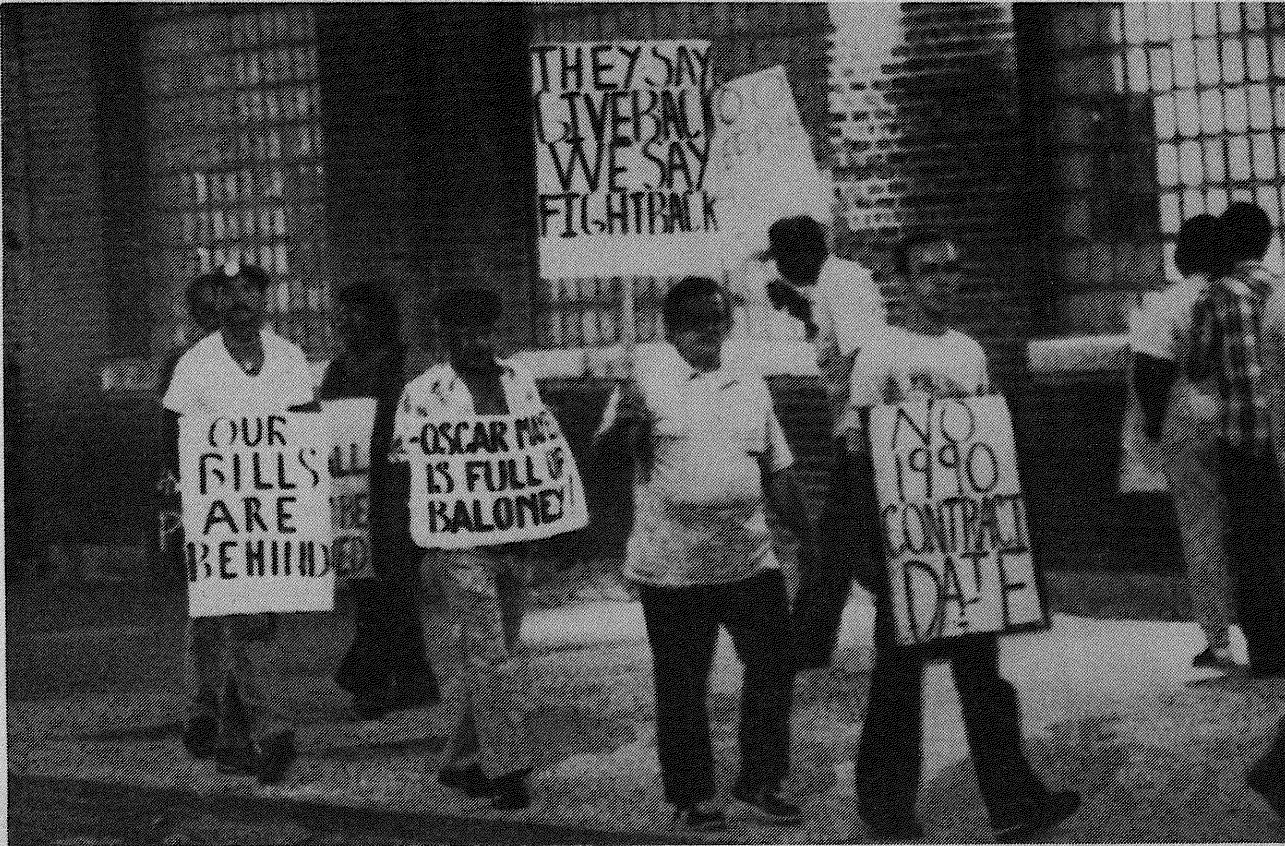


.....OSCAR MAYER KINFOLK SPEAK....



In this era of attacks from bosses and business unions on gains made by workers, there are unionists who refuse to put up with the intransigence of union officials. When Oscar Mayer unilaterally cut wages \$2.50 an hour in 1984, a rank-and-file group of mostly black women who call themselves Kinfolk went public to force their local union officials to respond to Oscar Mayer's action. After some struggle they won back their wage.

Their contract came up June 1st. Oscar Mayer and United Food and Commercial Workers negotiators offered a two-month freeze, followed by an implemented contract based on what is negotiated September 1st at Oscar Mayer's Davenport, Iowa and Madison, Wisconsin plants, where wages remain at the \$8.25 cut rate. The rank and file refused the offer. Thirteen days later they found themselves out on the street and ineligible for unemployment benefits because Oscar Mayer reported it as a labor dispute. They got the union to take the company to court and won their benefits.

A second contract vote was called by the UFCW July 20th. This contract offered a 10-month freeze to take the Chicago contract out of synch with contract negotiations at other Oscar Mayer plants. Again it was voted down. The next day Oscar Mayer declared a lockout, as they had threatened before the vote, and began to hire scabs.

The Chicago plant, which produces 150,000 pounds of processed meat daily, is the backbone of the Oscar Mayer chain. It is located several blocks from the Cabrini Green housing project, in a city that is experiencing a heavy exodus of industry.

cont. page 2

USX. IS IT A STRIKE OR A LOCKOUT ?

The three-year contract between the United Steelworkers of America and USX, formerly known as the United States Steel Corporation, ended at midnight on August 1st. The nation's largest steelmaker shut down in what the company called a strike and the union called a lockout. Of the 42,000 workers in nine states who were affected by the action, about half were already on layoff, as the company had begun shutting down operations a week earlier, immediately after 59 of 75 local unions representing USX workers voted 10,051 to 66 authorizing a nationwide walkout.

Picket lines during the first hours of the strike showed "lockout" hastily painted across the word strike. The union feels it was locked out, as union representatives offered to continue working after the contract expired if negotiations continued. The point is not moot, since striking workers generally cannot receive state unemployment benefits. Last year, unemployment boards in three states ruled that a 98-day work stoppage by steel workers at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation was a lockout and the workers were eligible for benefits. The union says it has a strike fund of \$210 million, but is anticipating a long and bitter strike.

The last strike at US Steel was in 1959 and lasted 116 days. This closure may be as long, for as the strength of the strike vote shows, the USX workers are determined to resist company pressure for yet another round of concessions. In 1983 the union gave up concessions worth \$1.8 billion to the company, concessions equal to \$3.60 per hour per worker. Instead of putting the money back into its steelmaking division as promised, the company used it to help pay for its acquisitions of Marathon Oil and Texas Oil and Gas, diversifications such that steel now produces only a third of the company's profits and makes the company much less responsive to steel-union pressure.

Chicago-area steelworkers in particular feel betrayed by USX (as do some Illinois and Chicago officials) over the company's actions at its South Works plant, which at one time employed 18,000 workers, although new employment has plummeted to 800. USX announced plans to build a new rail mill at South Works; extracted major tax, environmental, and union concessions; and then ditched the whole idea. Nor were steelworkers in Gary, Indiana amused by the arrival of \$17,000 worth of tear-gas grenades and launchers at their plant the week before the strike.

After the doleful experience of previous concessions, the steelworkers' union changed its bargaining position slightly early this year to demand that companies open their books to prove "dire" need, and provide stock, profit sharing, or other compensations for any new give-backs. Under the new guidelines, contracts have been reached with four steel companies—Bethlehem, Inland, LTV, and National—and the old contract has been extended with Armco.

But the union has resisted concessions for USX, saying the company's steel division is not as bad off as the company asserts. Though USX refuses to open its books, it claims it has lost \$2.4 billion on its steel operations so far this decade, and demands concessions as extensive as those given its major competitors.

Before the stoppage, the company asked for a reduction of \$3.50 an hour in labor costs, which it placed at \$25.20 or more. (This is the source of the claim by the boss press that steelworkers make \$25 an hour. In reality, steel wages average about \$14 an hour, compared with a general-manufacturing average of just under \$10.) USX also demanded far-reaching changes in work rules. The union offered to take a wage freeze, but resisted company demands for major changes in job classification, suggesting that if any area of the factories was overstaffed, it was the excessive layers of supervisors and other white-collar managers. The union also insisted on new protections against subcontracting of bargaining-unit work.

For years many unionists have wanted to take on USX, having come to understand that earlier concessions would not have saved jobs. USX, which has closed 90 steelmaking facilities in this decade, will continue to close facilities it believes add nothing to its cash flow, whether it receives more concessions or not. But in 1971, the union in the biggest steel companies negotiated what was called the Experimental Negotiating Agreement, under which the companies agreed to automatic cost-of-living increases in return for the union's no-strike pledge, which many now feel sapped the union's strength by tying its hands.

About the time of the Agreement, major shifts took place in the steel industry. European and Japanese steel companies began to make inroads into the American market, followed by even-cheaper steel from Brazil and Taiwan. Domestically, highly-productive mini-mills were established to make steel from scrap. Plastic began to take the place of steel, and steel companies began to forgo modernization and even maintenance of their steel plants to raise money for investment elsewhere. In 1982, USX President Roderick claimed a responsibility to US Steel stockholders not to accept less than 10% profit in any operation. By the time the steelworkers' union scrapped the no-strike pledge in 1983, tens of thousands of steelworkers had lost their jobs and the whole industry had changed.

cont. page 2

P-9 FIGHTERS FACE PROSECUTION

The State of Minnesota is apparently going ahead with prosecution of 18 P-9 strikers and supporters on felony-riot charges stemming from the police attack on a mass picket at the Hormel plant April 11th. This prosecution is a direct attack on the rights of workers to speak freely and picket effectively. It is aimed at intimidating any workers who may decide to fight back against the employers' attacks in the future.

In particular, the indictments of Ray Rogers and Jim Guyette, neither of whom were at the picket line that day, are outrageous. They are charged with "aiding and abetting a riot". The complaint against Guyette charges him with mailing posters to people throughout the country, holding press conferences, sending out press releases, and making speeches urging people to come to Austin to demonstrate against the Hormel company. In short, Guyette and his co-defendants are being charged with exercising solidarity. They could get up to five years in jail if convicted.

We cannot allow this injustice to go on without challenge. Letters of support and donations can be sent to Austin Emergency Appeal, PO Box 65673, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55165. Letters of protest from individuals and resolutions from local unions demanding that the charges be dropped should be sent to Minnesota Attorney General Hubert Humphrey, State Capitol, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155, and to Mower County Attorney Fred Kraft, Mower County Courthouse, Austin, Minnesota 55912. AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!

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KINFOLK.....

The following interview with a Kinfolk organizer was held during an energetic morning picket.

IWW: What is the history of Kinfolk?

Kinfolk: It started two years ago. It was a group of black women who got together and went to different plants, just mixing and mingling, right after they cut us down to \$8.25 an hour. We were going to see how other plants felt about Oscar Mayer, how the workers felt. Some people here said that if we went to other plants we would be hung...that they would be prejudiced. When we got there we were accepted warm-heartedly. From that point we've had good relations.

Back in '84 we started going all out. We went to Sherman, Texas. Some went to LA. We told people that Oscar Mayer had cut our wages and we were fighting back.

After OM cut our wages we wanted arbitration. But to get it we had to picket our union hall because they would not back us. After we set up the picket around the hall, they started working a little harder. The court system was speeded up, and all of a sudden we got the money back.

It's been a hard struggle. Not only have we been fighting with the company, we've been fighting with the union too.

At first we got a lot of negative response about Kinfolk. We were a bunch of radicals who wanted the workers to go out on strike and lose their jobs—this was coming from our union. When we would put literature up they would tear it down or write slurring remarks on it. (Later on they started coming to us for information.)

IWW: What kind of issues did you initially address?

Kinfolk: When they implemented that \$8.25 wage on us, the union should have filed an unfair-labor-practice lawsuit against the company right away. Instead of doing it immediately, they waited until that Friday at two-thirty in the afternoon! OK? They had gotten to the point of telling the union lawyers not to talk to us, not to give us any information.

IWW: This was the local union?

Kinfolk: Right. They told the union lawyers not to give us any information, to keep everything hush-hush.

So we started working on good communications with other plants, and learned about what was going on. Communication is better now than it was in the past because there's nothing that goes down in a plant that we don't know about the same day. There's nothing that goes down—I don't give a damn what it is.

IWW: So there are Kinfolk in just about every Oscar Mayer plant?

Kinfolk: Everywhere. They're not all kinfolk, some is country cousins.

IWW: But it's all rank-and-file people saying "Hey, we have to stand up for ourselves."

Kinfolk: Yeah, it's all rank and file.

We didn't have much support when we started, but as you can see [she points to a picket line of 60 workers] it has grown quite a bit. People understand the union is not going to stand up unless we make them do it. We're all they've got.

IWW: Has the union been out here to support you?

Kinfolk: Yeah, they're out here! Yesterday when we had a meeting at the union hall, the vice-president went upstairs and told the secretary-treasurer, "You better go downstairs because they're handling the meeting so well everything they want is being passed. You better make it downstairs."

We've done everything but take their jobs over. We're responsible for getting information out to workers. We keep them posted on what's going on. It's a 24-hour job here. If it hadn't been for Kinfolk, the food caravan that came here wouldn't have come.

It's in meeting people, letting them know what our situation is and wrapping our arms around everybody coast to coast. It's paid off.

IWW: Why were you initially a group of women?

Kinfolk: You see we had a lot of problems, because we were never allowed to talk in union meetings. We were not allowed to put motions on the floor. Every time we tried, they would rule that we were out of order. The rank and file had to take petitions around the whole plant to get officials to call a local meeting to talk about issues. We sent copies of the petitions to our regional director. Since we didn't think that we could trust him we had them registered.

It wasn't easy putting it together. We read the bylaws, the International's constitution, books on labor law, and *Roberts Rules of Order*. We went through the whole bit, and then had to win the support of more people to back us, to stand up.

It took a while before people started coming in. They started after we won our wage back. When we set up the picket at the union hall, everybody was scared they were going to get fired. But when they saw they didn't fire us, we started to win more people over. We kept doing different things, knowing we were within our rights. We weren't doing anything illegal, so we knew they couldn't touch us.

During the last contract vote a mechanic and one of the persons on the negotiating committee went around telling people to vote for the contract—that it was a "good contract". We had signs ready to post in the hall where the union was having the meeting on Sunday. They wouldn't let us in till a few minutes before meeting time, so before we went in we talked with people about why

we should vote down the contract.

Two days before the adjudicator made the decision about our unemployment benefits. We had run off about 500 copies of a leaflet that said we had won our unemployment benefits and handed it out while the meeting was going on, before the vote. People hadn't heard about this, but we knew that if we got that decision we were going to win the vote.

IWW: So you took it into your own hands to get the adjudicator's decision out to the membership before local officials could pass a sweetheart contract?

Kinfolk: Right. Because we couldn't trust the officials to get it out. A lot of the things that have been done have been done by the rank and file and not the leadership.

IWW: Do you have any advice for other people in the labor movement? How to deal with the same kind of situation in their locals?

Kinfolk: I say mobilize, that's one thing we've got to do. I'm out here today, you'll be out here tomorrow. You understand. So, never think in terms of "That's their fight." This is *all* of our fight. The whole complete labor movement. This is not just happening here in Chicago, or down in Gary. It's happening all over the country now.

Like I tell a lot of people. This is going to be apartheid right here. This is going to be a Vietnam. This is going to be an all-out war! Because everybody's unsatisfied now, nobody's satisfied with what's going on. And these big businesses want to break us, take us down to slavery pay. You understand? And want us to put out products that's constantly making them rich.

You know, like we said, all the damn money Oscar Mayer donated to the Statue of Liberty (\$5 million), and the bitch can't even walk! This company don't care about us.



A lot of the women on the line now are getting more and more militant than I thought they would be. I never thought I would hear—and I'm talking about churchgoers—them saying things like "Hey, we've got to stop the scabs. That's all there is to it. We're locked out. We don't have no job, we don't get no unemployment, so what the hell, why let them run the plant?"

IWW: Are people speaking up a lot more in meetings?

Kinfolk: Yeah. They're talking more now and feel more free. We meet once a week and everybody is allowed to speak. We have that type of atmosphere set up and everybody feels comfortable with it. Even though it's in the union hall, the officials can't take over our meetings. We don't spend too much time on one given issue. If there's any new business then we'll see if the membership wants to discuss it. If not, then it's tabled.

IWW: When did the different expiration dates on contracts begin?

Kinfolk: That stuff is all packed together. You've got eight or nine Hormel plants coming up September 1st. You've got FDL, and you've got the other two Oscar Mayer plants, Madison and Davenport, all coming up September 1st. You're talking the meatpacking industry!

One reason why we think the International is so much behind us now is that they're scared local members might start talking de-certification. A lot of people are upset with them. Now just how far are they going to help us? ... I think they're a facade. I don't believe that they plan to help the struggle. But it has to look like they're doing something. You know what I'm saying?

IWW: So they don't...

Kinfolk: So they don't get iced.

Like I was telling someone this morning. I said "Well Walter [Piotroski, Local 100 GST] just may as well get his ass ready, because that union hall will never be like it used to be." We're going to see to that. We're putting a stop to all this shit about how we can't speak, we can't agitate—all that shit is dead! We have to take it over. And a lot of people are talking, "We heard those Kinfolks have taken over the union hall." I told 'em, "You're damn right we took it over. And we plan to keep taking over. It's our damn union hall, it's not Piotroski's union hall."

I was telling some of the women, I bet Piotroski says, "I'll be glad when this shit is over with. They'll get the hell out of this union hall and we can go back to business as usual." I say, baby, it will never be that way again. And even if we go back to work in this plant, it will never be like it used to be in there.

There's been a lot of bad feelings in this struggle because of all that they've put us through. And even if they conned us back up in there now, without a contract, there would be so much fucking sabotage up there you wouldn't believe it. They'll wish they had left us out on the damn streets.

Labor Briefs.....

WEYERHAEUSER STRIKERS APPROVE CUTS

On July 25th, the International Woodworkers voted two-to-one to accept a settlement of their six-week West Coast strike against Weyerhaeuser. The two-year agreement is built around union concessions worth about \$4 an hour. About \$2.90 of this is in wage reductions, and the rest is in loss of vacation and holiday time. In return for the concessions, the workers get profit sharing and production incentives, both glorified piecework schemes. The other striking union—the Lumber, Production, and Industrial Workers Union—hasn't scheduled a vote as the *IW* goes to press (August 5th), but has taken down its picket lines.

In two earlier votes, Weyerhaeuser workers rejected similar company proposals. The company reacted to the earlier union votes with the announcement that it would begin hiring scabs to replace the workers on the 25th, thereby forcing the vote. On the same day Weyerhaeuser reported that its earnings for the first half of this year were \$118.4 million, up 21% from \$97.9 million in the first half of 1985.

Since 1978, when logging and lumbering employed 136,500 in Oregon and Washington, the number of jobs in the industry has fallen to 101,800. The International Woodworkers' union membership has fallen to 17,000 from 32,000, and the Lumber, Production, and Industrial Workers Union (which mostly represents mill workers) has fallen to 22,000 from 38,000.

LTV FORCED TO PAY PENSIONS

Steelworkers walked out to join retirees on the picket line at LTV's East Chicago plant when the company, the second-largest steelmaker in the US, declared it would end all benefits to retirees. In mid-July, LTV entered Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and canceled retirees' pensions, life insurance, and medical coverage. Around 8,000 steelworkers and 1500 miners were affected. Retirees began informational picketing July 22nd, and a strike was formally declared by the United Steelworkers July 24th, with 3300 East Chicago workers joining in.

LTV reversed its decision July 30th in light of the walkout, an order by a New York federal bankruptcy court to pay, and Senate passage of legislation requiring payment.

The LTV bankruptcy underlines the crises in the US steel industry. Plant closings have devastated whole communities, and industry employment has plummeted to 200,000 from 450,000 in 1979 as demand for domestic steel has steadily dropped.

The companies are seeking to throw everything they can overboard, and pension liabilities are a tempting target. For every worker on the payroll at LTV, there is a retired former worker. The company has a total of \$1.5 billion in pension obligations.

In the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Chapter 11 bankruptcy last year, the company terminated its pension plan and shifted the responsibility for payment to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, a federal agency financed by premiums from 112,000 private pension plans, to protect workers' pensions. Now Wheeling-Pittsburgh, with its pension burden shifted to other shoulders, enjoys a significant cost advantage over its rivals as it fashions a recovery plan. LTV may have been trying to pull the same stunt.

COURT ORDERS THREE RAILROADS TO REHIRE 1700 STRIKING WORKERS

About 1700 employees at three New England railroads owned by Guilford Transportation Industries returned to work July 15th, nearly two months after their jobs were abolished due to a bitter strike. Union officials pointed out that the federal judge's order to rehire the fired strikers excused the company from giving them any back pay, at least temporarily.

USX.....

That the steelworkers' union has settled with all of USX's competitors before confronting USX may serve to place some pressure on the company to settle or lose its customers. Because of the over-capacity of steel, it will take several months before the USX shutdown (the company normally produces 17.7% of all domestic steel) begins to cause a shortage. Among major steel consumers, General Motors spokespersons have said the auto maker had arranged for other companies to provide the steel they would otherwise get from USX. Both Ford and American Motors said they were relying to some extent on larger-than-normal stockpiles of steel. USX said it had been storing steel in anticipation of a strike, and that it had a five-to-six-week stockpile. Nevertheless, LTV, the nation's second-largest steelmaker, which filed for bankruptcy protection in July, started telling laid-off workers to start returning to four Cleveland plants to help fill orders from car makers.

At any rate, USX is unlikely to open soon. Some fear that if the strike is long, many workers may not have jobs to return to if the company takes advantage of the strike to permanently close some plants. Meanwhile, the strikers are on the line in force. In Gary a court squashed a USX request for an injunction to limit the number of pickets outside two Gary plants.

CLASS WAR IN RUMFORD PAPER MILL

This is a very personal story. It's about a very bitter strike in *my home town*: Rumford, Maine. Rumford is not a very big town, with only about 8,000 residents. It sits in a lush valley where, ironically, the noxious smell of sulfur means prosperity. The target of this strike by 1200 members of Local 900 of the United Paper Workers International Union (UPIU), Boise Cascade Paper Group, has dominated the life of this town, under various guises, for generations. It is one of the biggest producers of high-quality plain and coated printing paper in the world (National Geographic magazine is one of the Rumford mill's best customers), and its workers take pride in their skill. So the decision to strike "the only game in town" was not something to be taken lightly.

After 100 days of fruitless negotiations, the workers voted overwhelmingly to reject the company's final offer (and the 1,000-dollar bonus-bribe that went along with it) and walked out on July 1st. Money is not the overriding issue in the strike, although work-rule changes, changes in overtime provisions, and the elimination of some vacations and holidays could result in an overall pay cut of 20%. The main issue in the dispute is Boise's attempt to gut 60% of the contract language, some 1049 lines out of a contract of 2049 lines, which would virtually eliminate the union from the shop floor.

The company claims that it needs a "modern" contract to compete with foreign rivals. For the bosses, "modernization" means allowing the company full dis-

cretion in re-assigning workers to jobs outside their normal work areas (so-called "flexibility"). But workers fear that giving management this power would inevitably lead to favoritism on one hand (in the distribution of overtime, for example) and harassment of union militants on the other. Workers also note that the mill is a dangerous place, and putting inexperienced people into unfamiliar situations would increase the risk of serious injury. Most importantly, however, workers are angered at the company's attempt to impose this garbage on them. One picket sign said it all: "Democracy, Not Dictatorship".

The first two weeks of the strike were fairly uneventful. Boise kept the mill running (achieving less than 50% capacity after one month of strike with a severe drop in quality) with around 450 salaried and management personnel working 12-hour shifts. Then Boise officials decided to escalate the conflict by deciding July 18th that negotiations had reached an "impasse" and that they were going to implement their final offer and begin to hire permanent replacements (scabs) for the 1200 strikers. This angered strikers; but what really pissed them off was the importation of a professional strikebreaking "security force", Special Protection Incorporated, from Oregon. This goon squad (nicknamed blackshirts because of their black, SWAT-style uniforms) made their mission quite clear on the morning of July 21st when a force of these club-wielding storm troopers attacked a group of

strikers who were confronting prospective scabs in the municipal parking lot, sending three of the strikers to the hospital with cracked heads.

As I said at the beginning of this article, this is a very personal story. I've worked in this mill in the past, and have friends and relatives who work there or have retired after many years of service. It is difficult to evoke the intensity of feeling pervading this town. One commentator described the strike as akin to a civil war. Indeed, this is a situation in which family members are often pitted against each other. A father may be a salaried employee working 12 hours a day to keep the plant running for fear of losing his job, while his son or daughter is on the picket line to defend the gains which he, the father, fought for over the last 30 or 50 years.

There is an intense sense of outrage at this company, which made over \$104 million last year and raised its executive salaries by some 20%, and its apparent willingness to destroy an entire community if it refuses to bend to the company's will. The letters page of the local newspaper is brimful of indignant missives railing against corporate greed and the attempt by the Boise Cascades of this country to drive the working class into the ground, back to the days when workers were treated like slaves. To paraphrase one letter writer: Anyone who doubts that the working class of America is smoldering with rage need only look at places like Austin, Minnesota and Rumford, Maine to shatter their doubts.

This incident so enraged the workers that, at a union meeting held later that day, only four out of more than a thousand strikers present voted to reconsider the company's offer. That evening 400 pickets blockaded the mill's main gate for over two hours before dispersing at the urging of Local union officials who feared the re-imposition of a temporary restraining order against mass picketing. The strikers then got into their cars and circled the mill property, honking their horns and generally raising hell. The demonstration lasted well into the night.

On July 29th, following three days of hearings, Boise succeeded in getting a judge to issue an injunction (good until August 22nd) limiting the number of pickets to 20 at the main gate and 10 each at the company's 10 other entrances. The injunction also requires Boise to keep its goon squad on company property when they are on duty. Workers were understandably angered by the limit on picketing (pickets normally numbered in the hundreds during shift changes), but felt that they could get around it by "combining" the number of pickets at the main gate and the several gates nearby. In this way they felt they could legally maintain a picket of 80 people in the vicinity of the main entrance. But threats of a lawsuit against the town by Boise, unless police enforced the injunction according to the company's interpretation (20 pickets means 20 pickets), forced the police, many of whom have relatives or friends on strike, to break up picket lines.

As I write these lines (August 7th), I have just learned that 2500 workers—strikers, families, and supporters from all over the state of Maine—marched through the streets of Rumford to show their solidarity in the face of Boise's retrogressive "modernization". The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), whose 62 members at the mill recently rejected a contract offer almost identical to the one refused by the paperworkers, are honoring the UPIU's picket lines, though they have not yet voted to join the strike. The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, themselves currently engaged in a dispute with the Maine Central Railroad, have refused to move trains across the line.

Donations are starting to pour in as well. UPIU Local 14 at the International Paper Company in Jay, Maine gave \$3200 to Local 900 at the August 2nd rally. (This same local, earlier in the strike, sent 108 pickets to join the lines at the plant gates.) Another union local from Berlin, New Hampshire donated \$1600 to the strike fund. And five pickup-truck loads of food arrived in town on August 4th to be distributed to needy strikers by the Spouses of Solidarity (SOS), the 400-member auxiliary set up by the strikers' families.

These acts of solidarity are important to boost the morale of strikers, and the fact that they are occurring so early in the dispute shows that the labor movement has learned something over the last few years; but (don't you just hate those buts?), such acts can only help the workers hold out in a battle of attrition. What is needed to win is strike action at Boise's other 16 pulp and paper mills in the US and Canada; or, failing that, a change in tactics.

I overheard a conversation in a local pub while I was visiting family in late July, in which the bartender suggested that the workers return to work to protect their jobs and initiate a campaign of "messing it up from the inside" till the company came around to their point of view. Such ideas are in the air, and maybe workers will pick up on them. At this time, however, it looks like another test of wills. Boise is going ahead with its interviews of potential scabs; and while everyone agrees that the situation is already explosive, many fear what will happen if the company actually attempts to bring strikebreakers into the mill.

There is a lot at stake. The strikers are literally fighting to save their community. Letters of solidarity and donations can be sent to Local 900—UPIU, 180 Congress Street, Rumford, Maine 04276.

Mike Hargis



photos by Merry Pezzano

US Portworkers Win Two

HOUSTON DOCKERS WILDCAT AGAIN

The Port of Houston's waterfront was shut down by another wildcat strike July 8th through 10th as members of the International Longshoremen's Association continued their protest against the use of scab labor on the public docks. Union dockers shut down the port for two days the week before over the same grievance (see the August 1W): the use of non-union labor by Houston Stevedores to unload a 20,000-ton shipment of bagged flour for storage and eventual shipment to Egypt.

While this latest stoppage only idled seven ships on the first day of the walkout (the earlier walkout left 22 ships stranded), it created havoc on the docks. Trucks dispatched to pick up cargo lined up as their drivers refused to cross the picket line; and the maritime association and shipowners were losing between \$3,000 and \$20,000 a day due to the walkout.

Ronnie Speakes, a member of ILA Local 24 in Houston, told the *Houston Post* that members hatched the strike spontaneously when they met Tuesday morning, July 8th, at their hiring hall. Their main gripe was the use of Houston police to protect Houston Stevedores' scab operation. "Doesn't seem right to use city cops to break a union," he said. There were at least 31 cops at the docks to protect 40 scabs, some of whom were former ILA members.

Another ILA docker, 27-year veteran Ray Sweeney, pointed out that when he went to work on the docks longshoremen were making \$3.80 an hour. Now they make \$17 an hour plus benefits. They had to fight to get this far, and are willing to fight to defend these gains.

Meanwhile, the West Coast Maritime Association took the ILA to court to get a back-to-work order after an arbitrator ruled that the strike was in violation of the labor agreement with the union. At the hearing, local ILA officials testified that the job action was not sanctioned by the union, and that they had been trying to get the workers to go back to work. The courts understandably ruled in favor of the employers' association and ordered the workers back on the job; but the workers refused to go back as long as the scabs hired by Houston Stevedores' owner Hank Milam were still working.

The wildcatters ended their protest, however, on Friday, June 11th, after a temporary settlement was reached between the Port of Houston, Houston Stevedores, and the ILA: The Port Authority will subcontract the flour job from Houston Stevedores and hire ILA members to finish it.

The catch is that the union agreed to do the job on a piecework basis (\$15 per metric ton) rather than at the usual hourly rate. This settlement, while achieving the immediate goal of getting rid of non-union labor and forcing Union Stevedores to negotiate with the union, will undoubtedly want to return to paying on a piecework basis to increase productivity and cut labor costs.

Even so, this latest wildcat action is another indication of the growing willingness of US workers to defend their hard-won standard of living.

LOS ANGELES AND LONG BEACH PORTS SHUT DOWN BY LABOR SOLIDARITY

Cargo operations at Los Angeles and Long Beach harbors came to a halt in early July, when office workers and machinists set up picket lines.

Some 250 office workers struck 11 steamship and stevedoring companies June 30th, demanding job security in the face of newly-introduced computerized systems and the transfer of work to supervisors and outside contractors. More than 4,000 dockworkers honored their picket lines—and the picket lines of 290 machinists who struck briefly before entering arbitration—shutting down all but a handful of the two ports' 67 cargo terminals. The strike ended July 7th with a settlement guaranteeing the clerks' jobs, though 14 office workers struck again on July 10th when Stevedoring Services of America refused to accept the agreement. Some 300 dockworkers at SSA terminals honored picket lines.

In an era when union scabbing, no-strike clauses, and concessions are the order of the day—leaving the labor movement reeling before a bosses' onslaught that has devastated benefits, wages, and working conditions—it's refreshing to see some of the old-fashioned solidarity that remains labor's most-potent weapon.

P-9 REVISITED

In the July *IW* I reported on my May visit to Local P-9 in Austin, Minnesota and Local 431 in Ottumna, Iowa. In early June I returned to Austin with two friends from Colorado.

As we approached the Labor Center we were greeted by a sight that brought goose bumps to this old rebel hide. The entire side of the Center had been covered by a beautiful revolutionary mural. The massive painting depicts, from left to right, the transformation of gray, faceless, unorganized masses entering a factory and emerging from the other end as organized workers, carrying banners reading "All for One—One for All" and "International Labor Solidarity—Abolish Apartheid". The mural was dedicated to Nelson Mandela, imprisoned leader of the African National Congress in South Africa, and painted by local strikers and supporters. Local 880 of the Sign Painters Union donated hundreds of dollars in materials.

Winding through the mural is a bloodsucking serpent representing corporate greed. The eyes of the serpent are made from Hormel logos. But the crowning glory is the banner at the very top of the mural bearing the words from the Wobbly song "We Have Fed You All for a Thousand Years": "If blood be the price of your cursed wealth, good God we have paid in full." Could this be Midwest America 1986?

We arrived at the hall just as P-9 had received word that Judge Devitt had upheld the UFCW decision to put P-9 into receivership (see the August *IW*). Tempers were hot, but Jim Guyette and Ray Rogers pleaded with strikers and supporters not to get violent, as heavy jail sentences could be imposed due to the language of the injunction.

"Bud" Jarvis, a P-9 retiree, walked out of the hall with tears in his eyes. He said, "I've been fighting for this union since 1934, when I was 15 years old. We built this hall with our own labor and donations. I can't stay and watch those UFCW scabs come in here and take it away from us. I'm afraid of what I might do, and then Jim (Guyette) could be sent to prison."

"Bud," I replied, "let's go down and picket the Hormel gate. The injunction says P-9 strikers can't picket, but it doesn't say anything about P-9 supporters." "Let's go," he quickly responded. So Bud and I, along with my friend from Denver and a few other retirees, picked up picket signs and went to the gate and picketed all day in the rain. Police and UFCW goons watched nervously, but they left us alone, obviously not wanting a confrontation with a couple old men and a few women.

While we picketed, Bud, one of the original members of Local P-9, explained to me that some P-9ers are proud of their IWW heritage. He said that three of the original organizers of the local were Wobblies and held the first IWW-style sitdown strike in history right there in Austin. "Is that so?" I said. "Would you believe you're standing next to a Wobbly today on this picket line?" He looked at me a long time, as if his mind was wandering back in time, looked at my IWW button a while, and then said, as if he were still thinking about the '30s, "I'll be damned. What goes around comes around. Welcome to Austin."

I attended the monthly union meeting that evening. Guyette and Rogers were under court order not to conduct the meeting, but as a union member Jim could speak as long as he did so only as a member of P-9 and not as an officer. Shows how little anyone understands the democracy practiced by this local and the strength of the individual members. Joe Hansen, the UFCW trustee, was invited to conduct this meeting, but he wisely chose not to show up. It was decided at this meeting to call for a re-certification election. A petition to that effect would be filed by the NLRB as soon as possible in an effort to (1) stop Hansen from negotiating a sweetheart contract with Hormel, and (2) re-organize the union and send the UFCW packing.

Calls came in from around the country encouraging P-9 to take this route. Locals fed up with the sellout Internationals in general and with the UFCW in particular promised to follow the same course if P-9 is successful. P-9 members reported that these locals expressed interest in starting a new union movement in the US, centered on returning democracy to the union movement and autonomy to the locals.

After a month in Canada I returned to Austin July 5th to find what must be giving Hormel, First Bank, the UFCW, and the AFL-CIO chest pains: stubborn, dedicated determination to win this struggle on the part of the P-9ers. The union has opened a new office just up the street from the Labor Center, and the support group was busy setting up shop in the newly-rented building they will use to feed and clothe strikers, to promote the boycott, and to fight for re-certification as the "North American Meatpackers Union". Nothing had changed except their location and the name of their union, but the emphasis now is on the re-certification election. If all the locals that support this break from the UFCW follow suit, we may be witnessing the birth of a new labor movement.

I was about to leave, satisfied that P-9 (North American Meatpackers Union) was not only alive but vibrant, when Ray Rogers said he, Jim Guyette, and 17 others would be going to court that afternoon to face an omnibus hearing for the charges arising from the April 11th "riot". (See "Appeal" elsewhere in this issue.) So I attended the hearing.

P-9 lawyers were brilliant and very well prepared, while the State of Minnesota sent a young, inexperienced, ill-prepared lawyer. The judge was jovial and, if not pro-

EDITORIAL: PACKINGHOUSE WORKERS NEED INDUSTRIAL SOLIDARITY!

Packinghouse workers throughout the US and Canada have been taking a beating over the last three years, as the meatpacking industry turns on its workforce to maintain profits in the face of increased competition.

Although the industry remains highly organized, a spiral of wage cuts has set in with each round of concessions used to force new pay cuts. The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the dominant union in the industry, is well placed to resist such attacks through its strength among supermarket clerks and butchers, but has instead embraced the concessionary trend.

The result has been wages that have fallen from a high of \$20 an hour to an industry average of about \$8 today. No major packinghouse now pays wages higher than \$10. The drive to slash wages is especially fierce at slaughterhouses—increasingly separated from the more-profitable meat-processing companies—a sector of the industry under increasing competition from non-union outfits that pay little more than minimum wage. In recent months some workers have accepted two-tier pay schemes, with new hires being paid substantially less. These wage cuts have been combined with drastic speedups and deteriorating working conditions and plant safety.

These attacks began with unionized companies shutting down—sometimes under cover of bankruptcy laws—and re-opening as low-wage non-union shops. Most notably this happened at Armour Foods (owned by the giant Con Agra company), where 13 out of 16 plants went non-union and now pay just \$6 an hour. Although the UFCW continues to talk of re-organizing Armour's workers and launching a national boycott campaign against Armour, it has taken no action to encourage its 1.3 million members, most of whom work in retail food outlets, to refuse to handle Armour products.

But the most-notorious example of the bosses' onslaught against meatpackers' wages and working conditions, and of the UFCW leadership's craven class collaboration, has become the Austin, Minnesota Hormel strike. The heroic resistance of Hormel's Austin workers in the face of a unified company-court—"union"—military assault has inspired rank-and-file workers across the entire continent. Within the UFCW intense opposition to the leadership's concessions policy has developed, and the International recently reversed its position—calling for holding the line against concessions and re-establishing a unified industry wage. (Of course, this change in official policy has yet to be felt in practice—instead, the UFCW is continuing its all-out effort to break the Hor-

mel strike.) And efforts to form a breakaway meatpackers' union committed to fighting to restore wages and working conditions in the industry may well bear fruit in the coming months.

Increasingly, workers are questioning the UFCW strategy of appeasement and accommodation, particularly as wages continue to fall, conditions continue to deteriorate, and workers are being locked out in unprecedented numbers. Although the UFCW still represents around 100,000 meatpackers, most of these workers have taken pay cuts either with the union's agreement or as a result of unilateral action by the companies. Rather than organizing workers at the non-union plants springing up across the country which pay wages as low as \$4.50 an hour, striking to block the pay cuts, or using its strength

among supermarket workers to cut off distribution of meat products produced under substandard conditions, the UFCW has been relying on arbitration, legal action against the companies, and an effort to bludgeon recalcitrant workers into submission.

Across the country packinghouse workers are now reaping the fruits of their earlier concessions and their failure to build militant, democratic unions prepared to use their industrial power. In Austin the concessions were used to finance a new \$100-million-dollar automated plant where machines and robots now do jobs that once required hundreds of workers. Throughout the industry, wage cuts have been used to justify still more cuts and ever-intensifying attacks against workers. And at many plants workers have agreed to massive pay cuts only to be thrown out of work a few months later.

Labor has yet to develop—or more accurately to implement—a strategy to beat back this corporate assault. Boycotts and corporate campaigns can help bring public pressure to bear against especially-retrograde employers, but they are expensive and take years to have an impact. Lawsuits and complaints to the National Labor Relations Board are usually a waste of time. And in the absence of sound organization and industrial solidarity, it can be extremely difficult to win strikes.

And so once again we see that the old IWW adage still holds true: "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common." Until we succeed in organizing as a class, and exercise our power over production and distribution to defend our interests, the bosses will continue to pick us off, a few at a time.

JB

labor, at least neutral in his demeanor. It soon became obvious to me that the charges had served their intended purpose of intimidating P-9, and now the State wanted to wash its hands of this mess, since it feels that P-9 is beaten anyway, and leave the impression that the courts are really fair after all.

No decisions were reached, as both sides were given two weeks to file final briefs; but it was obvious that unless Hormel decides that it needs more blood, most of the serious charges from this April 11th incident will be dropped, and the only ones to face charges will be three or four people who may have caused harm to policemen by throwing missiles or the like.

After the hearing, I left Austin feeling the need to support P-9 more strongly than ever. P-9 is rapidly becoming the symbol of union democracy and local autonomy throughout the US, and all authoritarian forces are gathering to crush it. The UFCW is very worried about this re-certification development, as many meatpackers' contracts come due in August and September. NAMU organizers claim they are in contact with activists in at least 30 meatpacking plants. An exodus of meatpackers from the UFCW would be very costly to

it in more ways than one. It may well regret having tangled with Local P-9.

It is very important that the IWW support P-9 in every way possible. They carry our heritage and fight for the democracy and autonomy we hold so dear. They need money, but most importantly they need help with the boycott and with their struggle against the UFCW. Distribute boycott stickers and flyers; picket grocery chains; picket UFCW offices in your city; invite P-9 strikers to your area to speak. Visit Austin and see this phenomenon for yourself.

Gary Cox

Addresses: Austin United Support Group, PO Box 396, Austin, Minnesota 55912 (for boycott stickers, flyers, and the like)

Hormel Rank and File Fightback, PO Box 903, Austin, Minnesota 55912 (for the Adopt a P-9 Family Fund. Make checks out to "Hormel Rank and File Fightback".)

North American Meatpackers Union, 711 4th Avenue Northeast, Austin, Minnesota 55912. Phone 507-437-8588.

Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World

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

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

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

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

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

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

*EDUCATION *ORGANIZATION *EMANCIPATION



AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

ONE UNION ONE LABEL ONE ENEMY

Industrial Worker

P. Ames, R. Christopher, C. Cortez, J. Garland
M. Hargis, P. Pixler, F. Thompson

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WORKING CONDITIONS IN MEATPACKING

.....NOW

WORLDS OF PAIN

(reportage on work-related disorders and working conditions at Hormel's plant in Austin, Minnesota, excerpted from the May 1985 edition of *The Unionist*, Local P-9's newspaper)

Elizabeth Anderson began work in December of 1982, boning hams in the area known as the hog cut. She worked up to speed, which required cutting off shank meat, taking out the bone, and trimming off the excess fat from 92 hams an hour. In March of the following year the pain began. Her hands and arms hurt worse and worse. They throbbled and lost circulation at night as she slept. And though she tried to bid out to a different department, she was unable to get out.

The plant doctor diagnosed her as having carpal tunnel syndrome, a condition characterized by swollen wrist tendons that leads to damage of major nerves and muscles in the hand and wrist. She was sent to a doctor in the Twin Cities, who immediately suggested surgery. Then she went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, where surgery on each arm was performed in November and December.

Following the surgery, she was assigned to as many as a dozen "rehabilitation jobs" at Hormel. However, every job seemed to involve lifting or exposure to heat or cold, subjecting her to further pain and possible injury.

Finally, in July of 1984, the company turned her over to a qualified rehabilitation counselor and sent her home, where she waited for further word from the company.

After one brief return stint at Hormel, the company again said that they had no work for her, and that there would be nothing for her anytime in the future. In early 1985, she and her husband decided to move to Wisconsin to look for work there, and he went on ahead and found a job. She stayed behind so that her children could finish their school term, figuring that she would move in the summer and continue to receive weekly disability benefits in Wisconsin until she found a job there.

But at the end of March, in spite of its earlier assurance that it really had no further work for her, Hormel offered Anderson yet another job. Under Minnesota workers'-compensation rules, this means she faces the choice of moving to be with her husband and giving up all benefits, or staying on and going through another round of what will likely be unsuitable and injurious work at Hormel....

Darrell Henaman suffered for a much longer period before his injury was diagnosed. After about seven years of working at Hormel, his hands began to cramp and get tired. The plant doctor told him that nothing was wrong with him until five years after the first symptoms had appeared.... Years of heavy, repetitious work had left his collarbone settled out of place on both sides, cutting off circulation in the arteries leading to his arms. One operation removed his top ribs but failed to correct the condition. Then, surgery discovered that a muscle in his arm had atrophied—it was no longer a red elastic, but now a gray fiber.... For the rest of his life, his bout with "thoracic outlet syndrome" will mean continuing nerve problems, poor circulation, and numbness that leaves him uncertain whether he is touching his own arm or his wife's when he rolls over in bed....

SKIN AND BONE

"The kill" and "the cut" are work areas every bit as dangerous as they sound. In other areas of the plant, meat grinders, sausage stuffers, and other machines can operate on human limbs as efficiently as on hog parts. Loading operations take their toll on backs and knees.

"We had one kid get stabbed in the leg in the kill area," says Ron Kraft, a worker at Hormel since the 1960s, by way of illustrating the plant's dangers. "The guy next to him fell off a stand while heading hogs—the cement stand got all full of blood and he slipped off. When he fell, his arm swung back and he stuck a knife four or five inches into the kid's leg.

"The kid turned snow white. He was lying there on the ground—I never saw blood spurt out of anyone so fast. They wouldn't even touch him at the Austin hospital, so they had to rush him to Rochester. He pretty near died on the way over there."

Like most of the operations in the plant, the kill is more dangerous now, the workers say, because the new plant that was built in 1981 was designed with little consideration for workers' needs.

"It was designed for the equipment, not for the people—I mean the equipment was put in there and the body was supposed to get used to it," notes Kermit Thomas, a 38-year veteran of Hormel's Austin operations. "But the body don't get used to something like that."

"It's a dangerous place to work if everything is done the way it's supposed to get done," adds Kraft. "But somebody's got to be hurt before the company will change anything."

And people are getting hurt, constantly. Last May, Mark Ferguson got his hand caught in a skinning machine in the night cut, taking all the skin down to the bone off his middle finger. He had surgery and a skin graft and missed seven weeks of work.

"We were running fast, too fast and too hard to take time to concentrate a little bit," he explains. "People get hurt skinning picnic hams all the time."

"It happened on the very first day that they increased

production from 78 to, I think, 91.66 hams per hour," describes L. R. Wilson. "The fellow standing next to me—we were both hurrying so we could keep our production up—and he stabbed me in the left forearm, just above my arm guard. It required 14 stitches to close it up, and I was off 9 days plus 2 half days for recuperation."

Ed Frein lost the tips of two fingers on his left hand last September in an automatic stuffer machine.... Bob Johnson suffered a cervical-spine strain working in the loading area. "The boxes we threw for the most part were loin boxes which weighed between 75 and 95 pounds, and butt boxes which weighed anywhere from 50 to 60 pounds. Our operation involved continuous throwing. We had a roller that we threw them onto that was about chest high, and quite often we would have to reach down to racks that were about a foot off the ground.

"These boxes were approximately a foot high, and we would lay 4 on a layer, 25 on a pallet. So for the 25th one you have to throw the box over your head to get it up on top of the load. And it was plenty fast...."

The work is so fast and brutal that some workers have had injury upon injury. L. R. Wilson has had three injuries since 1983: In addition to being stabbed in the arm, he had a hand sliced up and a thumb dislocated while trying to unjam a machine that lacked a safety switch; and he slashed his right index finger down to the bone while quickly opening poorly-sealed packages so they could be re-sealed.

John Marsolek Jr.'s 17 years at Hormel have left him with nerve problems in his hands, injuries to the vertebrae in his back, a knee hurt in a fall from which all the outer cartilage has been surgically removed, tendonitis in both shoulders, and broken toes on both feet.

"I had a sore throat for months over there," he says. "My glands would swell up in my neck, my ears and head would plug up. I've had both ears operated on—they removed the stirrups in both ears because I couldn't hear. I don't know if it's from the noise or from birth or what. But there's a lot of noise in the plant. The decibel level is way higher than it should be.

"With the wires in my ears, I can't take high-pitched noises. It goes right through me and makes me hyper. I just want to hit somebody in the face or whatever—I just get crazy. I had to even take some tranquilizers on account of the noise."

.....AND THEN

(Excerpts from Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle*, 1905)

There were the men in the pickle rooms... scarce a one of these that had not some spot of horror on his person. Let a man so much as scrape his finger pushing a truck in the pickle rooms, and he might have a sore that would put him out of the world; all the joints in his fingers might be eaten by the acid, one by one. Of the butchers and floormen, the beef boners and trimmers, and all those who used knives, you could scarcely find a person who had the use of his thumb; time and time again the base of it had been slashed, till it was a mere lump of flesh against which the man pressed the knife to hold it. The hands of these men would be criss-crossed with cuts, until you could no longer pretend to count them or trace them. They would have no nails,—they had worn them off pulling hides; their knuckles were swollen so that their fingers spread out like a fan. There were men who worked in the cooking rooms, in the midst of steam and sickening odors, by artificial light; in these rooms the germs of tuberculosis might live for two years, but the supply was renewed every hour. There were the beef luggers, who carried two-hundred-pound quarters into the refrigerator cars, a fearful kind of work, that began at four o'clock in the morning, and that wore out the most powerful men in a few years. There were those who worked in the chilling rooms, and whose special disease was rheumatism; the time limit that a man could work in the chilling rooms was said to be five years. There were the wool pluckers, whose hands went to pieces, even sooner than the hands of the pickle men; for the pelts of the sheep had to be painted with acid to loosen the wool, and then the pluckers had to pull out this wool with their bare hands, till the acid had eaten their fingers off. There were those who made the tins for the canned meat, and their hands, too, were a maze of cuts, and each cut represented a chance for blood poisoning. Some worked at the stamping machines, and it was very seldom that one could work long there at the pace that was set, and not give out and forget himself, and have a part of his hand chopped off. There were the "hoisters", as they were called, whose task it was to press the lever which lifted the dead cattle off the floor. They ran along upon a rafter, peering down through the damp and the steam, and as old Durham's architects had not built the killing room for the convenience of the hoisters, at every few feet they would have to stoop under a beam, say four feet above the one they ran on, which got them into the habit of stooping, so that in a few years they would be walking like chimpanzees. Worst of any, however, were the fertilizer men, and those who served in the cooking rooms. These people could not be shown to the visitor—for the odor of a fertilizer man would scare any ordinary visitor at a hundred yards, and as for the other men, who worked in tank rooms full of steam, and in some of which there were open vats near the level of the floor, their pe-

culiar trouble was that they fell into the vats; and when they were fished out, there was never enough of them left to be worth exhibiting—sometimes they would be overlooked for days, till all but the bones of them had gone out to the world as Durham's Pure Leaf Lard!...

During the summer the packing houses were in full activity again, and Jurgis made more money. He did not make so much, however, as he had the previous summer, for the packers took on more hands. There were new men every week, it seemed—it was a regular system; and this number they would keep over to the next slack season, so that everyone would have less than ever. Sooner or later, by this plan, they would have all the floating labor of Chicago trained to do their work. And how very cunning a trick was that! The men were to teach new hands, who would some day come and break their strike; and meantime they were kept so poor that they could not prepare for the trial!

But let no one suppose that this superfluity of employees meant easier work for any one! On the contrary, the speeding up seemed to be growing more savage all the time; they were continually inventing new devices to crowd the work on.... They would get new pace-makers and pay them more; they would drive the men on with new machinery—it was said that in the hog-killing rooms the speed at which the hogs moved was determined by clockwork, and that it was increased a little every day. In piecework they would reduce the time, requiring the same work in a shorter time, and paying the same wages, and then, after the workers had accustomed themselves to this new speed, they would reduce the rate of payment to correspond with the reduction in time! They had done this so often in the canning establishments that the girls were fairly desperate; their wages had gone down by a full third in the past two years, and a storm of discontent was brewing that was likely to break any day. Only a month after Marija had become a beef trimmer the canning factory that she had left posted a cut that would divide the girls' earnings almost squarely in half, and so great was the indignation at this that they marched out without even a parley, and organized in the street outside. One of the girls had read somewhere that a red flag was the proper symbol for oppressed workers, and so they mounted one, and paraded all about the yards, yelling with rage. A new union was the result of this outburst, but the impromptu strike went to pieces in three days, owing to the rush of new labor. At the end of it the girl who had carried the red flag went downtown and got a position in a great department store, at a salary of two dollars and a half a week....

Elzbieta was used to working, but she found this change a hard one, for the reason that she had to stand motionless upon her feet from seven o'clock in the morning till half-past twelve, and again from one till half-past five. For the first few days it seemed to her that she could not stand it—she suffered almost as much as Jurgis had from the fertilizer, and would come out at sundown with her head fairly reeling. Besides this, she was working in one of the dark holes, by electric light, and the dampness, too, was deadly—there were always puddles of water on the floor, and a sickening odor of moist flesh in the room. The people who worked here followed the ancient custom of nature, whereby the ptarmigan is the color of dead leaves in the fall and of snow in the winter, and the chameleon, who is black when he lies upon a stump and turns green when he moves to a leaf. The men and women who worked in this department were precisely the color of the "fresh country sausage" they made....

.....HORMEL PIG TALES

A couple of Minnesota Wobs compiled a list of the 1st Amendment rights of P-9 workers and supporters that the powers-that-be have violated.

(1) An Austin butcher who chose to observe the boycott by removing Hormel products from his shelves was threatened with contempt by a local judge if he didn't reverse his boycott and continue to sell Hormel products.

(2) A P-9 retiree who owns some land outside Austin let P-9 use a meadow for a rally and was fired from his part-time job in the Austin YMCA because of it.

(3) The principal of Austin's Pacelli (Catholic) High School was fired from his post after he allowed P-9 to rent the School's gym.

(4) Countless workers in Austin have been ordered to remove the Boycott Hormel bumper stickers from their cars when they park at work (not at Hormel).

(5) P-9's mail and Jim Guyette's personal mail have not been delivered properly, but were re-routed to the (official) United Food and Commercial Workers.

(6) An Arlo Guthrie benefit concert had to be canceled for lack of a hall—no one would rent P-9 a large-enough space.

Besides all this, there have been too many other examples of anti-union and anti-civil-liberties activities and general piggishness (if that term doesn't insult our four-footed cousins) such as the UFCW's billing P-9 for back unpaid bills. Also, the UFCW has asked Minnesota State Unemployment to deny benefits to Jim Guyette and several other former officers of the Local, and Unemployment has complied with the request.

Amazingly, not one P-9er has lost a house or car in the nearly 12-month strike. Not one family has gone hungry or been denied clothing or shelter. Labor solidarity is not completely dead yet.



Some city administrations here in Freedomland, whose display of concern for human justice is quite possibly a convenient facade for concern over where votes come from, have refused to co-operate with the Immigration and Naturalization Service boys, saying that such things as detaining suspected "illegals" is strictly the job of that agency. Some of those cities happen to be in Southern California, where much of the flow of undocumented takes place. But National City, which lies between San Diego and the border and lives up to its name, sees its mission in a different light. The city fathers of that stalwart municipality have enlisted the services of the city dogcatcher in their zeal to help La Migra.

While the prospect of being detained by the local dogcatcher may seem demeaning to those of Mexican heritage (and those who look like they might be), it is quite consistent with the "native son" mentality of many Caucasian Californians. California was one of the western states where, in the good ol' days, if a white man gunned down a Mexican or anyone else who wasn't white, he was only expected to make a report to the local sheriff so the records could be kept up to date.

One of the Chicano activists residing in National City has misgivings about a precedent being set when municipal employees are enlisted to support immigration officers. He wonders if those whose physical appearance betrays native Western Hemisphere heritage can also expect to be harassed by the garbage collectors.

Delving further into the department of myopic xenophobia, there are those of our fellow Freedomlanders who claim that the educational system here is turning out a generation of hop-headed Lefties. They stoutly maintain that permitting open discussion on anything critical of the status quo is "anti-American". But they are not as unique in their patriotism as they may think. Historically, status quo and patriotism are well mated, as both provide a convenient last refuge for scoundrels.

It goes without saying that criticism of the status quo is viewed as anti-British by Ma Thatcher, anti-Russian by Gorbachev, and anti-Cuban by Fidel. It certainly was anti-Spanish to Franco, anti-Filipino to Marcos, anti-Ugandan to Idi Amin, anti-German to Hitler, and anti-Roman to Tiberius.

Our home-grown variety of jingoists specify that permitting classroom discussion on such things as human rights, nuclear war, and the distribution of wealth would

ridicule the American "value system" by broaching the possibility of relinquishing political and economic pre-eminence in the interest of some "shadowy" global justice. Ach Himmel: The *herrenvolk* we shall always have with us, unless we dust the cobwebs off our brains!

Needless to say, it is safe to speculate that these upholders of the status quo enjoy the recent hit song "We Are the World" about as much as they enjoy "The Internationale".

A Cherokee chief in Oklahoma remarked that alcoholism, poverty, and lack of running water, which are looked on as Indian problems, are actually Northeastern Oklahoma problems. In that particular part of Freedomland, it doesn't matter whether one is Indian, black, or white. If one doesn't belong to the stratum of society that pulls the purse strings, one is part of the rural dirt poverty.

The Cherokee Nation was one of the five tribes that enthusiastically adopted European cultural attitudes, including traditional European sex roles, only to be driven from their homeland in the southern Appalachian Mountains by the invading European government. The infamous "Trail of Tears" to arid Oklahoma in the dead of winter decimated their numbers, but despite the ensuing poverty, disease, and racial discrimination, they still managed to become one of the more-numerous Native Nations. With a membership of 65,000, they are second only to the Dine (Navajo) of the Southwest.

It is good to see that the Cherokee are no longer slavishly aping the cultural attitudes of their conquerors and gradually returning to the cultural values of their antecedents before the Bible and the gun-toting "civilizers" graced these shores with their presence. While the Europeans were still strapping their wives in chastity belts, the women of many Native Nations here played an important role in the administration of their society. While some of the Nations had male chieftains, these men were selected by the women, and also deposed by them if they proved incompetent, as is still done today among the traditional Hodonoshawne (Iroquois), where the female elders elect the male administrator. Here is one society where there is no refuge for scoundrels!

C. C. Redcloud

WHY NOT?
4 HOUR DAY DAY WEEK
And no wage-cuts!
Organize
 MAKE PROSPERITY FOR ALL IN THE I.W.W.

JOSEPH GIGANTI (1904-1986)

Our good friend Joseph Giganti, lifelong labor activist, radical economist, and for many years chairman of the board of the Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, died in Chicago July 6th at the age of 83.

In the 1920s and '30s Giganti played a major role in American labor-defense agitation. He was Midwest coordinator of the Sacco-Vanzetti defense, and was also active in the campaign to free class-war prisoner Tom Mooney. He was a frequent visitor and sometimes speaker at IWW and Free Society Group forums.

A close friend of Maximiliano Olay, representative of the Spanish anarcho-sindicalist Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Labor) in the US during the Spanish Civil War, Giganti helped organize the Friends of Workers' Spain to advance the cause of the Revolution and to disseminate the literature of Spain's revolutionary organizations.

Though he had never attended high school, he took adult evening classes and earned his PhD in 1951. After working long years as a coal miner and then as a barber, he later taught labor economics and economic history at DePaul and Roosevelt Universities in Chicago.

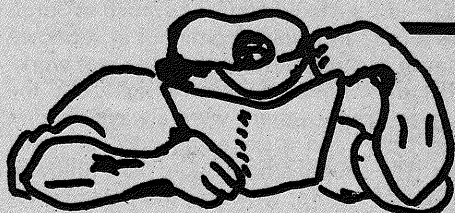
One of a half dozen old-time labor radicals who helped re-organize the Kerr Company in the early 1970s, Giganti became its chairman in 1973. Under his administration the venerable firm sprang to new life, and its ambitious publishing activity today owes much to his guidance and inspiration.

X322339

Free Enterprise

Truck de-regulation kills people. In 1975, only 3,483 people were killed by trucks. In 1984, after de-regulation, that figure jumped 40%, to 4,908 people. A likely reason is that a growing number of owner-operator truck drivers are tempted to try for a few hundred more miles when they should be sleeping.

BERTOLT BRECHT: "There are many methods of killing. One can put a knife in someone's chest, take bread away from people, not protect them from illness, put them in an unliveable house, kill them with work, force them to suicide, make them go to war...."



Books for Union People



Literature.....

- Practical and Informational:**
- () Organizing Manual75
 - () Collective Bargaining Manual 2.50
 - () Labor Law for the Rank and Filer* 2.50
 - () One Big Union (About the IWW) 1.25
 - () Workers' Guide to Direct Action35
 - () The General Strike (by Ralph Chaplin)75
 - () Unions and Racism 1.00
 - () Abolish the Wage System (ND)50
 - () IWW Preamble and Constitution 1.00
 - () Metal Workers' Guide to Health and Safety50
 - () A Quiz on You and the Arms Race10
(10 copies .85, 100 copies 4.00, 3.50 per additional 100)
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 - () The Rebel Girl (sheet music)50
 - () Didactic Verse (by Henry Pfaff)* 2.00
 - () Workers of the World Awaken (sheet music)50
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 - () Founding Convention of the IWW* (ND) ... 15.00
 - () History of the IWW in Canada50
 - () Joe Hill: IWW Songwriter 1.00
 - () Lucy Parsons: American Revolutionary* ... 5.95
 - () Autobiography of Mother Jones* 5.95
 - () The Right to Be Lazy* 2.25
 - () Mr. Block: 24 IWW Cartoons* 4.95
- Buttons:**
- () Build Militant Unionism75
 - () For More of the Good Things of Life75
 - () General Defense Button35

LUCY PARSONS POSTER AVAILABLE

A new linocut poster by FW Carlos Cortez has been issued to mark the Haymarket centennial. It bears a portrait of Lucy Parsons, and an excerpt from her speech to the IWW's founding convention urging that instead of mounting drawn-out strikes workers should occupy the factories and run them themselves. If anyone has to go hungry, she argued, let it be the owners. Copies are available from the IWW for \$10 postpaid.

- Posters:**
- () Joe Hill 10.00
 - () General Strike 10.00
 - () Huelga General 10.00
 - () Draftees of the World Unite 10.00
 - () Four Hours Work for Eight Hours Pay 10.00
 - () Fat Cat 10.00

*These items are offered for sale as a convenience to the readers of the IW. They are not official IWW literature, and the union takes no position on their content. The IWW does not engage in direct or indirect alliances with political or anti-political groups or sects. Quantity discounts are available on only some of the above titles.

Bulk orders of five or more of any item on the IWW Literature List, unless otherwise indicated, may be ordered 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.

AVAILABLE FROM LOCAL IWW GROUPS:

A Workers Guide to Direct Action: 50¢. New York IWW, PO Box 183, New York 10028.
 Fellow Union Member: 10¢ each; bundles of 5 to 15, 5¢; 16 to 500, 3¢; over 500, 2¢. Tacoma/Olympia IWW, 2115 South Sheridan, Tacoma, Washington 98405.
 Introduction to the IWW: 10¢ each; bulk rate 40% discount, paid in advance. San Francisco IWW, PO Box 40485, San Francisco, California 94140.
 Solidarity Bulletin (monthly publication): \$10 a year. Vancouver IWW, PO Box 34334, Station D, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6J 4P3.
 IWW baseball caps (one size fits all): \$4 each, add \$1 each for shipping. University Cellar IU 660 Job Branch (checks to IWW), 341 East Liberty, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107.

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*
*
*
*
*** **sound of a
distant drum**

KINNOCK MANEUVERS

Neil Kinnock, the leader of Britain's mass working-class Labour Party, has dreamed up another gimmick to win more middle-class votes in his desperate battle to get his arse planted on Ma Thatcher's chair within 10 Downing Street. His newest gimmick is to hamstring Britain's unions. When one sweeps away all the bureaucratic verbiage, one is left with the realization that what Kinnock and the Labour right wing want is for the politicians to gain control over the internal operations of all unions by depriving them of tax relief and other legal benefits if they refuse to hold secret ballots whenever a strike is called or elections of union executives are held.

The demand for secret voting in the election of union officials is just so much bullshit, as Kinnock knows, for it is normal practice within Britain's unions. What the middle-class right wing of Britain's Labour Party want is the secret postal vote for or against strike action. Kinnock knows that those who never attend a union meeting and are indifferent to the welfare of their fellow trade unionists almost always vote NO to any industrial action. This is the same as giving the legal right to absentee landowners to vote on what actions the landworkers of a plantation might take.

Two strikes hit London in this humid weather, but they made no news. Of the post-office sorters' strike and the bus workers' strike, it is the latter that argues my point. The bus-transport workers have come out on selective bus-garage strikes, not for their own working conditions or wages, but because the employer (State or private—it is all of a oneness now) is hiring part-time agency staff to operate the workers' canteens. And part-time is the operative word, for that means that full-time employed women can be laid off, while part-time staff can be employed for only an hour or so during rush meal times. Put that to the secret vote, comrades, of all those who never use the canteen or attend an emergency union meeting calling for strike action, and those secret postal votes will cry from the darkness as they always have: "To hell with the others; I'm all right!"

It is those middle-class and frightened working-class votes that Kinnock and Thatcher are fighting over. For Kinnock now knows he has corralled the indifferent status quo of the working class. Yet we laugh, comrades, for there in the background is the angry rumble of Britain's miners. At the recent Tenby National Union of Mineworkers meeting, Arthur Scargill and the militant miners once more demanded strike action. And the matter is so basic because the scab union of 30,000 miners have been given a 5½% pay raise, and Scargill's 100,000 miners have gotten nothing.

STRIKING OUT

There are talks and talks of strike, but nothing happens. Those involved in any dispute drag out the long days on the picket lines without any belief that their cause will win. Wapping drags on as a playground for the young militant left out for a Saturday punch-up with the law, while genuine strike pickets are ignored by their own union branches outside London. And, for a media strike, they no longer merit a line in the nation's press, while the teachers' ill-managed dispute, over the last year, drags on with even the teachers appearing to lose interest. Schools operate except for the odd strike days: The educational authorities make appointments now with the strike committees if available.

It was hammered in time and again to the godfathers of the British unions that if the miners were beaten, so were the British working class. History, in so short a time, has demonstrated the truth of this. The London bus workers have taken an overwhelming vote in favor of strike action. Some 17,500 bus workers at 55 London garages voted eight-to-one to reject the employers' offer of a pay raise; but whatever action they take, the bus workers cannot win. It is, in effect, the old three-card game that was used in the 1920s in Detroit, when workers were forced out on strike by a working offer they could not accept.

London bus workers average \$200 a week, but if they accept the offered pay raise, cuts in routes and changes in working conditions will mean a 25-dollar-a-week wage cut. The original cut was to be \$60, but in this raise that never was, there is now to be a cut of \$25.

Bus routes are already being sold off to private operators. This means that the bus workers' union has been effectively gutted. If the bus workers refuse to accept the cut in wages and strike, the transport authority, with the backing of Ma Thatcher's Tory Government, can hand out private bus operator's licenses to anyone who can find a coach to put on the road. Down the drain of history will go London's transport system, which was brought into being by the old, old pre-war London Labour Party within the Greater London Council.

The political clowns and carpetbaggers, as the Workers' Friends, threw away the Londoners' seat of government. And now we can witness the destruction of the London transport system, betrayed by a Labour Party leadership who thought more of cheap minority applause than of their duty to the men, women, and children who put the political riffraff into an office they were not fit to hold.

Arthur Moyses, London

SOUTH AFRICAN LABOR NEWS

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

On July 14th thousands of black students stayed away from class at the start of a new semester in protest against the South African Government's orders to issue identity documents to black pupils. In Durban, the black-led Metal and Allied Workers Union challenged the validity of the decree in court. More practically, the Congress of South African Trade Unions called for industrial actions.

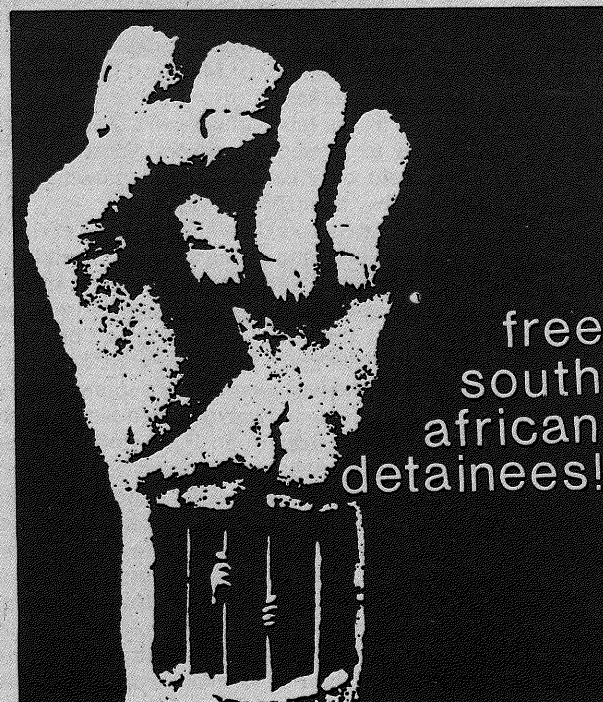
In Port Elizabeth, a traditional center of resistance to apartheid, workplaces were virtually deserted and the local subsidiary of General Motors closed its plants for the day. In Johannesburg, where work stoppages on May 1st and June 16th virtually stripped the city of its black workforce, many people seemed to have gone to work. Union officials said the Government's crackdown on labor—with many hundreds of activists detained—had hampered ability to organize political protest. Under the present South African decree, the identities of detainees may not be published. No one is sure how many have been arrested.

After their legalization in 1979, black unions tended to place higher priority on building organization than embarking on political confrontation. Thus the unions were far less conspicuous than student and community groups that had been at the forefront of protest. As the emergency has accelerated—a process which has been building up for months—unions have radicalized.

The level of organization and radicalization it will take to transform South African society is not clear. Whites, only 15% of the total population, receive roughly 63% of the country's income—a per-capita income for whites exceeded only by that of residents of the 10 or 12 richest countries of the world. The non-white majority, which receives about 37% of the country's income, has a per-capita income slightly more than 10% of the average for whites, comparable to the per-capita income of Guatemala. Estimates of the income of rural blacks put them in a category with residents of some of the poorest countries of the world, including Burma and Uganda.

These income statistics reveal one fact that influences all calculations about the likelihood of peaceful political change—the high economic cost to whites of any kind of reform. Because whites constitute such a small proportion of the population, to raise the per-capita income of non-whites by \$1, whites would have to sacrifice \$5.50. Until that almost pie-in-the-sky time when the South African economy can be transformed to provide a decent living for all, any sort of downward shift in wealth means that the income of whites will fall relatively closer to that of blacks. As long as they have the political/military power to prevent such a shift, white South Africans can be expected to do so.

Thus South Africa's unions must prepare for the possibility that their efforts to transform society will lead, as in Spain, to civil war.



COSATU'S DEMANDS AFTER A MEETING OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON JULY 2ND, 1986 INCLUDED:

- release of trade-union officials and workers from detention
- an "end to harassment, victimization, and intimidation"
- a "democratic resolution of our country's problems"
- [and directed at employers:]
- Any COSATU member detained should continue to be paid in full.
- Wage increases delayed because of disruption of negotiations should be back-dated.
- Workers should be exempted from night shifts without loss of pay because of the dangers of traveling to and from the townships.
- Employers should make available to union officials telephones and telexes to "overcome disruption of communication caused by measures imposed by state of emergency".

Also, the National Union of Miners (NUM) rejected wage raises ranging from 15 to 20% for the 565,000 blacks in gold, coal, and other mines. The NUM is demanding a 30% raise, justified by a 35% increase in earnings of the mining sector last year.

TWO WORKERS KILLED

According to government reports, fire broke out in a workshop at South Africa's oldest nuclear power plant August 2nd or 3rd, killing two workers and injuring two others. The accident occurred at the Pelindaba nuclear-research station, about 30 miles west of Johannesburg. The Government said there was no radiation leaked. One can only hope that their honesty in this matter is more reliable than their honesty about police activities. But when it comes to uranium, the first impulse of governments is to lie.

REVOLUTIONARY UNION NEWS

NEW ATTACK ON CNT

The Spanish State has struck another blow at the anarcho-syndicalist CNT-AIT (National Confederation of Labor-International Workers Association). On June 23rd a Spanish court provisionally ruled that the CNT-AIT was no longer legally entitled to use its own name. The court formally recognized the breakaway CNT-Unificada (better known as the *renovadoras*) as the legal CNT and rightful heir to the historic CNT founded in 1910.

The National Committee of the CNT-AIT has appealed this decision and has threatened to take the case to the highest courts if the appeal fails.

Meanwhile, the CNT-AIT have called on all sections of the AIT and fraternal organizations to send telegrams of protest to Jesus Nicolas Garcia Paredas, Juez del Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Numero Tres de Madrid, Plaza de Castilla, Madrid, Spain; and to Don Felipe Gonzales Marquez, Presidente del Gobierno Espanol, Palacio de la Moncloa, Madrid, Spain.

Coming on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Spanish Revolution, led by Spain's anarcho-syndicalist union, this decision is obviously an attempt to bury anarcho-syndicalism once and for all. But Franco was not able to do it, nor was the Primo de Rivera dictatorship in the '20s. The CNT-AIT have always bounced back from persecution. With our help and solidarity they can overcome this latest outrage.

SOLIDARNOSC ACTIVIST FREED

Leading Solidarnosc activist Bogdan Lis was released from prison July 31st—the first prominent opposition figure to be freed under Poland's new clemency act. Lis was due to be released in February 1987 after serving a two-year jail term for taking part in a clandestine meeting to plan a nationwide strike against price increases. The strike was later called off.

CENSORED
This newspaper has been censored in terms of the emergency regulations which severely restricts the coverage of security force action against the union movement and comment on the State of Emergency. We are also unable to be seen to "encourage or promote disinvestment" which has affected numerous articles dealing with action and statements by overseas unions. Despite these restrictions we have tried as best as possible to cover workers' news in these difficult times.

Paradoxically, the greater the news clampdown in South Africa, the more people in the rest of the world have their attention drawn to the situation.

— Ron Todd, general secretary of Britain's biggest union, the 1.5 million strong Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), said. "Against world opinion, again at the pleas of the leaders of the black people of South Africa, our prime minister remains stubbornly resistant."

On that judgment, during the Second World

Lis was deputy chairperson of Solidarnosc's Gdansk chapter and a founder of its Temporary Co-ordinating Committee, TKK, formed shortly after martial law had forced Solidarnosc underground in 1981.

Speaking from his home in Gdansk, Lis said: "Nobody asked me to sign anything; there was no warning talk. They just quoted a passage from the law saying that if I return to the road of crime, I'll be back behind bars."

Under the clemency law passed in late July, the state prosecutor is entitled to demand a written pledge that prisoners to be freed will not return to active opposition. The clemency law does not allow people charged with illegal union activities to be released except in "particularly justified cases".

Lis said he did not know why he was released. He had been released under a previous amnesty in December of 1984, but returned to union activity and was seized again the next February. Lech Walesa accused the Polish Government of trying to divide the banned union by releasing only some of its imprisoned members.

ART: IN, OF AND FROM THE WORKPLACE

At the end of June the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations at the University of Michigan sponsored a three-day residential Workers' Culture School for non-professional artists in the labor movement. The conference was designed to promote workers' artistic skills. Workshops were held on creative writing, drawing and painting, photography, theatre, and video.

Participants and instructors drawn from many corners of the working class (including office workers, assembly-line workers, homemakers, and labor organizers, among others) came from across the US, although most were from the Midwest. As the costs of housing and bringing in instructors were rather steep for the average working-class budget, most of the participants were sponsored by their union locals. Your poor reporter attended through the good graces of Elise Bryant, an ILIR staff member and the project co-ordinator, well known around Ann Arbor for her acting and directing skills in performances highlighting social issues. As I had to work during two days of the conference, I only managed to attend sporadically. Nonetheless, what I saw was impressive.

The art was definitely in, of, and from the workplace. Some of the pieces produced by workers had no relation to their wage work. A slide show depicted murals produced by workers in factories to make working conditions more bearable, and jewelry made by workers from materials available in the workplace. Much of the art, both graphic and verbal, depicted the workplace. It was clear that "workers' culture" is not willing to let itself be narrowly defined.

While the primary focus of the conference was on upgrading artistic skills, a perhaps even more valuable element developed through the discussions among participants both inside and outside the workshops. It was apparent that the participants were very proud of their place in the working class and of the culture of that class. They wanted not only to improve their skills, but also to find ways to spread pride in working-class culture among workers. As a first step, the participants have begun a newsletter to keep in touch with each other and share their artistic accomplishments.

There was discussion about the stereotypes of workers as uncultured—stereotypes which would be severely damaged if the quality paintings, writings, and performances produced at the conference could be seen by wider audiences. On the final day a performance was presented by the participants, including dance, a video film of the conference, dramatic readings, and a dramatization of the poem "The Hangman", about the attitude in society that as long as repression is happening to someone else it is not our problem.

The latter left some of us wondering if we might be the hangman's next victim, as actors among us portraying radicals, religious dissidents, and finally the apathetic narrator were dragged to their death. The portrayal was re-inforced by a reading of the quotation from Pastor Martin Neimoller, a victim of Nazi persecution, about not speaking out against the victimization of Jews, homosexuals, communists, and Catholics because he was none of those things—only to find that when the Nazis finally came for him there was no one left to speak in his behalf.

The conference closed with the singing of an old IWW tune long adopted by the US labor movement as a whole—"Solidarity Forever"—reminding us that things do not have to be as portrayed in "The Hangman" and by Pastor Neimoller. I walked out of the conference with my pride in being a member of the working class re-affirmed once again.

Plans are in the works to make the Workers' Culture School an annual event, and efforts to open it to a wider working-class audience are under consideration. If the quality of next year's school can match this year's, it will be well worth the while of workers to attend, and might serve as an eye-opener for any who have yet to recognize the cultural achievements of the folks who keep society running.

IWW DIRECTORY

ALASKA: Ruth Sheridan, Delegate, 4704 Kenai, Anchorage 99508. Barry Roderick, Delegate, Box 748, Douglas 99824.

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

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

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

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

GUAM: Shelby Shapiro, Box 864, Agana 96910.

IDAHO: IWW Delegate, Route 1, Box 137, Potlatch 83855.

ILLINOIS: Chicago General Membership Branch and General Defense Committee Local 2, 3435 North Sheffield (Suite 202), Chicago 60657, (312) 549-5045. Meetings first Sunday of each month at 1 pm. Champaign-Urbana IWW Group, Jeff Stein, Delegate, Box 2824, Station A, Champaign 61820.

KANSAS: General Defense Committee, Arthur J. Miller, Secretary, Box 6130, Kansas City 66106.

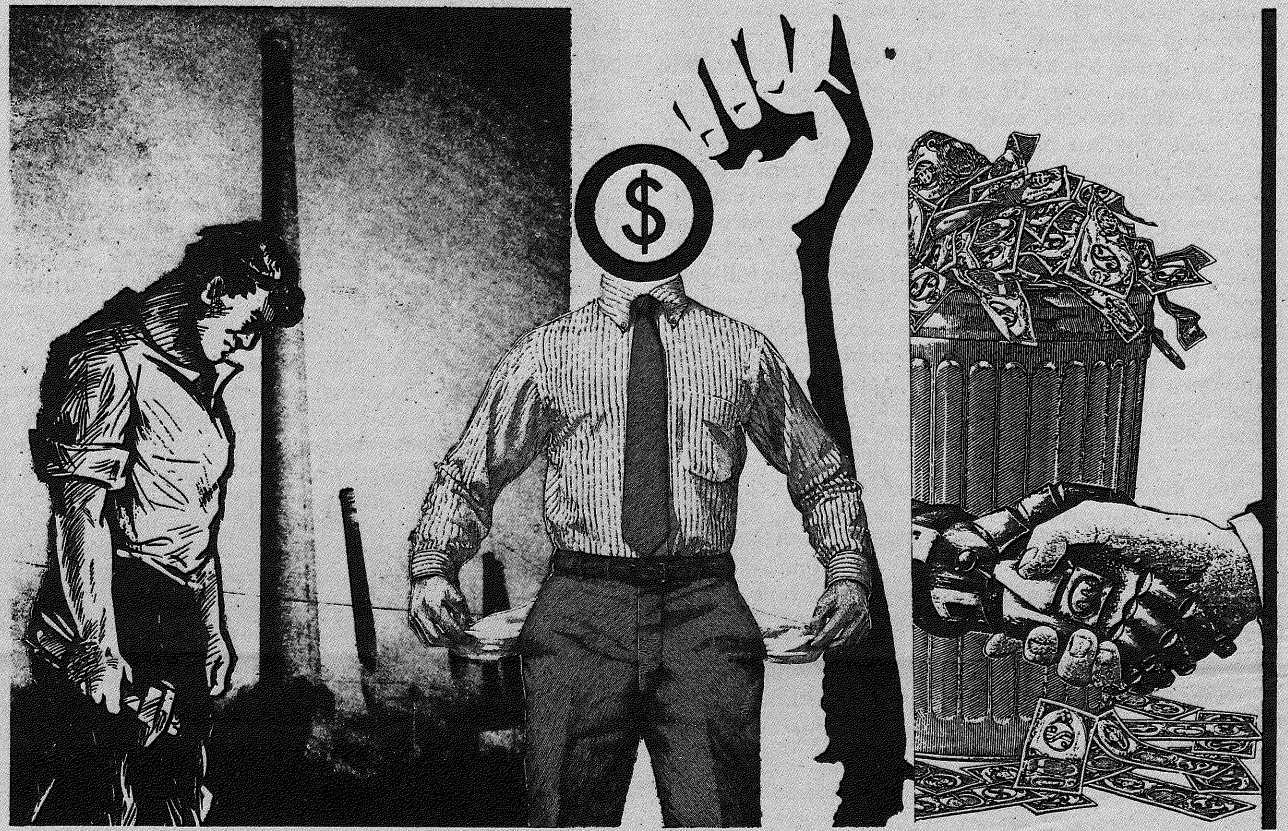
DID YOU NOTICE?

CATERPILLAR WORKERS STRIKE: More than 2400 workers at the Joliet, Illinois caterpillar plant went on strike midnight August 31st after the expiration of a three-year contract. In their first strike action since 1968, members of Local 851 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers overwhelmingly rejected the earth-mover equipment company's proposed wage freeze.

MOROCCO UNIONIST FREED: Amnesty International has received reports that El Haj Mastour, Secretary General of the Union General des Travailleurs de Phosphate (Phosphate Workers' Union) has been released. Mastour was the last of 10 miners arrested between January 25th and 31st, 1986 after a strike.

COLOMBIAN UNIONIST KILLED: Amnesty International reports that peasant and trade-union leader Rafael Reyes was shot dead in Grenada, Meta Department, Colombia July 30th while leaving the Grenada municipal offices, where he had been elected councillor. During the first six months of 1986, AI notes, over 600 Colombians, many of them labor activists, were killed by troops, police, and rightist gunmen.

PERUVIAN PEASANT LEADER FREED: Amnesty International has learned that Carlos Taipé Campo has been released. He was arrested June 8th as he spoke to a community assembly in his capacity as an official of the Confederation Campesina del Peru (Peruvian Confederation of Peasants).



.....Around Our Union.....

SAN DIEGO: In the wake of a recent immigration-rights rally at which organizers mounted a massive effort to prevent the distribution of "unauthorized" literature, local Wobs have been meeting with other San Diego activists to promote freedom of speech and democracy on the left. In July, Wobblies helped bring off a rent party to benefit a long-time San Diego activist and journalist whose unemployment benefits had been cut off weeks before the new job he had located was to start. Some \$150 was raised to help tide the FW over. And a new member lined up at the first IWW meeting in San Diego in many months (July 28th), which discussed local organizing prospects, opportunities to spread the IWW message, and the upcoming convention.

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

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

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

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

MICHIGAN: Southeast Michigan General Membership Branch, 42 South Summit, Ypsilanti 48197, (313) 483-3478. Meetings second Monday of each month at 7:30 pm in Room 4001 of the Michigan Union. University Cellar IU 660 Job Branch, 341 East Liberty, Ann Arbor 48104. People's Warehouse IU 660 Job Branch, c/o Sarah Rucker, 727 West Ellsworth Road, Ann Arbor 48104. IWW Delegate, 415 Ethel, Grand Rapids 49506.

MINNESOTA: Twin Cities General Membership Branch, Nancy Arthur Collins, Delegate, 1621 Marshall (3), Saint Paul 55104. Meetings third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm.

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

NEW YORK: New York General Membership Branch, Box 183, New York City 10028. Delegates: Robert Young, Box 920, Wingdale 12594. Joe O'Shea, Winklers Farm, Towners Road, Carmel 10512. Rochelle Semel, 788 Co-

UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS entitled to Medicaid: On July 14th, a federal judge ruled that undocumented workers living in New York State cannot be denied Medicaid assistance. The decision came in a seven-year-old class-action suit originally brought against New York City, New York State, and the Federal Department of Health and Human Services.

SOUTHERN ARSON RISES AS OIL FALLS

US arson and insurance fraud have been concentrated in Northern cities that have suffered sharp economic reversals. But now layoffs, bankruptcies, business failures, and home foreclosures are at record levels in Louisiana, Texas, and other energy-producing areas, a result of the crises in the US oil and gas industries. Insurance and fire officials say the Houston area has become the nation's worst spot for arson-for-profit. Five years ago in Houston, arson against private dwellings was insignificant. Now unemployment has reached 12.5%, and property values in most parts of town have dropped 30% or so over the last two years. Many people thus find themselves without income and owning homes that are now worth far less than the outstanding mortgage debt. Since owners face ruinous losses if they sell, collecting the insurance seems the only alternative to many.

The problem has stretched the resources of the Houston Fire Department to the limit, particularly since the city's fiscal difficulties have forced layoffs of city workers. Typically, there are nine cases of arson a day, representing one-tenth of the calls the firefighters answer.

.....Aids action in ann arbor

Since its founding in 1905, the IWW has always been in the forefront in promoting progressive causes among workers. In recent years elements of the labor contract between the IWW and the University Cellar have served as a model in negotiations for worker rights and worker self-management in other shops. In the current round of negotiations at the Cellar, tentative agreement has been reached on addition of a new section of the anti-discrimination clause which will prohibit discrimination in hiring and continued employment on the basis of a worker having a disease which is not communicable through normal contact in the workplace, such as the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. To our knowledge this will constitute the first contractual protection anywhere of the right of AIDS victims to continue work.

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