

## Gloria House — Stirring things up

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showpiece for the Black community. Etheridge assured Mrs. House he would tolerate her radical views, which were well known.

Mrs. House proceeded to shake up the morning editorial board meetings. She began discussions on Attica, the raid on the Republic of New Africa (RNA) headquarters, the Stress unit of the Police Department (notorious for brutalization in the Black community), the struggles in Northern Ireland and the Middle East.

"My position on all these issues," she says, "was consistently anti-imperialist, anti-racist, and for the most part were dismissed by Etheridge and his colleagues — all white — as 'emotionalism,' 'subjective,' 'radical' or 'unfounded.'"

Instead of facing her with charges, Etheridge built up a dossier against her.

In mid-September 1971, a march and rally were planned against the Stress police. It was a period of 14 murders committed by police, and the Black and white communities were fed up.

Thousands headed for downtown on September 23 to participate in the demonstration. Gloria House, active in the anti-Stress campaign, requested the afternoon off. Etheridge refused, telling her that if she took the time off for the rally she would be considered AWOL. She went any-

way, and was fired.

"Etheridge had alternative methods of discipline," Mrs. House says. "Many flagrant incidents of dereliction of duty by white members of the Free Press staff could be documented, and I came to work the morning of the demonstration, while thousands of Detroiters took the whole day off.

"Such are the insidious mechanisms of institutionalized racism, which all Black members of the Newspaper Guild have suffered in their relations with employers. This is the kind of harassment the Guild must fight to stop."

The executive board of the Detroit chapter of the Guild, however, tried to scuttle the case, voting last August not to take it to arbitration. A month later this decision was overruled by the membership, after members of the Daily World and UAW publications spoke in behalf of Mrs. House. This reporter had the honor of having been asked by Mrs. House to be her spokesman.

But the case is still not settled. The Guild's attorney, Bruce Miller, who is also Democratic Party County Chairman, has been holding back, insisting on watering down the presentation before an arbitrator. Mrs. House has had to hire her own lawyer.

Meanwhile, Gloria House is active at Wayne State University where she teach-



A demonstration outside the Detroit Free Press last October. William Allan is in the foreground.

es Black History. She has been aiding the students' fight against the takeover of the student paper, *South End*, by George Gulen, WSU president and former American

Motors labor relations director.

Regardless of what happens with the Free Press case, Detroit will hear more from Gloria House.

## Rose Schneiderman — Life of conviction

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into caps, and her wages went up to \$7 a week.

Young Socialists were union leaders and they led the successful fight for better working conditions — distressing the bosses and leading to a concerted effort to destroy the trade unions and to establish the open shop. But the socialist trade unionists led the fightback to save the unions.

The WTUL was founded in 1903 in Boston. Samuel Gompers, then head of the AFL, supported the League, which was invited to organize unions in many industries. At a convention of the Capmakers Union, Rose Schneiderman, then 22 years old, was elected to the General Executive Board — the first woman in trade union history to be so honored.

In November 1909, Local 25 of the Shirtmakers' Union met at Cooper Union in New York and the overflow crowd of unionists voted unanimously to support a general strike against working conditions in the factories. Twenty thousand women left their shops.

The WTUL offered its headquarters, organized volunteer pickets, arranged bail for arrested strikers. Rose and other League members accompanied strikers

on trips to raise funds to support the strike.

The strike ended many months later, but not all the shops were unionized. One that remained open was the Triangle Shirtwaist Co. During the strike it recruited immigrants as strikebreakers, and the union concentrated on trying to organize the employees there.

On Saturday afternoon, March 25, 1911, at about 5 p.m., when workers from union shops had left their jobs for the day, a frightful fire broke out at the Triangle factory. Trapped behind doors locked to keep out union organizers, 143 young girls and women perished.

As a result of a mass meeting at the Metropolitan Opera House, a state factory investigation commission was established, with Robert Wagner as chairman, and with Alfred E. Smith, Samuel Gompers, and Mary Dreier of the League as members.

In 1912, Rose took a leave of absence from WTUL to work for women's suffrage.

In 1915 she became an organizer of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, touring various industrial cities to organize women.

In 1917, she became chairman of the



1908 — Rose Schneiderman making linings in a cap factory.

members attended the Third International Congress of Trade Union Women, in Vienna. And in 1926, she was elected national president of the WTUL, a post she held until 1947. While WTUL president, she was concerned about the Equal Rights Amendment sponsored by O.H.R. Belmont and the Women's Party. The WTUL foresaw the potential dangers of the ERA, that it could scuttle the protective laws they fought so hard for.

Rose, who was instrumental in acquainting the Roosevelts with the importance to workers of trade unions, was appointed to the U.S. Labor Advisory Board and she also served in N.Y. State's Labor Department, on the Compensation Appeals Board and the Industrial Board.

Rose Schneiderman, as I knew her, was sincere, dedicated, and compassionate. She loved people and pioneered in the great struggle to build the labor movement in our country. She felt that all the billions spent on bombs and atomic submarines during the cold war could have been spent on education and medical care for the people. She was firmly opposed to war.

Her influence was tremendous on me, and on countless other women, imbuing in us the importance of the struggle for the rights of women.

Rose died in August 1972, at 88 years, after a life of great achievement.

industrial section of the Women's Suffrage Party of New York City.

In 1919, the WTUL invited trade union women from all over the world to meet in Washington before the International Labor Conference scheduled for October. In addition to unionists from the United States, delegates came from Latin American countries and from 12 other countries, including China. The conference established a permanent organization called the International Congress of Working women, with headquarters in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Margaret Dreier Robins, national president of the WTUL, was elected president.

All these years, Rose Schneiderman continued to be a leader in the WTUL. She was instrumental in establishing training schools for working women. One, in Chicago, granted six-month scholarships to young women, and another, at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, was an eight-week course. I was fortunate enough to have been chosen to attend both of these schools, and my training there — field work and academic study — meant a great deal in my future activities.

In 1923, Rose and a group of League

Clara Bodian Masso has been a trade union activist for many years, and is active in the National Council of Jewish Women and the National Council of Negro Women. She was a charter member of the Communist Party and is currently on the party's Women's Commission.

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1911 — Speaking at a women's suffrage meeting in Wall St. Rose Schneiderman is in the center, leaning forward.

The photos of Rose Schneiderman are from her autobiography, "All For One," published by Paul S. Eriksson, Inc.

## Grace Mora — 'Unity is the key'

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lish. Why the hell didn't he speak English? After all, as my teachers repeatedly reminded me, **this was America**, and here we spoke English. We were supposed to give up our language, our culture, and embrace theirs.

El Barrio was a social center for the youth and families that lived there. There were dances every Friday, Saturday and Sunday in at least three or four ballrooms right in the community. Then the craze began for Latin music and all the big spots downtown began featuring the big Latin bands. Well, we wanted to go. It was our music, wasn't it? But no matter how sharp I dressed and how sharp I looked, once I left El Barrio I felt ugly, inferior. On the subways, in a restaurant, at a dance or in a nightclub, I felt that everyone was looking at me, calling me a "spic" and thinking that we should all stay where we "belonged," in the ghetto, or go back where "we came from."

Gradually, I began to feel angry inside at every white person I saw. So to cover my hang-ups, my hurt, I became arrogant and bitchy. . . I'd show them! ! I'd curse loud to shock those bastards and show them I was tough and I didn't care and didn't need them. (But, man, did I care!)

I don't know when I began to develop an understanding of why I felt this way and that we were the victims of deliberate, racist tactics used to undermine us, to put us down until we put ourselves down and lost the incentive to learn, to struggle for what was rightfully ours and against the injustices we were subjected to. I can thank my uncle for giving me direction, for patiently explaining how racism is an effective tool of capitalism used to divide and exploit the people, the working people. He is a Communist and therefore able to analyze correctly and scientifically the ways and means used by the capitalist, racist ruling class to oppress us.

I began to appreciate my workingclass

parents, the soul of the Black and Puerto Ricans who were oppressed. I understood the anger that arose from the frustrations of our daily lives on the job, in the schools (we had no high school in Harlem and had to go downtown into white schools where the kids dressed nice. Many of us didn't have the carfare or lunch money to go, so many dropped out) and in society.

I began to realize that these racists, the owners and operators of big business and corporations, who profit from racism in their white ivory towers, with their power to maneuver our lives, were non-entities.

On the job they do their damndest to pit Black against Puerto Rican. The Puerto Rican is told that he is a better, more conscientious worker than the Black, and if he accepts lower wages he'll have a steady job. The Black is told that the Puerto Ricans come from the island to steal their jobs and to take less pay. The whites are told the same about the Blacks and Puerto Ricans.

Unity must be the key against the boss. It is in the interest of all Black, brown and white, to work together for equal wages. Together we can become strong and our struggles will be successful. On the job we organize, in the community we organize and socialize.

Today, I am free of inhibitions and undue criticism of myself because I'm a Puerto Rican. Today I am proud because through struggle I've maintained my dignity, and because I am a Communist I am learning to deal with my oppressors. That is my tool and they don't have the power to destroy that.

**Grace Mora was the national chairman of the Fort Hood Three defense committee (one of the three is her brother, Dennis Mora), was on the national steering committee of Dr. King's Poor People's Campaign, was a candidate for Congress in 1968, and was one of the first American women to visit Hanoi (1967). She is the mother of four and works at the Harlem Institute for Marxist Studies.**



Grace Mora addressing a Hiroshima Day rally in New York in 1966. At the time, her brother, Dennis, was one of the Fort Hood Three, the first GIs who refused to go to Vietnam. The father and sister of James J. Johnson, another of the Three, stand behind her.

## Rosa Parks — 'To make the world better'

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but if all "white" seats were occupied, white standees could demand that a Black passenger give up his seat in the rear.

And that's not all. No Black passenger could walk through the white section. He had to pay his fare at the front of the bus, then get off and walk around to reenter at the rear door. If he was slow, the bus would leave without him. Rev. Walker explained that these specific restrictions were not practiced in every southern community: bus segregation was enforced by custom and/or law. In Montgomery, strong legal sanctions fortified custom.

Montgomery buses were owned by the city, not privately, a circumstance which particularly enraged members of the White Citizens' Councils. The "Walk — Don't Ride" movement was construed as anti-government action.

Resistance to indignities on the buses and to racism in all areas was not new for Mrs. Parks, or for Montgomery, although it had previously attracted less attention. As long as she could remember, she has been trying "to make the world better," Mrs. Parks said. Besides belonging to the NAACP she was active in the Women's Political Council, in the Civic League, and in social organizations of St. Matthew A.M.E. Church, where she is now a deaconess.

Within 48 hours of Mrs. Parks' arrest, a coalition of all these organizations was formed — the Montgomery Improvement Association. It immediately mimeographed and circulated leaflets in the city's Black sections and the boycott was on. Time, in its January 16, 1956, issue, reported that it was 95% effective, former passengers either walking to work or forming car pools. As Dr. King put it, "They traded tired hearts for tired feet."

Bus income fell, and the City Commission was forced to increase fares from 10 to 15 cents with formerly free transfers costing 5 cents.

Frequent church rallies, nationwide publicity, the commitment of the boycotters and the skill of their leaders brought victory. Prominent among the leaders were Dr. King, then an unknown young

minister, Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, who later led the Poor Peoples' March, and E.D. Nixon, the Pullman porter trade unionist who gave bond for Mrs. Parks.

Neither mass arrests of the boycotters nor the bombing of King's home on Jackson Street, in the heart of the Black community, could halt this first large-scale, non-violent action against racism in the land. The boycott ended in 1956 with a federal court injunction prohibiting segregation on buses.

This victory sparked ever wider non-violent manifestations, from local to regional and then national in scope, from defiance of bus segregation to insistence upon the right to swim in public pools, to eat in all restaurants, to attend all schools, to hold all jobs. The movement spread from Montgomery to Albany, Ga., to Birmingham, Selma and Washington (the Poor Peoples' March) and will end only when racism itself is no more.

Mrs. Parks is still an activist for civil rights. She picketed the Holiday Inn in Dearborn in 1971. She greeted Angela Davis at a rally of the Committee to Free Angela Davis and All Political Prisoners in Detroit. In 1972, in Dallas, she was presented with the annual award established in her name, for fighters for civil rights.

Born in Tuskegee, Ala., Mrs. Parks now lives with her husband in Detroit. Since 1965, she has been a receptionist in the home office of Congressman John Conyers, Jr., the Black leader re-elected last November to a fifth consecutive term to the House. She enjoys this work which, she says, offers her great opportunity to know what is going on in Detroit. "She finds time to use this knowledge in local activities in addition to the public actions she mentioned, especially in a newly formed Council of Concerned Women."

Mrs. Parks is especially pleased that she is asked to speak to young people at assemblies in public schools and elsewhere. She tells them that it would be a better world, "if those in power would think we were all human and would use their power wisely." She hopes to convince the youth to grant power only to wise leaders.

RIGHT ON, Rosa Parks!



# Women's struggles in the coalfields

By Nancy Klein

"It's been a long hard fight for our men and our families," says Ellen Watovich, a miner's wife from Marianna, a little coal town built on the side of a hill near Washington, Pa. "Our men have been disabled and killed in these mines. It's been heartbreak for the widows and orphans. We've fought the operators, the Bureau of Mines, and now we've dumped Tony Boyle. Don't let no one forget us — it's the women that fought alongside the men!"

Women in the coalfields have a long fighting history. Mother Jones, the miners' most famous woman organizer, led struggles from Cripple Creek, Colo., to Cabin Creek, W. Va. Fannie Sellins, one of the few official UMW woman organizers, was murdered by coal operators' gunthugs during the 1919 coal strike at Brackenridge, Pa. Nineteen-year-old "Flaming Milka" Sablich led the 1928 Colorado miners' strike. Aunt Molly Jackson was one of the many miners' wives who led the National Miners Union strike in 1932 in "Bloody Harlan" Kentucky. Aunt Molly wrote labor's famous song, "Which Side Are You On?"

"We're still fighting today," Ellen Watovich answers. "Look around these towns and ask the women. For the past ten years, we've helped our men fight for better mine health and safety, for benefits for disabled miners and widows, and for union democracy. We fought for better schools, better hospitals, and for more jobs. We fought against most everybody — the bosses, Tony Boyle, Nixon, the Social Security, and the politicians!"

On November 20, 1968, 78 miners were killed in a gas and dust explosion at Consolidation's No. 9 Mine near Farmington, W. Va. Soon afterward, the Farmington widows formed the Widows' Mine Disaster Committee.

"We went right up to their office in Pittsburgh and accused Consolidation Coal Company of murder," explained Sara Kaznoski, one of the leaders of the Farmington Widows. "They've got the worst safety record in the nation." (Since the explosion at Farmington, unsafe conditions at Consol's Blacksville No. 1 Mine, just 20 miles north, killed nine miners. Last December five miners died at their Itmann No. 3 Mine in southern West Virginia.)

"We never stopped fighting for our miners," Mrs. Kaznoski continued. "We supported and campaigned for Jock Yablonski in 1969. Some of us got up on the platform and spoke up for him — because he was for safer mines. Then, in December 1969, six of us flew to Washington, D.C. We picketed the White House. We promised to shut down the coal mines across the country if Nixon didn't sign that Federal Mine Health and Safety bill. He signed it, all right. Nixon remembered our Black Lung strike in February and March, when 45,000 miners walked out for three weeks and won us our law in West Virginia!"

"Some of us women got out on the picket lines that time," remembers Louellen Holeb of Kingwood, W. Va. "We shut down two of the mines around here. We just held up our signs, 'Black Lung Kills Our Husbands' and the miners turned their cars right around and went home. Some of us even went to Charleston on the bus; 2,000 of us got those politicians at the state capitol to vote for the Black Lung bill!"

When Arnold Miller (now President of the United Mine Workers) and other rank-and-file members organized the Black Lung Association that year, the miners' wives and widows helped build local chapters. Sara Kaznoski, at a meeting of over 200 miners in Monongah, W. Va., was elected vice-president of the new Marion County Black Lung Association. Granny Hager, who has long been a fighter for miners' rights in east Kentucky and whose husband died of Black Lung in 1962, was recently elected president of the BLA of Perry County, Ky.



"The Women's Auxiliary" painted for the Pennsylvania Coal strikers in 1928 by Lydia Gibson.

In the spring of 1970, disabled miners and widows who had participated in the Black Lung Strike organized the Disabled Miners and Widows Organization of Southern West Virginia. Robert Payne, a Black disabled miner, became the president of the 4,000-member organization, about half of whom are women. They were angry that during the past year, since the Farmington disaster, over 300 miners were killed and another 6,000 miners were injured in the mines.

"My husband Jack lost both his legs in the Winding Gulf Mine, just two months after we got married," says Della Mae Smith of Rhodell, W. Va. "We got angry when Tony Boyle and the UMW Welfare and Retirement Fund refused to give pensions to disabled miners and widows. Jack draws \$130 a month disability from the State and we get food stamps. The UMW won't give a disabled miner a pension until he reaches 55 years old — and then only if he's got 20 years in the mines!"

"Tony Boyle was a trustee on the UMW Welfare and Retirement Fund. When he ignored our demand for pensions, we called a strike. On June 21, 1970, our roving pickets pulled out a dozen mines on the hoot-owl shift. Inside of a week, 20,000 miners here and in western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio were out."

"Boyle sent in his goon squads and the operators got court injunctions and put four of our leaders in jail. But we've won almost all our demands." The Disabled Miners and Widows Organization filed a court suit and forced Boyle off the UMW Welfare and Retirement Fund, and ordered him to repay to the Fund the millions of dollars he misused. Willie Ray Blankenship's court case has won many

miners their back pensions. Now Arnold Miller, whose platform included pensions for disabled miners and widows, is UMW president.

Miners' wives and widows, like Ellen Watovich, Sara Kaznoski, Louellen Holeb, Granny Hager, and Della Mae Smith, all supported and campaigned for Jock Yablonski in 1969 and Arnold Miller in 1972. President Miller's recent election victory is a victory for the women, as well as for rank-and-file miners. But for most women in the coalfields, the struggle goes on.

Granny Hager began fighting the coal operators back in the early 1960s when they tried to break the UMW in east Kentucky. She joined the Roving Picket Movement, which involved many miners' wives and widows. When the operators succeeded in breaking the union there and thousands of men were out of work, she helped organize the Appalachian Committee for Full Employment. Jobs, the lack of them, is still Appalachia's worst

20 hours a week, her weekly take-home pay was \$15!

"Jobs is what we can't get," says Shirley Dalton, president of the Monongalia County Welfare Rights Organization. "My husband, Darris, can get just a temporary job hauling limestone, so me and my seven children are on and off welfare." A few years ago, Shirley joined women like Joan White, a Black welfare mother from Fairmont, W. Va., to build a strong Welfare Rights Organization. The WRO has fought for day-to-day needs like food stamps, medical care, old age care, and decent schools. During the 1971 miners' contract strike, she fought for the miner's right to collect food stamps. Shirley Dalton also supported the fight for Angela Davis's freedom, spoke at two anti-war rallies at West Virginia University last spring, and attended the Democratic Convention in Miami last summer in the hopes of dumping Nixon.

The future for young women in the coalfields is bleak. One year after the disaster at Buffalo Creek, two young women there have no hope of a bright future. "After I graduate in June," says Patty Jones, "I'm going up to Wisconsin or Chicago. I want to be a secretary. If I stay here, all I can do is get married and raise kids for the rest of my life. I really love Logan County, but most of the guys in our school can't even get jobs when they graduate. A young woman like me has even less chance to find work."

The job situation is even worse for Black women in Appalachia. Dossie Martin, from Coxton, Ky., is one of the lucky ones. She's got a job as a nurse in Harlan Hospital. But most Black miners' wives, like Norma Carter of Gary, W. Va., have factory jobs. Norma works in a small purse factory where she does piecework, gets paid below minimum wage, and gets hassled by the boss daily. There's a union, that's true; but it's not a good one and never fights for the women workers. Many Black women, like Nancy Cole of Westland, Pa., work as household maids.

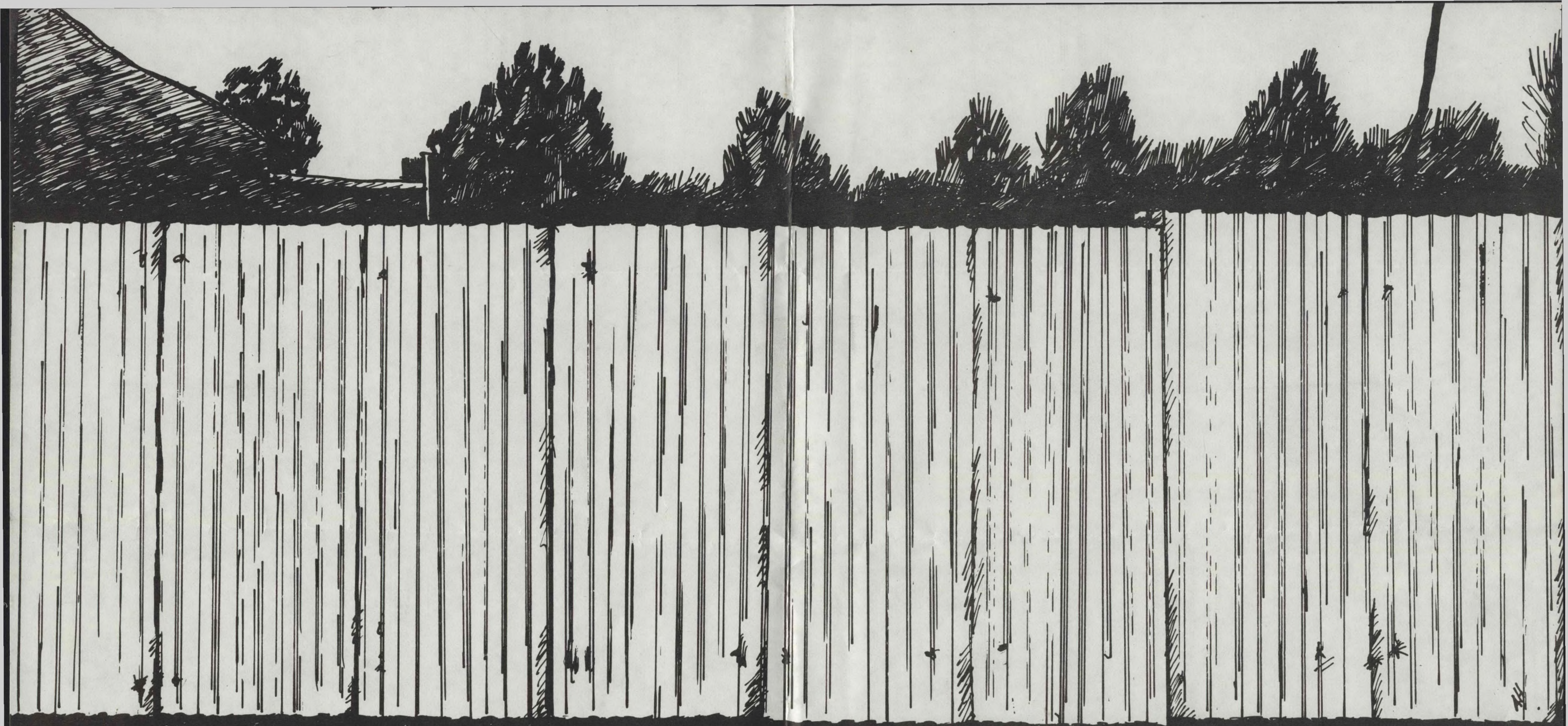
Women in the coalfields are either unemployed or work at low-paid, non-union jobs. While their husbands, fathers and sons are coal miners, work in a major industry, and have a union to protect them, the women are left out in the cold. Now that Arnold Miller and the rank-and-file movement have taken over the UMW, that union may be able to help the wives and widows who played such an important role in their victory.

The UMW is the largest union in Appalachia. As in the '30s, it can now begin to fight for all the workers and poor people here, not only the miners. It can support other workers, like hospital workers and sanitation workers, in their fight to organize. The UMW can fight for welfare recipients — thousands of miners were laid off during the 1950s because of mechanization of the mines and today are living on welfare. The coal miners' union can demand a better life for every woman and child, so they can live in dignity and find schooling and employment in the coalfields.

problem. Granny herself understands what that means. Until only recently, she worked in a laundry in Hazard, Ky., for \$1.15 an hour. And since she worked only

Sara Kaznoski (3rd from left) and other members of the Widows' Mine Disaster Committee discuss mine safety legislation with West Virginia's Rep. Hechler. "We never stopped fighting for our miners" Mrs. Kaznoski said, "Six of us flew to Washington, D.C. We picketed the White House. We promised to shut down the coal mines across the country if Nixon didn't sign that Federal Mine Health and Safety Bill. He signed it."





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NINA O'CONNELL - pen&ink&gouache/satirical  
CHRISTINE JOHNSON - design proposals for Islington Royal  
JASMINE CANN - Agricultural Hall  
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