

RIGGED STEEL ELECTION OVERTURNED

Chicago, Ill.—The U.S. Department of Labor has overturned the election in the Chicago—Gary area of an Abel-machine candidate as head of this district of the steelworkers union.

Responding to the challenge filed by reform-candidate, Ed Sadlowski, to last February's rigged election for Director of District 31 of the United Steelworkers of America, the Labor Department has declared its intention to sue the union to have the election set aside and to hold a new one under government supervision. This development took place as opposition to the President, I. W. Abel's leadership continued to grow on other fronts.

Running on a program of union militancy, democracy and responsiveness to the rank and file, Sadlowski challenged the Abel machine in the USWA when he ran against Sam Evett, for Director of the union's largest district. District 31 covers Northwest Indiana and Northeast Illinois and includes 125,000 steelworkers. As reported earlier in *The Call*, it was the nearly unanimous feeling of the steelworkers here that Sadlowski "won the election but lost the count." This feeling was based on the experience of widespread physical intimidation against watchers and voters and massive evidence of vote fraud in counting ballots.

Sادلowski's response to the election rigging has been to keep his organization intact while filing legal challenges, first with the union and then with the Department of Labor.

While the union's International Tellers made a show of investigating Sadlowski's charges and even threw out the entire vote of Local 1014 (U.S. Steel, Gary Works), they made sure that Evett still came out on top. Evett occupied the office and has tried to keep running the district as a managed estate for the Abel-sellout leadership (see accompanying article, this page).

PLENTY OF EVIDENCE

After going through the union's "internal remedies," Sadlowski filed his challenge with the Department of Labor. The Labor Department then sent out an investigating team which had no trouble finding evidence of a thoroughly-rigged election.

While Sadlowski has stated that this should have been enough for him to be declared the winner, the government has insisted on negotiating with the USWA leadership, seeking to agree on a date for still another election, this time under government supervision. However, the Abel leadership has refused to accept the arrangement, and the Labor Department has been forced to sue.

The Abel leadership, taking advantage of laws which favor such thievery in the labor movement, will try to put off the election as long as possible, hoping to drain Sadlowski financially and to demoralize the workers who support him. Meanwhile, they still hope to consolidate their reactionary front within the steelworkers through further manipulations.

This time, however, the leadership can be in for a surprise. Steelworkers are organizing their caucuses and locals around the issues of the right to strike, and millwide seniority, as well as union democracy and support for Sadlowski. Ed Sadlowski's campaign for militancy and democracy in the USWA has a big part to play in building the movement against the Abel leadership. The movement must rely mainly on the steelworkers themselves for support, while continuing to use the legal means available in this system. Doing this, it can not only survive and gain office, but with the full backing of the rank-and-file, it can continue to successfully fight the Abel machine and the steel companies.