

FRIDAY

9 Jan 70

**JACK ANDERSON**

## U.S. Ignored Threats To Slain Labor Figure

WASHINGTON — Six months before Jock Yablonski was murdered in his bedroom, he pleaded with the Labor Department

for a full investigation of attempts to intimidate him into dropping his campaign for the United Mine Workers presidency. The appeal was delivered by his attorney, Joseph Rauh, who warned Secretary of Labor George Shultz to his face that if the government did not intercede, Shultz might end up with Yablonski's murder on his conscience.

This prophetic warning came out of a grim, private conversation between Rauh and Shultz after Yablonski had encountered his first violence. He had been knocked cold from behind by a karate blow after a meeting with miners in Illinois.

### Squad of Goons

The next day, a rally organized by his supporters in Pennsylvania was broken up by a squad of goons waving placards supporting Tony Boyle, the incumbent union president.

During his private huddle with Shultz, Rauh made documented charges of these and at least 15 other election abuses, including threats against Yablonski's supporters. But the secretary of labor refused to order an investigation.

By the time election day arrived in December, Yablonski had produced detailed charges of more than 100 federal violations by the Boyle machine. On four separate occasions, the Labor Department was begged to step in with a full probe.

### Embittered Relatives

Now, embittered Yablonski relatives are saying that the murder of the defeated union candidate, his wife and daughter would never have occurred if his enemies had not been encouraged by the government's apathy.

Throughout the campaign, Yablonski was haunted by the threat of violence. He even posted guards at the door of the Washington news conference where he announced his candidacy.

He would not campaign at all in Ten-

nessee, home state of the pro-Boyle thugs who had beaten up dissidents at the union's conventions.

### Mystery Car

During the final months of the campaign, a mysterious car with Tennessee license plates was seen a number of times outside the Yablonski home, a farm in southwest Pennsylvania. Several times the car remained outside all night.

Yablonski and his wife Peg both disliked guns and never kept them in their home. But after the ominous appearance of the Tennessee car, Yablonski borrowed several firearms from one of his brothers to keep in the house.

After Boyle won the election by a two-to-one margin, Yablonski charged the vote had been stolen. A new appeal was made to the Labor Department to impound the ballots and begin an immediate probe into additional violations on election day.

### Probe Refused

In a private meeting with Rauh before Christmas, less than a month before the triple killing, department officials again refused.

Yablonski's aides also were told by the Justice Department that a federal grand jury in Washington had determined there

was substance to his charge that money had been embezzled from the union treasury to be used in Boyle's campaign. Justice officials told the Yablonski aides, however, that they had decided not to seek indictments.

Jock Yablonski was a rugged man of 59 with a gravel voice and a gruff manner. He



### Shultz, Yablonski

. . . Warnings Ignored

had gone into the mines at the age of 15, and he never forgot what life was like for the men who daily risked their lives to bring out the coal. His father died in a mine accident.

### Lewis Lieutenant

Yablonski was a loyal lieutenant of John L. Lewis throughout the 40 years of Lewis reign as the mine workers' president. But things changed when Tony Boyle took over in 1963.

Until 78 men were killed in a dramatic mine explosion in November, 1968, Boyle sought no new federal mine safety standards. Yet coal mining is the nation's most hazardous occupation, more dangerous even than police work or fire-fighting.

Under Boyle, the union was twice convicted of an antitrust conspiracy with the nation's biggest coal companies. Both the union and companies joined in oppressing the men in the mines.

Yablonski was torn between his loyalty to the union organization and his desire to see the UMW again become a powerful champion of the miners' interests. Finally, he decided to break with Boyle.

Boyle has now said that he believes Yablonski's murder had nothing to do with the bitter election campaign. But Yablonski's relatives and associates believe that, although he lost the election, there still were several reasons why union hotheads might want to kill him.

### Motives for Murder

Here are the possible motives for murder:

1. Despite his loss, Yablonski made the best showing by an insurgent UMW candidate in nearly 50 years. He had also pledged to continue the fight for reforms, possibly challenging Boyle again in the next election.
2. A group of rank-and-file miners, under Yablonski's leadership, had filed a \$16 million federal suit against Boyle and his fellow officers, charging gross misuse of the miners' dues. Yablonski and his associates felt that the suit had an excellent chance of succeeding.
3. Because of Yablonski's prodding, there was still an outside chance that the Labor Department might investigate his charges and throw out the December election.