

BREAK GIVEBACK SPIRAL

**CALIFORNIA CANNERY WORKERS
HANG TOUGH IN BITTER
FOUR-MONTH STRIKE**

The largest US cannery workers' strike in more than 30 years—in the small coastal town of Watsonville in "Steinbeck country" about a hundred miles south of San Francisco—is entering its fourth month with growing support and workers' morale. The outcome is crucial to the whole canning industry, and will affect far more than the 2,000 workers—over 85% Chicano and Mexican women—involved in the strike. Of added significance is an internal struggle in huge Teamster Local 912 which has been going on side by side with the battle with the bosses.

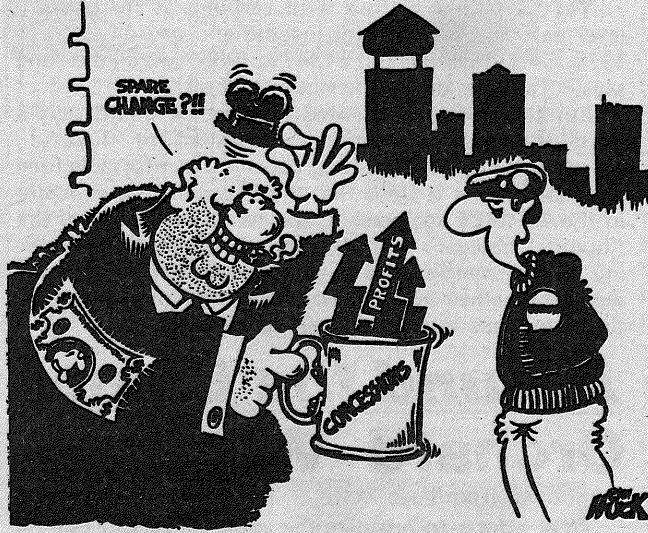
Watsonville, a town of 23,000, is known as the "frozen-vegetable capital of the world", packing over 40% of the frozen vegetables in the US—mainly broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, and spinach. The massive walk-out began last September 9th when the two largest food processors in the area, Watsonville Canning and Richard Shaw, announced wage cuts of almost \$2 an hour, reducing starting pay to \$4.75, plus 47 other take-aways in proposed new union contracts.

Owners of the two struck companies claim that they cannot compete with other canneries, even though the Teamsters Union recently negotiated new contracts providing a wage of \$7.06 an hour at five other area canneries. Observers see the struck companies' tactics as an obvious attempt at union-busting, and a spokesman for Richard Shaw has publicly admitted that they hope to build new open-shop canneries, a development which could have far-reaching effects on the entire industry.

The strike has been marked by over 300 arrests of strikers, supporters, and innocent bystanders, many over false or questionable enforcement by hostile police of an injunction limiting pickets to four at an entrance. One storage plant has been burned down, and strikers speculate that this may have been done by the owners to collect insurance money and discredit the union. There have been a number of clashes between strikers and scabs or police, and unionists claim that police once threw a mace bomb into the union hall while 30 people were present.

The union is suing the Watsonville Police Department for five million dollars for violating strikers' civil rights. Meanwhile, a massive statewide support effort has been launched by unions, churches, and student and minority groups; free toys have been collected for a gala holiday celebration for the strikers' children; and the local community, except for police and elected officials, is almost unanimous in support of the strikers.

I visited the picket line, where small groups of Latino women of all ages stood in the chill wintry weather with pride, determination, and optimism in their eyes, while company security guards sneered at them through high chain-link fences. "They think they can push us around just because we're women and Mexicans," one woman told me. "But I'll be out here until we get the treatment we deserve—even if it takes the rest of my life." "We can't live on \$4.75 an hour," said another. "My son had to drop out of high school to get a job to help support us. My neighbors have lost their home already because of the way the owners have betrayed us."



Strikers said that despite the drastic cuts in pay and benefits, local Teamster leaders did not want the strike, but were forced to support it because of the overwhelming sentiment of the rank-and-file. Union members said that though the Teamsters for a Democratic Union have enthusiastically supported the strike, it was the rank-and-file members who actually brought it about. Management has tried to provoke conflict between Teamster officials, Teamsters for a Democratic Union, and other dissidents by distributing leaflets exaggerating their differences. But workers have not taken the bait, and the different factions have presented the owners with a solid front. For example, when management raised its original wage offer of \$4.75 an hour to \$5.05 (compared to the previous \$6.66), union members voted by an amazing 800-to-1 margin to reject this paltry offer.

Since that vote management and union officials have agreed to discuss their differences with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, but at this writing the management still refuses to soften its stand. It is the off season, and although the owners have been able to recruit only 200 to 400 out-of-town scabs to replace the 1,000 people usually working in December, union officials do not expect a breakthrough until the spinach season begins in March, when the entire workforce would normally be employed.

When I visited the busy Teamster hall in mid-December, hundreds of strikers were coming there for their weekly 55-dollar strike benefits. A dozen volunteers sat at a long table, helping members with various problems involving landlords, banks, utility cutoffs, repossessions, welfare, and the like. Outside, rival factions passed out campaign literature for the upcoming union election in an apparent spirit of good-natured competition.

The rank-and-file slate, led by Gloria Betancourt, had a platform stressing representation of women workers, a decrease in the \$212,000-a-year total paid the four full-time officials to \$100,000, parity with other unionized workers earning \$7.06 an hour, a workers' committee in every workplace, a union education program, bi-lingual union meetings, and "full participation in the union for all members". Teamsters for a Democratic Union fielded a candidate only for the position of president. Whatever the results of the election, the overwhelming involvement of the workers in the strike is likely to ensure increased rank-and-file democracy in the union.

Meanwhile, support for the strike has been increasing dramatically. Cesar Chavez and other prominent leaders have addressed the strikers, and local community support is snowballing as teachers and many others have come out publicly on the side of the strikers. Behind the desperation of the struggle is the uneasy knowledge that if the two canning behemoths can break the union in Watsonville, it will be a giant step toward destroying the union in the entire industry.

Those wishing to help in this crucial struggle can send checks or money orders to Teamsters Local 912, 163 West Lake Avenue, Watsonville, California 95076.

Eugene Nelson

DAY-CARE SCARE: The call for fingerprinting all child-care workers, charges *City on a Hill*, a student weekly at the University of California at Santa Cruz, is a diversion from the real dangers of child care, such as overworked and underpaid staffs.

**FALSE START FOR ANTI-
CONCESSIONS FIGHT**

Grocery workers in Southern California have just accepted a two-tier concessionary pact, after their union forced locals that had rejected the contract to re-vote. The UMW has called off its 15-month strike against the A.T. Massey Coal Company. Austin, Minnesota meat-packers continue their strike, having turned down a concessions package promoted by their union international. TWA workers are on the verge of accepting concessions as the *Industrial Worker* goes to press.

Even though it has been proven that concessions do not save jobs—but are merely another ploy to put more money in the bosses' pockets and divide workers against themselves in a desperate battle to see which will allow themselves to be exploited most ruthlessly—the bulk of the US labor movement has made no effort to stem the tide of givebacks or enable labor to fight more effectively.

Drawn by the need to mount a fight against concessions, nearly 500 rank-and-file workers and local union officials turned out for a Chicago conference December 7th and 8th to form the National Rank-and-File Against Concessions. Unfortunately, the organizers stifled discussion among delegates and squelched the presentation of ideas about how to mount effective resistance to the bosses' onslaught.

IWW members were briefly arrested at the organizers' request for exercising their right to distribute literature, and only the protests of people waiting to register forced the convenors to back down. Efforts to prohibit distribution of the *IW* and an IWW leaflet suggesting ways to fight concessions were also unsuccessful. But the organizers did succeed in restricting dialogue and the rank-and-file to the margins of the conference, dominating

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Around the Union

DETROIT PRINTING WORKERS LINE UP

Six of seven workers at Detroit's American Speedy Printing joined the IWW in December, and are preparing to enter negotiations as the *Industrial Worker* goes to press. These workers are employed at two small printing shops, and met with IWW (and GCIU) representatives over several weeks before lining up. They join three other Michigan print shops in the IWW (in Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, and Morenci). With these new additions, and the decision by workers at Ann Arbor's Tenant Union to join, membership in the Southeast Michigan GMB is up to 115, including five shops: Partners Press (IU 450), People's Warehouse (IU 660), Speedy Print (IU 450), the Tenants Union (IU 670), and the University Cellar (IU 660).

FW Fred Chase reports that the Branch hopes to line up the seventh Speedy Printing worker soon, and that workers are whipping up a proposed contract modeled on existing IWW contracts in the area with improved wages and benefits as priorities. The employer (who works in the shop but is ineligible for membership) has recognized the union and hopes to reach an initial agreement by mid-January.

**BAD YEAR FOR
ORCHARD ORGANIZING**

A short season, high seasonal turnover of workers, a fearful and apathetic workforce, and language barriers contributed to a generally unsuccessful fall for IWW organizers in the apple orchards.

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Boss-court injunctions have restricted Watsonville cannery workers to token picket lines. (photo by Eugene Nelson)



"Too much barking?" says the advertisement. "Then teach your dog the skill of silence!" Right next to these informative words is an illustration of a dog's collar with an insidious-looking box attached to it, put out by Tritronics Incorporated, that can be mail-ordered for \$195 to ensure that you will be relieved of stress and irate neighbors. So much for the freedom of speech in Freedomland, and one wonders where the Society for the prevention of Cruelty to Animals has gone.

One reason for having a vociferous beastie on one's premises is to give clear notice that said premises are well-occupied, should any disrespecter of the sanctity of someone else's hearthside happen along. Of course if such electronic devices were designed for politicians, statespeople, or other such unproductive forms of life, yours truly would be inclined to bend his humanitarian inclinations a bit and even contribute out of his meager resources to see that the needy would not be without. But for his four-legged fellow creatures, never!

It seems that the Immigration boys are not concerned only over "wetbacks" these days. They also seem to be a little upset with "mattress-backs": those who use the sacred institution of holy matrimony with a citizen of Freedomland to acquire permanent residence on these shores. While such goings-on are not quite as fraudulent as Indian treaties, the Immigration boys quickly bear down on newlywed couples when one of them happens to be an alien who is applying for naturalization as the bride or bridegroom of an American citizen.

The happy couple are hustled off into separate rooms where they are asked such questions as "What color is your bedroom ceiling?", "When did your husband last bring you flowers?", and "What does she take in her coffee?", with the obvious idea that conflicting answers would be sufficient grounds for more thorough investigation and inquisition.

This, of course, is not such a new wrinkle. The local blurb apparently was a little short of copy, so a feature article was born. When my better half was interrogated on her application for permanent residence, the scion of immediate canine ancestry who was her investigator was giving her a lot of flak, but she stood her ground so well that he soon decided to act a little more polite. It's a shame that some of my antecedents had such a lackadaisical immigration policy. This once-open land has certainly become infested with a lot of equine fecal matter.

Not only does Freedomland have its Fort Knox, where a sizeable portion of the World's gold supply is stashed away from the grasping clutches of various and sundry unammurrican elements, but there also seems to be a "Fort Knox of Seeds" in the shape of a nondescript three-story building on the Colorado State University campus. Herein are contained the seeds of countless varieties of plant life, many of them either extinct or on the verge of extinction. Seeds for 3,000 kinds of barley, 5,000 types of peas, and over 50,000 separate varieties of maize, to name just a few.

Compared to plain old gold, this stash of seeds is a far more precious treasure, considering the future generations of Humanity it has the potential of saving from starvation. For this critical treasure to be housed in one building, despite the possibility of fire, earthquake, or even nuclear bombardment, is a profound indictment of the short-sighted stupidity of our species. One can excuse the ego trip of wanting to hoard all the gold in one spot under one flag, but when the same thing is done with the future food supply for billions of people, it goes beyond rationality.

Apparently others agree, as a little-publicized Global controversy is brewing over the fact that this precious future food supply is being hoarded in one place and not more evenly distributed around the World. This controversy currently has its chief battlegrounds at a United Nations meeting in Rome and at a federal courthouse in Washington DC.

Since the rise of the class system among the species Homo sapiens, with its attendant nation states and profit systems, more species of plant and animal life have been rendered extinct than since the disappearance of the dinosaurs. And in the present era of rampant industrial militarism, thousands of life forms disappear each year. The only thing the two-legged species has been unsuccessful in exterminating is the cockroach; and the way things are going, it looks like the little rascals are going to be looking for something else for dinner after they have eaten the last of our carcasses.

But what else can you expect when too many decisions affecting far too many people are made by far too few?

C. C. Redcloud

BOSSSES' DICTIONARY

EFFICIENCY:

When the boss fires half the workers and makes the others half work twice as hard

Editorial:

Let's Stop Mismanagement

A fourth of the world goes hungry. A third of all adults can't read or write. Yet more than three trillion bucks have been spent since World War II to create 12 times the amount of nuclear explosives that would be needed to kill everyone on this planet. There is 1 soldier for every 43 people in the world, but only 1 physician for every 1,030.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has taken a look at the 33 million Americans living below the official poverty line of \$10,609 for a family of four. It finds that 23 million of them are white, while 2 million of them work steadily all year but still don't earn enough to make ends meet. In 1984 the poorest 40% of American families got less than 16% of the national income, their lowest share since 1948. The top 40% got 67.3% of the national income, their highest share since 1948.

Yet "a family of four with earnings at the poverty level paid \$269 in federal income and payroll taxes in 1978, \$459 in 1980, and \$1,147 in 1985". As an old song says, "Taxation drains the victim's blood."

But the Business-Oriented Conference Board says a third of the US population can now afford "luxury", loosely defined as something above "a comfortable lifestyle". However it finds that these specimens are mostly in the 40-to-65 age bracket, and tend to drop out of the "luxury" category on retirement. A fourth of the working class is pensioned off, and the other three fourths wonder whether this sentences them to work to support them or keeps them from joining the breadline.

Around the Union Orchard Workers...

(continued from Page 1)

IWW efforts to organize the apple pickers in Central Washington are now in their second year—but most of the people our organizers made contact with last season didn't return this time around. And while there has long been a substantial Spanish-speaking population in the apple orchards—concentrated in the lower-paying orchards—this year growers shipped in large numbers of Mexican workers who had never picked before, and were thus unfamiliar with the industry, prevailing wage rates, the dangers of pesticides, and so forth.

Faced with the constant threat of deportation and the promise of earning US dollars (which go much further down in Mexico), these workers presented special barriers to organizing that could not be overcome in the two-month season. The problem was aggravated by the fact that most of our organizers spoke little or no Spanish, and did not have supplies of Spanish-language literature on hand.

While there continued to be sporadic resistance and walkouts in the fields—even among Spanish-speaking workers—it proved difficult to build a base of union support. As a result, the fellow workers in the Orchard Workers Organizing Project are considering new tactics for the 1986 season.

In addition to preparing materials in Spanish, greater efforts to establish a base among pickers who live in the area (and thus tend to work every season) and to organize related industries such as packing and local distribution are planned.

So although little progress has been made during the recent season, the IWW will be in the orchards again this year making an organized push for better pay and conditions.

IWW 1986 OFFICERS ELECTED

The IWW, by a referendum ballot of the membership, has approved several amendments to its constitution and has elected new officers to serve in 1986. Fellow Worker

*EDUCATION *ORGANIZATION *EMANCIPATION



AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL
ONE UNION ONE LABEL ONE ENEMY

Industrial Worker

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Yet last year the Holland Hotel in New York City made a profit of close to \$4 million. It rents rooms at \$60 to \$100 a day to homeless folks on welfare, with the Government picking up the check . . .

Fred Thompson

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 HAS 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.

Mark Kaufmann, a warehouse worker from Ypsilanti, Michigan, has been elected General Secretary-Treasurer. Fellow Workers Allan Anger, Jon Bekken, David Jahn, Greg McDaniels, Rochelle Semel, Dave Tucker, and Tom Wayman have been elected to serve on the General Executive Board. FW Janet Miller has been elected First Alternate to the Board. Fellow Worker John Garland, a member of the IWW's University Cellar IU 660 Job Branch since its inception, will serve in Chicago as Office Manager.

NEW SHOP JOINS IWW

The most recent addition to the IWW's ranks is the staff of the Mifflin Street Community Co-op in Madison, Wisconsin. Founded in January 1986, the Co-op offers not only quality food at low prices, but also newsletters, nutritional and economic information, and so forth.

Mifflin Street is worker-managed, and has not succumbed to the anti-worker capitalist policies pursued by many co-ops in recent years. Mifflin Street employs seven workers, with a substantial portion of the Co-op's work done by members who receive a discount in return for volunteering at least four hours a month.

AROUND OUR UNION

HONOLULU: IWW supporters have recently distributed 50 copies of the Little Red Songbook in Hawaii and the Philippines, and have begun re-issuing the *Soapboxer* after a seven-year absence (Box 38162, Honolulu, Hawaii 96837). They have also been distributing the *Industrial Worker* and other IWW literature, and with luck we'll soon see an IWW group or branch reborn in those parts.

LAKEWORTH, FLORIDA: Local Wobs and supporters distributed copies of the *Industrial Worker* and other IWW literature at a January 12th showing of *The Wobblies* at the Finnish Workers Hall.

SAN DIEGO: FW Kroopkin reports that the October 11th student strike for divestment covering all eight campuses of the University of California was 60% effective at UCSD. Hundreds of copies of IWW literature were distributed at a five-hour rally on the UCSD campus that day, receiving some favorable response.

TWIN CITIES: Minneapolis-Saint Paul Wobs celebrated their new charter with a program of labor films and a concert by IWW singer Utah Phillips to a good crowd. IWW literature (especially songbooks) was distributed, and some participants expressed interest in forming a Starvation Army Band to join picket lines and serenade cops and VIPs. The annual book show saw the IWW's table especially busy, doing several times the usual sales. In early December FWs Nancy Arthur Collins and Greg McDaniels—both of the new branch's delegates—served 14 and 9 days respectively for their part in an anti-militarist demonstration.

DIRECT ACTION

United Airlines is learning that it doesn't pay to antagonize pilots, according to *Labor Notes*. The airline won concessions from pilots during last year's strikes, but pilots have a lot of control over the amount of fuel their planes burn, and some are wondering why they should go to extra trouble to save fuel for the company, considering United's lack of regard for them. (Fuel accounts for some 25% of an airline's operating expenses.)



TRUCK SAFETY: The US Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety (BMCS) reports that of the trucks inspected in 1985, 40% were put out of service for serious safety violations—up from 27% in 1983. The most common serious violations of BMCS regulations were brake problems, since many companies have cut back on brake maintenance to save money.

DIESEL UPDATE: New information on diesel exhaust fumes indicates that diesel fumes contain substances (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) shown to produce lung cancer in humans in other settings. Drivers and maintenance workers are the most heavily exposed, though garage and loading-dock workers can also be endangered—especially during the winter, when doors are kept closed to conserve heat. In areas with very poor ventilation, levels of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur dioxide can build up to immediately dangerous levels (symptoms include nausea, headache, dizziness, and burning in the eyes, mouth, nose, or throat), requiring evacuation of the area. In addition to ventilation and use of alternative fuels (see the January 1986 *Industrial Worker*), dangers from diesel fumes can be reduced by using only Diesel 1 fuel, which burns more cleanly and produces much fewer exhaust fumes than Diesel 2 (which many employers prefer because it's less costly—after all, they're not exposed), and frequent tune-ups, which reduce diesel fumes (more and more often skipped by management to cut costs).

Strong union organization (which can organize disruption of productivity that costs the employer more than Diesel 1 or tune-ups) can give the boss a new perspective on the costs of health and safety protection, and is, as always, the best guarantee of health and safety on the job.

ELSEWHERE IN THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM: According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, more than 14,000,000 workers are exposed to known reproductive hazards (substances that can cause increased rates of miscarriage and/or birth defects) in the US alone. These include:

(1) Radiofrequency and microwaves: VDT operators, broadcast maintenance workers, food-service workers, welders using RF welding equipment, workers using plastic heat-sealing processes, workers using microwave processes for coating, curing, drying, gelling, gluing, or laminating products: 9,000,000 exposed.

(2) Ethylene glycol: chemical workers (particularly those making antifreeze, brake fluid, glue, ink, paint, resins, and wax), metal cleaners and polishers, textile workers: 2,060,000 exposed.

(3) Formaldehyde: laboratory technicians, chemical workers (especially those making deodorants, disinfectants, embalming fluids, ink, latex, and resins), wood and lumber workers using wood preservatives, textile printers, photographic film makers, leather workers: 1,600,000 exposed.

(4) Lead: metal workers (particularly those making batteries or brass products and doing soldering or enameling), painters, building-maintenance workers, oil-refinery workers, insecticide makers, farm workers, glass and ceramics workers: 1,400,000 exposed.

(5) Chloroprene: rubber workers, chemical workers, makers of Duprene and Neoprene: 343,600 exposed.

(6) Cadmium: metal workers (especially welders, solderers, zinc-refinery workers, battery makers, and engravers), chemical workers (especially paint and pesticide makers), textile printers, farm workers: 157,400 exposed.

(7) Ethylene oxide: chemical workers, gas-sterilization workers: 139,000 exposed.

(8) Anesthetic gasses: anesthetic makers, nurses, operating-room technicians, physicians: 50,000 exposed.

Despite the focus on women's exposure to reproductive hazards (and subsequent attempts to exclude women from the more high-paying of the jobs at risk), men's exposure is in almost all cases as likely to cause birth defects, and usually carries some risk of miscarriage.

DISPOSABLE LUNGS: Several brands of low-cost, single-use respirators have recently come on the market, and employers are increasingly issuing them to workers for use in hazardous situations, especially cleanup of asbestos. Use of respirators is never good. A respirator that actually provides protection is almost always uncomfortable (due to the tight fit needed to prevent dust and fumes from leaking in), and—except for the seldom-used air-fed respirator (sort of like above-water scuba gear)—very hard to breathe through. Engineering controls to eliminate hazards from the air are enormously safer for workers (and, because they cost more, enormously less popular with employers).

Single-use respirators, however, are worse than the usual, since they apparently *can't* be fitted to the face well enough to be effective, no matter how tightly (and uncomfortably) they are worn. In spite of this, single-use respirators have been approved by the US Government (although the National Institute for Occupational

UMW Surrenders at Massey

The 15-month-long strike against the A.T. Massey Coal Company subsidiaries in Kentucky and West Virginia has been called off by the United Mine Workers. Massey was targeted for selective strike action October 1st, 1984 when the Company refused to sign the national agreement or to engage in serious negotiations with the union.

From its inception the strike has been marked by exceptional violence, as Company goons have sought to break the strike and move scab coal. The goons have fired shots into the homes of union members and officers; shot at union supporters at a market in Pike County, Kentucky; and bombed union offices. Several goons and scabs have been arrested for possession of deadly weapons, including military assault rifles. Armored personnel carriers and locomotives have re-appeared in the coal fields, as have armies of gun thugs from the Southeastern Securities and Investigations firm.

The conduct of these thugs has been so outrageous that West Virginia officials ultimately revoked their license and ordered the withdrawal of Company goons from the Sprouse Creek coal-processing plant. Massey's scab drivers have attacked picket lines and slammed into several strikers' cars, destroying the cars and sending UMW members to the hospital. When scab drivers began forcing school busses off the road, Kentucky Governor Martha Collins was forced to promise action to protect the busses.

Normally, however, the Government has intervened on the side of the Company. West Virginia has refused to enforce the state's "anti-Pinkerton" law barring the importation of out-of-state goons. More than a hundred Kentucky state police in full riot gear were dispatched for scab-herding duty in Pike County. Hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines have been levied against the union for picketing and conducting other peaceful protests. And the National Labor Relations Board has obtained an order limiting union activity at all Massey subsidiaries.

In the face of these vicious attacks, Massey workers have remained determined to win, maintaining mass pickets and carrying out direct action of various kinds (including the armed defense of picket lines against Company thugs). But now the UMW has decided to call off the strike and to order miners back to work without a

contract.

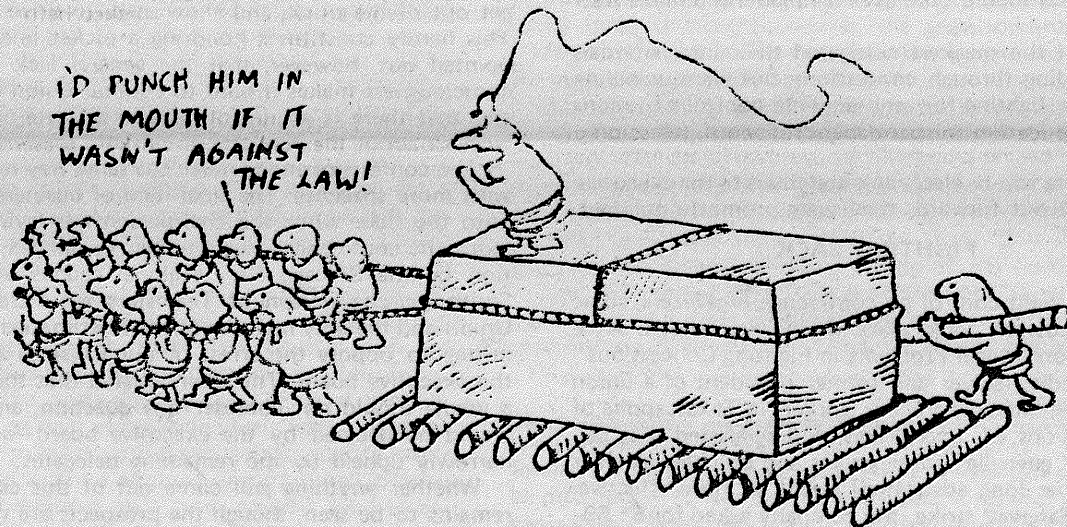
The union takes the position that with the favorable settlement in mid-December of an unfair-labor-practice case brought against Massey by the union, the strike is settled and miners should return to work under the provisions of the 1984 national agreement. (The settlement provides that Massey, which has scores of subsidiaries, will bargain henceforth as a single unit.) President E. Morgan Massey, however, has made it clear that the miners can return only on their knees. If UMW miners return, he said, it will be "without a UMW contract". This echoes his statement shortly after the strike began that "We refuse to recognize the United Mine Workers. We never have. We never will." And Massey subsidiaries made it clear that the Company would not allow union members it suspected of strike-related misconduct to return to work. In some mines, the number of union members being blacklisted under this pretense approaches half the workforce.

Nonetheless, UMW spokesperson Joe Corcoran states that "To us it makes sense to go back to work and resolve our various positions in court." Union officials, who have apparently not allowed members to vote on whether to return to work, have said that "It's going to hurt our guys to go back inside and leave some of the fellows on the outside", but apparently are content to rely on the courts to resolve the matter.

So once again we see a strike that could have been won being turned over to the bosses' courts, and hundreds of unionists facing the blacklist for standing by their union because their union will not stand by them. Many of these fellow workers also face potential fines, legal fees, and possible jail time from these same courts.

We are in a class war. In the Kentucky and West Virginia coal fields the bosses pulled out all the stops, returning to the days of gun thugs and terrorist attacks against workers' families in order to break the strike. Only an equally powerful response from the labor movement could have won the day. Instead, the UMW has chosen the path of capitulation and class collaboration, turning to courts that have shown time and again which side they're on.

JB



Somma Waterbed Strike Still On

On November 21st, 1984, Local 512 of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union demanded that the Angel Echevarria Company, maker of Somma waterbeds, recognize them as the bargaining agent for the 200 Somma workers—almost all recent Latino immigrants, and many veterans of organizing drives in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico.

The Somma workers had had enough of Echevarria's \$4.50-an-hour wages and speedups, and had built an organizing committee and contracted with the ILGWU to represent them. But the Company, owned and run by Angel Echevarria, refused to recognize the union and remained obstinately against it even after it won 70% of the votes in an NLRB election at the four Echevarria plants, whereupon the Company fired 27 supporters of the union.

On May 1st, 1985 the workers walked out for two days, getting two workers who had been unfairly fired in April rehired. One week later, Somma workers again struck for a full week. Faced with Echevarria's continued unwillingness to recognize the union, the ILGWU decided to call for a national boycott of Somma waterbeds.

By October, 200 stores nationwide had responded to union letters and informational picketing and had taken Somma mattresses out of their showrooms. Meanwhile the Company has appealed the NLRB regional office's decision that the elections were conducted fairly, and

Safety and Health advises strongly against their use), which means that workers who use them are risking not only their health, but also their chance of compensation if their health is impaired (since the legal presumption is that someone who wore an "approved" respirator could not have been at risk). Union action to boycott single-use respirators (and indeed any respirator except in unusual or emergency conditions) is urgently needed.

has sought an injunction against picketing of retail stores which would include handbilling of potential customers.

The Somma workers have appealed to all other workers to boycott Somma waterbeds and organize delegations to visit stores that still carry them. Send a letter to Angel Echevarria, President, Angel Echevarria Company, 3760 Union Pacific Street, Los Angeles, California 90023, indicating your support for the right of workers to organize and your support of the Somma waterbed boycott. And please send a copy to the ILGWU.

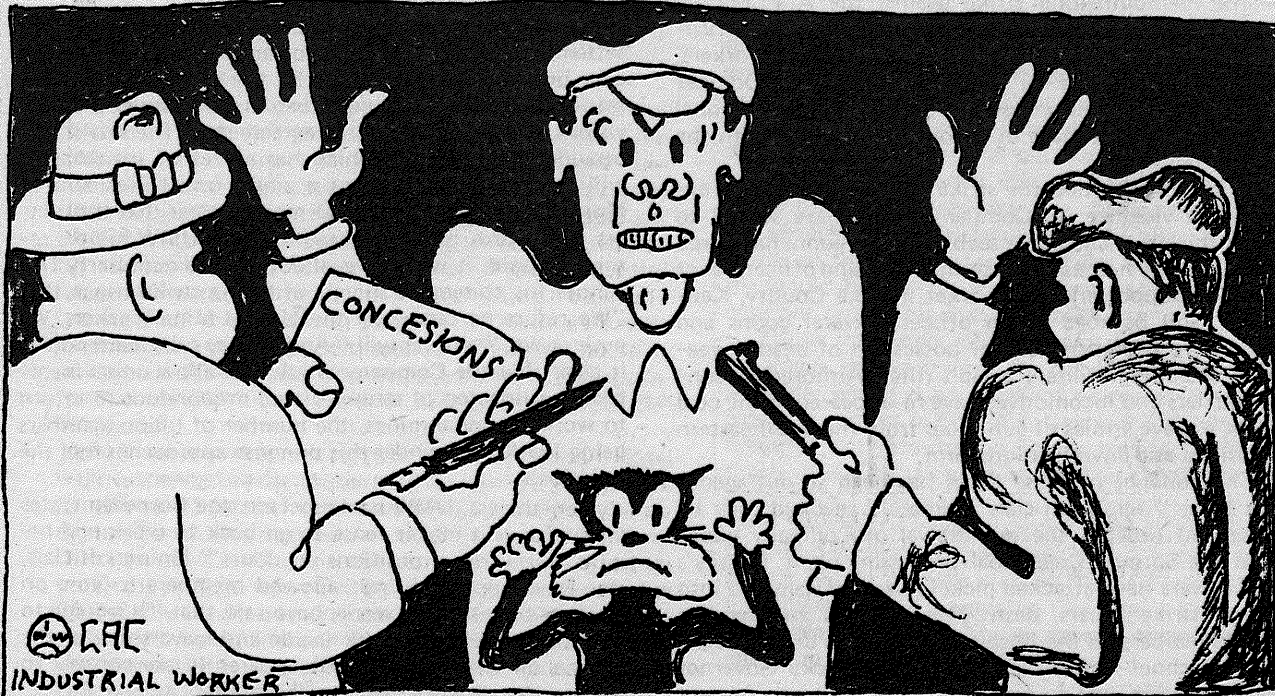
Anyone wishing to help support fired Somma workers can send a contribution to the Organizing Helping Hand Fund, c/o ILGWU, 675 South Park View Street (2nd Floor), Los Angeles, California 90057-3306.

GAO DISPUTES PENTAGON ON A-TEST RADIATION STUDY

An investigation by the General Accounting Office, a wing of Congress, has challenged the contention of a Defense Department study that none of the 42,000 men participating in the first atomic tests after World War II (at Bikini) were exposed to harmful levels of radiation. About 500 of the military personnel who took part in the tests have filed disability claims with the Veterans Administration. Because of the analysis of the Defense Nuclear Agency, all of these claims have been rejected.

At the early-December news conference to announce the GAO findings, it was reported that the Defense Department study had based its estimate of radiation levels only on what participants had probably inhaled, and had not included radioactive material they might have swallowed or considered the possibility that individuals might retain radioactive material on their bodies and in their clothes upon their return from working on ships in the target areas.

THE FIGHT AGAINST CONCESSIONS



FALSE START (continued from Page 1)

the proceedings with a seemingly endless supply of long-winded speakers.

Most of these speakers talked a good fight—but when it came to concrete tactics to fight back could offer nothing more than appeals for funds, reliance on politicians and courts, and chauvinistic attacks on our fellow workers from other countries. An exception was Steelworkers Local 1397 President Ron Weisen, who noted that a war was going on and labor had to start fighting back. Weisen suggested that instead of strikers' getting their heads broken open fighting to keep scabs out of plants, they send in their own scabs to do so much damage that the bosses would have to send everyone out. Noting that his local has been reduced from 7900 workers to 400, Weisen suggested that if the bosses don't want to make steel, perhaps workers should take over the plants and make steel themselves.

Many of the speakers castigated their internationals for railroading through concessions, but were unwilling to consider fighting for rank-and-file control of unions or engaging in direct-action tactics. Indeed, when proposals to allow rank-and-file groups to affiliate with the new organization or elect rank-and-filers to the executive board were put forward, they were promptly quashed.

FIGHTING BACK

Despite tight control by conference organizers, some useful discussion took place during workshops. At a workshop on "Legal Problems in Fighting Concessions" David Twedle, lawyer and former president of a union representing Safeway grocery workers in Texas, spoke of the limitations of long strikes, and suggested that coordinated "guerrilla" mini-strikes and quickies (such as the IWW has long advocated) might be more effective.

In the Safeway strike, the company asked for \$1.69-an-hour wage cuts for workers at the chain's 70 country stores when the contract expired. (There were another 150 city stores.) The union responded by bringing its smallest unit—a three-person store—out on strike and hiring pickets to rotate among the different stores. The workers were asked to honor the picket lines and to go home and refuse to answer their phones when pickets were in front of their stores. Everyone worked a three-day week (there was a no-picket-line-crossing clause in their contract), but workers worked overtime on days when there were no pickets in front of their stores.

After two months Safeway threatened to fire anyone who honored a picket line, so the union switched tactics, raising dues to \$50 a week. Knowing the money was going to the strike fund, Safeway refused to check off \$50 a week, prompting an unfair-labor-practice strike which the workers won. Twedle stressed the need for communication with the union if such tactics were to be effective.

In that same workshop, a San Francisco carpenter spoke of efforts to combat the two-gate system, a form of union-busting in the construction industry whereby contractors set up two separate gates on a job site. One gate is used for all union labor and material, and the other for all non-union labor and material. During the day union and non-union workers work together, but in the evening they leave by separate gates. Under federal labor law unions can picket the non-union gate but not the union gate, and so cannot shut down the job. Violations of this rule can result in contractors' suing and receiving triple damages for any losses due to picketing.

Rank-and-file construction workers in San Francisco formed a support group that could picket sites where non-union labor was being used. If they were fighting use of non-union carpenters, the support group would consist of non-carpenters who wore prominent caps and other insignia of other unions to show that it wasn't a carpenters' picket line, thus avoiding legal penalties. The fellow worker stressed the need to keep the support group ephemeral, so if a judge did issue an injunction against it it could re-form under a different name and resume op-

erations.

Of course, while we need to consider strategies to render strikes and solidarity legal where possible, this cannot always be done. At that same workshop, it was noted that Local P-9 (Austin meatpackers) face secondary-boycott charges for leafletting Hormel's banker and buyers of Hormel meats (such as Burger King), raising the question of whether unions enjoy the same rights of free speech that are supposed to apply to individuals and corporations.

In a workshop on issues facing the transportation industry, the need to organize workers for real solidarity by refusing to undercut each other's struggles was discussed. (Even where truck drivers, for example, refuse to cross picket lines, they will often pull up to the line, get out of the truck, and allow scabs to drive it across. This hardly constitutes honoring a picket line.) It was pointed out, however, that the general lack of union consciousness makes it hard to counter union scabbing, and that there is an urgent need to educate our fellow workers about the need for unions and solidarity.

The conference ended much the same way it started—with more speeches. The final item of business—forced onto the floor while the chairperson was trying to adjourn the conference—was whether to uphold the election by the Chicago-Gary regional caucus of Marilee Smith (co-chairperson of Teamsters for a Democratic Union and the only member of the interim steering committee to oppose the arrest of our FWs) to a seat on the executive board. The chair insisted that the body as a whole should not consider this question, and that it would be decided by the executive board—a decision narrowly upheld by the remaining delegates.

Whether anything will come out of this conference remains to be seen, though the prospects are not good. In the meantime workers will have to carry on the struggle against concessions both on the shop floor and in our union halls until we win. In this issue of the *Industrial Worker* we are printing reports of various fights around the country, as well as comments by some of the IWW members who took part in the conference.

LESSONS OF A 40-MINUTE FREE-SPEECH FIGHT

What happens when business-union piecards pretending to be rank-and-file militants find themselves in a crowd of *real* rank-and-file militants? Consider an incident at the National (so-called) Rank-and-File Conference Against Concessions.

Two fellow workers, members of the Chicago IWW Branch, had been invited by Conference organizers to set up a literature table featuring books on labor history. But when they showed up Saturday morning, shortly before the sessions opened, they were told that a secret meeting of a certain "steering committee" the night before had decided at the last minute to ban all literature tables. Two up-and-coming junior-league Jackie Pressers named David Foster and Fred Neufeld insisted that they and they alone were invested with the sublime authority to decide such things for us lowly rank-and-filers. Where would we be without leaders like these?

The Wobblies with the literature, however, objected to this high-handed usurpation of rank-and-file prerogatives. They found a table for themselves, set it up in the hall just outside the Conference area, and announced in good voice that high-quality proletarian reading matter was now available, whether the self-appointed censorship committee wanted it or not. Foster and Neufeld called the cops.

About 20 minutes later no less than 14 Chicago policemen arrived to apprehend the dangerous rank-and-file criminals caught red-handed in the heinous act of selling copies of *The Autobiography of Mother Jones*. At the orders of Foster/Neufeld, the two Wobblies were actually placed under arrest. But before the forces of

Law 'n' Order were able to cart them off to jail, the tide had turned.

It seems that before city cops can make arrests for misdemeanors in a hotel they have to secure the approval of the management, and this took a little time. Meanwhile, our fellow workers took advantage of this brief delay to engage in a bit of soapboxing, which is simply a matter of telling the truth somewhat more loudly than usual. As the Conference delegates stepped out of the elevators, they heard the whole story.

Most of these rank-and-file workers, who had doubtless come there hoping to find a rank-and-file conference, were not exactly delighted to see fellow rank-and-filers being held in "protective custody" on their way to the pokey. Probably also, like most workers, they just didn't relish seeing so many cops so early in the morning.

Many delegates went so far as to suggest that calling the cops and having rank-and-file workers hauled off in paddy wagons was somehow not the best way to open a rank-and-file workers' conference. Some pointed out that Foster and Neufeld were doing the work of the bosses. Several comrades declared that they would wage a fight on the Conference floor unless the Wobblies were immediately released.

Besieged on all sides by enraged rank-and-filers, Foster/Neufeld quickly gave in, apologized to their friends the cops, and sputteringly told the Wobblies they could have their literature table after all. Once again workers had demonstrated that direct action and solidarity gets the goods. The shortest IWW free-speech fight on record ended in complete victory.

Why, one might ask, wasn't this mood of not taking baloney from the bureaucrats sustained throughout the Conference? The answer is plain. The free-speech fight in the hall was a kind of spontaneous mass meeting, in which bureaucrats had no advantage over the rank-and-file. But once Foster, Neufeld, and company got into the Conference room they were able to use their parliamentary and other manipulative skills—plus some outright autocratic skulduggery (such as limiting access to the microphone)—to re-establish their authority and control.

It is amusing to note that within one hour of the free-speech victory, numerous esoteric sects of the "vanguard" persuasion set up tables of their own. These people explained to anyone who cared to listen that working men and women could never possibly achieve even the smallest gains without following their particular variety of infallible leadership. During the free-speech fight, however, these "glorious leaders" were quieter than most of the mice we've known and, with one or two partial exceptions, took no part in the struggle.

X322339

PS: By the way, fellow workers, isn't it amazing how being surrounded by 14 cops boosts literature sales? Everybody comes over to see what the trouble is, and decides that if the piecards and cops don't like it, the stuff must be good. We took in over \$20 in half an hour. Try it some time!

GOONS, PIECARDS, AND FAKERS

Walking in the door of the National Rank-and-File Against Concessions Conference with a stack of *Industrial Workers* and a leaflet put together by the Chicago GMB suggesting that real solidarity and direct action (no matter what labor law allows) are the most effective way to combat concessions, I'm stopped at the door by a man in a suit and tie who wants to make sure I'm not trying to distribute rank-and-file literature.

I (and the literature) get through. Once inside we get speeched at by piecards—some of whom talk pretty militant, though we get some flag-waving protectionist jingoism thrown in. One speaker calls for direct action on the plant floor, as well as in the community. Then they let delegates speak for a few minutes—mostly political freaks who've been lined up at the mikes for an hour or more and exhort us to form a labor party (no doubt like the one that's done so much good for our fellow workers in England).

Workshops: Mine is for transport-sector workers, and there is a lot of discussion (the only place I am to encounter free discussion during the entire Conference), including some on government-employer collusion and the need for direct action and real solidarity (such as hot cargoes, refusal to handle scab goods, and the like). A Greyhound worker from New York speaks of efforts to fight concessions during the 1983 strike (they were trying to build actions including a total shutdown of New York transit by bus and taxi drivers). Then back to the main session, to ram through a set of bylaws and officers for the new organization. (The whole thing was wrapped up in less than an hour, including the decision that rank-and-file groups could not join.)

Then the high point of the Conference: a mass picket of the *Tribune* printing plant. For only the second time during this months-old strike, *Tribune* trucks were prevented from leaving or entering the plant—this time at both gates, and for better than an hour. The picketing was brought to an end in exchange for the release of three arrested picketers, since the piecards had to get back to the hotel for another speech. (A few days later, shocked that scabs had actually been prevented from crossing the line, the Pressmen's and Typographers' in-

(continued on Page 5)

Old Beef With A New Twist

A new twist in the Southern California strike of some 22,000 Meat Cutters and Teamsters has been its defensive nature. Instead of fighting for higher pay, these people are trying to hang on to their present gains. This, in the economically healthy industry of supermarketing! Management wants to cut the meat cutters from eight hours to four; introduce a new, lower-paid classification of worker called a "meat clerk", who would perform some of the tasks now done by a professional meat cutter; and reduce the number of hours a day markets are required to have a journeyman meat cutter on duty. This sounds dandy to the 1125 supermarkets in the area that would be obliged to pay only \$7 an hour instead of the journeyman's \$13.48.

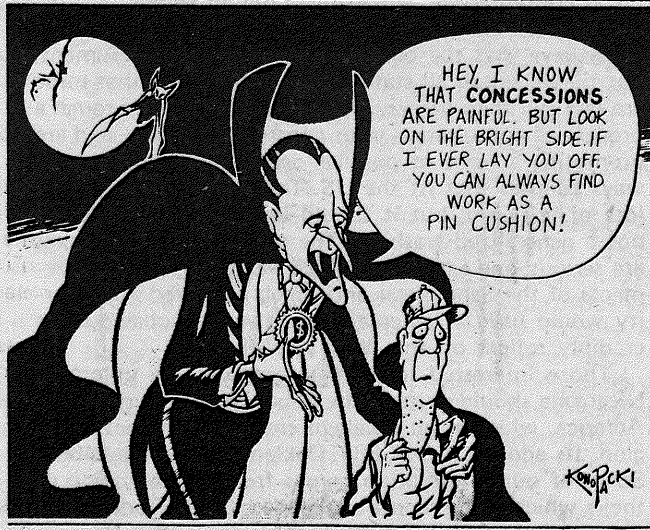
The Teamsters' main beef is management's plan to impose a lower wage scale for new employees, subcontract more work, and move into new warehouses without granting union recognition at the new locations.

Von's was initially targeted, but most other markets have locked out their employees. One exception: The Boys where your reporter continues to shop. They immediately signed an interim contract.

Just how loyal have the organized retail clerks been? Their contract won't expire till 1987. Well, their support has been spotty. Bosses have warned them that, while they can't be fired for honoring other people's picket lines, they could be replaced by non-union workers—a very touchy distinction! Anticipation of their own problems a couple of years hence may be inspiring a tad more respect than might otherwise be shown.

In former years, clerks were required to "break in" scab personnel who were scheduled to take their places at the checkout stand. You've heard of grisly cases in which condemned men were forced to dig their own graves before being shot. I'm not sure what's going on in the meat-packing room, but I'm glad I'm a vegetarian!

As of this writing, three of Von's truck drivers have been arrested for being grossly impolite to scabs grabbing their jobs. Unions and management periodically sit down and shoot the breeze together, but only hot air steams out of the conference room. With Christmas on



the way, everyone's getting nervous. Even supermarkets enjoy their highest profits during the holidays. But it looks like cold turkey down here for a while.

Dorice McDaniels

As the *Industrial Worker* goes to press, Teamsters and Meatcutters have accepted contracts granting most of the concessions demanded by management. Meatcutters originally voted to reject the contract, with three locals narrowly in favor of ratification and three against. The locals that voted the concessions down were then forced to re-vote by their international on the ground that they had not fully understood the agreement. Recognizing that their union would not stand by them, enough workers switched their votes to ratify the contract with a 54% overall vote.

Rank-and-file groups opposed the contract, which establishes a two-tier wage scheme with new hires receiving only 65% of current wages, as well as cutting shifts from eight to four hours and granting other concessions.

what tactics were used. And for all the talk about how unions must support each other, no mention at all was made of any way they might, other than fund raising. Taft-Hartley was not mentioned. Union internationals were damned a good bit, but there was no discussion about how unions can be made more democratic.

Instead, I heard a great deal of talk about how unions needed good labor lawyers and friends in government. Have no illusions, fellow workers. On November 21st, shortly before the Conference, the House of Representatives voted down requiring employers to give workers 90 days' notice before closing a plant or laying off a large portion of the workforce. Similar legislation has been introduced in each session of Congress for the last 11 years and failed every time.

So much for the temper of Congress. As for the courts, Reagan is rapidly filling them up with members of the New Right. The rulings of these Reaganites in robes are going to spell bad news for the next 20 years for blacks, Hispanics, women, and other members of racial or political minorities, as well as for individuals whose rights of privacy or liberty clash with Government security interests, or who are accused of crime or imprisoned, or who depend on Government assistance, or who want to organize militant labor unions.

In Chicago's federal court last September, a woman who worked as a cashier for A&P charged that the company promoted 27 male but no female clerks to assistant manager in the Chicago area from 1975 to 1978. A conservative majority tossed out her sex-discrimination claim on the ground that she "failed to offer evidence showing that, had she known of an opening for assistant manager, she would have applied". Even though she had repeatedly asked her store manager for training so she could advance "for example into the assistant-manager position", she had "failed to identify for which of these 27 positions she would have applied".

These are the kinds of rulings we will increasingly get from courts, and those who expect judges to hand down rulings favorable to organized labor are kidding themselves.

Fellow workers, our only strength in this upcoming struggle is in solidarity. Forget the National Labor Relations Board; it's not going to do a thing for us. Nor are the courts. Nor are legislative bodies. We make society with our labor; let us labor to remake it.

plp

STILLBORN BUREAUCRACY?

When we first received the announcement of the "Founding Conference" of the National Rank-and-File Against Concessions (NRFAC) I have to admit I was a bit skeptical about the whole affair. It was obvious from the brochure that the convenors of the Conference were local union officials, and I wondered to what extent actual rank-and-file militants were involved. Nevertheless, I felt that it was important for the IWW to involve itself in this initiative. Doing so would hopefully strengthen the IWW presence within the movement against concessions and provide us with the opportunity to make contact with trade-union activists interested in turning back the tide of decline in the US labor movement.

To say the least, my skepticism was more than confirmed by the course of events at the Conference itself. It became obvious as events unfolded that the convenors

sound of a distant drum

Cheered on by the rancid right-wing press, Neil Kinnock and Britain's right-wing Labour Party leadership are moving in for a massive interparty political trial and mass expulsions of the militant minority who control Britain's second-largest city. This political faction of the Liverpool Labour Party—who control the Liverpool Council, known as Militant Tendency, are charged with being a "Trotskyist" caucus within the Labour Party who hold their own Militant mass and minor meetings, have their own party paper, refuse to raise local taxes, insist on building more and more working-class houses, won't sack Council employees, are in Neil Kinnock's words "maggots", and refuse to rat on their election promises to the people as the London Labour Party political hacks did when, after milking the media month after month as the ranting voices of historical revolutionary socialism defying the naughty Tory Government, they literally crawled out of London's massive County Hall a few hundred yards across the Thames, booted out by Ma Thatcher's laughing Tory Party, and are now seeking new political excuses and new sties to wax fat in.

According to the right-wing press, the Tory Party, and the Labour Party's right-wing bosses, the Liverpool radicals are just plain rotten: heigh ho! But nay, not so: for all that the London politicians can offer is the old and empty political promise "When we are elected into office...", and the massive purges are now moving into action.

When Britain's right-wing trade-union godfathers betrayed the miners in their year-long strike the message was spelled out, and now the dead trees are yielding up their sour fruit as strike after strike collapses. The scab breakaway areas of the mining community have formed their own sweetheart union with the blessings of the Government coal bosses, and within seconds of tiptoeing into the manager's office have come out with an accepted 6% pay raise. And Scargill has been forced by his own left-wing executive to agree to kiss the Law's arse to enable the militant union to reclaim the \$15,000,000 the Government ripped off the striking miners' union during the long coal strike.

While Britain's teachers extend their pathetic odd-day strike into its eleventh month, the steel workers are threatening strike action over inflation-geared pay; but the authorities are indifferent to both.

But we can be thankful for the saving mercy that the political comedians responsible for instigating this right-wing pantomime do not have the power of imposing the death sentence. For this latter-day version of the farce once perpetrated on those who heeded the call of the Levellers and were ridden down by Oliver Cromwell's Ironsides for believing in the words of the hedgerow priests and the pamphlet that led them into battle that they knew to be just and glorious is to re-enact the great political purges of history, minus the bullets and blood.

Farewell Christmas and hallo 1986.

Arthur Moyses, London

were determined to exercise strict control over the Conference: from determining what kinds of literature could be distributed, to who would be allowed to sit on the organization's governing bodies, to what issues would be taken up.

Other Wobs who took part in the Conference will go into detail concerning our fight to be allowed to distribute our literature and to be recognized as a participating union, the lack of time for open discussion in the workshops, and the railroading through of the "officially" approved bylaws and candidates. However there was one incident that brought home to me the ultimate failure of the NRFAC. This concerns the "official" reaction to a proposed amendment to the pre-written bylaws which would have allowed rank-and-file caucuses and unemployed workers' committees to be represented on the NRFAC governing bodies. That reaction bordered on the hysterical.

The main arguments of the Conference leaders were (1) that it was an attempt to set up an opposition between the leaders and the rank-and-file, and (2) that it would leave the local union leaders open to charges of "dual unionism", threatening the legitimacy of the fight against concessions. It became quite clear to me from this that these self-appointed "rank-and-file leaders", caught up in their own sense of self-importance, feared the active participation of rank-and-file workers as a threat to their careers within the trade-union movement.

In the final analysis, then, what this Conference signified was the emergence within the lower rungs of the trade-union bureaucracy of a genuine desire to fight concessions, no doubt reflecting similar sentiments among the trade-union ranks, without losing control of the growing unrest at the base. However if the NRFAC is to become anything more than a stillborn mini-bureaucracy, it will need the active participation of the rank-and-file, a participation which the "leadership principle" that was so obvious at the Conference cannot help but discourage.

Still, the IWW's participation in the Conference was not a waste. We succeeded in making our presence felt, and got our literature into the hands of many trade-union activists. Let's hope they find merit in the IWW program and continue the struggle to build a real rank-and-file movement against concessions.

Mike Hargis

GOONS..

ternationals stepped in to call off mass picketing scheduled for mid-December.)

Back the next morning, bleary-eyed, for election of regional representatives to the Executive Board, more workshops, and more speeches. In the regional caucus we're subjected to an endless harangue about how we're all rank-and-filers here (even the picards) and how shameful it was that FW Rosemont made the picards arrest him. The official slate is nominated, and then us lowly peons are allowed to make nominations. When the dust has settled, we've elected a rank-and-filer (from Teamsters for a Democratic Union) and one of the slated picards. (We turn out to be the only region to break from the script.)

My workshop: strike strategies against concessions. Long speeches. A GCIU picard informs us that his Minneapolis local spent \$4 million on a two-and-a-half-year strike against local print shops. They lost, and are still spending money on lawsuits. The only ones to win, he says, were the attorneys. His advice? Make sure you have lots of money on hand if you're going to fight, and never go on strike against monetary issues. He's also into political action.

Then a speech from a steward with the Bath, Maine shipbuilders. The leadership capitulated early, we're told, saddling these workers with a no-strike clause so they can't strike over grievances or health and safety anymore, along with other concessions. He tells us we need to rely on politicians to bring pressure to bear on the bosses.

Finally a speaker from Local P-9 (Meatpackers) in Austin. She warns us of the need to set up lots of committees to keep strikers busy and to make sure they don't go to the picket line and stop scabs from crossing. They let two or three people from the audience make quick comments before herding us out the door for some more speeches.

I walk in the main hall, and learn that the picard we didn't elect to the Executive Board is having our election overturned. We go up to Chairman Foster to find out what's going on, and he says the officers will decide the matter later. We tell him we want the matter brought to the floor.

More speeches, and Foster is adjourning the meeting. I leap to my feet shouting a point of order and demanding that the election be dealt with. Someone in the back of the room gets a motion on the floor, but we narrowly lose (the principle that workers should be allowed to select our own representatives being too advanced for the picards). While Foster is adjourning the meeting, a goon comes over to eject me from the hall.

These picards seem to have learned little about why they're being trounced by the bosses and about whose interests are served by labor law and the politicians. They might do well to consider the modest suggestions contained in our leaflet. (You can get a copy by sending a stamped envelope to the IWW, 3435 North Sheffield, Chicago 60657.) Workers might do better to dump them, and to build solidarity and One Big Union.

Jon Bekken

HAVE NO ILLUSIONS

The most striking thing about the Conference (besides how they treated FWs) was what wasn't said. The fighting spirit of the '30s was invoked, but no description of

readers' soap box

NICARAGUA

Fellow Workers:

We take issue with the general tone and some of the contents of FW Bekken's December '85 editorial. Like Jon, we find the state of emergency distressing. However, we find the Sandinista labor record to be far from one of union-busting. Before the overthrow of Somoza 27,000 workers were represented by unions. This number has increased 900% or more since. It is true that the largest federation of unions is aligned with the Sandinistas in much the same way the AFL-CIO is aligned with the US Government. But the second-largest federation is politically non-aligned, and there are other federations hooked up with other political parties, including those of the right.

It is correct that the right to strike and other rights were suspended under the state of emergency. Before the Sandinista "triumph" there were no rights. The Nicaraguan Constitution recognizes 50 basic rights, far more than the US Constitution. Of these 13 were suspended on October 15th. When the Council of State met on the 31st to review the suspensions it re-instated half of the suspended rights, including freedom of speech and habeas corpus, but not, unfortunately, the right to strike. Our source in Nicaragua reports that the rights suspensions have been used selectively.

To what degree the strike prohibition is an economic move versus a defense against CIA-orchestrated destabilization strikes like in Chile is not known at this time. It is known that the 55% of all Nicaraguan workers under union contract generally enjoy benefits including sick pay, maternity leave, subsidized lunches, an educational fund and leave time, a free 24-hour clinic, free medicine, paid bus transportation to work, and similar benefits. Unions have access to company books and in many cases have a say in management practices. When you add to this the great strides in public education, health, housing, and nutrition that have been made in the past six years, one would tend to conclude that the Sandinistas have facilitated a process that has immeasurably improved the quality of life and individual freedom, as well as vastly improving the status of unions. What have we done lately?

Regarding limitations on the freedom of the press, one type of reporting that has been curtailed is the publication of upcoming commodity shortages that would enable the well-to-do to hoard food that is about to become scarce. There is undoubtedly other censorship that is unjustified by our standards.

Our major disagreement with Jon lies in his gratuitous statement that the *contras* are all but defeated and just an excuse to justify repression. About 6,000 people have died fighting the *contras*, and that many more have been maimed for life. The shortage of artificial limbs and retraining for the newly handicapped is a major problem. A source in Nicaragua wrote of some acquaintances near Esteli who recently were waylaid on the way to a meeting to discuss financing development projects for a co-operative farm. They were stopped, all wounded, tortured, and then dispatched. One man, the husband of a friend of our source, was castrated and his limbs and head hacked off. This sort of thing is not exceptional.

That is why it disturbs us so much to hear our union paper editorialize any opinions that would tend to legitimize the Reagan Government's stance that the Sandinistas are repressive, anti-democratic, et cetera.

Which side are we on? We want to make it clear that we believe that the best government is no government, but till we smash all states we have to realize that some are less evil than others. The Sandinistas work through a process of consultation with constituent bodies, and are promoting a form of popular democracy that in many ways eclipses that of the US. They certainly could use lots of criticism, but it should be principled criticism, not a generalized trashing. The charges that Jon makes are serious, and a criticism which recognizes the achievements of the Sandinistas and which is offered in solidarity would have a far greater positive impact and more credibly reflect on the IWW as well.

Those interested in more information on unions in Nicaragua should write to the Labor Network on Central America, which is an excellent source on the entire region. Its address is Box 864, Oakland, California 94668. Some of our information comes from a publication of theirs which is the report of the West Coast Trade Union Delegation to Nicaragua. We would also suggest that the IWW investigate inviting representatives of a couple of large independent union federations such as the Nicaraguan Health Workers and the National Union of Public Employees to our upcoming Centennial Labor Conference. We should be able to contact them through the above-mentioned network.

In Solidarity,

Jim Hansen, X332944
Ward Fay, X332457

RESPONSE: The above is the most cogent of a number of letters received criticizing our December 1985 editorial opposing the Sandinista Government's "socialist" union-busting. As the editorial noted, the IWW vigorously opposes the US-backed *contra* assault on the Nicaraguan people, but we cannot condone the Nicaraguan Government's repressive, anti-worker policies. The Sandinista regime is less brutal and not so blatantly anti-labor as the Somoza regime it overthrew, but this hardly means that it merits our support.

The Sandinista "union", the CST, has indeed enrolled a large membership, as have similar organizations in Mexico and the Eastern bloc. But this "union" is firmly under the control of the Government, serving as a transmission belt to convey orders to workers. The IWW has always opposed these types of "unions". Our 1983 General Convention, for example, "Resolved that the IWW support the struggles of workers everywhere to organize worker-run unions independent of the domination of political parties and/or national governments." A similar resolution was unanimously approved at the IWW's 1984 General Convention. Our most recent Convention reaffirmed the IWW's support of the Nicaraguan people in their struggle against US imperialism, at the same time criticizing the Nicaraguan Government for its suppression of independent unions, its denial of women's rights, and its treatment of indigenous peoples. This resolution was adopted before the last crackdown.

Glib attempts to pass over strike bans, censorship, and suppression of the right to organize and assemble cannot change the fact that such rights are fundamental if workers are to be free to control their destiny. If workers have attained conditions as admirable as our correspondents claim, then why does the Government need to forcibly

Buttons:

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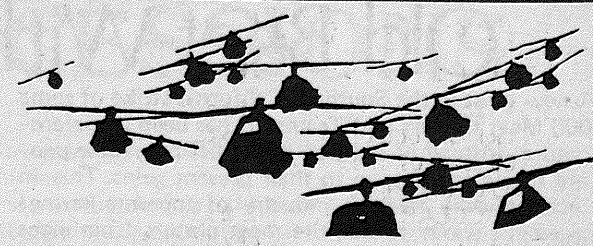
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prevent them from striking, from organizing, or from speaking their minds? While there have been some improvements in benefits and working conditions—mostly attained immediately following the overthrow of the Somoza regime—the Nicaraguan Government has been imposing anti-worker austerity measures to enable it to pay off the banks and maintain the bosses' profits, as well as to pay for the war effort.

The fellow workers refer to "large independent union federations" like the Nicaraguan Health Workers. This union (formerly affiliated with an independent union center) was forcibly seized by Sandinista thugs at its last convention and affiliated with the Sandinista "union" federation—against the opposition of a majority of the delegates. Little news of its subsequent fate is available.

We are asked which side we are on. The IWW has always been on the side of the workers. Those who prefer to support bosses, governments, or political parties have never found the IWW a congenial home. In Nicaragua workers are deprived of the right to organize unions, co-operatives, or other organizations without Government approval. Our fellow workers are deprived of the right to demonstrate or to issue leaflets or publications critical of the Government; they are imprisoned for opposing Government austerity plans; they have been deprived even of the right to strike. A worker without the right to strike is nothing but a slave. Which side are you on?

Jon Bekken

EPA SUCCUMBS TO INDUSTRY LOBBYING ON SOLVENTS

The Environmental Protection Agency, after a two-year study, concluded in mid-November that chemicals used by electronics companies in the San Jose "Silicon Valley" area south of San Francisco do not present a serious cancer risk.

The study was undertaken in October of 1983 in response to public concern that solvents widely used to clean semi-conductor chips—especially 1,1,1 trichloroethane, were responsible for what residents described as high rates of liver and heart problems, miscarriages, and birth defects.

Local environmentalists who served on a public advisory board for the \$800,000 study have asserted that the report was unduly influenced by the Semiconductor Association, whose lobbying had influenced the EPA not to consider whether the solvents contributed to chronic diseases, birth defects, or miscarriages, which was the original complaint. Solvents had been found to be leaking from underground waste-storage tanks at electronic concerns and getting into the water supply of 140,000 people—10% of the area's residents.

CONVENTION MINUTES AVAILABLE

Minutes of the IWW's 43rd General Convention (1985) are now available for \$1, as are minutes of the 1984 convention. Minutes for 1983, 1981, 1980, 1979, 1978, and 1976 are available for 50¢ each.

dered at a 40% discount if orders are prepaid. We offer a 30% discount on similar orders which we must invoice. Postage will be added to all orders that are not prepaid. Please allow three weeks for delivery. (ND) indicates that no discount is available.

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A Workers' Guide to Direct Action: 50¢. New York IWW, PO Box 183, New York 10028.
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Wars & Rumors of Wars

EVERY 60 SECONDS 30 children around the world die from lack of food or lack of inexpensive vaccines. In the same 60 seconds, the world's military budget absorbs \$1,300,000 of the public wealth.

ONE NUCLEAR SUBMARINE costs as much as the annual education budget of 23 developing nations, for the education of 160,000 children.

15 MILLION CHILDREN DIE each year before their first birthday. UNICEF believes these children could be saved by a simple four-part health program, including breast-feeding. The cost of this life-saving program would be only \$78 million—less than the cost of a single MX missile.

THE MAJOR WARS in the world today are the war between Iran and Iraq, in which over 100,000 persons have been killed since 1980; the Afghanistan civil war, involving Soviet troops, which has claimed over 100,000 lives since 1979; and the Lebanese civil war, involving Israeli troops, which has claimed over 80,000 lives since 1975. The civil war in Kampuchea/Cambodia is being fought at a relatively low level now, with Vietnamese involvement; but in an earlier stage it led to millions of deaths—the greatest toll for any conflict since World War II.

EACH MONTH some 41,000 people around the world die in armed conflict—an average toll that goes back to the end of World War II. It adds up to almost 20 million lives—three out of five of them hapless civilians.

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST INDUSTRY: The nations of the world spend over a trillion dollars a year on military programs, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

To worry unduly about those 110-dollar diodes, 436-dollar hammers, 743-dollar pliers, and 7,622-dollar coffee-pots is to miss the forest for the trees. Even debate on the cost overruns of whole weapons systems like the Trident missile misses the point: All this is small change in a 300-billion-dollar military budget. Adroit members of Congress and the press can impress the public by raging about peccadilloes while never questioning the whys and wherefores of the military buildup itself.

Money in large amounts isn't just money—it's power. The Pentagon is this country's largest purchaser of goods and services, and one out of every ten jobs in the US is related to "defense" spending, as is 10% of US manufacturing. In some states, such as California, military-related employment is the largest source of personal income.

With its vast spending power, the military-industrial complex creates political constituencies that make members of Congress, public officials, and labor-union officials its tools. Thus the 20 largest weapon companies

DID YOU NOTICE?

UNEQUAL PAY: In 1985, US male secretaries earned an average of \$20,123 a year; female secretaries \$13,538.

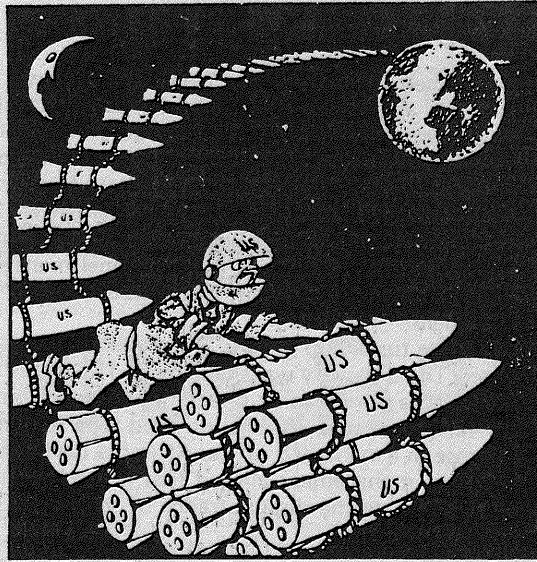
SPOILS OF WAR: During the Grenada invasion, it took 7,000 US soldiers three days to defeat 679 Cuban workers, only 50 of whom were actual soldiers. The Pentagon awarded 19,600 medals in connection with the invasion, including 680 bronze stars and 4,581 commendation medals: almost 30 medals per defeated Cuban.

DOWN ON THE FARM: About 30 years ago, 3,000 bushels of wheat would buy a combine. Today it takes 30,000 bushels.

HUNGER IN SOUTH AFRICA: South Africa is one of the top seven food-exporting nations in the World, annually exporting over a billion dollars of agricultural products, including beef, fruits, grains, and vegetables. Yet *The Economist* reports that an average of 136 black children die every month from the effects of malnutrition. The extent of hunger is so incriminating that since 1966 the South African Government has prohibited public agencies from publishing or even collecting data on malnutrition among blacks. Infant mortality per thousand live births is 13% for white South Africans, compared to 90% for blacks overall and 282% for rural blacks.

FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY: Statistics continue to show the rise in poverty among women, from close to a third of all households maintained by women in 1978 to 40% of such households by 1984. In 61% of impoverished households headed by women, the woman is a wage worker. Between 1978 and 1984, federal income and Social Security taxes for a family of four at the 1984 poverty level of \$10,613 quadrupled—from \$269 to \$1,076. And the working poor—disproportionately female—will undoubtedly continue to be the losers in the ongoing tax fandango.

END OF NLRB ILLUSIONS: If anyone has any remaining hope that the National Labor Relations Board offers any hope for workers, he or she should contemplate NLRB chairperson Donald Dotson's definition of collective bargaining as a "labor monopoly" which leads to "the destruction of individual freedom and the destruction of the marketplace as the mechanism for determining the value of labor". Not that the Board has much concern for individual freedom. Catch 22: In *Sears, Roebuck and Company*, Dotson and associates overturned a 1975 decision by upholding the firing of a truck driver who had complained about an unsafe truck. The board held that "individual employee concerns, even if openly manifested by several employees on an individual basis, are not sufficient evidence to prove concert of action." (Emphasis in the original.)



wield enormous and generally-unchronicled power via a complex network of vested interests which links the arms lobby to top Pentagon officials, national political leaders, elite scientific commissions appointed by the Government to study and approve military technology, and right-wing intellectuals who make a career of promoting US military glory.

So even as Congress and the press make noise about the corrupt habits of bloated military contractors, the Navy lifts its short-term ban on signing new contracts with General Dynamics, so it too can join the chase for the Star Wars program's \$26 billion in research money.

"It's the business opportunity of a generation...." commented the *Wall Street Journal*. "The scramble for the pot of gold is on."

INDUSTRIAL WORKER SUSTAINING FUND

(Received During November 1985)

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Many thanks, fellow workers, for your generous support. (The *Industrial Worker* loss for November was \$344.31)

FAREWELL, FELLOW WORKERS

Architect Eric Jackson, a Chicago Branch member in the mid 1970s, died in San Francisco recently following a long illness.

Anna Smith, a former member of the IWW who had distributed bundles of the *Industrial Worker* for the last 50 years, died December 10th in Oakland, California. Born in 1906, she was an active and militant supporter of unions and the unemployed all her life.

A memorial service was scheduled for 12:30 pm Sunday, January 19th, at 411 28th Street in Oakland.

JULIAN BECK MEMORIAL

Overflow crowds packed two memorial meetings in a New York theater and a meeting hall on Thanksgiving week for IWW booster Julian Beck, co-founder of the trail-blazing Living Theatre, who died of cancer September 15th at the age of 60 in his native New York.

In addition to bereaved family members, the parade of speakers included newsmakers like Amiri Baraka and Abbie Hoffman. Wobbly old-timers Sam Dolgoff and Merrill Moss presented a resolution of solidarity from the IWW.

Beck launched the Living Theatre and the avant-garde theater movement in 1947 with his young wife Judith Malina, and the troupe grew into a self-managed cooperative. The producer-director couple and their collaborators were arrested a dozen times in travels on four continents for their part in social protests and their daring on the stage, starting with civil disobedience in the first New York civilian air-raid drill.

In the '60s the Becks promoted two symbolic week-long "General Strikes for Peace". Their theater put on such controversial productions as *The Brig*, which drew wide attention and led to a Congressional investigation of prison brutality in the Marine Corps—and to the closing of the theater and the jailing of the Becks in 1969 for refusing to collect (withhold) war taxes from employees.

For the last 15 years the collective has toured Europe, North Africa, and North and South America, spreading revolutionary social and theater ideas. While the group

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.

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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 Sunday of each month, 1 pm. Champaign IWW Group, Jeff Stein, Delegate, Box 2824, Station A, Champaign 61820.

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

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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.

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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.

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

were imprisoned for their radical message by the military dictatorship of Brazil (they escaped trial after a world-wide storm of illustrious protests), Beck wrote:

"The working man can manage industry himself, without orders from 'superiors', without a managerial class telling him what to do."

On its last residency in America (in Brooklyn and Pittsburgh, 1974 and '75), the collective became a branch of the IWW, growing from 7 to 22 members. Its street-theater performances especially emphasized workers' union struggles—on picket lines, in support of the United Farm Workers, at the factory gates of the Homestead Steel Plant in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, scene of a historic strike and Pinkerton shootings.

Success never swerved the Living Theatre from siding with the oppressed. Fresh from a triumphant appearance before an enthusiastic crowd of 5,000 in the Berlin coliseum, the troupe stopped to give an underground performance of *Antigone* in Soviet-occupied Prague, where the clandestine audience wept openly to see their plight depicted in ancient Greek tragedy.

WORLD LABOR NEWS

BUGS IN IRISH FACTORIES

On November 12th, after a tip from a reporter working on a story about electronic surveillance, an official of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and an electronics expert examined the canteen at the Collins Brothers (meat exporters) factory in Waterford, Ireland, where workers held their union meetings. After 20 minutes a bug was found in the wall, complete with wires leading directly to the office of the personnel manager. After the workers downed tools, management agreed to meet with them.

Another bug turned up in early December at a Dublin glue factory. The discovery was made by an ITGWU official who traced a wire leading under floorboards from a company telephone to a voice-controlled tape recorder in a filing case in a manager's office. After the device was discovered, the management alleged that it had been installed to investigate the disappearance of some glue.

SPANISH PORT WORKERS have been engaged in a tough fight against the use of non-union labor and the privatization of ports. Last April the independent longshoremen's and marine clerks' union, Coordinadora, organized a number of successful one-hour general strikes against the use of scabs on the docks. Last September dockers responded to the use of non-union labor in the port of Algeciras with a mass demonstration and blockade of the port. They were dispersed by riot police firing rubber bullets, but continued protests forced employers to fire the scabs and hire union workers.

However employers still refused to sign a collective agreement, and the struggle broke out again last October when the Sealand and Maerks shipping companies began hiring scabs to unload ships. A 10-day strike (October 12th through 22nd) led to blockades and slowdowns in many ports, including Bilbao, Castellon, Las Palmas, Seville, and Tenerife as well as Algeciras, despite the use of Guardia Civil, vilification in the media, and provocative demonstrations by scabs. As a result of the strike an industrial agreement was signed for the first time in the port of Algeciras, guaranteeing that only registered union workers would be used there.

(Coordinadora is an independent, horizontally organized union which operates without any full-time officials. All union business is taken care of by elected delegates and committees. Ultimate decisions are made by the General Assemblies.)

THE IWW's CALL for an International Labor Conference to commemorate the centennial of May Day and the Haymarket incident has been well received by revolutionary unions and unionists internationally. The call has been published in a number of publications including *CNT*, *Direct Action*, *Le Monde Libertaire*, *Solidaridad Obrera*, and *Umanita Nova*, and commitments to attend the Conference have been received from the Solidarnosc Information Center in London, the South African Allied Workers' Association (SAAWU), and the Swedish Workers' Central Organization (SAC), as well as from rank-and-file militants and revolutionary unionists in Great Britain, Japan, Venezuela, and other countries.

Several sections of the International Workers' Association, including the Direct Action Movement of Great Britain and the French and Spanish CNT, have noted their desire to attend but explained that they were unable to afford air fare, as have Coordinadora and a number of other unions and groups. Efforts are being made to raise the necessary funds to bring hard-pressed delegates to the Conference. More information on this may be obtained by contacting the Conference Committee at 3435 North Sheffield (Room 202), Chicago 60657, (312) 549-5045.

The need for such a conference, which will deal with many of the problems being faced by workers worldwide as well as commemorate the battles of long ago, is obviously being recognized.

IN THE STRANGE HAPPENINGS DEPARTMENT the general secretary of the International Workers' Association received an invitation from the Executive Committee of Chile's Movimiento Sindical Unitario (MSU: Unitary Trade Union Movement) to attend their First Congress, held in late November. The MSU is reputedly led by the more-conservative sections of the Chilean opposition to the Pinochet dictatorship, including the Christian Democratic Party. This led the secretary general to speculate on the reasons for the invitation's being sent to the anarcho-syndicalist international—the most obvious conclusion being the growth of libertarian sentiment within opposition movements throughout Latin America.

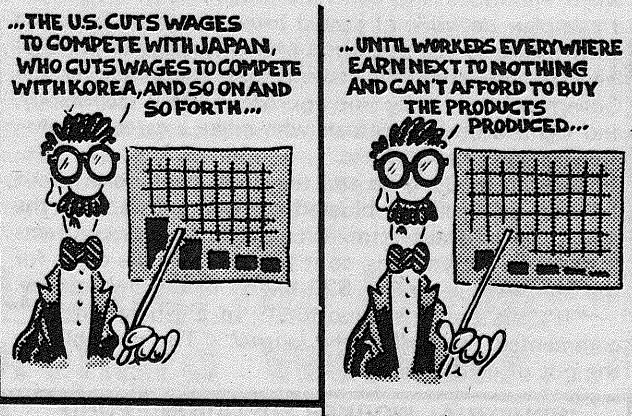
Proof of this can be seen in the emergence of new sections of the IWA and the revitalization of older sections, as in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The MSU leadership no doubt hopes to influence this libertarian current by creating a relationship of sorts with the IWA. The general secretary sent the MSU a short note wishing the workers of Chile good fortune in their struggle for democracy.

Mike Hargis

CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS FORMED

Long-standing efforts to unite South Africa's non-racial unions came to fruition November 30th with the establishment of the Congress of South African Trade Unions. COSATU, with 430,000 paid-up members and some 3500 organized workplaces, is now South Africa's dominant union federation. Four other federations exist, grouping black-consciousness unions, business unionists, and supporters of apartheid.

COSATU brings together the eight affiliates of the Federation of South African Trade Unions, the National Union of Mineworkers, the South African Allied Workers Union, and 23 other unions. COSATU is based on five principles: non-racialism, one union/one industry, worker control, representation on the basis of paid-up membership, and close co-operation between affiliates. Merger talks are under way between several affiliates to realize the principle of one union per industry. COSATU is also interested in unity that goes beyond South Africa's borders. The National Union of Mineworkers has joined with other unions to form the Southern African Mineworkers Federation, which hopes to build subcontinental unity among workers who face common employers.



NO PAY HIKE FOR MEATPACKERS

United Food and Commercial Workers members at four Wilson Foods plants have ratified a three-year contract that increases benefits slightly, but contains no pay raise. Wilson is one of the lowest-paying meatpackers in the country at \$8.50 an hour, and its low wages have been used by other firms to justify pay cuts.

Meanwhile, Hormel workers at Austin, Minnesota are continuing their strike against concessions, despite pressure from the UFCW to accept a concessionary pact. Hormel's latest offer—made after the international intervened in negotiations and pledged to consider authorizing picketing of other Hormel plants which have picked up the bulk of the struck plant's work—was voted down 2-to-1, a substantially narrower margin than in previous votes.

Oscar Mayer workers near Nashville are in the fourth month of a strike against company demands for concessions, and UFCW Local 405 is reportedly about to call for a consumer boycott against the firm. The strike began October 1st after workers voted 447-0 to reject the company's final offer, which included a 69-cent pay cut to \$10.69 an hour.

In 1981 these workers accepted concessions, touching off company demands for cuts at their eight other plants. Local 405 has extended pickets to other Oscar Mayer plants with only limited success. Reportedly workers at the Sherman, Texas plant—which struck last year in a fight against pay cuts—showed support for the picket lines, but Oscar Mayer promptly warned them that any worker honoring the picket lines would be disciplined or fired.

Oscar Mayer is the nation's leading purveyor of bacon, lunch meats, and wieners, and has seen sales and profits soar since General Foods bought the firm in 1981. General Foods itself was recently taken over by Phillip Morris, the tobacco concern.

LABOR UNREST IN IRAN

Despite Government repression of all legitimate union activity, reports from Iran indicate that wildcat strikes and other worker protests are on the increase in that country.

The protests have been spurred by wage cuts, late pay (often two or three months late, sometimes as much as five months late), deteriorating working conditions, the forced recruitment of workers to fight in the war against Iraq and in the ongoing guerrilla war with Iran's Kurdish minority, and widespread firings and layoffs (which have fallen most heavily on women workers and workers who fail tests of Islamic orthodoxy, as well as on workers seen as activists and organizers).

Protests seem concentrated in the textile and metalworking industries, and have included walkouts, sitdown strikes, slowdowns, and mass quitting (by whole workforces or by groups of hard-to-replace skilled workers). At at least one factory, the Tehran Caterpillar Tractor plant, workers (protesting the conscription of some of their fellow workers and a corporate takeover that would have reduced wages and benefits and eliminated pension rights) took over the plant (October 26th) and ran it themselves for 10 days. As of the last report (December 1st) the plant was still under worker occupation.

Repression by the Pasdaran (Islamic Guards) has been

extremely severe. The Pasdaran typically surround striking plants and either force strikers back to work at gunpoint or simply open fire on the strikers (the increasing incidence of sitdown strikes may be in response to Pasdaran tactics). Invariably, those workers deemed "agitators" or "troublemakers" are arrested, though protest strikes have succeeded in freeing some of these.

Unions in Iran (most of which were formed underground during the struggle to overthrow the Shah, or immediately after the fall of the Shah's Government) have been replaced by Islamic Councils, which function as Government-controlled pro-company unions. Protests against these bodies (including a demonstration of 4,000 Tehran taxi drivers protesting election fraud in their Islamic Council) have also been reported.

(Information from *Merip* and *Iran Report*)

An Injury To One

AMNESTY CAMPAIGN FOR RUSSIAN UNIONIST

Amnesty International has launched a letter-writing campaign on behalf of Yegor Volkov, whom AI considers a prisoner of conscience. Volkov has been confined in a Soviet psychiatric hospital since 1967 for organizing two strikes among construction workers to protest wage cuts. On June 27th, 1967 Russian authorities arrested him on a charge of "circulating anti-Soviet slander", and he was kept in Vladivostok prison under pre-trial investigation for 13 months—four months beyond the legal maximum.

Since then Volkov has been confined in the Blagoveshchensk special psychiatric hospital, where he has been "treated" with mind-bending drugs. His health has deteriorated, and he has reportedly contracted a stomach ulcer. In the spring of 1983 doctors recommended that he be released, but the courts ordered continuation of his forcible confinement.

Readers wishing to take part in the campaign on Volkov's behalf should write to Amnesty International USA, 322 Eighth Avenue, New York, New York 10001.

OHIO PRISONERS LAUNCH HUNGER STRIKE

Frustrated by deteriorating conditions, six locked-down prisoners at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility launched a hunger strike January 1st. The six are held in the prison's highest-security area, and most are locked in their cells for 24 hours a day, are prohibited from receiving publications, and are not allowed regular visitation or correspondence. They have announced their intention to fast until death if their demands are not met.

The six are demanding the closing of strip cells; the establishment of recreational facilities and walk lines; an end to the use of gas, chemical mace, and fire hoses on prisoners locked in their cells; the same rights as other prisoners under administrative control to food, personal property (such as books and radios), visitation, and mail; the right to purchase commissary items like coffee, soap, and tobacco; the establishment of regulations governing placement and release of prisoners in administrative control units; the transfer of a prisoner whose life they believe to be in danger from prison officials; and the investigation of the deaths of two prisoners at the hands of prison guards.

They write: "We are not animals! We are human beings! ... We refuse to be intimidated or further humiliated ... Death is preferable to a continued existence in this cruel and inhumane environment." They ask that fellow workers write Governor Celeste (Governor's Mansion, Columbus, Ohio 43215) and Richard Seiter (Director, Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 1050 Freeway Drive North, Columbus 43229) asking them to afford Ohio's prisoners basic human rights and to grant the above demands. Further information may be obtained from Willie Price (Number 154269, Box 45699, Lucasville, Ohio 45699-0001).

PELTIER DEFENSE NEEDS HELP

With oral arguments completed and written briefs submitted, Leonard Peltier's bid for a new trial is in a critical stage. IWW General Defense Committee Secretary Arthur Miller has forwarded an urgent request from Peltier's Defense Committee that letters be sent to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, 1114 Market Street, Saint Louis, Missouri 63101, supporting a new trial, and that donations to enable the Defense Committee to maintain its operations at this crucial time be sent to LPDC, Box 6130, Kansas City, Missouri 66106.

Overwhelming proof of Peltier's innocence has been gathered, as has evidence of serious Government illegalities in pressing the case. During oral arguments the Government was forced to concede that its "evidence is sketchy", yet Peltier has already spent several years in jail as a result of this frame-up. But without strong support now, Leonard Peltier's last chance for a new trial and eventual freedom may well be lost.