

**S0521 St. Louis Labor Tribune, 1935-Present
Collection, 1932-1976
582 Folders, 78,000 Negatives**

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Publisher Ed Finkelstein donated the records of the St. Louis/Southern Illinois Labor Tribune to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection-St. Louis on June 19, 1990.

In 1935, while studying architecture at Washington University, Maury Rubin founded the St. Louis Labor Tribune. It originally appeared as a broadsheet monthly entitled the Union Labor Advocate and changed its name in June 1937. In the second issue, Rubin teamed with Carpenters District Council leader Dick Adams to report on the poor quality of construction work at local non-union housing projects. The report, and week-end leafletting of the construction sites by the newspaper, led to union organizing of nearly the entire St. Louis construction industry. This in turn led to the continued low cost of housing in the metropolitan St. Louis area.

Rubin guided the development of the Labor Tribune for its first forty years along with a colorful staff that gave the newspaper character. Staff members included Ben Sabol, a cane-wielding photographer and who brought a ladder to his shoots facilitating wide-angle perspectives on group labor photographs; editorial chief Harry Winkeler, a devout anti-Communist whose red-bashing editorials were reprinted by newspapers around the country; and a phone-bound ad salesman, Harry Barge.

A staunch opponent of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, Maury Rubin also organized an AFL affiliated union for journalists in St. Louis in 1937, the Advertising, Publicity and Newspaper Representatives Local 20711. The Labor Tribune staff later reorganized under Local 47 of the Newspaper Guild, after the 1955 AFL-CIO merger. Even since that time, however, the Labor Tribune's support of the AFL against the CIO has kept most CIO unions from subscribing.

In 1947 the Labor Tribune began to organize another labor newspaper in East St. Louis called the Southern Illinois Labor Tribune. The new paper was printed in the National Stockyards, the site of the Livestock Reporter. The Southern Illinois Labor Tribune closed its advertising and circulation office in East St. Louis after refusing to fall victim to a protection racket. In 1955, Rubin offered his help to the AFL to start an official newspaper to report on organized labor in Indiana. Gene San Soucie, president of AFL Teamster Joint Council 69 for the state of Indiana, served as the associate editor. St. Louis Labor Tribune advertising salesman Joe Gordon later handled the Indiana paper's business operations. Rubin attempted to continue the Indiana Labor Tribune after San Soucie died in an airplane crash in 1973, but economic factors eventually caused it to fold.

The St. Louis Labor Tribune built its reputation by being in the forefront of national issues

that affected labor. It took strong positions against the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act and the Landrum-Griffin Amendments in 1959. Locally, it opposed anti-collective bargaining measures by the St. Louis Globe-Democrat and the Newspaper Guild, exposed shoddy workmanship and promoted worker safety. The paper was supported in part by Maury Rubin's ownership of Quality Beverages, a beer distributorship. In March 1957 the St. Louis Labor Tribune changed its broadsheet format to that of a tabloid.

Ed Finkelstein, Maury Rubin's nephew, joined the newspaper for a summer job when he was fourteen years old. After receiving a by line for writing an obituary, he decided to pursue journalism as a career. He graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia's journalism school in 1959 and began serving as an information officer for the Strategic Air Command. When he left the service, Finkelstein returned to the Labor Tribune as an executive assistant

to Maury Rubin. At odds with the staid Rubin, Finkelstein left the paper in the late 1960s and joined the Regional Industrial Development Corporation.

In 1970 Finkelstein began a public relations firm, Union Communications, in the interest of bettering the image of organized labor with local business. Jim Templeton became one of his first employees and later became the Tribune's managing editor. Much of the firm's business involved covering stories that appeared in the Labor Tribune. Finkelstein renegotiated his way back into the Labor Tribune operation with his uncle Maury, who was cognizant of his aging staff and the criticism the paper was receiving as having grown stagnant. Shortly thereafter Rubin retired as publisher emeritus. He died in 1984.

Finkelstein's combining of the newspaper and Union Communications helped restore the Labor Tribune's finances, which had suffered from the gambling loss of Rubin's beer distributorship. It also brought two important members to the paper's staff: managing editor Jim Templeton and reporter/photographer Sherwood Kirker. Finkelstein's experiences with RIDC and public relations left the paper with a less confrontational style and one that aimed more to promote cooperation between labor and business. Nevertheless, the St. Louis Labor Tribune remained an influential defender of labor causes. It worked ceaselessly to expose worker safety hazards and the poor quality of non-union construction and has helped organized labor groups against anti-labor legislation. It played a particularly important role in defeating Right-To-Work legislation in 1977. In 1984 the St. Louis Labor Tribune and the Southern Illinois Labor Tribune merged to form the St. Louis/Southern Illinois Labor Tribune.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The St. Louis Labor Tribune collection consists primarily of over 78,000 photograph negatives that comprised the Tribune's photograph morgue. The negatives have been indexed in a database. The St. Louis Labor Tribune collection also contains correspondence, memoranda and reports documenting the history of the St. Louis Labor Tribune; personal correspondence of its founder Maury Rubin; and records of the Advertising, Publicity and Newspaper Representatives Local 20711, the journalists union that Rubin help found; and bound volumes of an entire run of the Indiana Labor Tribune, 1955-1973, that Rubin also helped found. The collection also includes many photograph prints that have subject but no chronological identification.

Divided into seven series: 1. The St. Louis Labor Tribune, 1932-1970s, folders 1-61; 2. Advertising, Publicity and Newspaper Representatives Local 20711, 1937-1976, folders 62-91; 3. Subject Files, 1965-1968, folders 92-169; 4. Newsclippings, 1961-1968, folders 170-191; 5. Indiana Labor Tribune, 1955-1973, 17 volumes; 6. Photograph prints, undated; 7. Negatives.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

SERIES 1 - The St. Louis Labor Tribune, 1932-1970s. Folders 1-61. Includes signed application blanks for the American Federation of Labor; Audit Bureau of Circulations records, 1937-1950; correspondence, 1935-1970s; editorial cartoons, newsclippings and data for issues of the Labor Tribune, 1940s-1950s; correspondence concerning printing equipment, 1939-1966; applications for a reporter's position, 1963; Maury Rubin's press credentials, 1960; and the personal correspondence of Maury Rubin, 1947-1963. Arranged alphabetically.

SERIES 2 - Advertising, Publicity and Newspaper Representatives Local 20711, 1937-1976. Includes agreements with the Labor Tribune; audit report forms; constitution and by-laws; correspondence; meeting minutes; financial reports of the journalists' union founded by Maury Rubin. Also includes some personal correspondence of Maury Rubin, 1972-1973. Arranged alphabetically.

SERIES 3 - Subject Files, 1965-1968. Newsclippings, reports and other data used as a research file for the St. Louis Labor Tribune. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

SERIES 4 - Newsclippings, 1961-1968. Newsclippings from the St. Louis Labor Tribune. Arranged chronologically.

(Series 5 contained bound volumes of the Indiana Labor Tribune that were deaccessioned.)

SERIES 6 – *St. Louis Labor Tribune*, 1987, I bound volume.

SERIES 7 - Photograph prints. This series includes very little chronological identification of the prints. Divided into two sub-series: Prints and Oversize, both arranged alphabetically by subject.

SERIES 8 - Negatives. Divided into five sub-series, all arranged alphabetically and chronologically within alphabetical divisions: 1. Union and Group Names; 2. 35MM Series, a separate series comprised of only 35mm negatives; 3. People; 4. Events; and 5. Nitrate Negatives. These negatives are included as part of the Western Historical Manuscript Collection's photograph database.

FOLDER LISTING

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1. AFL, Signed Application Blanks, nd.
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3. Anheuser-Busch Strike, 1951
4. Audit Bureau of Circulations, 1937-1945, 1950
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46. Medart's Restaurant Licensing Matter, 1942
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55. Printing Equipment Data, 1965-1966
56. Reporter Applications, 1963
57. Maury Rubin's Press Credentials, 1960
58. St. Louis Labor Tribune, Vol. 1, #2, January 15, 1932
59. St. Louis Labor Tribune and Other Maury Rubin Correspondence, A-Z, 1947-1963
60. Southern Illinois Labor-Tribune, Renewal Certificate for Trademark, 1959
61. Welch for Governor Labor Committee, 1952

SERIES 2 - Advertising, Publicity and Newspaper Representatives Local 20711, 1937-1976

62. Agreement with St. Louis Labor Tribune, 1961-1964
63. Agreement with St. Louis Labor Tribune, 1961-1964
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69. Certificate of Affiliation with the Missouri State Labor Council, 4/56
70. Communications, 1960-1963
71. Constitution and By-Laws, 1958
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75. Correspondence, 1965
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78. Financial Statements, 1974-1975
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122. International Labor Press Association (ILPN), 1968
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124. Labor Day, 1965
125. Labor Legislation (National & Local), 1967
126. LAMP (Labor and Management Plan), 1968
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