

# Steelworkers' Union Elections Rigged

Recently, elections were held for director of District 31 of the United Steel Workers of America in which Ed Sadlowski, a 65-year-old worker at U.S. Steel South Works in Chicago, ran as an insurgent against the machine candidate, Sam Evett.

Evett was the handpicked choice of Joseph Germano, District Director for 33 years and iron-handed boss, powerful in the Democratic Party and in the affairs of the entire USWA. For a long time, Germano was good at doing the bidding of the company, keeping the locals in line and the steel workers demoralized about the union.

To get on the ballot, Sadlowski, a progressive candidate, needed the nomination

of 18 of 297 locals in the district. This was no easy job because of the control of Germano's machine, but Sadlowski and his supporters put together an organization based on his home local, on rank-and-file caucuses and elements from a number of large and small shops and was able to secure more than 40 nominations.

With Sadlowski on the ballot, the enthusiasm of his supporters began to really develop. Regular campaign meetings were held once a week in the sub-districts and forces were mobilized to reach as many plants as possible. Campaigners from other shops were walking past plant guards into locker rooms and organizing until some machine "unionist" would catch on and have the guards throw them out. People would stand in the cold leafleting week after week. Sadlowski got around to plant gates throughout the district and the media was mobilized to cover the campaign.

Meanwhile, the machine was doing its thing. Sam Evett, who nobody had ever known as "Mr. Nice Guy" was suddenly nominated "Man of the Year" by some "charitable organizations." Evett signs sprouted

all over and he was invited to "report" on irrelevant topics to a number of locals controlled by the machine. He was even taken on a guided tour of the Youngstown steel plant in E. Chicago, Indiana, while Sadlowski was thrown off company property when he tried to campaign at the gates.

Unfamiliar faces, who turned out to be from departments of some local city governments, tried their hand at leafleting a plant or two but found the cold weather hard to take and usually closed up shop after a few minutes of ineffective campaigning for Evett.

Sادلowski's main theme, that the union needs democracy and participation of the rank and file, began hitting home. The Sadlowski forces, Black, white and Latin workers, were small in number but were known in their plants as fighters and brought the issues to the people.

When the vote-counting started, the Sadlowski forces' problems began. They were able to place watchers in many key locals, especially where their organization was strong. But in a large number of locals, watchers were refused permission to observe. At the huge U.S. Steel plant in Gary, Indiana, one watcher was intimidated by a bomb threat and only one other watcher was allowed.

The pattern in the small fabricating locals around the district was similar and Sadlowski held his own despite the lack of watchers in many cases. In the large steel mills around the shore of Lake Michigan, Sadlowski won big margins at

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## Sell-Out film

# Where's Joe?

In their quest for greater and greater profits, the American Steel Industry has begun another

steel. This clearly shows that the steel monopolists are not interested in keeping jobs, but

# DISTRICT 31...

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Unofficial results started coming in. The pattern was that in the small fabricating locals around the district, despite the lack of watchers in many cases, Sadlowski held his own. In the large steel mills around the shore of Lake Michigan, Sadlowski won big margins at U.S. South Works, Republic Steel, Youngstown Sheet and Tube, Inland Steel and Bethlehem Steel. In all these big mills, watchers were present and counting was completed in a few hours. At Gary Works, where there was only one watcher, "results" were delayed for two days. Before "results" came in from Gary, Sadlowski forces tallied a lead of between two and three thousand votes. Sadlowski claimed victory. The next thing anybody knew, there was Sam Evett claiming victory by 2,5000 votes.

The procedure for certifying this election of the USWA does not require the International Tellers to report results until May 1, 1973. This is very convenient for a machine which would like things to simmer down some before it has to make the steel-workers swallow a bitter pill.

**The people in the mills do not want to**

swallow this pill. The overwhelming sentiment is that, "The people voted for a change, we won the election and these guys are stealing from us." Even many Evett supporters are saying this.

Sadlowski has lodged a protest with the International and may follow up with legal action. He wants results in locals where he was denied watchers and where irregular procedures took place to be disallowed.

Of course, it's not likely that this protest will enable him to occupy the post he won at the polls.

However, there have been important gains for the steelworkers in this struggle. Most important is that the steel workers here have seen clearly through their own experience how isolated and desperate the machine that controls their union actually is. Other important gains are that insurgent rank and file organizations in the district have gained strength and experience in organizing and are learning the importance of mobilizing the masses of steelworkers to see these organizations as *their own organizations*, if substantial victories are to be won. They cannot rely on elections alone. Further, the Sadlowski campaign was the first time in many years that insurgent action took place in the district. Out of this, steps are being taken to develop district-wide rank and file organization on a permanent basis.