

PENNSYLVANIA DELEGATION STUDIES VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

IN EGYPT AND ISRAEL

By Ben and Evelyn Stahl

(Ben Stahl is Regional Director of AFL-CIO's Human Resources Development Institute and a member of the Pennsylvania Advisory Council on Vocational Education. Evelyn Stahl is a free-lance writer.)

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Among the more modest results flowing from the Camp David accord that led to the Egyptian-Israeli peace pact, was the decision of the Pennsylvania Advisory Council on Vocational Education to include both nations in its tour.

The council is mandated federally and appointed by the Governor. It reviews and advises on vocational programs in our high schools and colleges.

Meeting in Harrisburg when news of the agreement came through, by coincidence the council had on its agenda discussion of a visit, already being planned, to study Israel's vocational education patterns and institutions. That evening, as hopeful

television viewers everywhere watched Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin embrace fraternally under the aegis of a beaming President Jimmy Carter, inspiration swiftly amended our plans to include Egypt.

Ours would be a Peace Tour, and properly so, for vocational education can provide a needed tool in developing a permanent basis for peace in the Middle East with the U.S. playing a constructive role.

Actually, the two of us had witnessed a similar scene, live, as far back as December of 1977. The AFL-CIO's national convention in Los Angeles had brought together on the platform the heads of the Israeli and Egyptian labor movements, and as the two embraced and greeted the assembled delegates, the ovation they received resounded mightily.

That was one of the first gestures toward peace between the two nations and organized labor in America was proud to play a part.

Now, on the heels of Camp David, six members, coming from among the educational, labor and business communities, were designated to represent the Advisory Council. They were joined by another eight interested and involved persons and on March 5th the group set off for Egypt, with Israel to follow. We were among them.

We expected to encounter problems and needs similar to those at home, and some varying in nature or degree. Israel, we knew, had welcomed peoples from 60 different countries and backgrounds, speaking a variety of languages, and was giving them skills and hope through vocational training.

About Egypt we knew less, but were prepared to find widespread poverty and had heard the country was today stressing skills training designed to improve living standards.

Our tour's Israeli portion had been planned early and in detail. With Egypt added, arrangements were speedily made through AFL-CIO's international department for the labor attache of the American Embassy in Cairo to brief us and provide Egyptian Federation of Labor and other pertinent contacts.

However, again the peace pact wheels, for a time nired down, were turning. Change was imminent. A mild excitement filtered through tourist class, enlivening the sleepless hours as we flew toward Amsterdam on the initial stretch: Walter Cronkite--or his clone--had been sighted up in first class.

Of course. If Cronkite comes can Carter be far behind? And how could we compete for the attention of the hard-pressed American Embassy staff? It was true; we couldn't.

We found the late evening streets of Cairo agog with vigorous preparations.

Men scaled ladders to apply the lacy Arabic script wherever arches straddled the roadway, bidding the American peace-maker welcome. Giant likenesses of Sadat in full military dress were being raised all along the center strip, interspersed occasionally with one of Carter.

Brushes that dripped white paint got slapped at buildings; blossoming clumps got plunged into soil. Night got turned into day to meet the deadline, with much to be done in the 36 hours that followed.

Crammed into Cairo, Africa's largest city, live nine million of Egypt's 40 million inhabitants. The city teems with people. Public buses bulge with riders determined to hang on. Thoroughfares are clogged with taxis, tourist buses, loaded donkey carts and motorcycles; and in the bazaars of Khan el-Khalili's narrow winding streets one day we got wedged in a corner by a straggling herd of mangy goats.

On the streets we saw, along with the dominant Western dress, men wearing the long, loose cotton galabia and a skull cap or turban. The occasional woman wrapped in a black shawl might balance a burden on her shoulder or head in the ancient way, but she never wears a veil. Here women gave up the veil long ago. Of Cairo University's 80,000 students almost half are women; yet in the rural areas men still have it pretty much their way.

Domes and minarets of the ever-present mosques provide a pleasing vista: Egypt is 90 per cent Moslem, 10 per cent Christian -- all but a sprinkling of Jews having fled Nasser a couple of decades back. Through the heart of the city flows the Nile, and from some quarters one sees the pyramids of Giza rising in the background -- the first time made us gasp! Downtown Cairo is modern, with broad boulevards, skyscrapers, and its share of swank hotels where one hears much English spoken and women get their bags searched at the door.

Our own small, shabby hotel we judged rather overly modest that first night as the plumbing problems cropped up. The next day we knew ourselves fortunate not to have been booked into the Hilton, for all its occupants got evicted to make way for President Carter's party.

The same thing was to happen shortly at the Jerusalem Hilton when Carter followed us to Israel. There is something to be said for not traveling first class.

"Call me Ellie," instructed our knowledgeable and charming Egyptian guide, Ilham Yassin. The Advisory Council's director, Dr. Sydney Jaffe, she breezily dubbed "Jeff."

As we rode between the pyramids of Giza and those of ancient Memphis and its burial place Sakkara (location of the step pyramid which at age 4800 years is the oldest stone edifice in the world) the statistics we had read about Egypt came alive.

Ninety-six percent of its land is desert, and in the four percent that is habitable -- the narrow, fertile valley of the Nile and its delta -- live 96 per cent of Egypt's people.

Across the irrigation canal from the ribbon of road our bus traveled appeared an occasional tiny village of mud-brick huts set amid palms. For the rest, it was sand.

Outside a hut a woman was washing clothes in the canal that probably harbored snails known to spread the debilitating, life-shortening tropical disease bilharzia, which afflicts 60 per cent of the country's peasants, the fellahin. At her feet a small child splashed contentedly. Beyond a clump of reeds a donkey and emaciated cow were drinking their fill.

"Is this really the Sahara?" we interrogated Ellie.

"Sahara just means desert in Arabic," she smiled. "Yes, indeed it is." All tourists must ask the same questions.

To improve our image, we remarked casually to Ellie that our University of Pennsylvania has a long history of important archeological work in Egypt, with five excavations now in progress.

"Egypt," goes the cynical bon mot, "is plunging headlong into the 20th century --B.C.!"

Many fellahin still use crude wooden plows to till their small plots and the sickle to reap their limited harvest. But change is in the wind. Four thousand village cooperatives now help farmers market their crops.

And along with the news of President Carter's arrival, on March 9th the English language Egyptian Gazette carried a story on the country's rural development plan.

Scheduled to cover 123 villages this year, raising the total of developed villages to 761, the project is expected among its other functions to provide the villages with a number of vocational training centers where youths "will be trained in skills suitable for development of the rural environment."

Driving back to our hotel one day we passed what was evidently a trade school. A sign in English indicated they taught shoe repair on Italian machines. Ah, we thought, Gucci has arrived in Egypt.

Egypt has big economic plans for its growing industries, not alone the textile mills that process its major crop, cotton. Most prominent on the horizon perhaps is oil.

At the other end of the spectrum--and we hope this folk art never gets automated out of existence--is the world famous weaving school for orphans at Harrania, outside Cairo. Here, for more than 25 years, village children have been taught the weaving skill and left to create their own designs. These emerge inventive and fresh, the colors vibrant. We watched some youngsters at the loom and were told a large rug can take two years to complete.

Still another kind of vocational school we learned about was the Armed Forces Technical Institute, established by the army a decade ago, whose 2000 cadets were said to "represent the cream of Egypt's young manpower."

Considering that in the wake of the peace treaty the country's militant national anthem has just been changed to a paean of peace, we believe the current cream of their youth will now be trained in more constructive vocations.

The descendants of the pyramid builders should take readily to instruction in the building trades.

"There's Air Force One!" People were nudging each other excitedly as we crossed the air field to board our Olympic Airways plane. Carter would be following us to Israel the next day.

But not exactly following. Presumably, Air Force One would fly directly to Ben Gurion airport--whereas we must take a lengthy detour and kill three hours in Athens, there to change planes. An incidental advantage of the peace to the traveler will be Egypt's new readiness to land her planes in Israel.

Evidently she earlier would not admit the existence of such a spot on the map. We got some notion of this when we flipped through Olympic's magazine for a map on which to trace our route. The one we found showed Egypt and Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and all the rest. But nowhere an Israel.

On the next lap -- Athens to Tel Aviv -- we speedily located a copy of Olympic's magazine at our seat and turned to the map. There was Israel, right where it ought to be, a little east of Egypt.

As we left the plane, we noted our disapproval/on the conveniently supplied rating card and left it with the steward.

"Call me Danny," suggested our Israeli guide, a sun bronzed crinkle-eyed hero straight out of Exodus. "One of the ancient tribes of Israel were the Dans." Our Dr. Jaffe was now transformed into "Yafo."

The major arrangements for our study of vocational education in Israel were made by ORT, the Organization for Rehabilitation through Training. Active throughout the world, it provides 25 per cent of Israel's skill training in its 90 secondary and post-secondary schools run in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. This year ORT celebrates its hundredth anniversary.

Sixty per cent of Israel's high school students -- double the U.S. figure -- study vocational education.

Which is not to say they by-pass academic studies, for all receive instruction in Hebrew language and literature, English, bible and history, plus one elective. Their school day generally runs from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., six days a week.

The emphasis is on quality training and equipment, and each of the facilities we toured, in various parts of the country, was spacious, bright and modern.

To study technical skills is prestigious in Israel, and a high proportion of such students go on to colleges and universities.

Over coffee and a beautifully decorated, delicately textured layer cake provided by its restaurant school, the director of the David Lvovitch Center in Netanya told us that when the center opened, no Jewish mother was about to send her son to a vocational school.

Today it has 1600 secondary and 200 technical junior college students, and the other high schools in the area get basically only girls.

The center does make a constant effort to attract females into non-traditional skill courses and is making headway. The director proudly mentioned the "tiny girl" who was their star electronics pupil.

In some schools, however, we found virtually no women and little attempt to recruit them. Israeli women, we were told, still gravitate to the traditionally female jobs; to an extent this is also true on the kibbutz, the collective farm.

At the Lvovitch Center we also encountered outstanding women on the staff--like the two outstandingly beautiful young Russian women engineers who were teaching electronics.

We found many recently arrived Russian Jews, incidentally, in the absorption center we visited. These centers the government provides to assist new arrivals in their adjustment to Israeli life, with special emphasis on the intensive teaching of Hebrew.

Vocational schools specialize in varying skills. At Lvovitch it's agriculture, hotel and restaurant, merchant marine and electronics. Here there is a deliberate mix of local students with especially able youth from low socio-economic level coming from 120 communities around the country, who live on campus. We noticed many Arab students at Lvovitch.

The Helen Keller high school provides a special educational framework for deaf students, basically offering mechanics for the boys and fashion for the girls. Singalowski has departments in electronics, general and electrical mechanics, drawing and design and data processing.

The ultra-modern ORT School of Engineering, connected with Hebrew University in Jerusalem and situated on its campus, graduates highly skilled technicians. Here we passed a David Dubinsky room and left a few souvenir sewing kits of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, of which Dubinsky was for many years president.

Vocational schools and the armed services, we learned, systematically coordinate their training. The army strives to utilize and further the training received by inductees at school. The schools do likewise for students entering or returning after army service.

In general all males serve in the army from ages 18 to 21, females from 18 to 20. However, this service is sometimes deferred until students complete their vocational education.

Some of the technical schools we toured maintain apprenticeship centers. Others conduct work-study programs, in which they encounter no placement difficulty because Israel enjoys full employment.

We made a special effort to talk informally with students, who seemed happy to try their English on us. We asked about the current peace negotiations, and about Israeli politics.

There was a general reaction that politics could wait; that most urgent now was the achievement of peace, with an end to the constant fear of attack and need for defense. There was uncertainty on the Palestinian question and the West Bank, but a hope that after peace with Egypt, peace would follow with their other Arab neighbors. From a student we learned of the Israeli radio station, "Voice of Peace," which broadcasts in English.

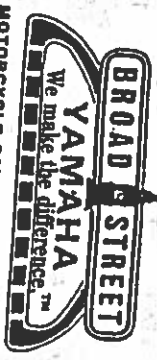
In a week's span our tour of vocational institutions carried us breathless, sometimes sleepless, across the face of Israel in Danny's bus. Between times we could do little more than savor the flavor of this multi-faceted land: remnants of ancient Greek, Roman and Crusader times; storied biblical sites, old testament and new. Even a sampling of kibbutzia, for which we were eager.

At Kfar Giladi, in the forested hills of Israel's northernmost "finger," the kibbutz at which we spent the night lies three miles from the Lebanese border. That morning a loud "boom!" was vaguely attributed by Danny to possible blasting in the nearby quarry. The next day's Jerusalem Post, however, told us a neighboring kibbutz slightly to the west had been fired upon at precisely that hour from over the Lebanese border.

Little more than a week later, fate--or coincidence--brought the two of us to Washington. Straining to see across Pennsylvania Avenue to where the peace accord was being signed on the White House lawn, we had come full circle: Cairo, Jerusalem, Washington. We thought of the eager arrangements we had seen in Egypt, the youths we had talked to in Israel and the shelling heard from Kfar Giladi, and we fervently hoped this momentous signing would bring the beginnings of peace.

#

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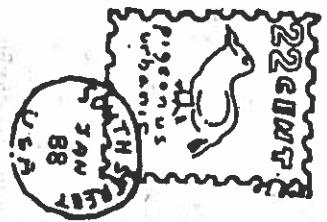
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To the Editor:

In regards to *So This Is France?* by Jan Van Stavern (March 10) on the previous week's Philadelphia Orchestra program, the audience and I, contrary to her opinion of Cesar Frank's *Symphony in D*, enjoyed it immensely. I walked away with the tune of the first movement going around in my mind. The audience gave a tremendous ovation. This symphony was chosen, I'm sure, because its sounds are much like a number of organs playing. For one who is so elated with the Foulenc organ concerto and the fact

that we get to hear so little organ music at all, it is surprising that Van Stavern gave such short shrift to what was the best piece on the program! One has to know the composer was an organist when hearing the *Symphony in D*. It comes through—no mistaking that.

Joe Miller
 Center City *

To the Editor:

The responsible media of the nation—press, radio and television—have accepted the policy of no longer reporting the race or ethnic background of suspected criminals unless there is a definite special reason such as the police recently calling on the public for catching the "Center City Stalker." Your March 3 column *Street Talk* defends an earlier story's mention of the race of attacker and victim in a reported rape assault, and replies to our

State Rep. Babette Joseph's criticism of your coverage of that story.
 Rape is a most serious crime and should be strongly condemned no matter who the attacker or victims are. But attempting incorrectly to stereotype rapists, or any other type of criminals, adds unnecessarily to the tensions of our city.
 Babette Joseph's courageous and should indeed be commended for challenging the approach of your paper on this issue.

Ben Stahl
 Center City *

All letters to the Editor must include a name, address and daytime telephone number. You will be called for verification. The *South Street Star* reserves the right to edit letters for publication.

RECYCLE

Continued from page 1

Collections are from 9 to 10 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturday of each month. Four different types of recyclable materials are accepted—newspapers, glass, aluminum cans and cardboard.

"Recycling is very important in dealing with this waste management issue and these [recyclers] are doing something positive. The ones participating are part of the solution."



PHO

AFTER CETA - WHAT?

By Ben Stahl

Congress is reacting in this pre-election period to the sharp rise in unemployment and is debating the various bills authorizing a successor to CETA, now scheduled to end September 30th.

Our nation's jobless rate rose in April, by official government figures, to 9.4% the highest since the Depression of the 1930's with a count of 10.3 million unemployed besides approximately 2 million "discouraged" workers who had stopped looking for work. (Part-time workers are officially considered employed). In the past year 2.4 million workers lost their jobs, with unemployment up from 7.3% in April 1981. The breakdown shows adult men as 8.2% unemployed, black workers 18.4% and minority youth over 48%. Members of Congress cannot ignore these figures. They felt the grassroots reaction to recent economic trends during their Easter vacation at home and will be returning home again soon to campaign for reelection.

Four major bills calling for some type of Reauthorization of CETA, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, have been introduced into Congress. Joint Senate-House hearings were held on these four approaches and sub-committees have been "marking up the bills", attempting to reach compromise agreements, but major basic differences still remain. The only certain item of agreement is that the legislation will have a new name and neither "CETA" nor any other four-letter acronym will be adopted, but some new name such as "Training for Jobs" Act will emerge.

In the U.S. Senate, the Hatch Bill reflects the Administration's viewpoint while the Quayle-Kennedy Bill, introduced by Don Quayle of Indiana and Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts presents a bi-partisan compromise effort to press for fast action. Representative Augustus Hawkins' Bill in the House maintains the major concepts of the present CETA system; although Republican Representative, James Jeffords, introduced his own legislation, he is, with some

exceptions, supporting the Hawkins approach.

Unfortunately, none of the proposed bills establishes a basic, long-rang national policy on employment and training. None embraces the concept of providing training for all who might need it to enter the labor market or improve their skills to move up the economic ladder. Programs are still related to income levels. Coordination of the vocational education system and the employment system is haphazard. But there is at least a realization in the four bills before Congress that federal legislation is needed to reduce high unemployment, aid relocation of workers displaced due to mass layoffs and plant closings, assist new graduates or school drop-outs in entering the labor market, and relate to the rapid changes in technology that affect jobs.

Among the basic issues of an employment and training system which Congress must decide as a result of the current debate on the Reauthorization of CETA are:

1. WHO SHOULD OPERATE THE SYSTEM?

The Administration's "new federalism" philosophy provides for block grants to the governors, who then distribute funds to local Planning Councils they appoint under minimal guidelines. Most current Prime Sponsors (chief elected officials in cities and counties over 100,000 population) would be eliminated as program administrators. Thus most governors favor block grants with few directives, while mayors and county officials favor the current Prime Sponsor system with a structure of federal guidelines and formulae.

2. WHO SHOULD RECEIVE TRAINING?

The Administration bill limits training to welfare recipients and out-of-school youth under age 25. But others, such as workers laidoff

by cutbacks and plant closings, in-school youth and special target groups, also need to share in available services and training. Limiting training to those below the poverty level is a debatable feature of both current CETA and proposals for its successor.

3. NATURE AND ROLE OF ADVISORY COUNCILS

In line with the current private sector emphasis, proposed legislation gives business representatives a majority membership on all Planning Councils, while organized labor favors tri-partite government-business-labor participation on these decision-making bodies.

4. STANDARDS IN TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

If the block grant concept prevails, each state would establish its own standards and regulations, wiping out current national protection of wage rates, benefits, collective bargaining contract terms, maintenance of effort provisions and other standards that have been developed during the ten years of CETA's existence.

5. ALLOWANCES AND STIPENDS

Should allowances and stipends be paid to trainees and, if so, under what circumstances? If these are completely abolished, as proposed, many of the most needy will be unable to afford to participate in training programs.

6. YOUTH TRAINING

Focus is placed on youth with its extremely high rate of unemployment. Yet funding for summer youth jobs is uncertain and coordination between our educational and skilled training systems is not tackled in the proposed legislation.

7. PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT

Public service employment is eliminated despite its successful use as a job creation tool to put people to work quickly in productive employment.

The rise to a 9.4% unemployment rate, however, is giving Congress second thoughts on total removal of PSE.

8. FUNDING

Proposals for funding vary from \$1.9 billion in the Administration bill to over \$5 billion in the Hawkins Bill. The amount of funding is, of course, an indication of the serious concern Congress will give to the jobs issue.

9. DISPLACED WORKERS

Most workers affected by mass layoffs and plant closings will be ineligible for programs under the basic provisions of the pending bills because of recent earned income. Retraining and helping them obtain new jobs is provided for in some proposals or may be covered in supplementary legislation.

Because of significant opposition to Administration policy in both Houses of Congress, the most recent scenario foresees either no new employment legislation or a Presidential veto. This could mean CETA dies on September 30th, or that a continuing resolution will maintain the present structure and funding for one year. What will happen will undoubtedly be affected by the final action on federal budget.

But at a time of increasing unemployment, deepening recession and rapid technological change, programs for the jobless and the disadvantaged are essential to economic growth and social progress. The labor movement will be pressing for the most extensive legislation in employment and training programs, along with concrete steps for economic development and revitalization of American industry. Eyes will be on Washington these next few weeks to see what happens to legislation to succeed CETA.

Ben Stahl is Regional Field Coordinator, Human Resources Development Institute, AFL-CIO.

BEYOND THE WORKPLACE, 30 minutes, 16 mm, color, sound, 1980. Produced by Ohio State Labor Education and Research Service, 1810 College Road, Columbus, OH 43210; (614) 422-8157. Funded in part by the Ohio Program in the Humanities. Available free. Study guide accompanies film.

With the broad panorama of American labor history as a setting, the film documents the changing personality of community programs from the early days of fire brigade voluntarism and the neighborliness of pitching in to chop wood for a disabled fellow worker. Perhaps the setting is too broad, and too little time is given over to current union involvement in the community. This film strongly resembles others on labor history, though with a continuing thread of voluntarism running its length to wind up with the role of today's unions in community services, education, and the arts.

Using photos, prints, and newsreel the film carries us from colonial America's indentured labor to the aftermath of the 1929 stock market crash, which it credits with being the single event that most channeled our labor movement into community affairs. It pauses en route to note that AFL's founding convention took place in Ohio in 1886, and that somewhat prior, ^{hire of the} ~~hiring~~ young Sam Gompers to read to cigar makers at work was an early manifestation of workers' education. The Great Depression, accompanied effectively by the nostalgic strains of "Brother Can You Spare A Dime," is revealed as an era when people needed to help each other to survive. Voluntarism, a term used repeatedly in Beyond the Workplace, became the name of the game. Yet perhaps voluntarism is here stressed to the neglect of what should bear at least a parallel emphasis through New Deal days and to the present, namely government's required effort in bettering people's lives and the labor movement's insistence that it maintain this role.

World War II brought organized labor's participation on governmental boards such as War Labor Board, WPB, and OPA. CIO's National War Relief Committee became CIO Community Services Committee, with national and local staff, and the raising of war relief funds shortly gave way to United Fund drives.

By the time the film arrives at the present day, too little space remains to develop fully the role of the Union Counselor, trained to help fellow workers at the workplace on a one-to-one basis. We do see him making the rounds to take up out-plant problems, but what these are and the making of referrals to United Way agencies, the program's major focus, are insufficiently detailed. This Union Counselor system has been the grass roots life line of unions ⁱⁿ serving their membership "beyond the workplace."

Emphasized are day care centers concerned with child development, not just baby-sitting, promoted by organized labor as high priority for working mothers--and over half of all U.S. mothers with children under age six, we are reminded, are today working. Blood donation, flood and disaster assistance, housing for senior citizens and other such community involvement receive mention. A major function of AFL-CIO Community Services (CSC) is noted as strike assistance, with the Committee called in before a picket line is even formed, to help with homelessness, hunger, and health. In Cincinnati a task force grapples with alcoholism, today under major attack by CSC.

Beyond the workplace lie not just community services but two other broad ^{areas,} ~~areas~~ education and the arts. Trade unions brought public education, Horace Mann is quoted as saying. And today, following the replacement of confrontation by negotiation on the labor scene, they are at work in conjunction with university labor education services such as Ohio State's LERS, the film's producer, to educate their membership in the ways of collective bargaining. Conferences feature women, CETA, OSHA, and other current issues. Union members earn college degrees, with credit for union participation. Orchestras, plays, and art shows are also all part of labor's far-reaching involvement.

Although the film employs footage, facts, and figures out of Ohio history, its universality sustains its value and interest for audiences elsewhere. Most effective labor use of the film would be at conferences or workshops where time allows discussion to follow. High school and college students studying the labor movement can

profitably be shown the film for another, non-economic, view of trade unions. Union Counselor training classes, standard in many cities, might kick off with Beyond the Workplace as an orientation aid. Viewing it with us was a United Way labor staffer, who judged it good to show business executives involved in community fund-raising, to contribute sympathetic labor/community background, but less so for sophisticated labor people in the field.

The study guide on the film, prepared by C.J. Slanicka, stimulates discussion with several questions on "Issues for the Future" following a detailed historical analysis.

Unfortunately, the film ignores the neighborhood movement, a new force to which organized labor is increasingly relating, and--a serious lack--leaves out of its historical scope completely the whole civil rights movement.

This is the second film produced by LERS, a sequel to Strength Through Struggle, which highlights Ohio labor history from 1930 to the present. Perhaps they (or someone else) could do a sequel to this one, which would really detail current activities of AFL-CIO's Community Services Department and the Union Counselor network, and pick up on some of the deficiencies noted.

Ben Stahl
Regional Director
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Evelyn Miller Stahl
Director of CIO's first demonstration
Community Organization Project, conducted
in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, in 1944