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Linda I'm proud of you

Organized Labor Seeks Links With Young People

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Getting involved with organized labor is an excellent way for young people to bring about change, according to Linda Paquette, "but the pity of it is not many of them know it."

The labor movement is a vast, unknown quantity to most people of high school and college age, Miss Paquette said in an interview. "And when you don't know much about something, you're suspicious of it," she added.

Miss Paquette, 19, a student at San Diego State University, is the new San Diego coordinator for Frontlash, an organization started by the AFL-CIO to involve youth.

'PROPER PLACE'

"I'm convinced that the unions are the proper place to get involved. They are within the establishment, yet they are constantly out to achieve changes in our way of life—improving the plight of the minorities, getting better wages and living conditions for working people and striving for social justice," she said.

Frontlash has been in existence for three years, but its profile has been low in San Diego except for a few surges of activity around the time of voter registration drives and elections.

"We have some volunteers, but we need a lot more," said Miss Paquette. "We've barely scratched the surface."

She said little or no subject matter pertaining to organized labor, its history, its achievements, its role, is in the curriculums of the public schools, colleges and universities.

"Back in New York, they



LINDA PAQUETTE
...working for change

have begun teaching courses in labor history, which is a positive step, but here all you see is a brief mention of sweat shops and Samuel Gompers in a chapter or two of American history.

"People have read about dishonest leaders because they are the ones who have made the headlines. They don't realize that the crooks are in the minority in unions as they are in other elements of society."

EDUCATION GOAL

So one of the goals of Frontlash in San Diego is to get labor courses taught in the schools and colleges. "Meantime, we try to do it ourselves with volunteers," said Miss Paquette.

"We have had speakers go into the schools from time to time," she said. "That has helped quite a bit."

The Frontlash people preach that organized labor is a progressive force. It is not a natural majority—for

there is no natural majority in the United States—but it is a coalition of minorities who basically have the same ideology, according to Miss Paquette.

"That ideology for labor is bringing about changes for the better in the way of life of the worker," she said.

POLITICAL POLICY

She added that the labor movement does not "pick up on unnatural coalitions. This is what the radical groups do and they wind up spinning their wheels."

Frontlash is attached to labor's Council on Political Education (COPE), but Miss Paquette explained that "we don't get involved with political issues and candidates directly."

The AFL-CIO realizes the importance of Frontlash and helps the organization financially and by assisting with nationwide organizing campaigns, sponsoring periodic educational seminars and providing office space in central labor body offices.

In San Diego, Miss Paquette works in the COPE office which is in the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council building at 2232 El Cajon Blvd.

Miss Paquette said her involvement with Frontlash began about two years ago.

"I wanted to get involved in something positive, something concrete, something that is around and is going to stay around," she said.

"At the time, I didn't have any ideology, and like everyone else I was skeptical about labor. But now, I think it's the best thing going. It moves slowly, but it moves."

Miss Paquette replaced Steve Behringer, who left San Diego to participate in the gubernatorial campaign of San Francisco Mayor Joseph Alioto.