

35 to 40 per cent. That is, although all unions have removed the color bar, in practice, only about 35 to 40 per cent have actually removed discrimination. One of the main purposes of TULC has been to remove the color bar from unions, so that each person, be he Negro or white, has the right to work and make a living."

A. One of the other things that TULC has been engaged in is political action. We feel that what you win across the bargaining table can be taken away from you at the ballot box. We feel that to handle a person's job in the shop all day, and to forget about it when he gets home, doesn't work. So we have ventured to weld together the total community, those of the working class of people, and tried to bring forth to them why each one of them should be registered and should vote in each election, and who they should vote for on the basis of the basic problems that are confronting the working class of people.

We've also worked on the minimum wage law, which we think is a basic thing not only in the city of Detroit but throughout the country, to try to raise it into a decent wage so that everyone who's working can buy back some of the products that he makes. The fellows making \$1.25 an hour can't buy back the things they'd need \$2.50 an hour for; so consequently you have a situation of unemployment. Another thing was the right to work laws. The TULC was very instrumental throughout the mid-western states in getting around and lobbying and campaigning among the working class of people, explaining to them exactly what was meant by "the right to work." It wasn't at all like it was painted up to be — it wasn't the right to work without having to belong to a union, but the right to work without representation and without being able to protect yourself. The right to work law was strictly in favor of big business — where you can pit worker against worker.

We were in contact with members of the City Council whom we had supported time and time again through the Negro community and through labor, but each time we had a problem or a bill of any kind or any decision to be made by the Council which would benefit the total community, Negro or white, or labor, we found that there were certain Council members taking orders from people other than the ones that put them in office. As a result, we figured why should we beat our brains out and spend our money electing these people when we can't call on them when we have basic issues and expect a fair decision from them? We went down the line looking at the candidates who had taken a fair position over the last two or three years and had worked with labor and with the total community on the basic things that were right. We came up with only three Councilmen. We then figured that we would displace five and add one. So we had to tie together the total community — the Jewish community, the Irish community, the Polish community, and the Negro community. We came up with five candidates who we figured would be in sympathy with the thinking of the people of the community.

The mayor had been an obstinate person — you go down to try to see him on any problem pertaining to the Negro community, the white community, or pertaining to labor, you found that he was one of these guys who never had the time and was never around. He'd give you these stock answers, or else he'd appoint people and then refer you to them. You could never get any basic answer from him whatso-

ever. So we felt that this wasn't the kind of mayor that we needed. We needed a full-time mayor who would speak to all the problems of the community.

Horace Sheffield commented on the reasons for the success of TULC in the political field and also on some of the problems created by the presence of race as a factor in elections.

Q. How do you account for the fact that TULC has been so successful here in Detroit?

A. Well, I think one of the reasons that TULC has been so successful is the fact that the trade union movement has itself been successful in political action, and you've had a tremendous amount of Negro involvement, as a result, in political action . . . Negro trade unions and TULC feel that the coalition between the labor movement, the Negro community, the Democratic party, liberal white forces, and other ethnic groups has really made for some progressive changes in this state. We support the coalition, but I think our greatest contribution has been in espousing the most progressive view — I mean trying to rid the coalition of the notion that you take the line of least resistance — in other words, that the prime standard for endorsing a candidate is 'can he win' rather than 'can he provide the most leadership for the community: what does he stand for?' Detroit is unique in that it has so many Negroes who have been involved in this kind of thing — who are precinct delegates, who are functionaries at all levels of parties, who are in a full-blown labor political apparatus such as the UAW's COPE (Committee on Political Education).

As for problems, in the last councilmanic election we had a Negro running for re-election. There were efforts on the part of groups in the community to say 'just vote for one,' but we gave leadership and we came up with a formula we called '5 plus 1' in which we argued, and happily were successful, that we had to get a majority of liberal councilmen, 5 out of 9 constituting a majority, and that for the community to vote for just one individual because he was Negro was wrong. Surprisingly, we got a large number of adherents to this view. We also had a fight last year in the Congressional district where I live, the 15th district, where John D. Dingell is the congressman and a Negro ran against him. Of course the district is probably about 48% Negro, but we at TULC had to meet that problem. We argued that if you say that a white man can't represent Negroes then you must also say that Negroes can't represent white people. We don't buy that theory. Now this is one of the largest conflicts we've had with forces in the Negro community but our position did prevail. Clearly Dingell had been a good congressman and is a good congressman. He'd championed every liberal view and in our judgement, and fortunately we were able to convince most of the leaders of the Negro community, he deserved re-election . . . As a principle, I think that Negroes shouldn't say that a Negro ought to hold office *because* he's a Negro or that only a Negro can represent Negroes.

Q. You haven't mentioned discrimination specifically in formulating the problems of employment and housing. Does TULC have a

position that solving the problem for the whole community will solve the discrimination problem? (Asked of Battle)

A. I feel that once you have solved the job problem, I figure that the discrimination problem will then disappear by at least 65 per cent. If you are unemployed and I am unemployed — if a white fellow is unemployed and a Negro is unemployed — one of the problems they share is the scarcity of jobs. If you're unemployed, you're just as mad as I, a Negro, am about being unemployed. So if in the civil rights field we holler for jobs for Negroes, if our whole fight is in the discrimination field, on the basis of being Negroes, the first thing it does is to make a bitter feeling between Negro and white. So that's the reason we talk about unemployment in the total community. We feel that unemployment is just as hard on whites as it is on Negroes, although a large number of Negroes are unemployed because of discrimination in hiring practices.

We are fighting to break down any barriers, any discrimination that bars Negroes from jobs. Once these barriers are broken down, Negroes will then have the right to any job. They have to be qualified for the job. We don't feel that it's right to keep Negroes out of certain classifications of work for the last 200 or 300 years because they're Negroes, nor do we feel it's right to walk in saying 'we've been shut out of these classifications — now you're going to lay off five whites and put on five Negroes.' We think that as long as employment is open to everyone, so that a Negro has just as much chance to qualify for a job as a white, this is the main thing we're fighting for.

TULC has recently been attempting to organize sister groups in other major metropolitan areas with marked success. Its unique approach to the over-all problems of American society make it a valuable experiment and an important model for the future development of the civil rights movement and for the wider struggle against poverty, injustice, and intolerance.

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