

CONVERSATIONS UNLIMITED Feb. 10, 1986

INTRO UP AND UNDER

Hi, everybody. I have a quick quiz question for you today. Question: Can you identify the largest labor strike in the history of the United States? We'll give you the answer in a moment. But first, let me explain that the question is a way of getting into the subject of labor unions and history. An interesting development concerning labor unions has taken place recently in the academic field of history. In a nutshell, it has to do with recognizing large hunks of history that seem to have been lost, or even deliberately overlooked. Like that strike I asked you about a minute ago. Our guest today is Vera Rony, who directs the Labor/Management Studies Program at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Professor Rony has started a national effort to see that history no longer overlooks the largest strike in the history of the United States. How many workers were involved, Professor Rony?

INTERVIEW PROFESSOR RONY:

-- Background of the strike

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

How?

Why?

-- Her oral history project:

Brief outline

How can public help?

14:00

We're going to take a short break now. When we return, we'll be talking with Vera Rony about her oral history

project with the largest strike in U.S. history...and about why historians have not recorded such events until now. Stay with us, please.

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Page 2 - CONVERSATIONS UNLIMITED Feb. 10, 1986

BRIDGE MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Hi. I'm Al Oickle, and I'm at the State University of New York at Stony Brook with Vera Rony. Professor Rony directs the Labor/Management Studies Program at Stony Brook, and she is heading up a national effort to provide an historic record of a strike involving 400,000 people. You've already begun the national search for people who were involved in that strike, haven't you, Professor Rony?

INTERVIEW VERA RONY:

- National advisory committee
- Describe some of the participants
- Describe the mechanics of gathering information
- Editing; documentation; transcribing; publishing
- Discuss "radical history" label:
 - * Organization of slave families on plantations
 - * Decline of textile industry between 1915 and 1935
 - * Did Ford's assembly line workers realize what they were helping do to society?
 - * Women's changing roles: in offices, professions
- Discuss differing views of labor and management roles as "real revolutionary agent in America"
- Review how those with information can help research

29:00

OUTRO

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