

THE RICHARD T. LEONARD COLLECTION

Papers, 1940 - 1971
Predominantly 1946-1947

.25 linear feet

Accession Number 746
L.C. Number MS

The papers of Richard T. Leonard were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in December of 1975 by Mr. Leonard and opened for research in September of 1984,

Mr. Leonard was born in New Straitsville, Ohio in 1902 and after completing high school attended Ohio State University at Columbus for two years. In 1922 he moved to Detroit and began working in the auto industry as a welder. He was active in organizing one of the first federal labor unions in the automobile industry, Hupp Local 18698 in 1933. Elected president of the local in 1934 he directed the first major successful strike in the industry.

In 1936 he was employed by DeSoto and played an important role in organizing the workers for the UAW and was elected first president of UAW Local 227. While president of this local he was elected to the UAW-CIO staff and appointed International Welfare Director in December of 1937. In 1939 he was elected to the International Executive Board and was named Director of Region 1-A in the Detroit area. In August of 1941 he was appointed National Director of the Ford Department. He aligned with the Reuther caucus in 1941 and again in 1943 in an unsuccessful attempt to unseat George Addes as secretary-treasurer of the UAW. Subsequently he switched his support to President R. J. Thomas and in 1946 was elected to the vice-presidency. In 1947 he lost the election as vice-president and also his post as National Director of the UAW Ford Department.

Richard Leonard returned to his job as spot welder at DeSoto and was elected president of Local 227. Later, he left the automobile industry for a CIO staff position and in 1953 was named assistant to CIO President Walter Reuther. When he retired in the fall of 1971, Mr. Leonard was Director of Collective Bargaining Services, Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO.

The papers of Mr. Leonard consist mainly of clippings collected by him, chiefly during the 1940's, and reflect his work with the union.

Non-manuscript Material:

Approximately 20 photographs relating to the career of Richard T. Leonard have been placed in the Archives Audio-Visual Collection.

Box 1

- 1-7. Clippings, 1941-58
8. Correspondence, 1940-71