



Worsening conditions in the mills have been a factor giving rise to the growing movement of steel workers. The Sadlowski campaign presents one opportunity to advance this movement.

Election Draws Near

Rank & File Advances In Steel Fight

The struggle in the steel workers union is coming to a head. As the campaign for the union presidency grows very hot with the approach of the February 8 elections, it is becoming clearer than ever that this contest between the union machine candidate Lloyd McBride and Ed Sadlowski is a good opportunity to advance the steel workers' struggle. As communists and other active steel workers have pushed hard to build the Sadlowski campaign through some heavy battles, it is also even clearer just how important it is that the rank and file look to its own interests and not be used as a pawn in this race.

The way this election battle is shaping up has already had an effect on other workers and brought powerful class forces into the field. After all, if the rank and file can dump the Abel machine, there's a lot of other comfort-loving company-serving top union bureaucrats who'd have to fear for their good thing too. AFL-CIO head George Meany has issued blast after blast against Sadlowski, calling his campaign "a danger" to "the free labor movement." Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union head Murry Finley "requested" his executive board members and other union staffers to make personal campaign contributions to McBride. The notorious reactionary sellout Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers took out a whole newspaper ad against Sadlowski, full of hysterical warnings about the "threat to unionism" if Sadlowski wins.

In the nomination elections in United Steel Workers locals across the country in December, Sadlowski won nominations from 521 locals and McBride from 2901. Sadlowski swept the mills and larger locals, winning enough locals to get on the ballot. This in itself is an important victory. The machine headed by USWA President I. W. Abel tried to stop Sadlowski by hook (redbaiting him, trying to tell workers in nonbasic steel that Sadlowski is only interested in basic, etc.) and by crook (goon work and stealing elections, such as the Wyman-Gordon local near Chicago where the local president suddenly adjourned the nomination meeting before the vote was taken). Later he called people on the phone and on the basis of his own personal poll announced that McBride had won.

McBride is running as Abel's handpicked successor and heir to Abel's machine, and Abel's name is a dirty word on the shop floor. He promotes the line that what's good for the companies is good for the workers ("labor-management cooperation"). In fact, he's helped out the companies in all the attacks they've heaped on the steel workers, and every struggle the steel workers have taken up—against layoffs, harassment, job combinations, for the right to strike and against the so-called anti-discrimination consent decree which allows the companies to continue discriminating while attacking seniority—in all of these battles the rank and file has had to take on Abel and his pro-company dictatorship within the union.

McBride has the backing of the steel bosses, not just in thinly disguised words but more importantly, in practice. The companies have joined the Abel machine in harassing pro-Sadlowski forces, trying to keep them from leafletting and putting up signs, and trying to stop workers from wearing Sadlowski stickers but leaving men wearing McBride stickers alone. In at least one case, the steel bosses called the cops and had pro-Sadlowski leafletters arrested for "trespassing." All the while the companies are stepping up their propaganda about

how wonderful the Abel-backed Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA, which forbids strikes until 1980) is and how layoffs would be worse without it.

Rank and File Chart Own Path

Why has this campaign developed such significance? Certainly not because of what Sadlowski himself represents. Like other union reformers before him, he has gotten political and financial backing from some liberal types in the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeois opportunists of various stripes, especially the revisionist Communist Party. But the rank and file has begun to stand up against the steel companies and their agents within the union, and Sadlowski has to a certain degree spoken to this movement. For steel workers, fighting to elect Sadlowski is a way to break up the Abel machine and build organization of the rank and file united around their real demands and interests.

While Sadlowski's desire to be union president and the rank and file's desire to be free of Abel coincide at this point, steel workers are increasingly charting their own course, building their organization to deal with the attacks such as the layoffs and all the rest no matter what happens in the elections or afterward. If the rank and file didn't approach the Sadlowski campaign with this point of view, it would be impossible to win, let alone advance in the future.

Even though Sadlowski did succeed in winning nomination, his campaign has run up against obstacles, including some of his own making. In his own home District 31 (Chicago-Gary), some mills which had elected pro-Sadlowski union officials last Spring failed to nominate him this time. In many places, many of the active rank and file workers began to get more than a little cynical about whether a Sadlowski victory would change anything after all. After making a relatively strong start by coming on strong on some important issues like the ENA and talking militant in the early fall, Sadlowski had picked up some momentum. But after that he apparently figured that he had the most active workers sewed up and he began to vacillate more, trying to appear more "middle of the road." This created a situation where many active workers don't readily see why they should do the kind of day-to-day mobilizing of forces necessary to win greater numbers of steel workers to take up the campaign actively so it can win.

McBride, for his part, is coming on hot and heavy against Sadlowski, redbaiting, lying, striking a thoroughly phony militant pose and taking advantage of all Sadlowski's weaknesses. For instance, when Sadlowski and his candidate to succeed him as District 31 Director got together with Inland Steel and signed a local so-called consent decree against discrimination that neither does anything about discrimination nor has the consent of the workers, McBride came to the plant gates to stage a show of strength by denouncing this dirty deal. Awhile later, McBride made a big splash in the papers by denouncing Sadlowski for taking money from "employers," citing \$1500 Sadlowski had gotten from some rich liberal capitalists.

Of course coming from McBride this is pure hypocrisy. The Abel-McBride machine doesn't need open campaign contributions from the capitalists because they've got the membership's dues money in their pockets—dues they've increased heavily to pay for their fancy living. Lots of their business associates in the In-

ternational and lower level hacks kicked in a few hundred or a thousand dollars to buy job security. And of course it was Abel who signed the national consent decree in the first place and tried to sell it to steel workers as a big advance.

The situation is that while there is a lot of pro-Sadlowski sentiment from among the workers and especially the more advanced, at the same time in the minds of many there is the question of what, if anything, the rank and file can accomplish through this election. This comes from the real experience of workers who've seen reformers and just plain hucksters come and go.

Where the greatest advances in the Sadlowski campaign have been made is where communists and other workers have summed up the real picture, especially the ongoing struggles of steel workers, pointing to the need and real opportunities the campaign presents to build struggle against the companies and the Abel machine that fronts for them, to build organization and unity, presenting the fight to elect Sadlowski as one important part now of furthering this.

When attempts have been made to win people to fighting for Sadlowski on the basis of Sadlowski's stand pure and simple, by saying "This is where McBride stands and this is where Ed stands," the campaign has been narrow in participation and lukewarm in action and effect. The campaign has been strongest when it has been taken up fundamentally based on building the the struggles steel workers are waging and their hatred for the class collaborationist Abel dictatorship that holds them back, and presenting the Sadlowski campaign as a tactic to organize and advance these struggles.

In the course of fighting against the Abel machine, there have been efforts from time to time in the Sadlowski campaign to limit the participation of the rank and file. The effect of this would be to paralyze the mobilization of the forces necessary to win this election (and to try to make sure it isn't stolen). For this reason, as well as to advance the more basic interests of steel workers to the maximum, this point of view has been opposed from the rank and file, including people around the *Steelworker* national newspaper and members of already existing organizations in the industry.

Local Nomination Battle

For instance, in Milwaukee members of the steel section of the Milwaukee United Workers Organization and others initiated the local Sadlowski Fight Back Committee, which waged the nomination battle local by local through leafletting, bringing banners to gates, fighting it through in union meetings, etc. The Milwaukee committee had to go through a big struggle with the Sadlowski people headquartered in Chicago before they got agreement that they could put out their own leaflets as well as the national Sadlowski leaflets. The local leaflets not only spoke to local conditions and questions, but also most importantly they put the importance of electing Sadlowski in the context of dumping the Abel machine and building the organization of the rank and file united around their own program and interests.

When Sadlowski came to speak in Milwaukee, his people insisted that an out-of-town bureaucrat come in to introduce him instead of a local committee speaker. Again, this was beat back so that the rank and file could have its say. The importance of this stand became clear when Sadlowski, not wanting to commit himself, hedged on some sharp questions workers raised about job combinations in the can industry and dues increases. The only way to deal with this situation and keep people's feelings from giving way to dead-end cynicism was by presenting the campaign in its correct light, its importance as part of building the overall struggle.

In the Chicago-Gary area the organization Breakout at U.S. Steel in Chicago called together a District 31 Organizing Committee to take up the Sadlowski campaign and the basic steel contract that follows the elections, and build the struggle in steel. In November, McBride came to town for a fundraising dinner which the machine took great pains to hide from the 135,000 steel workers in the area. Nevertheless somebody found out about it and steel workers from the Chicago-Gary area and Milwaukee showed up to picket outside chanting, "I. W. Abel, Lloyd McBride, We Know You're On the Bosses' Side" and "No Right to Strike—Can't Even Vote—Get Your Damn Hands Off Our Throats" (referring to the fact that now USWA members don't even vote on national contracts). While the local Sadlowski people had declined to back this kind of action, the picket helped lay out the truth and stir things up in a good way.

In the Cleveland-northeast Ohio area, people around the *Steelworker* played an important role in the Sadlowski Fight Back Committee, helping to organize a rally of 350 workers from different shops, one of the biggest at which Sadlowski spoke around the country. The song "No Strike Blues" hitting on the ENA stirred lot of spirit at the rally and copies of the *Steelworker* with an article about the rank and file demonstration around Local 3059 in Pittsburgh (see *Revolution*, December 1976) went over well. But the Sadlowski people put all further mass action on hold and had the distribution of the *Steelworker* banned at Sadlowski events. Nevertheless, because most of the rank and file workers active in the campaign locally see the *Steelwork-*

Advances In Struggle Of Wisconsin Indians

The continuing struggle of the Menominee Indians in northern Wisconsin has recently scored two important victories. In an election on the reservation "Paddo" Fish, the hated sheriff for the past two years, was thrown out of office. Soon afterwards Ada Deer, chairman of the Menominee Restoration Committee, the governing tribal body, was forced to resign rather than face the tribal election in February. These victories deal blows to the bureaucratic tribal governing structure which the monopoly capitalists have tried to manipulate over the years in order to stifle the struggle of the Menominee tribe and rip off their land and run roughshod over the culture and people.

Two years ago the struggle of the Menominee people against oppression reached a high point when members of the Warriors Society, a militant group of young Indian fighters, seized an abandoned Catholic monastery, demanding it be used for much-needed Indian health and educational facilities. The one month takeover, which was defended by guns against the police and National Guard, successfully forced the Alexian Brothers to turn the unused mansion over to the tribe and rallied many Menominee and thousands of others to their cause.

With this struggle fresh in their minds and fearing another Wounded Knee the capitalists asked Ada Deer to come up with someone for sheriff of the reservation who would crack down on the Warrior Society. Her pick was "Paddo" Fish, a known bar room brawler on the reservation. The Governor appointed him sheriff.

"Paddo" Fish's Goon Squad

Fish immediately started beefing up the police force—from 6 to 70 deputies in two years. At the same time the tribal leadership diverted federal funds from job training programs to pay the salaries. The deputies were handpicked for the job. At least three were convicted murderers. The new "goon squad" as it came to be known among the 3000 Menominee living on the reservation, made it a practice to arrest and beat any young Indian they considered to be a member of the Warrior Society.

Every week there were new cases of police brutality. Sixteen year old Leslie Grignon, brother of one of the five main defendants from the monastery takeover, was beaten into a coma on the night of April 10, 1975. Tommy Tourillot's car was forced off the road

by a deputy's. Now he is paralyzed. "Peeko" Askenette, lost four teeth when punched by a deputy. Dale Kakkak had his jaw broken. The list goes on and on.

The most glaring crime of "Paddo" Fish was the murder of John Waubanasum and Arlin Pamanet. The holes in Fish's story about how he "fired in self defense," fit right in with his history of threats and beatings against the Warriors. The Menominee people were outraged at the reign of terror.

With his own election coming up "Paddo" Fish relied heavily on the tribal bureaucracy headed by Ada Deer to get him elected. People with management jobs at the tribal sawmill, working as deputies, or in the courthouse were a base of support for the Deer-backed "Paddo" Fish ticket. This was the only thing that made the election close.

But the Menominee youth had suffered too much under the policies of harassment and repression. Visiting house to house, driving elderly people to the polls, they led the way in this struggle. With this, Fish's fate in the election was sealed.

Along with a growing anger at the police repression more and more Menominee have come to see how Ada Deer and her governing committee were willing to sell out to different corporate and banking interests, trading off the wealth of the tribe for their own personal enrichment and political gain.

Capitalists After Menominee Land

The monopoly capitalists have long desired to sink their teeth into the valuable Menominee land. In 1954 the federal government began a policy called "termination," and in 1961 the Menominee (along with a few other tribes) were "terminated" as a tribe—meaning the loss of any special government programs and the loss of their school and hospital. In addition, their reservation became a tax-paying county. Every Menominee was given 100 shares—valued at \$1 a piece—in a setup called Menominee Enterprises, Inc. (MEI). Then, the First Wisconsin Bank was made trustee for all Menominee minors, giving the bank control of 40% of MEI, later rising to over 50%.

"Termination" quickly drove the Menominee tribe deep into debt, the reservation's sawmill operation being unable to pay all the newly levied taxes on Menominee land. The bank used its control in MEI to begin selling off Menominee land for summer cottages, and a resort was planned on nearly 9000 acres sold to a developer who built a dam and created Legend Lake.

The situation soon led to a struggle by the tribe to take control of MEI away from the First Wisconsin Bank. In 1971, Determination Rights and Unity of Menominee Stockholders (DRUMS) finally succeeded in gaining control. In the course of this struggle, the demand for restoration of tribal status emerged, and in 1971 the federal government passed a Restoration Act.

While this act has restored the Menominee's status as a tribe and stopped the land sales, the Menominee still face severe oppression and debts. The capitalists have shifted tactics and worked to turn the Restoration Council, headed by Ada Deer and controlled by what's left of the DRUMS leadership, into a servile committee loyal only to their financial gains. Much of the mass struggle on the reservation is directed against these bureaucratic lackeys who control the sawmill operation, the tribal governing structure and the allocation of federal funds.

Role of Tribal Bureaucracy

In 1974 there was a strike by the sawmill workers asking for a \$1 an hour raise over their wages which

were then \$2.50 an hour. Ada Deer and the Restoration Council came out staunchly against the strike, saying that the tribe had too many debts and couldn't afford to pay such a big raise, even though they themselves receive very comfortable salaries.

Ada Deer further exposed herself during the takeover of the monastery two years ago, which was seen by many Menominees as a continuation of the struggle to secure full tribal status, including recognition of the tribe's historical treaty rights. She and the other "official" tribal leadership publicly attacked the Warrior Society, which led the struggle, as "misfits," a "splinter group," and "outside of tribal life," and then unleashed a wave of repression against these militant fighters through the office of "Paddo" Fish.

As if this wasn't enough Ada Deer has become increasingly exposed for selling out the interests of the tribe to corporate and banking interests, while at the same time taking what she could for herself. Under Ada Deer's leadership the Restoration Committee took out high interests loans, burdening the tribe with financial and political debts to the federal government and banks.

To bring in more money the Menominee forests have been opened up to highly automated tree harvesters, endangering the valuable timberland by clear cutting all the trees. Yet despite timber that's free for the cutting, the tribal sawmill reported a loss of \$200,000 this past year. Recently a huge scandal has been uncovered involving the misappropriation of \$215,000 in federal funds by Ada Deer's Restoration Committee. At the same time the lumber and pulp interests and the real estate and resort developers continue to wait impatiently in the wings for the banks to again claim control of big sections of the reservation as they did back in the '60s.

Hated by the great majority of the Menominee people, Ada Deer had no choice but to step down, rather than face open defeat in the tribal election this February. This combined with Fish's earlier defeat really shook up the tribe's governing structure.

Of course the capitalists are not satisfied with these results nor sitting still after their defeats. So despite Fish's defeat they have maneuvered to have him continue to maintain much of his power. The FBI, Bureau of Indian Affairs, together with the Shawano County District Attorney, are cooperating to set Fish up as a federal officer, splitting the reservation's police force into those under a newly created "tribal sheriff," who would be Fish, making the recently elected county sheriff a figurehead position.

But the struggle continues. Recently Quill Chevalier, one of the five defendants from the Warrior Society takeover of the Alexian Brothers abbey, has been caught after nine months as a fugitive. A political campaign is starting to make his defense a popularization of the cause of the monastery takeover and the injustice he faces a focus of struggle for the Indian people and others.

What is happening to the Menominee people—the ripping off of their tribal lands, the extreme poverty conditions, the ruling class' use of the tribal bureaucracy to maintain the oppression of the masses—all of these things are typical of the brutal conditions facing Native Americans across the country. In the last several years the masses of Indians rose up and waged fierce struggles against their oppression. While these struggles have subsided somewhat since the high tide brought about by the seizure of Wounded Knee, the battle being waged by the Menominees is sure indication that Native Americans will continue to hit back at the source of their misery. The defeat of both Sheriff Fish and Ada Deer are signs of the potential strength of this struggle. ■

Steel...

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er as their own and see the need for building the organization of the rank and file, many have worked for a mid-January conference of steel workers in the area to discuss the Sadlowski campaign, the contract and the no-strike deal, and how to move forward.

The question that the Sadlowski campaign gives rise to—the question the advanced workers ask—is how this campaign is going to change things. This goes to the heart of the matter. Steel workers hate and want to destroy the Abel machine because of what it stands for—total capitulation—and how it's helped the companies tie them in chains. In the next few weeks of the campaign it's vital that the forces fighting for Sadlowski wage a blow for blow battle against the attacks of the company and Abel, against their slander and harassment and strong-arm tactics. The attacks that have been unleashed to defend McBride have to be turned into an exposure of the two-headed monster of the company and its union henchmen and used as sparks to help ignite the struggle against them.

Fighting to elect Sadlowski as a way to bust up the Abel machine and build organization of the rank and file, steel workers can make the maximum gains in this election battle and continue to advance afterwards come hell or high water. ■



The long Menominee struggle for justice has won many victories, including over traitors in tribal leadership.