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// A community is democratic only when the humblest and weakest person can enjoy the highest civil, economic, and social rights that the biggest and most powerful possess. //

A. Philip Randolph
(1889-1979)



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ONTHECOVER

Photo Illustration by Wix Pix Productions, Inc.

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USW@Work (ISSN 0883-3141) is published five times a year by the United Steelworkers AFL-CIO-CLC Five Gateway Center, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Subscriptions to non-members: \$12 for one year; \$20 for two years. Periodicals postage paid at Pittsburgh, PA and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: **USW@Work**, USW Membership Department, 3340 Perimeter Hill Drive, Nashville, TN 37211

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USW@Work

Volume 02/No.4 Labor Day 2007
Official publication of the United Steelworkers
Direct Inquiries and articles for **USW@Work** to:
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Speaking Out

USW active and retired members and their families are invited to "speak out" on these pages. Letters should be short and to the point. We reserve the right to edit for length. Mail to **USW@Work**, Five Gateway Center, Pittsburgh PA 15222 or e-mail to editor@usw.org.



Forward-looking

The articles on Global Solidarity and Cross Border Strategy in the Summer 2007 edition of *USW@Work* bring back memories of my work as a union economist from 1957 to 1985.

I am glad to see that the USW is moving towards one big union that many were pursuing more than a century ago. Congratulations on being a dynamic forward-looking union.

Roy Ockert Sr.
Salem, Ore.

VEBA thank you

I worked at U. S. Steel's Lorain Works for 41 years, retiring in 1992. When we lost our health care, the United Steelworkers came together and secured a VEBA (Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association) health plan for its members. The members in Lorain, Ohio, thank you very much.

May God bless the USW.

Otis McCoy
Local 1104 retiree, Lorain, Ohio

Building power

Two years ago I received a solicitation from the United Steelworkers to join as an associate member. I set it aside. Then earlier this year I received another and sent in the dues.

Lo and behold I got a membership card and a subscription to the periodical *USW@Work*. When I read the publication, I began to understand the strategy and it is very smart. Samuel Gompers would approve.

Unions need to build organizational strength, not just to improve their financial base but to put real muscle behind their demands for change in wages, health care and workers' rights.

With my second issue, I find I am proud of the Steelworkers for taking a long overdue initiative — going international in a serious way. The USW is joining with a large union in the United Kingdom and Ireland to form a trans-Atlantic body representing more than 3

million workers and retirees.

We'll have to see how this plays out but I have hope that it shows evidence of a vibrant, creative labor movement, ahead of the curve and looking for interesting ways to tackle what seems like intractable problems of poverty, ignorance and misallocation of resources worldwide.

Si, se puede!

Mary Beth Acuff
Dublin, Calif.

Memorial Day massacre

Regarding the article on the 1937 Memorial Day massacre, one of the 10 men killed during the protest, Alfred Causey, was my uncle. It makes me very proud to know that he is being recognized for what he believed in and died for.

Martha Scott
Attalla, Ala.

America in jeopardy?

I retired 24 years ago with a small pension and health insurance, thanks to the bargaining ability of labor unions. I supplement that with Social Security, thanks to a great president, FDR. Now my income may be in jeopardy due to a "brain dead" Bush, and a "bought off" Congress.

What happened America?

Jack E. Carroll
Radcliff, Ky.

We've had enough

Enough of sending our troops off to war; alienating our allies, ravaging Social Security and Medicare, squandering America's riches on the wealthy, while treading on the rights of the struggling poor and middle class.

Let's hope that our next President will be a person of unquestionable integrity, morally sound, compassionately understanding and highly intelligent with the wisdom to lead our great nation onward in a quest for peace and goodwill toward all of humanity.

Bill Diller Sr.
Local 1196 retiree, Brackenridge, Pa.

Thank you

My husband loved his job and was loyal to the company and his union during his years of service at LTV Steel, Cleveland Works.

Thank you for all that you are doing to help retirees and surviving spouses ... I am very proud to be in touch with the USW and appreciate the financial and prescription assistance as well as the surviving spouse checks.

Novella Reece
Mountain City, Tenn.

Private equity problems

I agree 100 percent with the article in *USW@Work* regarding President Gerard urging Congress to regulate private equity pools of capital used for investments.

The article missed one important problem. The private equity and the venture capital crowd are treated like the top one percent fat cat taxpayers in this country and taxed at a much lower rate.

These people also play games by agreeing to waive fees and instead take a larger chunk of the profit to further dodge the tax man on their payday. Plus they are taxed only after an investment proves successful, often after many years.

Tom Sedor
Local 2599 retiree, Northampton, Pa.

Worker against worker

International President Leo W. Gerard calls on Congress to regulate private equity funds, but that may not be enough and may be too late.

A report by the International Trade Union Confederation advises its members in 153 countries to pull their pension investments out of hedge funds and private equity funds.

The immense debt bubbles these funds create are threatening a collapse of financial markets as credit conditions change for the worse. Pensions are directly in the path of disaster.

Geri A. Mellgren-Kerwin
Burbank, Calif.