

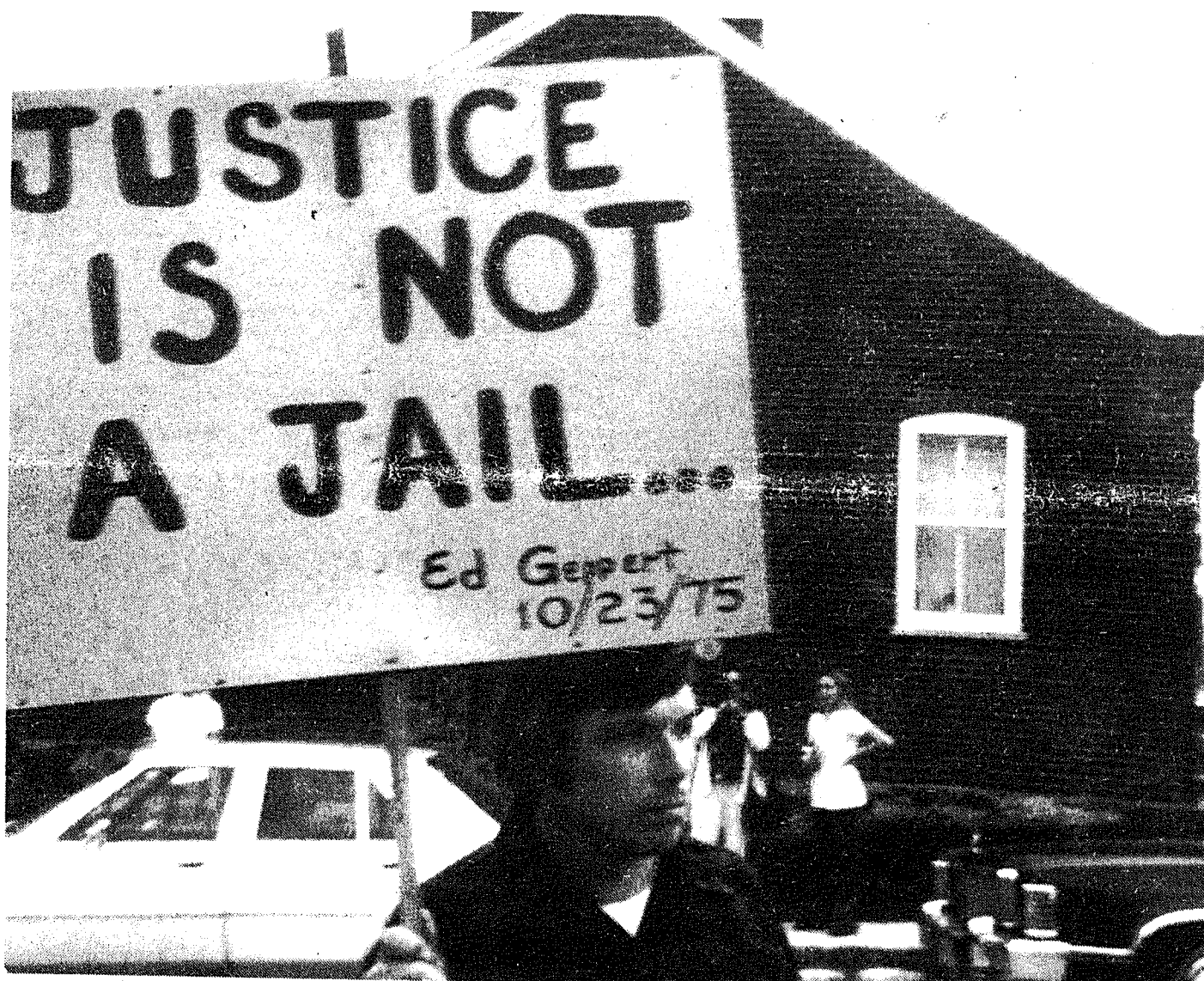
EDUCATION IN DEMOCRACY/DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION

ILLINOIS

Teacher

Official Publication of
ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Jail to victory!



Cahokia teacher Rich Lucy pickets St. Clair County jail where Local 1272 President Ed Geppert, Jr., and three other Union officers were imprisoned for defying injunction.

Phew! That was close . . .

Teachers played a crucial role in the override by the Illinois House of Representatives of Governor Walker's vetoes of \$116 million in school aid funds November 5 and 6.

The dramatic victory found pro-override forces garnering exactly the 89 votes needed to override Walker's vetoes of both H.B. 2971, an \$81 million basic state school aid bill; and H.B. 2989, a \$35 million special education funding bill.

The 89th vote on H.B. 2971, which came up first and was regarded as the test vote, was cast by Michael F. McClain, a 28 year old Democrat from Quincy who is a former 9th grade civics teacher.

The battle to override now moves to the Senate, where the attempt to override both bills is expected to come up soon.

"IFT members are responsible for the override victory," IFT President Robert Healey said. "I personally know of several legislators who voted for the override as the result of our work."

IFT members worked for more than a month before the House vote to win the necessary votes. Committees from Locals across the state visited their District's three Representatives before the Legislature reconvened to stress the importance of the override to the teachers and school children of Illinois.

More than 10,000 letters and mailgrams urging override were sent to House members by individual teachers and educational workers.

On Monday, November 3, groups of IFT members traveled to Springfield to talk personally with their Representatives urging that they vote to override.

IFT Legislative Chairperson Margaret Blackshere and Legislative Director Oscar Weil worked closely with President Robert Healey, Secretary-Treasurer Ken Drum, Editor Mary Dunea and IFT members from 15 Legislative Districts where one or more vote was in doubt to assure that

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Cahokia Teachers' Brave March Wins Gains

It was almost silent as they marched. In the hush, the sheriff's police whispered.

The whirl of television cameras cut through the stillness.

The Cahokia teachers were going to jail.

Three days later the teachers were to win a great victory with the collapse of the Cahokia Board, and a settlement with all strike make-up days, a 6% salary increase this year, 9% next year and all class size provisions.

But now—Saturday, October 25—they had only their courage as company as they lined up on the cool crisp fall morning — some to surrender to the sheriff on charges of violating an injunction against picketing Cahokia schools.

Others wearing black arm bands served as escorts for those under arrest.

The St. Clair County jail already held four Cahokia teachers — Local 1272 leaders Ed Geppert, Jr., Arnold Kinsella, Terry Osia, and Le Roy Triefenbach were imprisoned, without bail, Thursday, October 23, for refusing to obey an injunction to end the strike and return to work.

The four were being released nightly for — as the Judge ordered — "at least five hours of negotiations" with the Cahokia Board.

And the Cahokia Four — as they were dubbed almost immediately by the media — served the marching teachers, the school children, parents, townsfolk, indeed people across the country, as a moral force, an example of courage, of conviction, of conscience.

As the Cahokia teachers marched they could reflect that their conflict with the Board had been — from its summer beginning — different and difficult.

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Cahokia's Story: Cou

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The Local's demands for its 370 members had been reasonable: a 4% salary increase; payment by the Board of each teacher's 8% retirement fund contribution; and recognition of the District's five teacher-nurses as members of the bargaining unit.

But — from the beginning of bargaining it was apparent that the Board did not want a fair and just settlement.

The Cahokia Board wanted just one thing — to break the Union.

For this special, specific reason the Board brought Roy O'Neil—the Union buster — to Cahokia.

Roy O'Neil comes high, some say the Board spent more than \$20,000 for his services.

But a man of his reputation, he broke the IEA in Mascotah and East Aurora, is expensive.

Roy O'Neil demands more than money for his services. He also demands that the Board which hires him do as he says.

The Cahokia Board wanted its money's worth, after all, Cahokia is an Illinois suburb of St. Louis, a blue collar town of 20,000 where people want a dollar value for a dollar spent.

So the Cahokia Board did as Roy O'Neil said: bargained in bad faith; sought to break the Union; tried to cheat the teachers.

The result? A strike on October 2nd.

It was not Cahokia's first strike. Some of the marching teachers remembered a three day strike in 1959, when that sort of thing "wasn't done."

One marching teacher recalled the 1959 strike — before the Illinois Federation of Teachers was a powerful force.

"We went back after three days and we didn't get didley," she said.

But now things were different, the teachers were organized and had the strength and solidarity of the Union.

Nevertheless, by Thursday, October 23, the strike had lasted a long time.

The teachers were solidly together, although many of them were making great personal sacrifices.

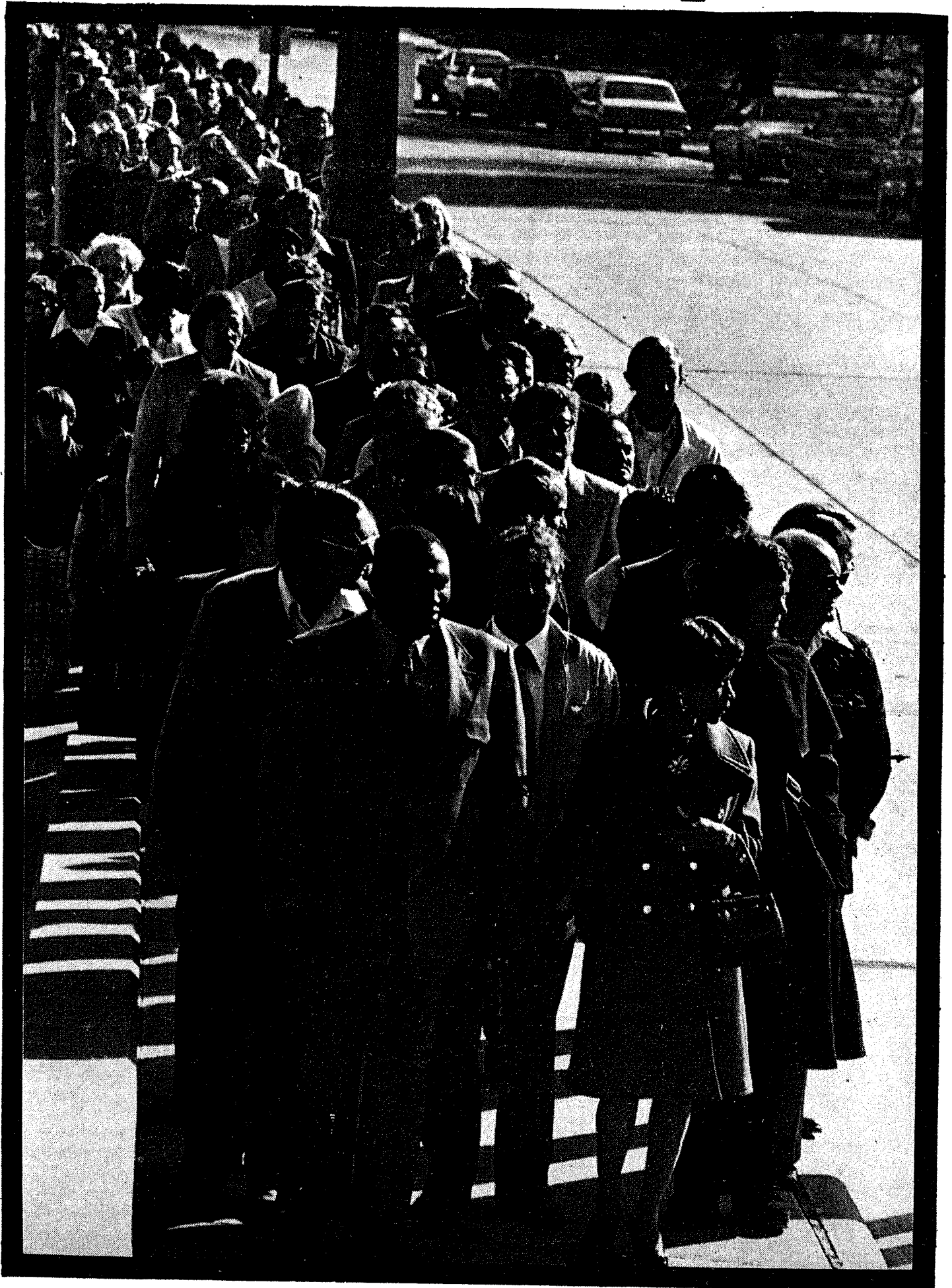
And the community — which includes all of Cahokia and part of East St. Louis — was solidly behind the them.

The people knew the justice of the teachers' cause.

But still, the strike had lasted a long time.

And the Board, under the influence of Roy O'Neil, continued to bargain in bad faith, still holding to the position that the Union could be broken.

Although the teachers' cause was absolutely just; although the Board was wrong; although the strike was long, still Cahokia had attracted very little attention outside its immediate area.



St. Louis Post-Dispatch photo

Cahokia teachers march to St. Clair County jail to surrender and plead innocent to charges of violating judge's injunction. Teacher Mrs. Johnnie Marks, escorted by her husband LeRoy leads the line of some 300 Local 1272 members.

That was all before the **Day to Remember**.

Thursday, October 23rd, was a reasonably regular day.

Cahokia teachers were, as ever, faithfully on the picket lines at their District's 11 grammar, one junior high and one high school.

But the Cahokia Board had, over the weeks since October 2, been growing restive.

All this money spent for Roy O'Neil and the Union was stronger than ever! Why — this could go on forever! Maybe, perish the thought, Roy O'Neil was **wrong**.

Maybe the Union couldn't be broken. Maybe they had **wasted** their money.

There was only one way to find out, and, at the same time, teach those teachers a lesson.

The Cahokia Board just **had** to get an injunction!

Anger Brings Victory



IFT President Robert Healey addresses rally for Cahokia teachers from back of pick-up truck parked across the street from St. Clair County jail where four Local 1272 officials were imprisoned. IFT Field Representative Bobby Yandell stands at right with sign blasting Cahokia Board members and arch-villain Roy O'Neil.

Now — getting an injunction — no matter what the Judge's order prohibits — picketing, striking, whatever — goes exactly against Roy O'Neil's grain.

He never advises it, he writes articles against it, he loathes injunctions.

Roy O'Neil hates injunctions for a very good reason. He knows they don't work.

He knows that with a strong teachers' union — such as Local 1272 — an injunction, far from stopping a just strike, will make it stronger.

Of course, O'Neil broke the IEA in several Illinois districts.

But the IEA, with its emphasis on dictatorship from above rather than democracy in the Local, really isn't very strong.

So, when O'Neil learned that the Cahokia Board was seeking an injunction, he was never seen again.

He didn't participate in another bargaining session; didn't fly to Cahokia in his private plane from Aurora, where he serves as Assistant Superintendent.

Roy O'Neil took his money and ran. He had lost, and he knew it.

Now the Board was really on its own.

Its lawyer went into Court seeking an injunction.

It was in that very act that the Board met its first stumbling block.

The Board couldn't find a Judge to hear its pleadings.

Finally, a man who had been on the bench for only 30 days agreed to hold a hearing.

Associate Circuit Court Judge Richard Goldenhersh, son of an Illinois Supreme Court Justice, presided at the injunction hearing.

His ruling was harsh — and unprecedented.

Not only did he order the teachers to stop picketing, he ordered them to stop the strike and go back to work.

It was strange — in 1975 — to enjoin a strike. The order sounded far more like 1957.

Of course, Local 1272's officers continued the strike.

None of them is likely to abandon justice.

Judge Goldenhersh promptly jailed the Cahokia Four, without bond, with the stipulation that they be released nightly for bargaining and that the bargaining teams must report to him on the progress of negotiations each day.

The Judge's order requiring negotiating sessions was the result of a plea by the Union's attorney Charles Kolker.

The Board fought the order for nightly sessions and Kolker felt the Judge's decision requiring them was a great victory for the Union.

"Otherwise the Board would have refused to bargain at all," he said.

On Friday, despite the jailing of their leaders, Cahokia teachers continued picketing.

And, on Friday school principals identified for the Judge teachers who, they said, had picketed in defiance of Goldenhersh's orders. In many cases the principals identified the wrong people.

One Union member, Mrs. Johnnie Marks, a kindergarten teacher at the Chenot school, said, "I wasn't picketing. I wasn't even outside. I was just sitting in my car."

Nevertheless — there was a warrant for Mrs. Marks' arrest.

On Friday afternoon at about 3:30, sheriff's deputies left the St. Clair County jail with 123 arrest warrants for Union members.

By 5 p.m., when the Union had scheduled a rally outside the jail, two teachers, Sharon Cunningham and Bill Amos, had been picked up at their homes and brought to the jail.

News of the warrants and the arrests shocked the 500 persons — Cahokia teachers, teachers from other Locals which are members of the Southwest Council, IFT President Robert Healey, Secretary-Treasurer Ken Drum, and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Tom Holland, who were present.

Bob Healey spoke to the rally from the back of a pick-up truck parked across the street from the jail.

"Never in the history of our country have teachers been dragged from their homes and taken to jail," Healey shouted. "This is the most despicable act a Board of Education has ever committed anywhere."

Cunningham and Amos each posted a \$1000 bond, of which they put up the required 10%, and were released.

Now efforts to find out the names of the other 121 teachers named in arrest warrants began.

Kolker, former President of the East St. Louis Federation of Teachers, who left teaching to become a lawyer, was able to persuade the Judge to call in the deputies on the promise that the 121 would surrender Saturday morning.

"At least teachers will not be dragged from their beds in the middle of the night," he said.

A meeting of all Local 1272 members was scheduled for 8 a.m. Saturday in a parochial school in Belleville, county seat and the site of the jail.

During the night the money needed to post bond for the 121 was borrowed from the teachers credit union with the Illinois Federation of Teachers signing for the loan.

Money also came from the American Federation of Teachers to aid the Local in paying an initial fine of \$4,000 and additional fines of \$1,000 a day for the duration of the strike.

Saturday dawned chilly and clear after Friday night storms had driven the last of summer away.

Fortunately Friday's rain came after the rally at the jail was over.

Teachers arrived at the Saturday morning meeting dressed in their best "teacher clothes."

Many brought their husbands, wives and children and everyone was in good spirits as the meeting began.

Rodney Edwards, Local 1272 vice-president who was not jailed because his name did not yet appear on the Union's letterhead and the Board did not realize that he is Vice-President, brought the crowd up to date on negotiations.

Richard Roth, IFT field representative for the Cahokia area, assured the teachers of the backing of the IFT and the AFT.

Then Charles Kolker discussed the legal ramifications of the arrest warrants.

All of the speakers stressed that it was each teacher's individual decision to go to jail or post bond but the recommendation of the Union's officers — both those in and those out of jail — was that everyone post bond.

Bail money, in the form of crisp \$100 bills provided by the IFT, was available for everyone.

A hush fell over the room as teacher Pat Schwartz began to read the names of those for whom warrants were out.

"Alice Ackermann," he began, and finished the alphabetical list by calling Daryl Younker.

105 of the 121 teachers were present and they lined up to get their \$100 for bail and a black arm band.

Those not named also received an arm band and the group then went by car to the St. Clair county jail where a line assembled.

It was then that the silent march began.

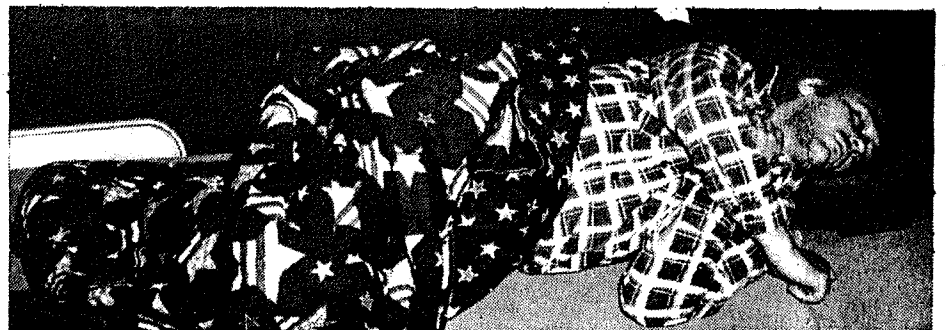
It was a march to victory and a march for history.

It was a march which will be long remembered by every Illinois Federation of Teachers member.

It was a march that brought a settlement the next Tuesday.

It was a march that made the difference.

BELOW: Arnold Kinsella, Local 1272 public relations spokesperson sleeps off effects of 27 day strike, part of which he spent in jail.



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review of books

Everyone is talking, and writing about us.

Teachers, students, theories of education, public schools and their impact on society — all are serving as themes not only for newspaper and magazine articles and broadcast documentaries but also for new non-fiction books.

Hard back and paper back books about education, written for the general reader, are flooding the market.

And the authors reach a vast audience as they discuss their books on radio and television talk shows.

What these men and women have to say affects the public's view of teachers.

And what they have to say isn't always kind or accurate.

Because it's important for us to know what is being written for the popular market, the *Illinois Teacher* is beginning a Book Review Column in our next issue.

And, because you as teachers know more about schools than anyone else,

we want you to serve as reviewers.

Every month, the IFT will purchase the newest popular book about education.

This book will be sent to an IFT member and his or her review, 200 to 300 words long, will be printed in a subsequent issue.

Of course, the reviewer may keep the book.

The Book Review Column will begin in the December issue with a review of David Melton's highly critical book, "Burn the Schools, Save the Children."

We've had to recruit our own reviewer for this book, but we need volunteers for future reviews.

If you would like to serve as a book reviewer for the *Illinois Teacher* please write to the Editor, Mary Dunea, at the IFT office, 15 Spinning Wheel Road, Hinsdale.

You'll be helping all of us learn what's being said and, in some cases, to set the record straight!

WRITE A LETTER TO GOVERNOR WALKER

Write a letter or send a telegram to Governor Walker today! Urge him to pardon Norman Swenson, president of the Cook County College Teachers Local 1600. State that he and his Union have been punished enough by the \$55,000 in fines and the eight days which he has already spent in jail. Remind Governor Walker of his campaign promises that while he is governor no teacher would spend time in jail.

State prexys meet

AFT officers from around the country became familiar with the success of the IFT Legislative Action Program (LAP) at the AFT Council of State Presidents meeting November 5-8 in Las Vegas.

Margaret Blackshere, IFT Legislative Chairperson and Dave Peterson, LAP coordinator participated in both formal and informal discussions with AFT-COPE representatives from other state federations.

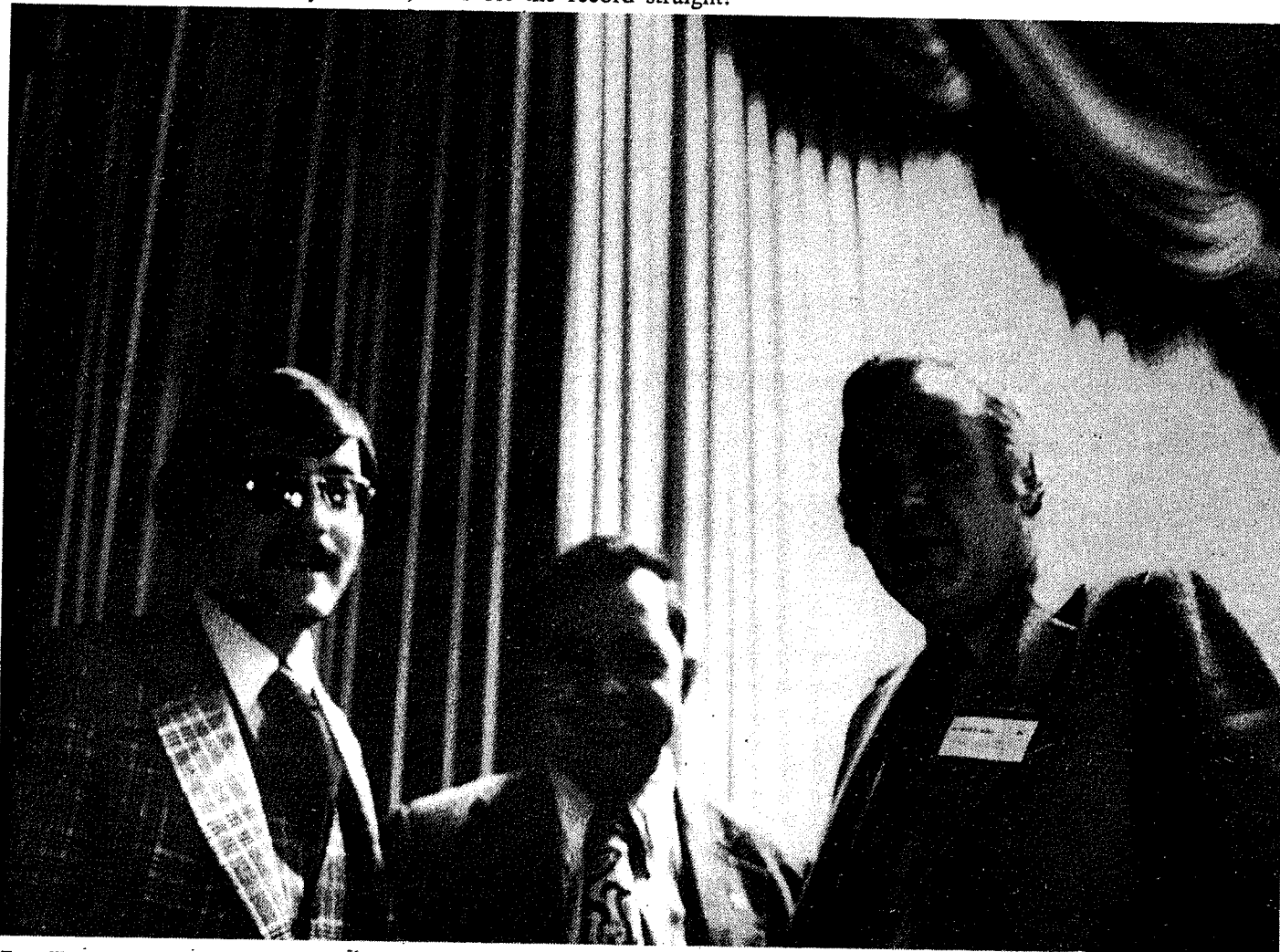
President Robert Healey, Secretary-Treasurer Ken Drum and Assistant Secretary - Treasurer Tom Holland joined Blackshere and Peterson in representing the IFT at the three day meeting.

Harvey thank you

Members of Local 1698 - West Harvey Federation of Teachers - have been praised for playing a crucial role in the passage of their District's bond referendum.

Writing to Local President Dianne Jones, John Sawyer III, Superintendent of Harvey schools, said "You are to be commended for your efforts on behalf of our children and our programs. At a time when 90% of all bond referendums are being defeated we can be proud of this . . . team effort."

Union members spent many hours making telephone calls, decorating cars for a referendum parade, running off materials for distribution and knocking on doors.



Two IFT Local Presidents left, Ed Geppert, Jr., Cahokia and Norm Swenson, Cook County College Teachers who have served time in jail this year for defying injunctions against legal strikes pose with IFT President Robert Healey after CTU presented each with a check for \$5,000 to aid in paying fines against their locals.