
ECONOMICS, LABOR, & BUSINESS

Union Distress

"It Isn't Labor's Day" by A. H. Raskin, in *The Nation* (Sept. 9, 1978), 333 Sixth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10014.

American organized labor is in trouble. The number of union dues-payers is declining (one in four workers now belongs to a union, compared with one in three at the end of World War II). Labor's hopes of reversing this trend through a 1978 Labor Reform Act were shattered by successful corporation lobbying in the Senate.

Signs of union distress are everywhere, writes Raskin, former *New York Times* labor reporter. Management is becoming more aggressive. Employers are learning new ways to bust unions. They are going to the bargaining table with demands that unions give back some of the prerogatives surrendered to labor over the years. "The classic tug of war over money has taken second place in negotiations to a defensive battle by unions against a take-away of contract-guaranteed limits on management's freedom to manage," Raskin contends.

Automation, notably in newspaper publishing, has shifted bargaining power from labor to management. On top of this have come intensified import competition, chronic stagflation, a shift of industry and jobs from the unionized Northeast to open-shop plants in the Sun Belt, and the change from a production economy to one in which seven out of ten jobs are in service industries.

Having joined with management in recent years in various joint efforts aimed at solving everything from the energy crisis to New York City's fiscal woes, Big Labor now finds itself politically weak and unable to mount an effective strategy of resistance against corporate attempts to weaken union power.

SOCIETY

Reflecting on the Fabricated Man

"Unanswered Questions On Test Tube Life" by Andre E. Hellegers and Richard A. McCormick, in *America* (Aug. 12-19, 1978), 106 W. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

The July 1978 birth to Mrs. Lesley Brown in Oldham, England, of the first "test tube baby" was a major medical achievement. But the euphoria surrounding this well-publicized event may be premature, argue Hellegers and McCormick, of Georgetown University's Kennedy Institute of Ethics, for it raises profound moral and ethical issues that affect such basic human concerns as parenthood, sexuality, and personal identity.

Some of the ethical considerations surrounding *in vitro* fertilization were raised earlier by theologians in discussing artificial insemination. In 1949, Pope Pius XII flatly rejected the "licitness" of artificial insemination.