

NEW SOLIDARITY INTERNATIONAL PRESS SERVICE



Labor Newsletter

USWA Paper Hits Victor Reuther

Aug. 21 (NSIPS) — The following is extracted from an article, "The Incredible Hypocrisy of Victor Reuther," which appeared as a feature editorial in this month's edition of Steel Labor, the Newspaper of the United Steel Workers of America (USWA). Reuther recently circulated a letter calling on other trade union leaders to support the "struggle" of Institute for Policy Studies operative Ed Sadlowski against USWA leadership.

Open season has been declared on the internal affairs of the USWA by a variety of people... The most well-known person mentioned is Victor Reuther, former employe of the United Auto Workers (UAW) whose major claim to fame is that he is the brother of Walter Reuther, late president of the UAW.

The June 23 edition of the Detroit News... reported that Victor Reuther "is making an unusual foray into the affairs of the United Steelworkers (USWA)."...

The Detroit newspaper and other publications refer to a letter that Victor Reuther released to the media over his own signature, in which he charged that the Steelworkers is run in "an autocratic manner" and that its policies will lead to "the destruction of democratic unionism." He and his associates sent thousands of copies of this letter out to the mailing lists of left-wing, liberal and academic groups — such as The Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) and a publication prepared by the Union for Radical Political Economics. The letter appealed for financial support for what the former UAW staffer describes as the "progressive" forces within the USWA.

Victor Reuther, who held a union job given to him by his brother until 1972, is considered... to have little if any influence inside the trade union movement. The media, however, gave substantial play to his attacks of the USWA....

The Syracuse Post Standard, for instance, welcomed Reuther's charges against the USWA in a June 17 editorial that equated the USWA with that of the Teamsters which is currently under investigation by government agencies.

One must wonder if the fine reputation of our officers and the outstanding record of our union has given Victor Reuther a guilt complex. ...He was quick to denounce other trade unionists as "CIA tools." However, in reviewing Reuther's recent book, "The Brothers Reuther," a columnist noted that "somewhat sheepishly Victor confirms that he himself was the dispenser of \$50,000 of CIA funds..."

Victor Reuther's antagonism toward Steelworkers and its current leadership, does not reflect the views of his deceased brother Walter... No public support for Mr. Victor Reuther's recent attacks on the Steelworkers or credence to any of his charges has been offered by any elected national leader of the UAW....

The backing for Victor Reuther's intervention in the Steelworkers comes from elsewhere, much of it from those outside the labor movement... Reuther candidly acknowledges that he faces great difficulty in raising any substantial funds

from the Steelworkers for what he calls his campaign to return the union to its membership.

Victor Reuther made not one public criticism of the Teamsters union during the entire period that it was joined with the Auto Workers in the ill-fated Alliance for Labor Action (ALA).

His claim that his sole concern is for "rank-and-file democracy" in the Steelworkers Union is painfully suspicious coming from one who was never elected to a union office. The pursuit of power rather than purity is believed to be Victor Reuther's motive. His self-proclaimed piety is a diversion from what many consider his real desire to continue an old feud with the AFL-CIO... Many see Victor Reuther's efforts being turned into a campaign to shape the labor movement as a political means to narrow ends as against those who seek to maintain it as an instrument for economic and social ends. He clearly reveals his objectives in his letter when he says: the Steelworkers hold the key to a "realignment of the AFL-CIO." Thus domination over the labor movement itself is at issue, they observe.

Looking at the sources of his support, Victor Reuther needs to be asked the basic question — "Transform the labor movement into what, by whom and for whom?"

IN NEXT WEEK'S NSIPS!

WHO
IS
JOE
RAUH?

AND
HOW HE'S
WRECKING
YOUR UNION

