative, with the help of the two Magnolia locals, negotiated a new contract banning the rigged seniority charts that held back Negroes.

Under the new agreement, Negroes and whites begin as General Helpers and advance according to ability, as jobs open up. In case of a layoff, plant-wide seniority is observed.

Both locals approved the new agreement by big majorities. When the company posted 100 new jobs in its Mechan-

ical department, 15 colored applicants passed the required tests; within a year, six Negroes were on their way to higher-paying jobs.

The improved hiring and promotion patterns set by the Shell and Magnolia agreements have spread through the oil and chemical industries. Similar contracts were signed with Phillips Petroleum in Kansas City, Mo., and the Gulf Corporation in Port Arthur, Tex.

OCAW leaders know that many of their members believe that segregation is right and proper. But they also know that the membership has a strong sense of fairness which will come to the fore if people are not antagonized.

Southern-bred union leaders have found that certain methods break down resistance to integration, while other approaches stir opposition. Gradual, quiet progress, for example, is usually accepted matter-of-factly, while loud publicity puts many decent people on the defensive. Hot arguments on racial issues serve no useful purpose; good examples teach important lessons.

Southern oil workers have fought against many odds and their wage rates are now among the nation's highest. Their locals are strong and self-sufficient; indeed, they often back weaker locals in other sections of the country.

Most important of all, Southern union leaders believe, is the motto cited at the beginning of this report: "Don't let them tear your union apart!" It is a telling argument.

GARMENT WORKERS STAND TOGETHER

From its earliest beginnings, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) has counted among its ranks workers of all races, nationalities and creeds.

Since the 1880's, successive waves of newcomers have manned New York City's ready-to-wear dress industry. First came the Jews, chiefly from Eastern Europe; next the Italians; then Negroes; finally Puerto Ricans and other Spanish-speaking groups.

The ILGWU constitution has always outlawed racial and religious discrimination; open displays of bias are rare in ILGWU shops. But some discrimination still exists—particularly against the Negro and Spanish American workers who are newest to the industry.

New York dress shops tend to be small enterprises, compared to auto, steel, rubber and other mass production giants. Workers usually enter the trade through friends or relatives already part of the industry. Newcomers naturally tend to work in the less skilled, less well-paid jobs, partly because of language difficulties and partly because the industry has never had a systematic training program for the higher skills.

In past years, new workers depended on friends or partners in the shop to teach them. Now, however, the union and the Board of Education have established a joint program at the High School of Fashion Industries in New York City, to train new workers and retrain unskilled workers in the more difficult crafts.

But there is still the problem of discrimination, and when it occurs, the union is in there fighting! Take the case of an excellently qualified applicant sent by the United States Employment Service to a certain shop. This talented Negro girl wanted to become a doctor and needed work to pay for her pre-med training.



The girl came to the union in tears. The employer had shouted: "I never had a Negro in my shop and I don't intend to. My white girls wouldn't work with a Negro."

The union's business agent, herself a Negro, investigated. When it became clear that the employer had in fact made this statement, the union told the boss: "Give this girl a chance or we'll empty your shop." She got her job—and quickly proved herself a skilled operator. Within a year she was union chairlady of her shop.

In 1956 ILGWU membership included 25,000 Spanish-speaking workers, 98 per cent of them women. Some three-

quarters of these workers are Puerto Ricans; the rest came here from other Caribbean lands. Four thousand of these Spanish-speaking unionists are in New York's Dress-maker Local 22. They are represented on the local's executive board, as well as among the union's business agents, organizers and clerical workers. Together with the "old-timers" these union officers do their best to help the newcomers find a place in the industry and the union.

ILGWU contracts allow workers without funds to get working cards immediately, and to pay initiation and membership fees later on. If they have language problems they are urged to attend the union's English classes, and those who can operate only a sewing machine are told about training programs for new and more complicated machinery.

Many other ILGWU locals have introduced special English classes and other projects to help Spanish-speaking members. A number of business agents are learning Spanish so that they can understand and deal with these workers' problems.

Outside New York, and particularly in the South, the ILGWU often comes up against more bare-faced bias.

ILGWU's *Handbook of Trade Union Methods* deals with this problem:

The ILGWU and other needle trades unions, founded largely by immigrant workers who had themselves been subject to generations of persecution, insist that neither race, sex, nor creed shall be a bar to membership. In cosmopolitan places like New York, with nationalities of all sorts jumbled together, prejudices of color and nationality are minimized. Negroes are made to feel at home, encouraged to serve on committees and assume office.

But in other and newer organization centers, convention resolutions are not always followed. This is particularly true in the South, of course, where color lines are closely drawn. Here race prejudice is used by employers to prevent the organization not only of Negroes but of white workers as well.

St. Louis, Mo. is the headquarters of the ILGWU's Southwest Region; its 111 locals have a membership of over 15,000. In 1933, when the union started organizing there, only two or three Negroes worked in the entire St. Louis dress industry. During World War II, however, St. Louis garment shops began hiring Negroes in large numbers, but in segregated shops and floors. A number of companies expanding their operations hired all-Negro staffs for their new branches.

Because of deep-seated prejudices and misunderstandings, a special ILGWU local was chartered for these new workers. It was also felt that this would give the members a chance to develop the leadership and assurance they would need later on.

But it was far from smooth sailing, even within the union. One of the St. Louis joint boards refused to accept delegates from the new local. But they were seated immediately by the other joint board, and union leaders of both races began working together for better understanding and unity among the workers. Slowly, as the members cooperated on union committees, and got to know one another at larger meetings, as they joined together in discussions, classes and other educational projects, friendship and understanding grew.

In 1949 integration of both shops and union locals got under way. The segregated local was abolished and many of its officers took posts on the expanded executive and joint boards. Today most of the organized shops in the St. Louis area are non-segregated—a tribute to the patience and hard work of all the officers and members of the ILGWU.



CLOTHING WORKERS COMBAT PREJUDICE

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, which covers the men's clothing industry, does not tolerate racial or religious discrimination in its ranks or in the industry. Equality is written into every ACWA contract, it is the job of every union official to see that the contract is honored.

Years ago, immigrant workers supplied the backbone of the highly skilled journeymen tailors' trade. Today, these older workers are retiring, and there is much concern about

who will take their place. In one large border city, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and Urban League proposed that Negro workers be included in a management apprenticeship program to train new workers. At first, employers resisted but the union continued to press for this goal. Today, Negroes are receiving apprenticeship training and make up a new skilled labor reservoir for the entire industry.

In 1949, in Cleveland, employers refused to consider Negro girls as trainees in the men's clothing field. The Amalgamated, again in cooperation with the Urban League, arranged for one of the firms to lend six power machines to the Phyllis Wheatley Association, a social agency which undertook to train the Negro applicants. In the past few years, ACWA has helped more than 100 colored power machine operators find work in Cleveland clothing factories.

In one large New Orleans clothing factory, Negroes and whites traditionally worked in separate divisions. When Amalgamated organized the plant, the local, too, was divided into two sections. But a union program soon brought the two units together. Because the union felt that common economic interests were a strong uniting force, a joint negotiating committee was formed. Later, a joint executive board was elected; by tacit understanding each unit provided one of the local's chairmen.

It was in the midst of a particularly pressing bargaining crisis that the white co-chairman moved to abolish the separate sections and elect one chairman for the entire local. The motion was carried and the changeover proceeded smoothly.

In a small Northern mining town the owner of a shirt factory hired a Negro girl without consulting the union or the other workers. On her first day on the job, two Negro friends drove her to work and sat in their car outside the factory while the other girls were arriving. Some of the old employees noticed the Negro men; before an hour had passed, the girls stopped their machines and announced that they would not work with a Negro operator.

When the girls refused to go back to work, a local priest was summoned to reason with them; they still refused to budge.

Finally, the union business agent was called and he hurried to the plant. Carefully he explained to the girls how on-the-job prejudice hurts unions and could hurt the girls themselves. Then he asked how many girls were willing to return to work and discuss the question later. The vote was close, but the girls went back to their machines.

A deciding factor in this situation was the stand of one particular girl who had recently attended an Amalgamated Clothing Workers summer school. There she met Negro unionists—at meals, in the dormitory, in classes and at social events. Discrimination was discussed in many institute classes. This girl's description of her experiences helped calm the fears of her fellow workers.

In the following days, there were many hours of soul-searching discussion between the local union members and their officers. Today, the Negro woman is still employed at the plant. She lunches with the other women, attends union meetings and is accepted as a friend.

Back in 1937, the Amalgamated began an organizing drive among laundry workers. Segregated plants and departments were the rule in New York laundries where Negro women worked for as low as 12 cents an hour. The health hazards of the industry were notorious.

As early as 1940, the union began writing non-discrimination clauses into all laundry contracts. Union officials and headquarters staff were integrated from the beginning, and many of the locals were led by Negro officers. Today, ACWA has almost 40,000 laundry and dry-cleaning members, with strong locals in a score of American cities. In most plants, white, Negro and Puerto Rican employees work side by side, enjoying complete job and pay equality.



THE SKILLED TRADES AND BIAS

The Oregon State Building Trades Council made history in February 1955 with a resolution declaring its “bitter opposition” to racial segregation and its support of “desegregation in housing”—to enable Oregonians to “practice in our every day lives the democracy which we preach.”

The following year, at the merger convention of the Oregon State Labor Council (AFL-CIO), the Building Trades, Metal Trades and Service Trades Councils all

pledged "to implement the policy of the AFL-CIO and the State of Oregon in the area of civil rights and fair employment practices."

To prove it meant business, the Oregon State Labor Council got together with the state's Fair Employment Practices Commission and the Apprenticeship Council to develop training opportunities for members of minority groups.

The State Apprenticeship Council publicizes the fact that all qualified people are equally eligible for apprenticeship training. It cooperates with the State Employment Service's testing department, union leaders and employer associations in the building and metal trade industries.

Here's how the program works. Chester Daniels, a Navy-trained machinist, went to the Apprenticeship Office when he came out of the service. He wanted to become a journeyman tool and die maker. Tool and die makers, badly needed in national defense work, are always in short supply.

It was carefully explained to Daniels that the apprenticeship program for this trade takes five years to complete. He was given expert counselling and directed to the State Employment Service for aptitude testing. It made no difference to anyone along the way that Chester Daniels was a Negro.

Daniels had a good education. His aptitude test proved him qualified to be a machinist. He soon found a job at the Screw Machine Products Company, a Portland firm with an excellent record under the state FEP law.

Still guided by an Apprenticeship Council field representative, he went before the local machinist trade apprenticeship committee, a group with equal representation from the machinists union and the metal trades association. The committee reviewed his tests and previous experience and found he had the makings of a good tool and die worker.

Chester Daniels was accepted into the apprenticeship training program, with a year's credit for his Navy experience. Under Public Law 550, he is using his veteran's ben-

efits for on-the-job training and for evening classes at Benson Technical School.

In four years, Daniels will be a journeyman tool and die maker—because labor, management and the State of Oregon have learned to use teamwork to fight bias in employment.

Oregon's apprenticeship programs have opened the door for Orientals, Negroes and other minority groups, not only as tool and die makers, but also as optical technicians, auto mechanics, body and fender repairmen, carpenters and brick-masons.

Unfortunately, Oregon's quiet but effective program is not typical of the country as a whole. Lester B. Granger, executive secretary of the National Urban League, points out that Negro young people still cannot enter many apprenticeship programs, especially in the building trades. Even when they do manage to get the training they need, Negroes often can't get jobs in their chosen trades.

Boris Shishkin, director of the AFL-CIO Civil Rights Department, explains:

The job of removing discrimination in training and the job of removing discrimination in employment must go hand in hand. They must be performed simultaneously. To realize the full potentials of the worker and his skill, fair training opportunities must be followed by productive and gainful employment, in which the worker will be able to make his best contribution to society.

The Building Trades Council of Louisville, Ky., has proved what *can* be done, with patience and willingness. Before the depression of the 1930's some Louisville unions rejected Negroes for membership because of the prejudices of contractors and white union members. When the Government started a number of construction projects to give work to the unemployed, the unions agreed to supply the labor. The Central Labor Council, the Building Trades Council, the local unions and the Urban League worked out an agree-

ment giving union permits to qualified craftsmen, without discrimination, for construction jobs in the area.

The secretary of the Louisville Building Trades Council was the chief negotiator on union contracts for public housing, industrial plants and other new buildings. He made it clear to the contractors that the unions' Negro members would be assigned to job openings along with others. In some cases, he invited an Urban League official to sit in on the negotiations.

Contractors soon realized the unions would not buck employment of Negro workmen; jobs for skilled Negro construction men began opening up. During the first year of this program, the unions let the new men work either on a permit or as new members; their initiation fee could be paid in installments. The vast majority became full-fledged members of their craft unions.

At one point, a Negro contractor in Louisville was bidding on the construction of a large defense housing project. There was no question about his technical ability, but Government officials weren't sure he could recruit enough help. There were not enough Negro craftsmen in the area to do the job alone; and the possibility that white building mechanics would refuse to work for him made the housing agency hesitate to give him the contract.

The contractor took the issue to the Building Trades Council. A resolution by the officers of all the building trades unions guaranteed that skilled labor would be on hand in all crafts. The contractor's bid was accepted and Negro and white craftsmen worked together to get the job done. Later, the same builder carried out two other large contracts with equal success.

The constructive attitude of the unions outweighed the traditional patterns of segregation in this Southern community, providing a fine example of united efforts to win job equality.

THE CASE OF THE COLORED SALESMAN

“You say the union sent you?”

The music store manager's voice was cool. It was true that he badly needed a record salesman who knew classical music. It was also true that, knowing the policy of the union employment office, he had been careful not to specify other requirements, such as color or religion. He had merely hoped. . . .



The applicant was personable and cultivated—and he knew his classical music. Did he remember the main theme of the second movement of Schubert's Eighth Symphony? He certainly did. Did he know the Brahms' Third? Right again. Without hesitation and with evident enjoyment he hummed the themes of every work the manager named, explaining how the piece came to be written and when. But—the applicant was a Negro.

At the end of half an hour, the manager shrugged and said he'd let him know. Later in the day, the manager phoned the union employment office to say he'd decided to employ a record salesman referred by a friend.

Politely, the union officer reminded him that District 65 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union would not tolerate discrimination. By agreement, the manager was permitted to hire outside the union's list only if the union could not supply a satisfactory applicant within 48 hours. Another applicant, added the union officer, would be there within the hour.

By the time he arrived, the union's machinery for handling anti-discrimination cases had been set in motion. The shop steward and the organizer, who happened to be a Negro, called a meeting of store employees and suggested that, under the circumstances, they should consider anyone hired outside the union machinery ineligible.

The second applicant was no lighter in color than the first and musically somewhat less accomplished. But the store manager got the point. This worker got the job. Employers have discovered that music lovers are considerably less race-conscious than they once supposed.

Fifteen years ago, there were hardly any Negro or Puerto Rican clerks in New York retail stores. Today, the picture is changing and colored personnel may be seen behind the counters of many retail shops. The 30,000 members of District 65—8,000 of whom are Negroes or Spanish-speaking—

also work in wholesale, processing and manufacturing establishments.

In one year, the union employment office placed a total of 16,527 workers. Its services are available to both members and non-members. Of the total placements, 2,724 were Negroes and 3,805 were Spanish-speaking Puerto Ricans, Latin Americans and Filipinos. Some of the largest retail stores in New York City obtain their workers regularly through District 65.

A decade ago, small businessmen along Broadway, with shops employing only three or four people, would not hire Negroes; today, they take a second look at their union contract and decide against discrimination. Foreign visitors have commented on the resulting change in the color spectrum behind the counters of New York stores.

In 1938, for instance, when the Lerner chain warehouse and home office in New York signed a District 65 contract, there were only 30 Negroes, most of them porters and watchmen, among its 700 workers. Today, 20 per cent of the company's working force of 1,000 are Negroes and Puerto Ricans, including senior distributors, skilled office workers and department heads.

District 65's leaders realized a long time ago that unity could not be taken for granted, and that friendship and understanding among the different racial, religious and nationality groups within the union had to be nurtured.

To this end, committees corresponding to the main groupings of the membership—Jewish, Irish, Negro, Spanish, Italian—were set up within District 65, each with similar objectives:

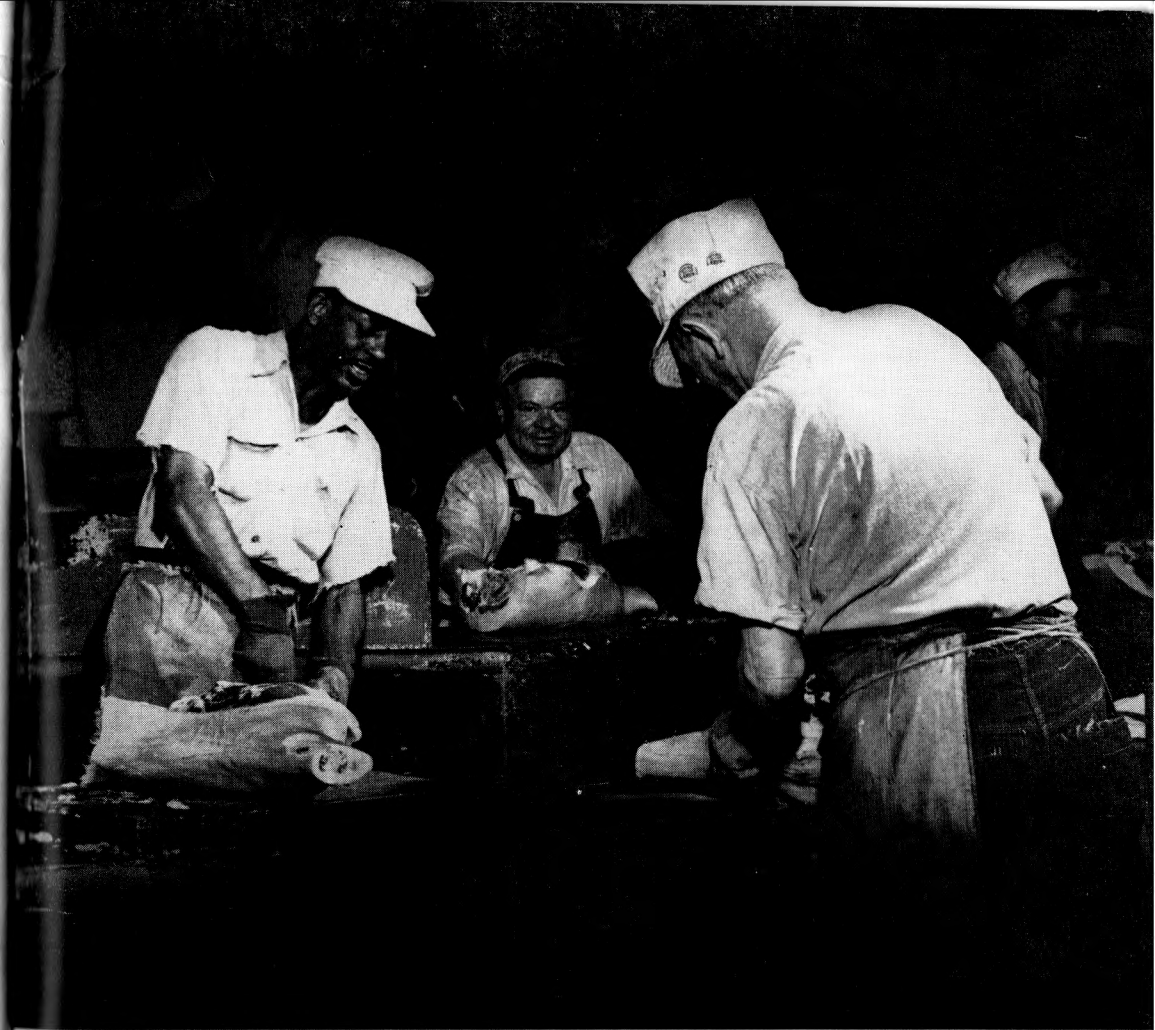
1. To help the particular group express its aspirations through the union.
2. To conduct activities that establish better relationships with the other groups.
3. To stimulate participation in union affairs.
4. And most important—to educate fellow unionists

about the group's background, culture and traditions, so that the value of equality for all will be better understood.

The work of these committees helps strengthen the members' feelings of unity and makes it possible for the union to resist discrimination against anyone in its ranks. District 65 also relies on the state FEP law in its drive for fair practices.

In the South, where other locals of the RWDSU include over 15,000 members, the union has fought hard for equality, even where segregation is written into state law. In Charleston, S. C., for example, at the American Tobacco Company plant, half of whose employees are white, half Negro; only Negro workers were members of a predecessor union. As a result of RWDSU action, with District 65 organizers, however, the plant's 1,000 workers are now fully organized, with white and Negro working together for joint economic betterment. Secret union ballots elect officials from both races. Union meetings are open to all, despite pressure by management and public authorities to preserve segregation.

The pattern is clear. From tobacco to music, RWDSU spells equality.



HANDS ACROSS THE COLOR BAR

Clasped hands mark the official seal of the United Packinghouse Workers of America. One of the clasped hands is white, the other black.

UPWA's interracial solidarity goes back to the 1940's, when the union was founded. One of its first tasks was to resolve racial and religious conflicts and to unify the white,

Negro and Mexican American workers in its ranks. The union was also concerned with community bias, for local prejudices invariably spill over into plants and union halls.

As a starting point, UPWA asked Fisk University to make a survey of its membership. The results, and the union program that followed, have been analyzed by John Hope II, Director of Industrial Relations for the American Missionary Association. His findings appear in a book entitled *Equality of Opportunity*, published by the Public Affairs Press in 1956.

At the time of the survey, one-third of UPWA's members were Negroes; one-tenth were Mexican Americans; and one-fifth were women. The Negro members of this union had slightly more schooling than the whites but they earned less.

Negroes did not attend union meetings as regularly as whites, although over two-thirds of the locals had Negroes in key posts as officers and organizers. Probably because of language difficulties, a smaller proportion of Mexican Americans reached positions of leadership, although they attended union meetings as often as white workers.

Within the union there was twice as much opposition on the part of white workers to the hiring and promotion of Negroes as there was to the upgrading of Mexican Americans. One-third of the white unionists objected to working under Negro foremen; almost as many resented Mexican American foremen.

About one-third of the plants covered by UPWA had segregated washrooms, cafeterias and other facilities. Negroes were fired more frequently than whites and were moved more frequently from job to job. Everywhere, both Negroes and Mexican Americans were conspicuously absent from skilled jobs.

In 1950, with Fisk University's appraisal of their union's problems and resources in hand, UP leaders launched a vigorous anti-discrimination campaign. In every district, bar-

riers of custom and prejudice were challenged and new opportunities for minority groups opened up.

By October 1951, twelve plants in Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City and Sioux City had eliminated separate locker rooms; the food facilities of three other plants were opened for Negro workers without segregation and separate drinking fountains were eliminated in several shops. Shortly afterwards, plants in Fort Worth, Birmingham and Baltimore also eliminated separate facilities. These practices all were changed by local negotiation.

In one Southern branch of a major packing company, a white minority opposed to desegregating plant facilities nominated an all-white slate to run against the interracial group in office. Despite a heated campaign, the interracial slate won handily. Fifty-one white members out of a total local membership of some 1,400 resigned from the union in protest. A year later, 35 had applied for reinstatement.

Today, all master contracts with the Big Four Packers—Swift, Cudahy, Armour and Wilson—contain anti-discrimination clauses, so complaints of prejudice can be handled through the grievance machinery. In Chicago, the union charged Swift & Co. with refusing to take on qualified Negro workers; through arbitration the applicants won not only their jobs but also seniority rights and back pay of over \$6,000.

The campaign to break down the color bar in the big general offices of Armour & Co. in Chicago started in 1952 and lasted two and a half years. A procession of white and Negro applicants for office positions, all of them well qualified, were sent by the union to Armour's personnel office. The white applicants were hired; the Negroes received assorted brushoffs.

Armour & Co. is a Government contractor. So, with the cooperation of the Chicago Urban League and other civic groups, the union finally took its evidence to the President's Committee on Government Contracts. An investigation by

the Army Quartermaster Corps soon followed—and later, conferences between Armour personnel officers and representatives of the union's anti-discrimination department.

On March 9, 1955, the Company unconditionally accepted the union's policy of equality. An official poster of the President's Committee appeared on the bulletin boards of all Armour & Co. plants, pledging full equality in:

- 1) Employment, demotion, upgrading or transfer.
- 2) Recruitment or recruitment advertising.
- 3) Rates of pay or other forms of compensation.
- 4) Selection for training including apprenticeship.
- 5) Layoff or termination.

A week later, Armour hired its first Negro office worker. Soon afterward, two Negro salesmen and several Negro clerks were employed in the Chicago office. UPWA locals everywhere used the Armour breakthrough to bring other packing houses into line. Within a few months qualified Negroes were seen in the front offices of a dozen packing houses from New York to Los Angeles. At the same time, more and more Negroes, with union backing, won long delayed upgrading to skilled job categories.

UPWA's seal is its pledge to every member: *Together* they will all go forward.

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