

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

January 5, 1973

TO BRANCH ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

Coalition of Labor Union Women

The East Coast Regional planning meeting of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) was held in Philadelphia on December 8. The purpose of the meeting was to further plan for the national conference to be held in Chicago, March 23-24.

The national conference has the potential of being a very significant one. The size and spirit of the Philadelphia planning meeting was an indication of the growing interest in the struggles of union women. About 300 women attended, between 15 and 25 percent of whom were Black.

The Communist Party had a number of members there from New York, Philadelphia, D.C. and Boston. They made no organized intervention, not even with their press. The Daily World gave major coverage to the conference afterwards.

Several sectarian groups were present also, including the Spartacists and Youth Against War and Fascism.

We had a fraction of 12 comrades -- New York (8), Cleveland (1), Boston (1), and Philadelphia (2). Over \$100 of Pathfinder literature was sold, particularly on the Black struggle.

The conference was not a decision-making one. It was called to build support for the national conference. The morning session was taken up with speeches and the afternoon sessions were state and union workshops to select representatives for the national planning meeting.

Although there was very little time for discussion, the theme that came through was clearly: how union women are going to fight for women's liberation issues through the unions.

Some of the obvious issues were: (1) organizing the unorganized women; (2) passage of the ERA; (3) childcare; (4) affirmative action programs and EEOC cases.

In one workshop women from the Women's Political Caucus were very vocal about the need to get women trade unionists elected to office. That will undoubtedly be an issue at the national conference.

The national leadership, including Edith Van Horn, UAW; Addie Wyatt, Amalgamated Meatcutters; Joyce Miller, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, are not interested in a broad, large national conference. They have dragged their feet all along and will probably continue to do so.

For instance, the conference in Philadelphia was supposed to be one of three regional planning meetings. Meetings were also to be held in Atlanta and Los Angeles. However, if the other two happen at all, they will be small "leadership" conferences. The Philadelphia conference was broader only because some women in Philadelphia took the initiative and built it -- in spite of the national leadership.

The national conference provides us with an opportunity to meet and discuss with other union women and to put forth our perspective on several issues. The conference also has the potential of being big. Even though the leadership is not interested in a large conference, there has been a great deal of interest expressed in the national conference, particularly since the success of the Philadelphia meeting.

SWP women unionists will want to continue to participate in this formation and help build the conference. The amount that can be done will vary, of course, from area to area. In some areas, for instance -- Philadelphia, Detroit and Cleveland -- comrades have been elected as state or union representatives on the national steering committee and can use that authority to build the conference. But every branch should think out what they can do to participate.

Male trade unionists can also help build the conference by distributing leaflets, putting notices in their union papers, and talking with women in their unions.

Between now and March there are several state or local meetings called to gain support for the conference. One is planned for January 5 in Chicago and another for January 19 in New York. Others will probably be called and comrades should watch for them and plan on attending.

Any information about meetings, material, or plans in your area for the national conference should be sent to the national office so the work can be nationally coordinated.

Enclosed is a copy of the conference leaflet. Branches may write to Addie Wyatt for leaflets, and some areas will be able to get them duplicated through local unions.

Comradely,



Linda Jenness
Women's Liberation Director