

# Wheeling-Pitt Strike Fails ...

On July 17th the 19 United Steel Workers of America AFL-CIO (USWA) locals at the nine Wheeling-Pittsburgh plants went on strike. The company, with authorization from a US federal bankruptcy court, had voided its contract with the USWA and imposed unilateral wage and benefit cuts.

At the time of the strike, the USWA had three major goals: to protect union members' pension rights, to limit the concessions extorted from union workers, and to force the company's creditors to take on a share of whatever concessions the company might need. The strike is ending now, with none of the objectives achieved.

The former pension plan has been eliminated (with the \$400,000,000 in pension-fund payments owed by Wheeling-Pittsburgh to be picked up by the US Federal Benefit Pension Guarantee Company, a government-supported insurance firm) and replaced by a new plan that will cost the company less than a third of what the old one did—with so far undisclosed benefit cuts.

Labor costs, reduced from \$21.40 an hour under the voided contract (the industry average is over \$23 an hour) to \$17.50 an hour by Wheeling-Pittsburgh, were increased in the course of a three-month strike to only \$18 an hour. (It should be noted that the "labor costs" figures are misleading, since they lump together Workers Compensation costs, Social Security taxes, wages, and benefits.)

The banks that hold \$332,000,000 of the company's \$514,000,000 in debts have refused to even meet with the union, much less discuss creditor concessions. They have also felt free to intervene in union-company negotiations, threatening to liquidate the company (break it up and sell it piecemeal) if it failed to extract enough from union members.

Wheeling-Pittsburgh is the seventh-largest US steel company, with about 3% of the US steel market. Problems between the USWA and Wheeling-Pittsburgh began when the company got itself deeply in debt in the course of modernizing its steel plants.

Wheeling-Pittsburgh, like other US steel companies, enjoyed high profit margins and re-invested relatively little in its plants during the 1950s, '60s, and early '70s, while the European and Japanese companies which are claiming an increasingly large share of the US market were accepting low profits while maintaining high re-investment rates. When steel imports began to make a major impact on the local market, US steel companies reacted in various ways.

US Steel diversified (only 32% of its income now comes from steel production) and invested in plants

in countries where dictatorial governments maintain "union-free" environments. Smaller companies, like Bethlehem Steel, have been targets of take-overs and mergers. Wheeling-Pittsburgh decided to undo two decades of low investment all at once with a massive modernization program, paid for with borrowed money. By 1981, it was arguably the most efficient and potentially most profitable steel-producing company in the US. It was also deeply in debt.

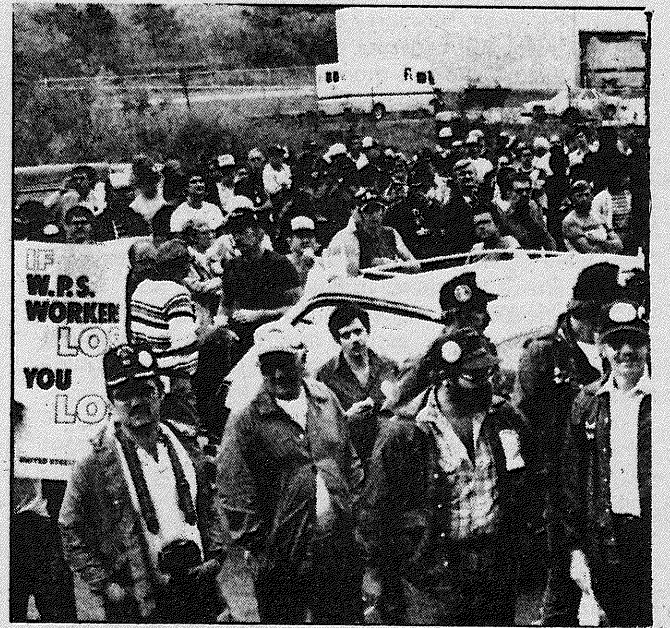
In 1981, pleading difficulties in meeting its debt payments, Wheeling-Pittsburgh sought—and received—concessions from the Basic Steel Agreement. Further concessions soon followed, with Wheeling-Pittsburgh USWA members eventually losing about \$600,000,000. These concessions had, as it happened, relatively little effect on Wheeling-Pittsburgh's position in the US steel market, since other companies have been able to use Wheeling-Pittsburgh's gains as precedents to extort concessions.

The year after Wheeling-Pittsburgh gained its first concessions from the USWA, the Basic Steel Agreement was re-opened for all signing companies. These ongoing rounds of concessions have fractured the USWA's once-comprehensive master contract with the steel industry. The current Basic Steel Agreement (which covers only five companies out of what was once a 14-company group) may well be the last, since the remaining companies have announced that they will bargain separately when the contract expires in August.

At Wheeling-Pittsburgh concessions only whetted the appetites of the company and its creditors for more concessions. In July of this year, a US federal judge, under the provisions of a bankruptcy law that the AFL-CIO had claimed was going to prevent such things, ruled that the company could void its contract with the USWA and reduce wages and benefits and change working conditions unilaterally. An interesting comment on the court action was heard from Paul Weiler, professor of labor law at Harvard University, who observed:

"The basic conclusion is that one should not overrate the importance of labor law. Whatever happened in the courthouse, the thing was ultimately going to be settled in negotiations, and that's exactly what happened. Ultimately economics, whether of the employer or the union or both, are going to be much more critical."

The ensuing strike closed Wheeling-Pittsburgh down completely. There was no attempt to re-start production, nor is there any likelihood that such an attempt would have been successful, despite the high unemployment in the Monongahela and Ohio Valleys, where the Wheeling-Pittsburgh plants are located. Solidarity from other USWA



Steel workers demonstrate their solidarity with Wheeling-Pittsburgh strikers.

locals and districts was widespread, with thousands of dollars collected for strike relief at plant gates and by stewards and grievors (\$12,369 by USWA Local 6787 at the Bethlehem Steel plant in Burns Harbor, Indiana, for example, and \$40,000 by USWA District 29 in Michigan). Solidarity even, at times, overflowed the boundaries of the law. Mass picket lines at the Wheeling-Pittsburgh plant in Beach Bottom, West Virginia, reinforced by 500 mine workers and USWA members from other plants, blocked the company's attempt to truck out equipment.

(continued on Page 8)

## The Struggle Continues

### AMNESTY FOR BRITISH MINERS

During the year-long British coal strike some 12,000 miners were arrested for picketing or for other strike-related actions. At least a hundred miners remain in jail, along with several supporters. The National Union of Mineworkers' funds remain "sequestered"—seized and controlled by a Government-appointed lawyer—because the NUM refuses to repudiate the strike. The union is existing on donations, even while it fights a breakaway by miners from the Nottinghamshire area (which largely scabbed on the strike).

Hundreds of miners have been sacked—many merely for being charged with picket-line offenses, others without any basis whatsoever aside from their union activity. The Coal Board has disregarded normal procedure for sackings, denying workers any chance to make their case. And growing numbers are being sacked for using the word "scab" or otherwise being impolite to strikebreak-

ers. In the Kent coal fields it's common to hear these scum called "Sausage Chips And Beans", as calling a scab a scab carries instant dismissal there.

Management is on the offensive, pushing speedups and trying to break the union. But workers continue to resist through on-the-job direct action on a pit-by-pit basis. Resistance is particularly fierce in the Yorkshire coal field and parts of South Wales, Scotland, and Kent.

Several pits have been closed or scheduled for closing, with some 60,000 to 70,000 jobs slated for elimination. Several community campaigns are under way against the closures.

Though the NUM is still reeling from its defeat (caused by the lack of labor solidarity), a determined effort to win amnesty for the imprisoned and sacked miners is under way. Women Against Pit Closures and a number of strike-support groups are raising funds for the victimized miners and their families and campaigning for amnesty. The appeal hearing for two miners given life sentences was picketed, and plans are under way for a conference of the remaining support groups to establish national coordination of the amnesty campaign. A Rank and File Miners Movement—composed of sacked and blacklisted miners, working miners, and women from miners' families—formed last May to build the amnesty campaign. Tony Clegg, one of the blacklisted miners active in this organization, reports that the class-war prisoners are still as strong as ever for the struggle, the amnesty campaign, and the fight to get the miners' jobs back.

The National Organization for Miners in Prison and Supporters, formed at the beginning of the year, is also active in the amnesty campaign and publishes a paper, the *Liberator*, which reports on trials and prisoners. The NOMPAS can be contacted in care of Housmanns, 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, London N1 9DX.

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TO:

Several efforts are under way in North America to boost the amnesty campaign. The IWW's Chicago General Membership Branch is picketing and leafleting local British offices, circulating an amnesty petition, and working to organize an amnesty program for the winter. Several other IWW groups and branches are also circulating the petition (copies are available from the IWW at 3435 North Sheffield, Chicago, Illinois 60657). Other unionists have begun to get active in the amnesty campaign—for example Mike Ferner (2975 113th Street, Toledo, Ohio) is raising funds to support the fired and blacklisted miners by selling strike memorabilia at reasonable prices. The IWW is also accepting donations to be forwarded for the relief of blacklisted miners.

More than a hundred miners are rotting in jail, and hundreds more are jobless and blacklisted, because they had the courage to resist the British Government's assault on their livelihoods. In corporate board rooms and state offices throughout the world, the powerful are gloating over the miners' defeat even as they take their revenge. We must let them know that the British miners are not alone, and that although we have lost a battle the struggle will go on. An injury to one is an injury to all.

(Thanks to FW Cooper and to *Black Flag*, who provided information on which this article is based.)

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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## Editorial: 'Socialist' Union-Busting

NICARAGUA BANS STRIKES,  
SPEECH, ASSEMBLY

The Nicaraguan Government declared a "state of emergency" October 14th, outlawing strikes; suspending freedom of speech, assembly, and travel; tightening censorship and banning outright a church newspaper; authorizing interception of mail; and suspending the right to speedy trial, release if no charges are pressed, and appeal. Scores of people have been arrested since these decrees were issued, but the Government is reportedly using its draconian new powers selectively in hope of intimidating domestic opposition without arousing a storm of international condemnation.

Nicaraguan Vice-President Sergio Ramirez Mercado said the new laws were implemented because "some individuals and groups... had gone to the extreme of organizing associations and co-operative groups without consulting or asking legal permission from the State". Under the new measures unions cannot be formed without Government permission, and all meetings or events require prior approval by the Government.

The right to strike, and many of the other rights suspended in October, had been restored only last November, having initially been suspended in March of 1982. Since the Sandinista regime came to power they have continued the repression of labor unions and activists—though often on a reduced scale—that prevailed under the Somoza regime, imprisoning union leaders for criticizing Government austerity measures, suppressing the country's only non-Government leftist newspaper, repressing independent unions and seizing control of others with Government goon squads, and establishing a massive Government-controlled "union" to try to control growing worker unrest.

These systematic and unpardonable infringements on

## Remember Jackson Taylor

In the November issue of the *IW* we remembered the thousands of workers who have given their lives in the class war. Unfortunately one more name must be added to that long list: that of Jackson Taylor.

Jackson Taylor was a member of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 333 in Baltimore, Maryland. On October 9th, FW Taylor was among 300 Baltimore longshoremen who broke through a police line in an attempt to reach the Cypriot freighter *Depy*. The Baltimore Launch and Marine Services company was using five-dollar-an-hour scab labor to unload the ship, and the unionists were trying to put a stop to it. When the workers broke through the line, the cops called for reinforcements. Two police cruisers responded to the call, speeding to the scene at 60 miles an hour. On their arrival they swerved into a group of pickets, hitting and killing Jackson Taylor.

Following this incident the company agreed to the principle of using union labor—but they want it at substandard wages. This the ILA has refused, and the *Depy* remains at anchor with its cargo still aboard.

For those who believe that class warfare is a thing of the past or a phenomenon unique to the Third World, the death of Jackson Taylor should serve as an object lesson. Jackson Taylor died in battle. We never forget!

Mike Hargis

### BIG MOUNTAIN MOBILIZATION

Across North America, federal buildings and other US Government offices were leafleted or picketed November 6th. In some cities educational programs were held to alert people to the Big Mountain struggle.

\*EDUCATION \*ORGANIZATION \*EMANCIPATION



AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

ONE UNION ONE LABEL ONE ENEMY

## Industrial Worker

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workers' basic rights (which have also affected the Church and, to a lesser extent, employers) have lent ammunition to US Government charges that the Nicaraguan regime is totalitarian, and fostered comparisons to Eastern Bloc countries. In fact, Nicaraguan repression—severe though it is—has not yet reached that stage; instead the situation more closely resembles that prevailing in Mexico, where non-Governmental parties are tolerated as long as they pose no danger and refrain from vigorous criticism; where the Government-controlled union is in bed with the bosses; where efforts to form independent unions are ruthlessly stamped out; and where an independent press is tolerated only so long as it has little impact.

The Nicaraguan Government seeks to justify its repression and anti-labor policies by pointing to the US-backed "contra" forces seeking to install an even more brutal Somoza-type regime. But in fact the contras are, by all accounts, all but defeated. And even if they were not, we would be compelled to speak out in support of the right of Nicaraguan workers to organize, to speak, and to strike. This is why the IWW, at its 43rd Convention, unanimously approved a resolution criticizing the Sandinista regime for its suppression of independent unions, its denial of women's rights, and its oppression of the indigenous peoples of Eastern Nicaragua.

With this new outrage we must once again raise our voices in protest. Just as we continue to oppose the US-backed assault on the Nicaraguan people, we cannot countenance attacks by the Sandinista Government directed toward similar ends.

JB

## Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World

THE WORKING CLASS AND THE EMPLOYING CLASS HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON! THERE CAN BE NO PEACE SO LONG AS HUNGER AND WANT ARE FOUND AMONG MILLIONS OF WORKING PEOPLE AND THE FEW, WHO MAKE UP THE EMPLOYING CLASS, HAVE ALL THE GOOD THINGS OF LIFE.

BETWEEN THESE TWO CLASSES A STRUGGLE MUST GO ON UNTIL THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD ORGANIZE AS A CLASS, TAKE POSSESSION OF THE EARTH AND THE MACHINERY OF PRODUCTION, AND ABOLISH THE WAGE SYSTEM.

WE FIND THAT THE CENTERING OF THE MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRIES INTO FEWER AND FEWER HANDS MAKES THE TRADE UNIONS UNABLE TO COPE WITH THE EVER GROWING POWER OF THE EMPLOYING CLASS. THE TRADE UNIONS FOSTER A STATE OF AFFAIRS WHICH ALLOWS ONE SET OF WORKERS TO BE PITTED AGAINST ANOTHER SET OF WORKERS IN THE SAME INDUSTRY, THEREBY HELPING DEFEAT ONE ANOTHER IN WAGE WARS. MOREOVER, THE TRADE UNIONS AID THE EMPLOYING CLASS TO MISLEAD THE WORKERS INTO THE BELIEF THAT THE WORKING CLASS HAVE INTERESTS IN COMMON WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS.

THESE CONDITIONS CAN BE CHANGED AND THE INTEREST OF THE WORKING CLASS UPHELD ONLY BY AN ORGANIZATION FORMED IN SUCH A WAY THAT ALL ITS MEMBERS IN ANY ONE INDUSTRY, OR IN ALL INDUSTRIES IF NECESSARY, CEASE WORK WHENEVER A STRIKE OR LOCKOUT IS ON IN ANY DEPARTMENT THEREOF, THUS MAKING.....

AN INJURY TO ONE AN INJURY TO ALL.  
INSTEAD OF THE CONSERVATIVE MOTTO, "A FAIR DAY'S WAGE FOR FAIR DAY'S WORK," WE MUST INSCRIBE ON OUR BANNER THE REVOLUTIONARY WATCHWORD, "ABOLITION OF THE WAGE SYSTEM."

IT IS THE HISTORIC MISSION OF THE WORKING CLASS TO DO AWAY WITH CAPITALISM. THE ARMY OF PRODUCTION MUST BE ORGANIZED, NOT ONLY FOR THE EVERY-DAY STRUGGLE WITH CAPITALISTS, BUT ALSO TO CARRY ON PRODUCTION WHEN CAPITALISM SHALL HAVE BEEN OVERTHROWN. BY ORGANIZING INDUSTRIALLY WE ARE FORMING THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW SOCIETY WITHIN THE SHELL OF THE OLD.

The Government plans to forcefully relocate 14,000 Dine (Navajo) people from their homeland next year as part of efforts by the Government and energy companies to open the land to uranium and coal mining.

The deadline for relocation is July 8th, 1986, and the Government says eviction will be enforced by US marshals and the Military. The National Guard is already at the site and trainloads of military equipment are arriving.

Supporters are being asked to organize affinity groups to help defend Big Mountain when the time comes, either by going there or by building resistance elsewhere. The plan is to form a ring of supporters around Big Mountain to halt the assault.

To help stop the assault on Big Mountain, write the Big Mountain Legal Defense/Offense Committee at 124 North San Francisco (Suite B), Flagstaff, Arizona 86001, or the Big Mountain Support Group at Box 6130, Kansas City, Kansas 66106.

Arthur J. Miller

(The IWW passed a resolution supporting the Big Mountain struggle at our last Convention, and the General Defense Committee and various IWW branches have been active in the support work.)

### Alice in Reaganland: Verdict Now, Trial Later

Attorney General Edwin Meese has a vision of justice that would eliminate court backlogs and facilitate the cumbersome process of deciding on guilt and innocence. Consider this exchange from the November '85 *US News and World Report*:

Q. You criticize the Miranda ruling, which gives suspects the right to have a lawyer present before police questioning. Shouldn't people, who may be innocent, have such protection?

A. Suspects who are innocent of crime should. But the thing is, you don't have many suspects who are innocent of crime. That's contradictory. If a person is innocent of a crime, then he is not a suspect.

Meese's further comment on the 1966 Supreme Court Miranda ruling: "We managed very well in this country for 175 years without it."

There are many types of environmental pollution these days, and not the least is condominium pollution. It is a clever way for a speculator to change his title from landlord to "property manager". Instead of renting to the suckers, you merely sell them their living space so they can have the illusion of being "property owners". You then no longer have the maintenance responsibilities of a landlord, since "property owners" have to keep their own bailiwicks in order as they spend the rest of their lives paying off the high mortgage interest that goes with your "management services". (Service is a word that is also used by animal breeders.)

This column had previously mentioned how former worksites are now being converted into expensive "lofts" for high-salaried young urban professionals, and where the people who used to work in those edifices before they were converted into "condos" are going to go is no concern of the speculators.

Yuppification is not content with being a blight on the urban landscape, as it is now making inroads into "God's Country"—those unspoiled stretches of countryside where only God can make a living.

Bisbee, Arizona was once a mining town and the site of one of the IWW's most valiant labor struggles. About 80 years ago it was considered the most prosperous mining town in the US, but in recent decades it has fallen on hard times. Since our fellow workers of yesteryear were unsuccessful in establishing workers' control over the mines, the inevitable transpired. When the bounties of Nature are left in the hands of a few parasites through collective irresponsibility, those bounties are mighty soon dissipated. The mine owners, after raping the earth under Bisbee, merely pulled up stakes in search of more virgin earth to ravage, and to Hell with the hosts of workers who had made Bisbee their home. Were it not for the few hangers-on who had managed to live off their retirement, Bisbee could well have become another American ghost town.

In recent years Bisbee was turning into a small artist colony, as many artists found it a nice place to live in while hustling their creativity to tourists. But under our present economic system good things do not last forever, and the pleasant little city of Bisbee is now being invaded by real-estate speculators who have decided that its picturesque architecture would make ideal condominium lofts to sell to bored suburbanites to whom the scenic grandeur of the Southwest would be a pleasant respite from the hazards of urban living.

One need not have any doubt what will happen to the original inhabitants of Bisbee who somehow managed to hang on to their home town. The great Southwest, the home of the Indian, the Mexican farmer, the hard-bitten miner, and the cowpoke, is now in danger of being overrun by the quiche and espresso crowd. But perhaps the great frontier will also move into the inner cities along with the displaced persons.

A few years ago, when it was still necessary for your scribe to hustle an employer for the price of his beans and rice, he had the kind of job that was available to one in his position: the position of being too damn old to get a decent-paying job, but still too young to collect Social Security. So I was a delivery man for a store that had a lot of its customers on the Gold Coast—so called because the thousand-dollar-a-month high-rise apartments along the lake shore obscure the silver lining in the clouds from the rest of us boobs who live away from the lake.

One day my boss was driving me on an extra-large delivery to one of those ritzy high-rises, and remarked how the skyline along the lake has changed over the years, with the lake shore completely hemmed in by high-rise apartment buildings. So I reminded my boss of 1929, when the stock market crashed and the lower-echelon aristocrats were jumping out of their skyscraper office windows. But now they won't even have to leave their comfortable homes to express their disillusion with the system they so fervently defend.

It has often been said by those who delight in amassing statistics that the suicide rate is much higher among upper-income people than among those of lower economic means. After all, there ain't no way one can be fatally hurt by falling from a basement window!

C. C. Redcloud

### LIES, DAMN LIES AND STATISTICS

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for September was 7.1%, or about eight million people. The jobless rate for that month as figured by the Council on International and Public Affairs, however, was 13.7% (14.2% seasonally adjusted), or over 15 million people. The difference stems from the way the BLS statistics treat a person who works as little as one hour a week as a part-time worker—not counting anyone who has not tried to find a job in the preceding four weeks.

# Tale of Two Newspaper Strikes

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Daily News* are back on newsstands now, following a seven-week strike by nine newspaper unions with modest wage and benefit gains, but some concessions on new technology that threatens to reduce jobs. Meanwhile, a strike by printers, pressmen, and mailers against the *Chicago Tribune* which began July 18th continues with no end in sight; the three striking unions have just leased a strike headquarters to get them through Chicago's brutally-cold winters.

The *Tribune* is able to print only one edition a day as a result of the strike, and circulation is down by tens of thousands of copies. Yet the paper continues to come out, advertising revenues are nearly unaffected, and the *Tribune* remains Chicago's circulation leader. In contrast, the Philadelphia newspapers were shut down tight, and the strike was won. Why the difference?

The Philadelphia papers' nine unions represent printers; production workers; reporters, editors, and photographers; maintenance workers; drivers (who get the papers out to newsstands); and so forth. Because nearly all phases of the newspapers are organized, and because the unions struck together and refused to go back until all unions had settled, they were able to overcome this union fragmentation and bring real industrial power to bear.

By contrast, Chicago's strikers represent production workers (many of whom management wants to phase out anyway) and printers. Unionized drivers are crossing the picket lines daily to deliver scab papers (they plead the no-strike pledge of their sacred contract as justification). Reporters and other editorial workers are unorganized, and no effort to win solidarity from these workers has been made. Clerical workers (who handle much of the advertising) are similarly unorganized, as are the bulk of distribution workers (as with nearly all papers). In such a situation, as the IWW noted when we were founded 80 years ago, a handful of scabs can enable management to continue production, thus ensuring workers' defeat. On the other hand, industrial organization intelligently applied can bring the bosses to their knees.

To make up for their lack of industrial power, striking *Tribune* workers have been focusing on persuading readers to stop buying the *Trib*, and persuading advertisers to pressure the *Trib* to settle. (Picketing advertisers who insist on patronizing the scab paper, or otherwise trying to compel them to withdraw their financial support for the *Trib*'s union-busting, would be illegal under Federal labor law, and thus has not even been considered by the striking unions.) This campaign has had limited success to

date. Some strikers have noted that a work-to-rule and other job actions by Teamster drivers could cripple *Tribune* distribution (which relies on massive violations of traffic laws and frantic scurrying to make delivery deadlines), but no such solidarity has been forthcoming.

We have noted time and again the total inadequacy of craft and trade unionism, and the folly of organizing parts of a company's or industry's workforce into competing unions while leaving substantial numbers of workers completely unorganized. Once again workers are being led to defeat by a mode of organization that was already long obsolete by the beginning of the century. Only through industrial unionism and One Big Union can we hope to bring real industrial power to bear, and to put an end to labor's defeats.

## DIRECT ACTION HALTS HEALTH THREAT

Prompt action by a dozen workers at the Briarwood, Michigan National Reproductions print shop forced the management to shut down unsafe equipment.

On August 23rd a microfilm operator was directed to operate a processing machine that had just been serviced. When she turned the machine on, ammonia began spewing from an open seal. The worker then turned off the machine, informing the supervisor (called "stupidvisor" by workers at NRC), that it was inoperable.

The stupe said to run it 15 minutes at a time. An inspector working at the next station stood up, telling the stupe that the ammonia was affecting everyone, including a pregnant worker. The stupe then went to his boss to consult on their next move.

Meanwhile, workers discussed the problem among themselves, reaching an agreement to walk out if the machine was re-started. Work was stopped for an hour before the normal lunch break and for several minutes after it, with production resuming in the afternoon when management agreed to leave the unsafe processor idle until repaired. Workers also agreed to stand together in case management attempted reprisals.

Direct action got the goods, where calling in a government inspector would have taken days (during which everyone would have been poisoned). Hopefully these fellow workers, who are now unorganized, will consider other applications.



**NO IMPORTANT EXPOSURE:** US steel companies have been required to reduce the release of coke-oven fumes into the atmosphere. There is no doubt that such releases need to be controlled. However one increasingly common solution to the problem has some questionable effects. This solution is the coke shed, which encloses the coke oven and filters the air as it escapes from the oven. The problem is that the coke-oven workers are *inside* the shed. With coke-oven workers already at high risk of lung cancer (250 to 700% of the US national average, depending on specific job), kidney cancer (700% of the national average), and cancer of the pancreas and bowel, the idea of putting them in a more concentrated atmosphere of coke-oven fumes is nothing short of premeditated murder. Steel companies claim that the sheds are "the way to go". Now if company presidents had to have their offices in the coke shed, they might see another way.

**WORKER HEALTH IN ONTARIO:** Readers in Ontario have an unusual occupational-health resource available to them. The Hamilton Workers Health Centre was founded by USWA Local 1005 in 1984, and is funded and sponsored by the union. The Centre is open to all workers, regardless of union or employer, and has a paid part-time staff of two industrial hygienists and two occupational-health physicians, plus volunteers (many of whom are union health-and-safety-committee members or injured union members on workers' compensation).

The union founded the Centre for the very sound and sensible reason that "Workers cannot rely on their adversaries for protection. The employers poisoning and maiming us don't have our interests in mind. Nor do government bodies afraid to enforce their own health and safety laws. Workers can rely only on their own strength and resources." (USWA Local 1005 official statement on the Workers Health Centre)

In addition to helping individual workers with a wide variety of problems, the Centre has worked with transit-union members around bus drivers' problems with low-back pain and with women's groups around occupational reproductive hazards. Occupational-health clinics of any kind are rare (there are only about 30 in all of the US and Canada), and the Hamilton Workers Health Centre, as a union-founded and -run occupational health clinic, may be unique in North America—although hopefully it won't stay that way for long. The Centre is located at 1071 Barton Street East, Hamilton, Ontario L8L 3E2, (416) 544-5181.

**CHEMICAL CLASS WARFARE:** A study of accidents reported to the US National Response Center between 1980 and 1985 showed a total of 6,928 toxic-chemical spills reported, or an average of five per day. The study was made on the basis of partial data, and Industrial Economics Incorporated—the primary research consultants for the study—estimated that if a study of data for the entire country had been done the number of spills would have been between 17,320 and 20,780, or an average of 13 to 15 a day. About 75% of the chemical spills occurred in plants manufacturing or using the chemicals, and 25% during transportation. Dr. James Commings-Saxton of Industrial Economics estimated that most of those who died from the chemical spills (only acute-exposure deaths were counted; long-term effects such as cancer and lung disease were not) and a majority of those injured were workers. No estimate was given as to how many of the dead and injured were employers, but we suspect that this number was very small.

**RE-PROGRAMMING:** Robot manufacturers are becoming concerned that workers who deal with industrial robots will be endangered as the machines are used for more and more tasks. Robots—used mainly on assembly lines—can be reset to do a number of different jobs, and workers who are used to a robot's doing one job may be caught by surprise and injured when the robot takes on a new function.

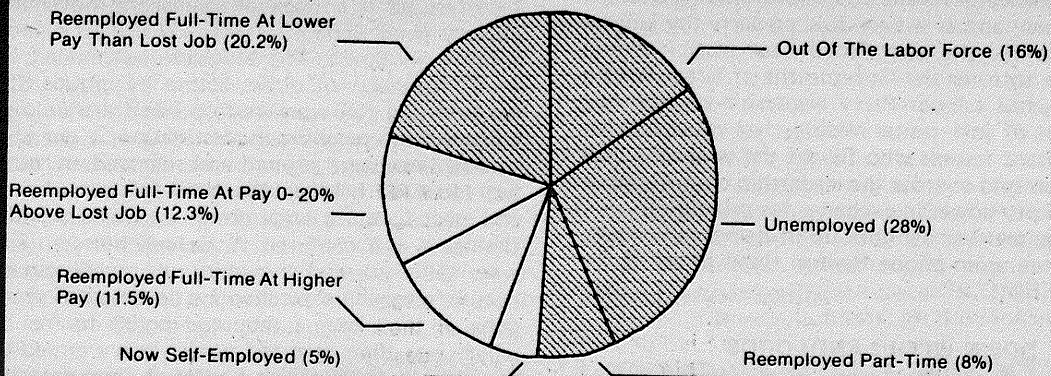
Manufacturers are working on various ways of programming "safety consciousness" into industrial robots so that they will not be able to kill or injure people. While the manufacturers' concern is probably due to fear of lawsuits rather than to any real concern for our safety, their actions are still laudable and should be encouraged. Now if they could just come up with some way to re-program our employers...

**WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!** For this column to be as useful as it can be to IWW members on their jobs and in their organizing activities, we need to know what safety and health problems you have (or suspect you have) on your job. Write to: Is Your Job Killing You? c/o Industrial Worker, 3435 North Sheffield, Chicago, Illinois 60657. Ask! Could it hurt?

**MAGINOT LINE IN THE SKY:** The current US policy toward Russia can best be described as steadily increasing the threat we pose to them. So far all it has gotten us is more weapons aimed our way.

## 1984 STATUS OF WORKERS DISPLACED BETWEEN 1979 AND 1983

(Shaded Area Represents Workers With Earnings Losses)



Nearly 12 million workers lost their jobs because of plant closings between 1979 and the end of 1983. The chart shows the (un)employment status of the 5.1 million of

those workers who had worked three or more years at the job they lost.

# Expect 1986 Wage Decline

As wage settlements and salary plans for next year take shape, all signs suggest that 1986 will become the fifth consecutive year that the typical American worker will receive a smaller pay increase than in the previous year.

In labor settlements reached during the first half of 1985, many of them covering two- or three-year periods, wage increases averaged just 2.8% for the first year of the contracts and 2.9% over the life of the contracts. This is well below the 3% to 4% inflation rate projected for the year by many economists. Thus wages, already as low as or lower than they were in the early 1970s (in real terms) will in effect be cut again.

Wages are weakest in the manufacturing sector, which not coincidentally is the part of the economy that has suffered the most from the strong dollar and US capitalism's refusal to re-invest at home. In September the number of manufacturing jobs fell by 111,000: the worst decline in nearly three years. In some economic circles, this is seen as a healthy gain in productivity—that unit labor costs in manufacturing are falling—and a useful measure to keep down the inflation rate. More realistically, the chronic 7% unemployment rate and decelerating wages are a danger signal to an economy that has relied heavily on consumer spending for much of its vigor.

Two-tier wage systems, under which new hires get a lower pay rate than current employees, have become a

major means by which employers cut labor costs. Even when temporary in nature, wherever new hires reach the full pay rate, they provide a foot in the door for management's campaign to lower that rate.

In the first six months of 1985, nine major contracts (those covering more than a thousand workers) which included two-tier systems were negotiated. These settlements covered a total of 295,000 workers, 250,000 of whom were teamsters covered under the National Master Freight Agreement, under which new hires start at 70% and reach full rate in three years.

One can only hope that unions will someday realize the uselessness of concessions and stand in solidarity with other unions in the fight to strengthen the position of the working class.

## COLUMBIA WORKERS END STRIKE

Some 1050 Columbia University clerical workers ended a five-day strike by overwhelmingly approving a three-year contract providing for a 6% pay hike, better medical benefits, affirmative-action protections, and a guarantee of no personal errands for supervisors. Despite the puny pay hike, workers ratified the pact 155 to 18, happy to win their first contract after years of efforts to organize.

## sound of a distant drum

At the national Labour Party conference the fraternal greetings are being read out from the dais, and all over the country the sound knobs of the television sets are being turned down. While in the great meeting hall within the ritzy seaside town of Bournemouth the elected delegates of the people are leaving their seats to drift off to empty their bladders, drink the beer or the tea, and swap scandalous gossip in between bites of the hot bacon sandwich. In longer words if needed, comrades, the CIA and the KGB will sum it up for their secret files as just another British Labour Party conference. Yet for the men and women of Britain's Labour Party this should not be just another annual display of breast-beating and bleeding hearts and well-honed revolutionary rhetoric, for three major issues have clamped themselves to Neil Kinnock's inside leg measurements to impede his struggle and desire to become Queen Elizabeth's First Minister.

As I write, Brixton is being put to the torch for the third time in three days, as the local colored community fire shops and cars in protest over the shooting of a woman by a policeman during an armed raid, and our telephone rings into the Railton Road anarchist bookshop in the burning heart of Brixton to ask if everyone is all right. But once the flames have died down and the smoke has drifted away, the "leaders" of the people—politician or prelate—will tiptoe forth across the smoldering ashes to hand out solutions to the unemployed, the socially rejected, and the plainly excitable, offering them gutless and useless alternatives to human misery and social rejection in exchange for their vote or their money. So be the grasping hands black, brown, or lily-white, comrades, ask them to show their references.

Neil Kinnock, the leader of the Labour Party, had to show his references this day when the Labour Party were called upon to accept the creation within their ranks of black sections with full elected delegates. And he called on the Party to reject the black sections, and his deputy strong right right arm Roy Hattersley argued successfully for rejection, claiming that the British Labour Party encompassed the whole of the working class, and no group should seek voluntary segregation. So Roy boy won and the demand for a black-section resolution was lost. Yet in my heart I am not sorry, for I fear private groups and closed doors.

It is true, as a tough and confident colored woman argued from the dais, that neither the local British Nazis nor the miserable bureaucrats in office ever have trouble identifying colored people. But within these small islands between the wars I have borne witness to persecution of the Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Irish, Scottish, Welsh—and yea, even the English—whose only crime was that they sought the right to work for their daily bread. And the self-created ghetto was never the answer.

But come Wednesday Arthur Scargill's inspired resolution on behalf of the National Union of Miners will be moved, and it is this resolution that has Neil and Roy boy wetting their platform seats. For the resolution will demand that the next elected Labour Government pay back to the miners' union two million dollars that Ma



IN NOVEMBER WE REMEMBER

IN MEMORY OF

The Defenders of the IWW Hall

at Centralia, Washington

November 11, 1919

and

The Deportees of Concrete, Washington

November 11, 1924

Joe Murphy

Occidental, California

(Received after the November issue of the IW had gone to press)

# Salvadoran Labor Struggles

The Salvadoran Workers Central (CTS), a 40,000-member union, has withdrawn from the pro-Duarte coalition UPD because of the failure of El Salvador's president to live up to his campaign promises. The UPD had made a "social pact" with Duarte providing support for his election in exchange for reform commitments. CTS representatives said Duarte had not kept his promise to deal with human-rights abuses and negotiate with the insurgent FMLN-FDR.

The August 9th CTS announcement came amid continuing government repression against labor and *campesino* leaders. That same day: (1) Doroteo Gomez, a legal advisor to the National Labor Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS), was hanged in his cell at the National Police Headquarters a week after his arrest. (2) Ramos Marquez, general secretary of the poultry workers' union, was kidnapped. (3) Miguel Lopez, general secretary of the National Peasants' Association (ANC), was abducted.

Recent mass actions called in response to similar captures have met with some successes. Facundo Mauricio Ramirez of the Bank Workers' Union, a member of the FENASTRAS executive council, was released after work stoppages in 30 workplaces demanded his freedom. Salvador Rodriguez Duarte, general secretary of the Transport Union, also was released, after union members had threatened to walk off their jobs, paralyzing public transportation.

But the whereabouts of Elsy Esperanza Martinez, a member of ANDRES, and Vilma Mendez, a leader of the bakers' union, are still unknown.

Meanwhile, labor unrest continues at the water company, where the firing of 125 members of the water workers' union, SETA, including members of the union's executive board, has led to yet another strike.

In July, a coalition of unions, including SETA, led protests against a proposed 60% fare increase announced by the Association of Salvadoran Bus Owners. Although some of the bus lines are privately owned, others are workers' co-operatives. The Federation of Bus Co-operatives, Senacitas, opposed the fare hike, calling instead for increased government transportation subsidies. The FMLN urged people not to pay the fare increases, and warned the companies that it would destroy the busses of firms that attempted to raise fares.

Thatcher's High Court legal vultures ripped off in "legal" fines from the miners'-union fund, and that Neil's future Labour Government, if elected, also re-instate sacked miners and review the cases of all miners jailed during or after the strike.

The leader of the Labour Party has stated openly that whatever the conference decides he will not hand back the miners' money or review their cases, arguing that the Law is the Law, and as a Law-abiding party the Labour Party must uphold the Law. But the sad truth is that in their struggle to form the Government of Great Britain the working-class Labour Party leadership believe they need the mass of soft-center middle-class votes, and for that the militant miners who fought the year-long coal strike must be sold out; for the leadership of the Labour Party seek empty power in exchange for principles.

Meanwhile, another car goes up in flames in Brixton, and I will once again phone Railton Road to ask if my mates are all right.

Arthur Moyse, London

## DOWN WITH LANDLORDS

Usually the point of rent strikes is to withhold the money until the landlord makes repairs, gets rid of rats, or whatever. But the Irish tenants' union, the Aontacht Cumann Riartha Aitrebhtoiri (ACRA), is challenging the right of landlords to collect ground rent at all.

Ever since the early invasions of the realm, the people of Ireland have been paying rent for the land they live on to the descendants of various invaders. Hauling down the Union Jack and running up the Tri-color over the 26 Counties made little difference: The rents went on to an estimated total of 10,000,000 pounds a year, despite the bleats of politicians of all stripes that they were iniquitous.

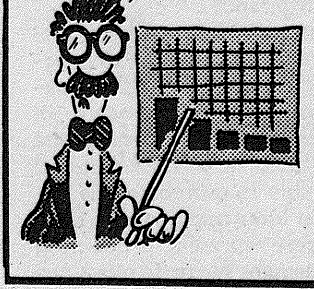
In 1974 the ACRA started calling on people not to pay and not to succumb to pressure to buy out the landlord's title. As of March, the ACRA estimated that 8.4% of residents had bought out their ground rent, while about 20% were paying rent and about 71% had joined the withholding campaign.

Since the start of the campaign, 6,000 ACRA members have been taken to court for non-payment. Of those, 163 have received jail sentences, though only three actually served time. (The same Irish landlord, Henry Hunt, was the claimant for 159 of the sentences.) Of the three jailed, two were members of the Post Office Workers Union.

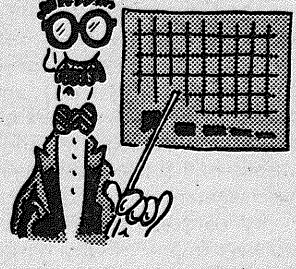
The first Union member jailed, John O'Reilly, served only two days of his ten-day sentence. He was released when his union threatened to close down the international telephone exchange and the then-Government paid his fine to avert the closure. The second member, Willie O'Toole, was in jail for three days, during which no postal deliveries were made in the Dublin area. (The third person jailed was a member of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, which did nothing.) Noting that two of the three jailed were tenants of Henry Hunt, the Dublin Council of Trade Unions resolved in October 1983 that if Hunt brought non-payment action again, his firm (Henry Hunt Limited) would be struck.

Also in July, the General Association of Salvadoran University Students (AGEUS) called on Duarte to "capture the death-squad leaders in his cabinet", after a communique signed by the Secret Anti-Communist Army named 11 National University students and faculty members as activists in FMLN organizations, and gave them a week to get out of the country. The threats came after the Government detained 10 students and teachers following a march by 20,000 students demanding funding for the University. As the *Industrial Worker* goes to press three are still in prison.

...THE U.S. CUTS WAGES TO COMPETE WITH JAPAN, WHO CUTS WAGES TO COMPETE WITH KOREA, AND SO ON AND SO FORTH...



...UNTIL WORKERS EVERYWHERE EARN NEXT TO NOTHING AND CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY THE PRODUCTS PRODUCED...



## WORLD LABOR NEWS

**AUSTRALIA:** Support for the embattled Queensland power workers continues to mount (see the September and November *IWs*). On September 16th 8,000 Queensland coal miners staged a 24-hour strike, causing \$10 million in lost production. Two days later 30,000 building workers also struck for 24 hours. Yet while these actions point to the sentiment among workers to mount a real opposition campaign, there is a growing recognition that such limited actions will not do the trick of turning the tables on the bosses. Voices are being raised in favor of an unlimited general strike, coupled with a total blockade of Queensland.

Workers at Provincial Trades Limited in Colmsie, Brisbane, voted in support of such a strike at a stop-work meeting. Similar motions have been passed at the Co-meng engineering workshops in Granville and at the railway workshops in Chullora, both in Sydney.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions, however, is doing everything it can to stifle any such actions in order to defend its cozy relationship with the ruling Australian Labour Party; and the rank-and-file mechanisms for bypassing the ACTU are not yet strong enough to organize an adequate response. The overriding task ahead is to build these organs of self-managed struggle.

**FRANCE:** New work plans by the Renault car manufacturers led to a blockade against the movement of machinery from Renault plants in Northern France to subsidiaries in Spain. The blockade culminated in a two-week campaign of direct action by groups of Renault workers and rail workers to prevent a trainload of machinery from reaching its destination.

Rail lines were severed and removed en route. A ballast blockade held up the train for just under a week, and near Douai a large group of workers laid siege to the train and captured it. Several hundred riot police were called in, and the train was recaptured near Bordeaux following a pitched battle between workers and cops. It took over a thousand police to free the train, which was then escorted, under heavy armed guard, all the way to the Spanish border. A final protest in Paris snarled rush-hour traffic as thousands of Renault workers blocked the Champs Elysees with their vehicles.

**POLAND:** Women textile workers at the Zyrardow Stella textile factory pulled off a successful on-the-job strike in late August. Workers in one department began the action when they refused to turn on their machines at the end of the breakfast break, and other workers joined in till all production was halted.

The strikers refused to talk to the plant director, and laughed at a prosecutor who appeared on the scene to warn the women of the dire consequences of engaging in an "illegal" strike. Finally a representative of the Ministry of Labor and Wages arrived, but the workers refused to send a delegation to meet him, preferring instead to allow each woman to speak for all. As a result the workers got a pay raise within two days, and workers in another plant were promised a return of free Saturdays.

**ITALY:** Revolutionary railway workers in Rome are putting out a shop paper, called *Braccio di Ferro* (Iron Arm), as part of their campaign against restructuring of state railways which threatens to eliminate thousands of jobs, cut out miles of track and service, and speed up the remaining workers. The workers' committee that puts out the bulletin is calling for the formation of general assemblies and councils of revocable delegates to organize the struggle.

Mike Hargis

## SCABS QUIT OVER PAY CUTS

16 out of 30 strikebreakers hired to haul coal from an A. T. Massey mine in Kentucky quit after the company cut their pay from \$37.50 a load to \$10. Mine Workers have been on strike for over a year against Massey, co-owned by Royal Dutch Shell and the Fluor Corporation, both of which have major investments in South Africa including coal mines. The UMW charges that Massey is trying to introduce "slave labor" conditions like those it enjoys in South Africa to its US mines.

# LABOR IN NORTH AMERICA

## WORKERS PROTEST ARBITRARY FIRINGS

Nearly 150 workers have been fired by Youngstown's Schwebel Baking Company for the most petty of reasons, and sometimes for no reason at all. One worker was fired for clocking in 10 minutes early for work, another for putting some bakery sugar in his coffee. A woman was fired as a "safety hazard" because her attractive appearance was said to "distract" her fellow workers. Another worker was fired for not wearing safety gear that the company had never issued to him. In the face of such outrages, Bakers' Union Local 19—which supposedly represents Schwebel workers—has stood passively by. Fed up with this situation, workers formed "Families Against Schwebel Employment Tactics" (FASET), and launched a boycott against all bread and bun (Schwebel) products for Deli Rye, Fisher, Giant Eagle, Open Pantry, P.Q., Pullman Wheat and Rye, Roman Meal, Salt Free, Super Fresh, 'Taliano, Tip Top, Town and Country, and Valu-King.

Workers have also begun picketing the plant, and have sued Schwebel's. For more information write to FASET, Box 2676, Youngstown, Ohio 44507.

## KILLING US SLOWLY

At least 6,928 accidents involving toxic chemicals have occurred in the US in the last five years, killing more than 135 people, injuring nearly 1500, and causing 217,450 to be evacuated, according to the draft of a study commissioned by the Environmental Protection Agency early this year. This compilation is only a partial list, because data were drawn only from selected areas and information banks. Had the entire country been surveyed, the number of accidents would be two and a half to three times higher, according to the consultants who prepared the study. But even this admittedly-incomplete listing reports that five accidents a day released toxic chemicals from small and large facilities, most of them involved in chemical production or storage, totaling some 420 million pounds of chemicals.

Common chemicals were culprits in large numbers of accidents, chlorine being responsible for more deaths and injuries than any other (9.6%). The study did not say what proportion of the dead and injured were chemical-plant workers and what proportion were members of the general public, but the consultants estimated that most of the dead appeared to be workers, while injuries were evenly split. About 70% of the deaths and injuries involved liquid chemicals, 25% gasses, and 5% solids. Deaths in large companies seemed involved chiefly with chemical production, those in small companies more often with chemical use.

## NEW GRAPES, OLD BOYCOTT

The boycott against California table grapes is on once again. The United Farm Workers of America (UFW), instead of leafleting and picketing grocery stores as it did a decade ago during the first grape boycott, is using computerized direct-mail techniques to target the consumers most likely to support the cause.

Some 80,000 grape workers are employed in California, only 3% of them unionized. The UFW is calling for a contract with grape growers to provide for "free and fair elections" and the opportunity to "negotiate in good faith".

# NOTICE? DID YOU NOTICE? DID YOU

**VDT TROUBLES:** Occupational- and environmental-health researcher Dr. Irving Selikoff reports that the non-ionizing radiation produced by VDTs (see last month's column) is similar to the pulsed magnetic fields long known to produce birth defects in laboratory animals. A small-scale study conducted by the Campaign for VDT Safety showed 30.6% of the women VDT operators studied reporting miscarriages, and 6.8% reporting children with birth defects. Both these figures are significantly above the US national averages of 10% and 4% respectively.

**COST OF RACISM:** Differential exposure to environmental toxicity helps push the rate of cancer deaths among black men 45% higher than among white men, the death rate for cancer of the esophagus three times as high, and the death rate for prostate cancer twice as high. The incidence and mortality rates for cervical cancer in black women are about two and a half times the corresponding figures for white women. Coronary heart disease rates are twice as high among black women as among white women.

**WOMEN WIN UNEMPLOYMENT COMP** for no child care: When Betty Boren, a restaurant waitress in Kern County, California, couldn't find a babysitter to care for her four children when she was re-assigned to start work at 5 am, she quit and applied for unemployment benefits. Her claim was denied because the California Unemployment Code disqualified workers who left their jobs for "domestic duties" and who were not the "sole or major support" for their families. After years of litigation, a California court of appeals recently ruled that statute unconstitutional. The Boren case was certified as a class action, and so the State must now pay retroactive benefits to Betty and all other women who were wrongfully denied benefits between 1968 and 1976 because of that law.

## HEADS OF THREE UNIONS SUSPENDED FROM JOBS

A federal judge has ordered the heads of the three largest unions representing US Government workers suspended from federal employment for 60 days because they supported Mondale's Presidential bid. The three have vowed to appeal the decision, which marks the first time in its 46 years that the Hatch Act (which prohibits most political activities by federal workers) has been enforced against union officials. While all three are full-time union officials on leave from their government jobs (and have been for from 14 to 26 years), the suspension could affect retirement benefits and the three's ability to return to federal employment.

## TORONTO BANK WORKERS STRIKE

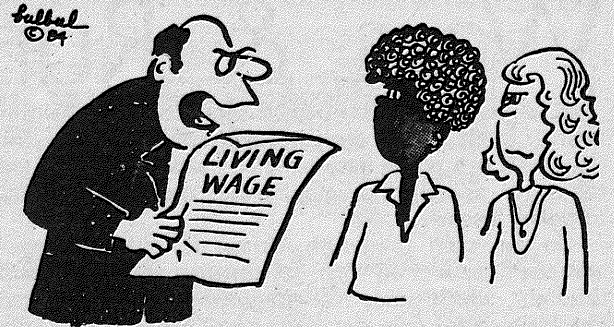
Toronto bank workers have been on strike against the Imperial Bank of Commerce since June 12th, when 40 workers occupied their offices in the Bank's VISA department overnight before leaving to walk picket lines. They were joined September 18th by mail-room workers. No negotiations have been held since the workers went on strike, and the Bank is insisting on no wage hikes, the right to lay off and promote without regard to seniority, the right to discharge sick or disabled workers, and other concessions. The Bank has been able to maintain operations with scabs, but supporters are trying a variety of tactics [including mass rallies to deposit \$1 each in a solidarity account for strikers at the Bank, marches of strikers through non-striking banks leafletting workers and encouraging them to organize, and telephone blitzes to urge management to bargain (incidentally tying up the Bank's phone lines)]. This is the first Canadian bank strike to come to our attention since the Service, Office, Retail, and Wholesale Union of Canada (SORWUC) drives were smashed several years ago.



## ANTI-CONCESSIONS CONFERENCE SET

The National Rank and File Against Concessions will hold its founding conference December 7th and 8th at Chicago's Mart Plaza Holiday Inn (350 North Orleans). The conference will include workshops on fighting concessions in steel, auto, and shipbuilding and maritime; how to bargain against concessions; problems of Southern labor; strike strategies; building local anti-concession coalitions; and legal problems in fighting concessions. Speeches from a number of Steel Workers, Auto Workers, and United Food and Commercial Workers local officials are also scheduled. For more information contact Dave Foster, USWA Local 7623, 2315 Irving Avenue North, Minneapolis 55411, (612) 588-4847 or 458-0799.

**AND THE RICH GET . . . :** According to the Congressional Budget Office, the social-welfare cuts started in 1981 cost households with incomes below \$10,000 an average of \$390 a year, while the enlarged loopholes such as accelerated depreciation handed households with incomes of \$10,000 or more an average yearly windfall of \$8,270. Thus by 1984 the poorest 20% of the US population were receiving 4.7% of the nation's income (their lowest share since 1953), while the wealthiest 20% were reaping 42.9% (their highest share since 1947). And the latest atrocity, the Gramm-Rudman amendment to the debt-ceiling bill, will slice food stamps and child nutrition, already slashed by \$12 billion since 1981.



**ONE MORE UNREASONABLE DEMAND AND THIS COMPANY MOVES TO CHEAPER LABOR!**

## BUYING OUT THE BOSSES: A BILL OF GOODS?

Should workers buy the means of production? The strategy of employees buying up their own troubled companies received a ringing endorsement in October at a Chicago conference. But this enthusiasm may be due to the fact that the conference, which looked for innovative solutions to the Midwest's industrial crises, was attended heavily by community activists and neighborhood economic-development types, and only very lightly by union activists.

Threatened with plant closings or demands for massive wage and benefit concessions, workers are opting instead to buy their firms. Their financial leveraging tactics are not much different from those of corporate raiders like T. Boone Pickens—raising a small amount of cash and pledging the firm's assets to borrow the rest. But the corporate raiders go after healthy companies whose underlying value isn't reflected in their stock price, while workers, for the most part, are taking on the basket cases of corporate America.

Whether that is an adequate basis for revitalizing American industry seemed doubtful to the few union representatives present at the conference.

"First they (the bosses) cut back on preventive maintenance," observed one member of United Steel Workers District 31. "Then they cut back on research and development, then outside sales, then everything becomes a patch job. Then they say to the workers: 'If we don't have concessions, we'll have to close the plant.'"

"They hold out a candle of hope: 'If you buy it, maybe you can save your jobs.' The workers are looking for hope. They fall prey to [the same] money manipulators who raped the company in the first place."

The businesses the bosses have let the workers buy have been those about to fail—a new form of lemon socialism. Generally, the reason the plant is failing is not likely to be inept or wasteful management (which worker-managed re-organization could cure). Either the entire industry is in decline, or this particular business has been gutted, usually to raise funds for more-profitable investment elsewhere. To keep competitive, the new worker-owned business needs large-scale re-equipment investment. But such massive funding is not available to companies which—because of their leveraged buyout—have already borrowed to their limit. And if new equipment is not available, then management (which typically has little worker input) must cut its costs any way it can—usually by laying off some of the worker "owners" who sacrificed so much to buy the company.

**NEED FOR CONCERTION:** The National Labor Relations Board has upheld the firing of Michael Kemp, a former security guard in a Saint Louis, Missouri shopping mall. Three years ago, the people who ran the mall ordered the guards to just get the drunks and their cars off the mall's property and onto the public streets. Kemp told local reporters what was going on, and the firm managing the mall fired him for violating company policy while talking to the press. Kemp appealed to the NLRB, and after much delay the Board ruled that the firing was lawful because what he did did not qualify as "concerted action". So as you blow the whistle on your boss, always include a demand for union recognition.

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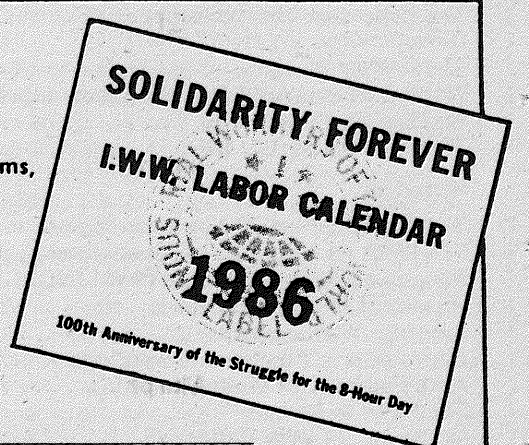
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# Wars & Rumors of Wars

SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE show internationalism: In their quest for the perfect crowd-control weapon, the South African police have sampled weapons from around the world, as well as developing their own contributions to police arsenals.

On their own, the South African police have discovered the "Pepper Fog" tear-gas dispenser and the "Sound Curdler", which sends high-frequency shrieks that can physically bowl over demonstrators. From the US, the police have tested the "Photic Driver", which sends glaring flashes into crowds, along with "Chemical Mace",

the "Electro-baton", and the "Taser Gun", which delivers electric shocks. From Europe has come the "adhesive rain", which could be used for "sticking demonstrators together and rendering them immobile". The Swiss police offered skunk odor with which to flush "rioters" from houses into which they may have fled.

**COPENHAGEN SYNDROME:** This disease attacks those who express views unwelcome to the US Government, and hence unwelcome to the boss press. The usual symptoms include sudden inability to make one's views known.

the price tag) or even the \$21 cost to IWW members, I hope many will check it out from their public libraries.

One of the reasons I dedicated my book to the IWW and its "heroic legacy of struggle, sacrifice, and militancy" is my belief in the union's impact on every aspect of American life, not just the workplace. It is this impact which forms the crux of my book, which I'm sure workers will find a celebration, not a rejection, of the IWW. I feel strongly that the small number of militant workers who attended the recent IWW convention had more class consciousness in their little fingers than all the Lane Kirklands, Jackie Pressers, and other labor fakirs have combined.

In Solidarity,  
Donald Winters

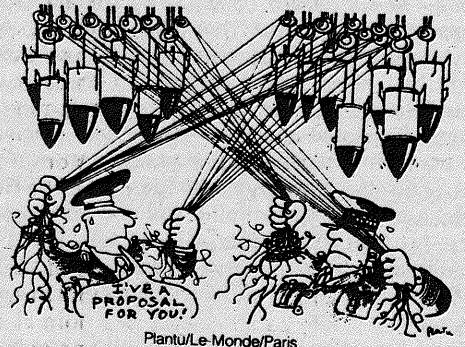
Jon Bekken responds: FW Winters does indeed contrast the IWW to the Billy Sundays of the day, instead seeking to compare us to millennialism (Pages 66-67) and to the Social Gospel-style religion that competed with Sunday's ilk (for example, Pages 22-26). I cannot speak to FW Thompson's review of the earlier dissertation or what changes might have been made in the text since then. But FW Thompson did *not* assert that "many" Wobs shared the Social Gospel view, merely that some did. Yet not only does the book consistently refer to the IWW as a religious movement, it offers a definition of religion—an ideology that seeks to develop working-class solidarity and class consciousness, and motivate a struggle against capitalism toward the end of creating a new order (Page 11)—tailor-made for this task. Winters explicitly argues that the IWW is a religion, even while noting that Wobblies like FW Thompson disagree.

The two IWW members around whom Winters builds his case that the IWW was grounded in religious belief and practice (Chapter 2) are Eugene Debs—never active in the union and a member for only a very brief time—and Father Hagerty, who while prominent in the IWW's formation, left very early. Bill Haywood is barely mentioned in the book, and the other Wobblies referred to appear mainly in Chapter 5 (on IWW poetry), which I noted was "interesting, though fundamentally misdirected".

The IWW's impact was indeed broad and vital, but does not constitute the basis of this book. Instead, the book is a misguided attempt to portray the IWW as a religious movement and to examine our relationship to American religion.

## STAR WARS PIE IN THE SKY

Not surprisingly, the companies that are receiving millions of dollars to find a way to "protect" us from nuclear weapons via the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) are the same firms that manufacture nuclear weapons. The early leaders in SDI research funding are the prime contractors for the Trident missile (Lockheed), the B-1 bomber (Boeing and Rockwell), the MX missile (Rockwell and TRW), and the sea-launched cruise missile (McDonnell Douglas).



For politicians, as for military contractors, the early allocation of Star Wars funds is a case of the rich getting richer. More than 77% of SDI contracts in 1983 and '84 went to states or districts whose Congressional representatives sit on the committees with the most power over weapons funding: the House Armed Services Committee and the Senate Defense Appropriations Committee. And 90% of the SDI awards in those years went to just four states—Alabama, California, Texas, and Washington—all heavily dependent on military contracts for jobs and income. When members of Congress from those states face pressure from their constituents to vote in favor of Star Wars, it will most likely be organized in many cases by the arms companies themselves, as in the late '70s, when Rockwell mobilized its employees to send 80,000 letters to Congress during the campaign to save the B-1 bomber.

## IN WHOSE INTEREST?

"Without being radical or overly bold, I will tell you that the Third World War has already started—a silent war, but not for that reason any less sinister. This war is tearing down Brazil, Latin America, and practically all of the Third World. Instead of soldiers dying, there are children; instead of millions of wounded, there are millions of unemployed; instead of destruction of bridges, there is the tearing down of factories, schools, hospitals, and entire communities.... It is a war by the United States against the Latin American continent and the Third World. It is a war over the foreign debt, and one which has as its main weapon a weapon more deadly than the atom bomb, more shattering than a laser beam...." [from a statement by Luis Ignacio Silva (Lulua), Brazilian labor leader, before the Conference on Latin American and Caribbean Debt, Havana, August 1985]

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A Workers' Guide to Direct Action: 50¢. New York IWW, PO Box 183, New York 10028.  
Fellow Union Member: 10¢ each; bundles of 5 to 15, 5¢; 16 to 50, 3¢; over 50, 2¢. Tacoma/Olympia IWW, 2115 South Sheridan, Tacoma, Washington 98405.  
Introduction to the IWW: 10¢ each; bulk rate 40% discount, paid in advance. San Francisco IWW, PO Box 40485, San Francisco, California 94140.  
Solidarity Bulletin (monthly publication): \$10 a year. Vancouver IWW, PO Box 34334, Station D, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6J 4P3.  
IWW baseball caps (one size fits all): \$4 each, add \$1 each for shipping. University Cellar IU 660 Job Branch (checks to IWW), 341 East Liberty, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107.

## readers' soap box

### SOUL OF THE WOBBLIES

Needless to say, I disagreed strongly with your review of my book (*IW*, November 1985, Page 11) and feel that you misread or misrepresented *Soul of the Wobblies* entirely.

Rather than refute your arguments point by point, I would like to respond to a few of the more glaring distortions. To begin with, the very title of your review—"Sky Pilots or Rebel Workers?"—is very misleading. The rebel workers of the IWW, who led some of the most important strikes in American labor history, are not equated with the "sky pilots" of the Progressive Era (such as the Salvation Army and Billy Sunday) but are emphatically contrasted to them. As Fred Thompson pointed out in his review of the dissertation version of my book (*IW*, July 1981) I thoroughly reject "sundry efforts to equate the IWW with a church" and seek simply to demonstrate the reciprocal relationship between American religion and the IWW at the beginning of the 20th Century. Thus the "bizarre contention" that the IWW is a religion is not my contention at all.

Secondly, you accuse me of spotlighting "marginal figures" of the IWW rather than those Wobblies who represented the union's attitudes. Unless you consider Joe Hill, Bill Haywood, Arturo Giovannitti, and Covington Hall "marginal figures", this charge is absolutely absurd. Father Thomas J. Hagerty, an important figure in the early years of the IWW and primary writer of the Industrial Union Manifesto, viewed religion and unionism as completely separate. Many others, however, as Fred Thompson points out in his review of my dissertation, "did not maintain that partition, sharing rather the Social Gospel view that a Christian's duty here on earth was to fight for social justice, whether bishops approved or not".

Rather than rejecting my book as approaching "total worthlessness" as you have done, I urge Wobblies and others interested in labor history to read *Soul of the Wobblies* and judge its value for themselves. Although I share your belief that few people would be willing to pay the sizable cost of \$27.95 (I had nothing to do with

## IWW LABOR HISTORY CALENDAR

The IWW is producing an attractive 14-page labor-history calendar for 1986. This 11-by-17-inch calendar will feature dates drawn from labor history from around the globe, with striking graphics depicting the struggles of our fellow workers to build a better world. It will be available this fall for \$4.95, with our normal discounts for bulk orders. Don't miss it!

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# Marion Lockdown Continues

October 26th, 1985 was the second anniversary of the lockdown at the Marion federal prison in downstate Illinois. During this time a bad situation has degenerated from worse to incredible.

Since October 1983, most of the 350 prisoners have been held in small one-man cells 23 hours a day, with meals shoved in through the door. They are allowed out of their cells for one hour to "recreate"—but only one at a time and inside a special cage built for that purpose. They get outdoors for one hour a week, wearing shackles and handcuffs. Three showers a week is maximum. No personal property and no tobacco. But three books at a time are permitted, as is one 10-minute phone call—every three months.

Such is the life of the *average* inmate. More troublesome types (about 70 these days) are put in the Control Unit, a super-segregated section where privileges are even further limited and strip searches and rectal probes are common. On the other hand, some co-operative people (about 60 at present) are sent to the Honor Unit, where conditions more nearly parallel those of a normal prison.

No one in the Federal Government is apologizing for Marion or suggesting the lockdown will ever be lifted. Earlier this year, at a United Nations conference in Italy, the director of the US Bureau of Prisons lauded Marion's effectiveness. The Marion warden has repeatedly told inquirers that the permanent lockdown is necessary because "we get the worst there are at this place".

Yet Marion is not reserved for the nation's most vicious and unmanageable inmates. Private consultants hired by the Bureau of Prisons (on the orders of a US House subcommittee) determined that 80% of Marion's prisoners were neither especially incorrigible nor especially prone to violence. Some had been sent there after participating in work stoppages at other prisons or being caught with narcotics or other contraband. Others had been aggressively involved in lawsuits against the prison system. Some had been assigned to Marion just because there was an empty cell available.

The mere existence of Marion seems to be raising the levels of tension and repression throughout the US federal prison system. Because transfers to Marion are so arbitrary, inmates at other prisons know they can be sent there for even the pettiest reason. And the Marion practice of shackling and handcuffing prisoners whenever they are outside their cells has been rapidly spreading throughout the whole system.

## WORLD LABOR NEWS

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Police have detained over 4300 people under the ongoing crackdown, 1700 of whom are still in custody. Hundreds more have been arrested and are being held under South Africa's catch-all security legislation or on criminal charges. But when police arrested several shop stewards at Volkswagen's Uitenhage plant and tried to question them about their union activities, the firm's 3,000 black workers downed tools, refusing to return to work till the union leaders were released. Volkswagen executives then called police, who released the men. As South African workers become increasingly organized, and better prepared to use their power on the shop floor to win their demands, many more such victories will be won.

Plans for a new federation of non-racial unions are continuing, though the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) has dropped out of the unity process, insisting that union leadership should be restricted solely to blacks. FOSATU and several major independent unions are moving ahead on plans for the new federation, which will include some 400,000 members organized into non-racial industrial unions.

**BOLIVIA:** The general strike against new anti-worker austerity measures was crushed in mid-October, with 27,000 silver and tin miners (the last holdouts) returning to work in exchange for the release of 97 union leaders imprisoned for calling the strike and the cessation of military attacks and shootings against the miners and their families. The Bolivian Workers Center (COB) intends to continue fighting the austerity measures, and is demanding that the foreign debt be repudiated.

**ICELAND:** Women workers in Iceland recently held their second one-day general strike protesting their work situation. As with all other nations, women workers in Iceland lag far behind their male co-workers in pay and working conditions. However they seem to have a good grasp of effective tactics, and may not be behind in the porkchop department for too much longer.

The new strike, like its predecessor of 10 years ago, shut down much of Iceland's economy because of the widespread participation of office and clerical workers. Other jobs done predominantly by women also had a high rate of participation.

The President of Iceland, who is a woman, did not work on the day of the strike. She did, however, sign back-to-work legislation (which she could have vetoed) designed to prevent stewardesses working for Icelandic Airlines (Icelandair) from taking part. Happy to say, the stewardesses ignored the legislation and took part in the strike, thereby winning some concessions from their employers. Solidarity works, as does the general strike—a point that the North American labor movement might keep in mind.

**SOLIDARNOSC ARRESTS:** On October 2nd, Polish police arrested Andrzej Michalowski for "organizing illegal actions aimed at sparking public unrest in the province of Gdansk". Michalowski, who had been on the

The situation in Marion has been attacked not only by prisoners'-rights groups, but also by members of the Black Liberation Movement, the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, and the Puerto Rican Independence Movement. It should be attacked by all political activists, who should realize how easy it is for the State to define inconvenient politics as criminality. But most important, the whole working class should keep in mind that the prison population is composed almost entirely of working-class people. The bosses who rob us and poison us almost never see the inside of a prison cell. The occasional member of the owning/ruling class who is unlucky enough to be convicted of something (like those sentenced in the Watergate case) will certainly never see the inside of Marion. That's reserved for the working class.

## PRISONERS DEMAND HUMAN RIGHTS

Prisoners in the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility have long been fighting to secure basic human rights. Their main grievances include being denied the right to possess a radio, to purchase hygienic articles, to supplement their meager meals with commissary items, and to receive newspapers, magazines, or adequate medical care. These demands have been pressed for months through a lawsuit, a hunger strike, and other measures, but without effect.

Recently four prisoners—frustrated by the lack of response to these reasonable demands—took some prison guards hostage, holding them for 15 hours till they were permitted to speak to the media to make their demands and conditions known. The hostages were released unharmed, but none of the demands have been met and the four prisoners are being held in strip cells in complete isolation.

FW John Perotti, who helped these prisoners prepare their lawsuit, asks that fellow workers write to prison director Richard Seiter (Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, 1050 Freeway Drive North, Columbus, Ohio 43216) asking that prisoners under his jurisdiction be treated as human beings, and that their demands be met. He notes that "all of these things are basic necessities and needs which they should be permitted regardless of status". Because of previous efforts by *IW* readers, Ohio prisoners are now being permitted to receive the *Industrial Worker*. If we are persistent, perhaps more can be done.



Leahy/The Bulletin/Sydney

strike committee in the Lenin Shipyard when martial law was imposed, was arrested in 1982 and went underground while out on parole. On October 13th, shortly before elections, at least 35 dissidents were arrested—including Solidarity activists Jacek Kuron, Zbigniew Romaszewski, and Janusz Onyszkiewicz—on the ground that they were conducting a "rough and vulgar" election-boycott campaign. But older Poles waxed philosophical. As Lech Walesa observed: "Before World War II, communists were being detained before elections; and now they're doing the same thing to us."

**JOE HILL IN AFRICA:** This summer students at Ibadan University in Nigeria put on Barrie Stavis's play *The Man Who Never Died*. The journal *West Africa* ran an extensive review of the play, ending: "The audience left the theater with Hill's songs on their lips—a fact which set one wondering why the director hadn't put those songs in the otherwise generous production pamphlet."

The fellow worker who sent the clipping notes that Nigerian union officials go to Eastern Europe for training and make speeches about socialism, but don't seem to be doing much to help the workers fight retrenchment and austerity.

## BOOKS ON IWW HISTORY AVAILABLE AT DISCOUNT

Greenwood Press is making four books on IWW history available to readers at a 25% discount. Philip Foner's *Fellow Workers and Friends* (an oral history of IWW free-speech fights) is available for \$22.50, as is *At the Point of Production* (an excellent collection of essays on the IWW in specific areas and industries edited by Joseph Conlin). Conlin's *Bread and Roses Too* (essays about the IWW of uneven quality and insight) is \$21, as is Donald Winters' *The Soul of the Wobblies* (a remarkably poor book on the IWW and religion). Each of these titles is in hardcover, and prices include discount and postage. Checks should be made out to the IWW.

# IWW Directory

**ALASKA:** Southeast Alaska General Membership Branch, c/o Bird, 1680 Harbor Way, Juneau 99801. Barry Roderick, Delegate, Box 748, Douglas 99824. Ruth Sheridan, Delegate, 4704 Kenai, Anchorage 99508.

**AUSTRALIA:** IWW Delegate, 417 King Street (1st Floor), Newton, Sydney.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA:** Vancouver General Membership Branch, Box 34334 Station D, Vancouver V6J 4P3, Canada, (604) 876-8438. West Kootenay IWW Group, PO Box 941, Nelson V1L 6A5, Canada.

**CALIFORNIA:** San Francisco Bay Area General Membership Branch, PO Box 40485, San Francisco 94140. Little River IWW Group, c/o PO Box 302, Little River 95456. R.M.R. Kroopkin, Delegate, 3924½ Park Boulevard, San Diego 92103. Richard Ellington, Delegate, 6448 Irwin Court, Oakland 94609, (415) 658-0293. David Bernreuter, Delegate, 718 Cayuga Street, Santa Cruz 95062.

**FLORIDA:** Fred Hansen, Box 824, New Port Richey 33552.

**GUAM:** Shelby Shapiro, Delegate, PO Box 864, Agana, Guam 96910.

**IDAHO:** IWW Delegate, Route 1, Box 137, Potlach 83855. Southeastern Idaho Forest Workers Affinity Group IU 120, Box 764, Pocatello 83201.

**ILLINOIS:** Chicago General Membership Branch, 3435 North Sheffield, Suite 202, Chicago 60657, (312) 549-5045. Meetings first Wednesday of each month, 7:30 pm. Champaign-Urbana IWW Group, Jeff Stein, Delegate, Box 2824, Station A, Champaign 61820.

**INDIANA:** Mitchell Rice, Delegate, 7333 West Isom Road, Bloomington 47401.

**KANSAS:** General Defense Committee, Arthur J. Miller, Secretary, PO Box 6130, Kansas City 66106. IWW Delegate, PO Box 522, Wichita 67201.

**KENTUCKY:** Louisville IWW Group, 2024 Baringer Avenue, Louisville 40204.

**LOUISIANA:** IWW Group, PO Box 16725, Baton Rouge 70893.

**MANITOBA:** Winnipeg IWW Group, "Haywire Brack", Delegate, Box 161, Station C, Winnipeg R3M 3S7, Canada.

**MASSACHUSETTS:** Boston General Membership Branch, Box 454, Cambridge 02139. Meetings first Monday of each month, 522-7090. Western Massachusetts IWW Group, Box 465, Hadley 01035.

**MICHIGAN:** Southeast Michigan General Membership Branch, 42 South Summit, Ypsilanti 48197, (313) 483-3478. Meetings second Sunday of each month. University Cellar IU 660 Job Branch, 341 East Liberty, Ann Arbor 48107. People's Warehouse IU 660 Job Branch, c/o Burkhardt, 727 West Ellsworth Road, Ann Arbor 48104. IWW Delegate, 415 Ethel, Grand Rapids 49506.

**MINNESOTA:** Twin Cities General Membership Branch, Nancy Arthur Collins, Delegate, 1621 Marshall (Number 3), Saint Paul 55104.

**MONTANA:** Clark Fork Valley IWW Group, PO Box 8562, Missoula 59807, (406) 728-6053. A. L. Nurse, Delegate, Route 5, Box 88, Thompson Falls 59874, (406) 827-3238.

**NEW YORK:** New York City General Membership Branch PO Box 183, New York 10028. Henry Pfaff, Delegate, 77 Eckhart, Buffalo 14207, (716) 877-6073. Jackie Panish, Delegate, 99-12 65th Road, Number 5-J, Rego Park 11374, (212) 868-1121.

**OHIO:** Southwest Ohio General Membership Branch, Box 92, Clifton 45316, (513) 767-9217. Prison Organizing Project: Dennis Wolfel, Number 145-554, Box 45699, Lucasville 45699-0001.

**ONTARIO:** Brian Burch, Delegate, 257B Carlton Street, Toronto M1A 2L4, Canada.

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Tom Hill, Delegate, PO Box 41928, Philadelphia 19101.

**SOUTH CAROLINA:** Harbinger Publications IU 450, 18 Bluff Road, Columbia 29201, (803) 254-9398.

**TEXAS:** Andrew Lee, Delegate, 3402 Enfield, Apartment B, Austin 78703, (512) 472-7854. Gilbert Mers, Delegate, 7031 Kernel, Houston 77087, (713) 921-0877.

**WASHINGTON:** Bellingham General Membership Branch PO Box 1386, Bellingham 98227. Seattle General Membership Branch, 3238 33rd Avenue South, Seattle 98144. Tacoma/Olympia General Membership Branch, 2115 South Sheridan, Tacoma 98405, (206) 272-8119. Orchard Workers Organizing Project, Box 2223, Chelan 98816. Walla Walla IWW Group, PO Box 392, Walla Walla 99362.

**WISCONSIN:** Madison General Membership Branch, c/o 1846 Jenifer, Madison 53704, (608) 251-1937 or 249-4287.

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Many thanks, fellow workers, for your generous support.

# Chrysler Deal: A Mixed Bag Settlement

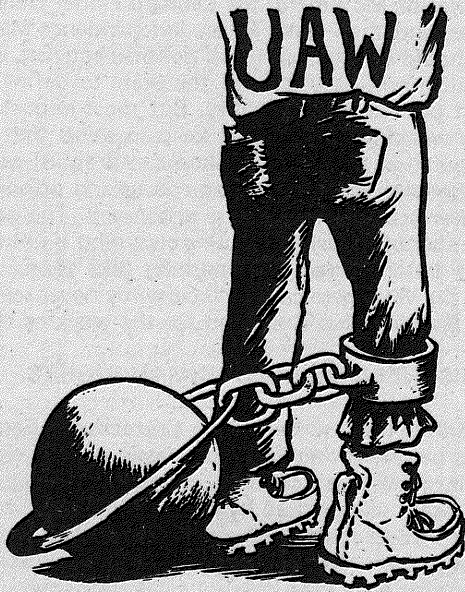
A short strike by 80,000 US and Canadian Chrysler auto workers has ended in a new pact restoring Chrysler workers to parity, but also containing some dangerous implications for the future. US and Canadian workers settled separately, and many details of the agreements were not available at press time.

The Canadian auto workers approved a two-year contract which restores wages to parity with those paid by Ford and GM, and expires at the same time their agreements do. Each worker will receive a bonus of around \$750 (US) and a pay hike of about 5½% over the two years, plus a special Canadian adjustment to compensate for the weak Canadian dollar.

US workers are saddled with a three-year agreement, which means that when the Canadian contract expires they will have to decide whether to scab on their fellow workers across the border or to violate their contract's no-strike provision. Wages will rise 2¼% in the first year of the contract and 3% in the third year. (There will be no pay hike in the second year, but workers will receive a 2.25% lump-sum payment that year.) Each worker will also receive a bonus of \$2,120 to help make up for the deep concessions granted the company between 1979 and 1982. (The US bonus is larger than the Canadian because workers in the US accepted deeper pay cuts and agreed to a three-year contract.)

The US contract also provides for modest profit sharing and a small fund to assist workers displaced by new technology or subcontracting. Finally, the contract provides various "understandings" on subcontracting (which has led to tens of thousands of layoffs as the company cut labor costs by using non-union workers) and work-rule changes.

Both the US and Canadian contracts provide for in-



GUARDIANGRAPHIC BY JOHN BAUMANN

creases in retirement benefits to parity with Ford and GM, modest bonuses to retirees, and transfer of stock—or equivalent cash—to Chrysler workers. The stock was placed in an Employee Stock Ownership Plan as compensation for earlier concessions, but could not be sold or voted until retirement. US workers have 183 shares, worth nearly \$7,000. Canadian workers, who rejected some concessions, have 139 shares worth about \$5,200 US. The Canadian union had been particularly insistent that this "worker-owned" stock be turned over to the

Chrysler workers. In addition, a two-tier pay scheme earlier granted to Ford and GM, whereby new hires will make only 85% of regular wages, has now been extended to Chrysler. After 18 months on the job, new hires will receive the regular rates.

Thus the UAW has returned to approximate parity between the Big Three auto makers. And Chrysler was unsuccessful in its efforts to get massive concessions patterned after the recent UAW sweetheart agreement with GM's Saturn division. But it is only in the context of the massive concessions the UAW has been handing the auto companies over the last six years that this contract can be regarded as an advance. At the same time, the decision to allow the US contract to expire one year later than the Canadian contract and the contracts with Ford and GM undercuts the union's leverage, and makes it extremely difficult for workers to act in solidarity with one another.

As with Ford and GM, many automobiles sold under the Chrysler name are manufactured in Japan and South Korea. The UAW will doubtless continue its efforts to erect legal barriers to the importation of these models, fearing that otherwise the company will transfer ever more production to these plants in search of lower wages. A more productive course of action might be to make contact with Chrysler workers in other countries and help them raise their wages and working conditions to North American levels through union organization and struggle. Then, instead of being played off against each other, we could advance together toward industrial democracy through One Big Union solidarity.

JB

## 35% FOR -- CONTRACT PASSES

Northern California Teamster grocery drivers and warehouse workers rejected a contract proposal by a large majority for the fourth time in four months. But since the vote fell just short of the two-thirds majority the Teamsters required to reject a "final offer", the contract—covering 1900 Safeway and Lucky supermarket workers—"passed" with 64.4% voting against it.

The concessions pushed through include a two-tier wage scheme, cuts in vacation time and sick leave for new hires, and creation of a "supplemental" workforce with few rights or protections.

## Around the Union

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA: Local Wobs report that our November issue made a big splash along the banks of the Big Muddy, and ordered a hundred more. In addition to distributing the *Industrial Worker* and other IWW literature, these FWs have been collecting signatures for the IWW's Peltier and British miners amnesty petitions, organizing a Big Mountain Day rally, and helping organize an anti-apartheid rally.

MADISON: The Branch set up a literature table at an October 23rd showing of *The Wobblies* and met with fellow workers at a grocery store considering lining up in the OBU.

CHICAGO: Branch members sold songbooks and distributed *IWs* with a cheery "We Never Died, Says We" insert during showings of *The Wobblies* at a local cinema October 24th through 27th. The following day saw local Wobs leafleting British Air offices, demanding amnesty for British miners imprisoned and blacklisted as a result of the recent coal strike.

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN: Local Wobs have brought out a new edition of their newsletter, including the following items: Fellow Workers in the U Cellar Job Branch are wrapping up negotiations, bringing some positions into the bargaining unit that were given quasi-managerial status by management shortly before the first contract was reached. Because the Cellar finished the year in the black, workers will benefit from the negotiated profit-sharing plan, receiving up to \$100 each (based on number of hours worked). An immediate pay hike for the entire bargaining unit of 45¢ an hour, with another 15¢ in February, is called for by the tentative agreement. In recent months the Cellar branch has supported campaigns against South African apartheid and US intervention in Central America.

The People's Warehouse Job Branch recently won a grievance over management's firing of an agency-shop worker. The Branch's October meeting elected a negotiating committee which will bargain with management or money issues only. Fellow Workers at the University of Michigan Hospital, whom the Branch has been assisting for some time in their struggle with management over speedups and pay cuts, are pressing a mass grievance over management's decision to exclude their base wages from an announced across-the-board 5% pay hike. Past mass grievances by these women, employed in the medical-transcription department, have been largely successful, but have been followed by selective reprisals against "troublemakers". The new grievance was initiated by women who had not been singled out in the past, showing that the University's divide-and-conquer tactics have failed.

On October 13th the Branch sponsored a talk by Philippine labor activist Maynardo Palarca, General Secretary of CENTRUM (a regional federation of 150 unions on the island of Mindanao with some 80,000 members). FW Palarca gave a rousing speech concerning the labor struggle in the Philippines, following which the Branch took up a collection to aid organizing efforts there.

RC

# Irish Workers Take Action

PUBLIC EMPLOYEES STRIKE IN IRELAND

IRISH WORKERS OCCUPY SHOE FACTORY

The 26 Counties of Ireland were brought to a virtual standstill October 15th as 170,000 public-service workers staged a 24-hour work stoppage. In addition to closing government offices, the strike shut schools, hospitals, employment exchanges, swimming pools, libraries, airports, and harbors. The unions operated only emergency services, and even in traditionally-conservative unions the strike had nearly 100% support.

The strike, the largest in the history of the country, was called by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to protest the coalition government's "gross interference" in collective-bargaining procedures by ordering a wage freeze for public-sector workers.

(continued from Page 1)

# Steelworkers Need Organization

If Wheeling-Pittsburgh had been the strikers' only adversary, there is little doubt that the strike would have ended in at least a limited union victory. However a syndicate of 12 banks led by Manufacturers Hanover Trust, which among them hold \$332,000,000 of the company's \$514,000,000 in outstanding debts, has stepped into the conflict. While refusing to negotiate with the union, the banks have at several points in the negotiations threatened to force Wheeling-Pittsburgh into liquidation if the company fails to gain this or that concession.

This pressure was the key reason for the loss of the workers' original pension plan. There is reason to doubt whether the threat would have been carried out, since a working Wheeling-Pittsburgh will probably pay back its debts in full eventually, while the sale of the company's assets would only regain them a relatively small proportion of their loans. But the threat was taken seriously by the union and its members, who in the end feared the poverty of unemployment more than the concessions they made.

Aside from its stated goals, what did the union gain from the strike? Damned little. The Chief Executive Officer at Wheeling-Pittsburgh, Dennis Carney, who made the decision to provoke the strike and angered many union members with his loud anti-union statements, was replaced by George Ferris, a retired Ford executive with a more conciliatory style (though any pleasure the strikers may have felt at getting their boss fired was soured by a ruling that his contract—unlike the union's—was valid, entitling Carney to retirement and pension payments that will total \$2,300,000 over the next 10 years).

The union will gain two representatives on the company's board of directors, only one of whom may vote. Advisory labor-management committees will be set up at the nine Wheeling-Pittsburgh plants to "monitor the management of the company's assets". One-time cash payments will be made to an unspecified number of workers to be laid off under the agreement—presumably at the company's remaining unmodernized facilities. Demands by the banks to lower total labor costs to \$16.50 an hour and by the management for widely-expanded management rights (notably the right to fire or discipline without grievance or negotiation) were resisted.

Given the history of concessions at Wheeling-Pittsburgh, union members had essentially two choices if the banks were serious in their threats: to accept the best terms available, or to force Wheeling-Pittsburgh into

liquidation as an object lesson to other companies. In the latter case, some locals would probably have survived and been able to deal with the companies that bought up Wheeling-Pittsburgh's facilities. At the same time, there would have been widespread layoffs, some plants would never have re-opened, and others would have re-opened under open-shop conditions.

Given the USWA's inability to find new jobs for its laid-off members, and the misery and poverty suffered by most of the thousands of steelworkers laid off during the last six years (since 1979, employment in basic steel manufacture has dropped from 450,000 to 250,000), it is easy to understand the choice the Wheeling-Pittsburgh workers made. Only if the banks were bluffing or, as seems more likely, were simply willing to give the company more leeway than they claimed, would the continuation of the strike under the usual ground rules have offered any chance of victory.

There are forms of solidarity action (sympathy strikes, mass picket lines or sit-down strikes to prevent dismantling of "liquidated" plants, sympathy action by bank workers—unorganized in the US in any case) that were once common in the US and are still used in many other countries, that could have won victory for the Wheeling-Pittsburgh unions. However the dedication of the US labor movement to "legal" and "legitimate" tactics (odd, since almost all unions were founded by way of strikes that were illegal at the time) will not, unfortunately, be changed overnight—although the mass picket at Beach Bottom may be a sign that it is changing.

Some strikers were willing to take the chance that the banks would blink—or that the strikers could survive if they didn't. Six of the Wheeling-Pittsburgh USWA local presidents voted against putting the settlement to a ratification vote. As Richard Shoppe, president of USWA Local 1190 in Steubenville, Ohio, said of the contract: "It's a monster. I hope it never passes."

In the meantime, the other steel companies have made it clear that they see the Wheeling-Pittsburgh contract as the pattern-setter for their 1986 negotiations with the USWA. One steel-industry labor-relations executive remarked:

"This contract is going to have a lot of other companies licking their chops. The settlement certainly sets a downward trend."