

NEW YORK, NY
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N. Y. COMM. FOR TRADE UNION ACTION & DEMOCRACY
799 BROADWAY, ROOM TEL. 260-1530

the rank and file in action

Labour Today

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Country

Volume 15, No. 1

412

January 1976



80% JOIN STRIKE

Public employees strike against code in Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN: Over 80 percent of all unionized public employes in Puerto Rico stopped work October 8, to protest the new Personnel Law and to support a call for a 24-hour general strike.

The new personnel law would effectively destroy public union contracts and nullify the hard-won gains of Puerto Rican public employes. It would substitute for bargaining, a "merit" system in which supervisors would unilaterally implement promotions, transfers, salaries and conditions of work.

The strike followed a Labor Conference Against Repression called by the United Workers Movements (MOU) a grouping of inde-

pendent trade unions not affiliated with the AFL-CIO. The MOU denounced the new Personnel Law as a colonial version of the Taft-Hartley Act. Thirty-eight unions agreed to call the stoppage and to warn of an indefinite general strike of public employes if the Personnel Law is put into effect.

The main government agencies were seriously affected although union leaders took certain measures to guarantee that essential services to the people be maintained.

For instance, the Independent Union of the Waterworks and Sewers Authority (AAA) paralyzed the agency totally, but one worker--who supervises the water purification process--continued to perform his duties, so important to the people's health.

The agencies most affected by the general strike were: Puerto Rico Water Resources Authority, AAA, Communications Authority, Highway Authority, Fire Department, State Insurance Fund, Industrial Development Administration, Automobile Accidents

Compensation Administration (ACAA), and the Rio Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico.

The director of the Office of Personnel, Milagros Guzman, reported that in only six government agencies some 13,000 out of 19,000 employees--including the administrative strata--were absent that day.

Also joining the strike were 260 employees of the Industrial Development department. The telephone workers paralyzed the telephone company, which is publicly owned. Over 1,000 Highway Authority workers stayed off the job, along with 1,300 firefighters across the country who did not report for work.

Elsewhere, in several divisions of public agencies, absenteeism was over 50 percent, as, for example, was the case among employees of the Consultation Division of the Treasury Department

Labor Today

Queremos articulos en Espanol!

LABOR TODAY convida a todos los lectores y amigos a mandarnos artículos de fondo y cartas escritos en español. Pretendemos satisfacer la creciente demanda de parte de nuestros lectores a ver más materia en español.

Si Ud. se enrede en una lucha al taller, o en su unión, haga el favor de avisarnos.

El artículo de fondo corriente en LABOR TODAY tiene más o menos 800 palabras. Preferimos artículos de fondo escritos en máquina a dos espacios, pero todo esto no es necesario. Sería muy bueno recibirlos en español y inglés a la vez, pero estamos contentos con artículos de fondo en español a solas.

Manden Uds. sus artículos de fondo y cartas a: LABOR TODAY, 343 S. Dearborn St., Rm. 600, Chicago, IL 60604.



CONTRA EL LEY DE PERSONAL

Paro general en Puerto Rico

Más del 80 por ciento de los trabajadores gubernamentales unionados faltó a sus trabajos en protesta contra la nueva Ley de Personal y en solidaridad con el paro general decretado por 24 horas.

Todos los sectores conscientes de la opinión pública nacional han condenado la aprobación de la ley y juristas probos estiman que la misma es anticonstitucional.

La nueva ley garantiza a los directores de agencias del Gobierno el derecho a remover, trasladar, suspender, bajar el sueldo, entre otras cosas, a los empleados bajo su dirección sin que el trabajador pueda impedirlo o rechazarlo.

Las principales agencias públicas se vieron seriamente afectadas aunque los dirigentes sindicales tomaron las medidas para garantizar que ciertos servicios esenciales al pueblo se continuaron prestando.

En esa forma, la Unión Independiente de la Autoridad de Acueductos y Alcantarillados paralizó totalmente la agencia, pero destacó un empleado para que continuara trabajando en la purificación del agua por la importancia que esto tiene para el pueblo.

Las agencias más afectadas por el paro general fueron las Autoridades de Fuentes Fluviales, Acueductos y Alcantarillados, Comunicaciones, Carreteras, Servicio de Bomberos, el Fondo del Seguro del Estado, la Administración de Compensación de Accidentes Automovilísticos y el recinto de Río Piedras de la Universidad de Puerto Rico.

La directora de la Oficina de Personal, Milagros Guzmán, informó que en solo seis agencias públicas, de un total de 19 mil empleados, incluyendo los gerenciales, hubo un total del 13 mil ausencias.

Esta cifra no incluyó los empleados de Fomento Industrial, donde de 367 estuvieron ausentes 260. Excluyó también a los empleados telefónicos que paralizaron dicha agencia y que suman más de tres mil empleados. La cifra excluyó asimismo a los trabajadores de la ACAA, cuya unión paralizó los trabajos de la agencia, y dejó afuera el caso de la Autoridad de Carreteras donde son más de mil empleados, que comenzaron ayer un paro indefinido. Por otro lado, los 1,376 bomberos que hay en el país estuvieron ayer ausentes de sus trabajos.

Por otra parte, en varias divisiones de las agencias públicas hubo un promedio de ausencias que superó el 50 por ciento.

ATTACKS ON MILLER, RANK & FILE

"Destabilizing" the UMW

by FRED GABOURY
National Organizer
TUAD

Rank and file leaders everywhere are concerned about the attack on President Arnold Miller's leadership of the UMWA. Their concern is well founded. Although the attack is focused on Miller it is directed against the concepts of rank and file trade unionism that the Miller-Patrick leadership represents. As such, it is an across-the-board attack on the whole rank and file movement.

That the attack should be centered on the reform leadership of the UMWA is understandable. The MFD's 1972 win was the first major electoral victory of the rank and file movement. It stood as an inspiration to the movement everywhere as living proof that it was possible to beat city hall. And, on the other side of the coin, if the Miller leadership could be discredited then that would stand as living proof that it doesn't do any good to fight, that "even if you win, nothing changes."

NO SURPRISES

Workers and trade unionists are not surprised to find the giant corporations in the center of this "de-stabilization" campaign. Rank and file unionism with its election of officers (how many UMWA Executive Board Members were elected before Miller took office?), with its ratification of contracts (1974 was the first time that working miners ever had a damn thing to say about their contract)

Few are surprised to learn that the Boyle hold-overs on the IEB have become willing tools of Consolidation Coal or U.S. Steel Corporation in this attack on the rank and file movement.

The attack against Miller comes from many directions, and because of this it has caused a great deal of confusion. For this reason the attack deserves close scrutiny.

Generally speaking, little was said or written about Miller during the first year of his leadership. Most people knew that he and his fellow officers were surrounded by Boyle appointees when they took office. Most rank and filers applauded the decision to cut back the salaries of the International Officers and cheered Secretary-Treasurer Patrick when he sold off the UMWA Cadillac fleet.

A PLANNED BUILD-UP

Following the 1973 convention, when it became obvious that a majority of coal miners

supported the Miller leadership, a spate of articles appeared in many liberal and self-professed "radical" publications questioning Miller's ability to "lead forcefully" or condemning his "moves toward bureaucratic methods of leadership." His ability to deal with the many issues in contract talks was questioned while, at the same time, articles "reporting" on rank and file disillusionment in the coal fields appeared in major newspapers and magazines across the country, especially in major steel and auto manufacturing cities, to say nothing of mining communities.

When the time came to ratify the 1974 contract, many so-called "rank and file" groups had joined the gaggle of anti-Miller forces. Denunciations of Miller as a "gutless sell-out" became standard editorial fare in the "revolutionary" press.

By late summer of 1975, the de-stabilization effort was in full swing, as anti-Miller forces inside the union, including "radicals" and "communists" supplied by outside agencies attempted to fan work-stoppages in the coal fields into a full-scale rebellion against Miller and the United Mine Workers.



Arnold
Miller

Close study of the events in and around the UMWA last summer lead to some inescapable conclusions. Some hard questions must be asked. Some no-nonsense answers must be given.

WHERE WAS THE RANK AND FILE?

Would Miller and Secretary-Treasurer Patrick find themselves out-voted in the International Executive Board if the rank and file movement that swept them into office were still in existence? Would President Miller have recommended the same contract settlement that he did if there had been an organized rank and file movement in existence at the time of the 1974 contract negotiations? Could the coal operators have gotten away with their foot-dragging on the settlement of grievances had Miners For Democracy not been disbanded after the 1972 election of International officers?

The answer to all of these questions is NO. *The fight for rank and file trade unionism doesn't end with an election victory. Grass roots movements are needed to safeguard these victories and to provide additional power within the union at contract time and for aggressive contract enforcement all of the time.*

Since rank and file trade unionism poses a potentially costly challenge to corporate power and control everywhere, is there any reason to doubt that the coal operators had planned their offensive against Miller with a great deal of thought? When it became obvious that the Boyle machine was no longer able to assure a green light to the companies, isn't it logical to expect the operators to look elsewhere for "hit men," to deliberately use disruptors? Rank and file



Fred
Gaboury

cannot turn deaf ears to the exposures of police infiltration of people's movements around the country. They cannot turn their backs on the exposures of FBI penetration aimed at disrupting union organizing efforts in the South and elsewhere. Isn't it possible that the admitted FBI practice of setting up "communist organizations" in the midst of these drives could be duplicated in coal fields and mining communities?

The answer to all of these questions is YES --not "Yes, it could happen," but "Yes, it did happen."

TUAD has mistakenly shyed away from publicly exposing disruption and disruptors in the rank and file movement. We have done so partly because we did not want to contribute to any re-birth of McCarthyism, partly because we did not want to contribute to anti-student and anti-youth currents that exist in the labor movement. Our silence contributed to the confusion that exists in the movement. To continue on that path is to be irresponsible.

This is not to say, as some do, that the disruptors in the coal fields--or in New York, San Francisco, Detroit or any other city--are students who have become workers. On the contrary, many of these same individuals started their career of disruption and agency when they joined the anti-war and civil rights movements on college campuses. They are today what they were then--conscious, organized disruptors, as often as not, in the pay of the FBI, the CIA or the local red squad of the local police department.

This leaves a final set of questions: What about last summer's strikes? Didn't coal miners have just cause for anger over the backlog of grievances? Shouldn't coal miners (and all workers) have the right to strike over grievances and safety conditions? Didn't Arnold Miller urge striking miners to go back to work?

All of these questions can be answered with an emphatic YES.

TUAD has been in the forefront of the fight to preserve and extend the right to strike. We have urged workers and trade unionists to build political action movements to put an end to growing court intervention in labor disputes. We go even further. We say without equivocation: *The US labor movement cannot live with compulsory arbitration and no-strike clauses in labor agreements. No labor leader can look good when he is forced to carry out these provisions.*

A steelworker friend reminded me the other day that Miller is opposed to compulsory arbitration but that I.W. Abel is running around the country trying to eliminate the right to strike. Come to think of it, that's quite a difference! That's what rank and file trade unionism is all about. And so is TUAD.

Labor
Today

Volume 15, No. 1

January 1976

LABOR TODAY--"The Rank and File in Action!"--is published monthly except August by Labor Today Associates, a non-profit Illinois corporation, 343 S. Dearborn Street, Room 600, Chicago, Illinois 60604. Phone 312/922-5560. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60607 AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

1 year \$3.50; 2 years \$5.00; 3 years \$7.00
FOREIGN \$6.00 per year Air Mail Only
Printed in U.S.A.

British shop stewards build factory democracy

Interview with GEORGE SLESSOR
Shop Steward
Vauxhall Motors
Luton, England

By FRED GABOURY, LT Columnist

LT: Explain the Stewards Organization.

GS: The Shop Stewards Organization in Britain and Ireland is a rank and file organization, brought about by pressure from the rank and file for direct representation and for the ability to put pressure on some unions that weren't representing the members in the way that the rank and file wanted. It is now in Britain a massive organization, extremely powerful in large factories, and is able to conduct day-to-day negotiations with the biggest employers.

The Shop Stewards Organization negotiates directly with General Motors over wages and conditions. One of the advantages that the organization has given us is the direct representation from the shop floor to the negotiating table.

The shop stewards are elected annually by the union members. They then go on to a Shop Stewards' Committee, and usually elect an executive or steering body, which in turn elects a chief shop steward, called a Convenor. The convenor is present at negotiations with the employer.

If there is more than one union in the plant, as is sometimes the case here in Britain, a combined committee is formed which amalgamates all of the unions. Then one Convenor from each union is elected to be present at negotiations.

Now there are full time national officials, or local officials at the same negotiating meetings, but we always have representatives, direct representatives, of the rank and file, and any agreement or suggestions put forward must come back to the shop floor where they are debated by the shop stewards with their members.

If we think we can get more, we take industrial action. This has been very, very successful. In fact it's been so successful that some employers have tried to induce governments to bring in laws to inhibit the role of the shop stewards. There's a whole range of industrial actions. There's what we call the "Go Slow," the work to rule, and since the employers have surrounded themselves nowadays with so many rules, if you work to rule it just about brings factories to a halt. That has been very successful. We have the strike, which is outside the factory and picketing. The sit-in is becoming more and more popular, and in some cases we stay in and throw the management out. This has been very embarrassing to them; it meant that we were in control of the plants.

LT: In England, workers have maintained their purchasing power; how do you explain this?

GS: I think that we've maintained purchasing power simply because of the rank and file movement. Although some national unions pay lip service to limit wage increases, the rank and file nod, and then carry on and fight for higher wages.

But most of the unions are winning very good increases at the plant level because the shop stewards are in very direct contact with their members.

In this way many shop stewards and many negotiating committees have managed not only to keep level, but sometimes to pull ahead of inflation, and in that situation you know that we become better off because inflation is not always a bad thing for the working class.

LT: There is a growing movement in England against plant closures and shutdowns. Will you elaborate on this fight.

GS: In the recent period--three, four, perhaps five years--we've had cases in Britain of firms closing, especially foreign firms--American and German--closing plants and moving to other areas. Slowly the resistance has built up and tactics have been developed and improved upon, but the pattern now seems to be set. Workers defend their jobs, not by going on strike, but by taking over the factories. There have been many, many cases up and down the country, and some currently going on, when I left England. Imperial Typewriters tried to close down; the workers are now in occupation. UCS (Upper Clyde Shipyards), of course, was a very good example of workers taking over the plant and throwing out the management, running the whole thing themselves, and making it pay.



And then the government intervened to save themselves the embarrassment. It was a labor government that first refused money for Upper Clyde, and when the Conservative government came into power they carried on the same policy. But the mass movement, and especially the shop stewards' movement, rallied to the side of the Upper Clyde shipbuilder workers and forced the government to concede. I think this first successful take-over set the pattern.

Many, many workers are now seeing this as the answer, and we have an Institute for Workers Control which produces and circulates information covering all the industries: auto, shipbuilding, radio and television, etc. All of the stewards in these industries get into discussions together about what to do to take over.

LT: Is there a difference between workers' control and workers' ownership of these shops? You say that you've been kicking

management out of the factories, what do you mean exactly by this?

GS: I think it's been a propaganda exercise. When we know that a company is viable and has full order books, yet wants to shut down to make more money elsewhere or send the money abroad, the shop stewards move in. The stewards have actually walked into the board rooms and thrown the management out, and welded up the gates, blocked their vehicles and started the fight from there, not only to beat back the management but to bring some publicity as well. In many cases employers have had to retract.

Now there is certainly a difference between workers' ownership and workers' control. You can control the physical factory and run the machines and produce goods, but it's very very hard to get your hands on share certificates--that's the real control.

There's a difference between workers' control and nationalization. Nationalization of course has been going on in my country since the end of the Second World War, and it's been a social democratic policy of nationalizing the electricity industry, coal mining, water, all things that the other factories need to keep going. The tragedy's been that we have always nationalized those sectors that are needed by industry, but that themselves also needed massive investment. We nationalized steel and poured millions and millions of pounds into it so that private industry could get cheap steel.

The rank and file shop stewards see this as a very serious mistake and we are saying now that we want to nationalize those firms that make money--we want to nationalize oil. That's a big money maker, and will be much bigger in the years to come. We want the

money to come back into the state. We want to get rid of the old type nationalization and impose nationalization where the workers in the factory are on the boards and have the right to elect the board members. We would directly elect those experts that we needed. This is the important thing. We know that experts are needed, well, we'll elect the experts, or we'll hire them, but we'll also fire them, and this is not what's happening in nationalized industry today.

There is some public intervention. People like myself can sit on the committees as a consumers and have the right to determine increases in costs of gas and many other things. I'm on the Gas Industries Board, but I don't work in the gas industry. What we want is the direct representation of the workers in the gas industry, the electricity industry, in the mines and the railways. All of them should be nationalized so that we have a direct say in how those railways and other enterprises should be run.

STRIKE IN CHICAGO

College teachers defend union gains

by BEA LUMPKIN
AFT L. 1600
Chicago

In defiance of an injunction, 1300 Chicago City College (CCC) teachers conducted the most effective strike in the 10-year history of Local 1600 AFT. Yet, after 3 weeks they went back to work with a weakened contract and no raise for a year. This unfavorable settlement was hailed by the anti-union Chicago newspapers who held it up as a model for the Chicago Teachers Union.

The blame for the setback suffered by the CCC teachers union, considered the strongest local of college teachers, must be placed first of all on the anti-education budget slashes of Illinois Governor Daniel Walker and the anti-union CCC Board of Trustees, appointed by Chicago Mayor Daley. Crowding the dishonorable mention list is the circuit court judge who issued an injunction the first day of the strike and later sentenced the Local president, Norman Swenson, to 5 months in jail.

A large percentage of NO votes registered the widespread belief that the contract was an unnecessary step back. Even many who voted YES were dissatisfied with the leadership of the union but unwilling to go out on strike again under the same leadership.

Although college unions have made gains throughout the country, Local 1600 has been backsliding since February 1971, when they agreed to end their 5-week strike by allowing the circuit court to supervise the contract negotiations.

Any setback for the CCC Teachers Union has national significance because their contract had served as an inspiration to organizing efforts for college teachers. No doubt this is a factor in the all-out offensive of the Daley-appointed Board to first weaken, and then destroy the union. The economic crisis which has left thousands of college teachers unemployed has also emboldened the union busters.

In this period a union leadership policy which allows surrender of long established gains is very dangerous.

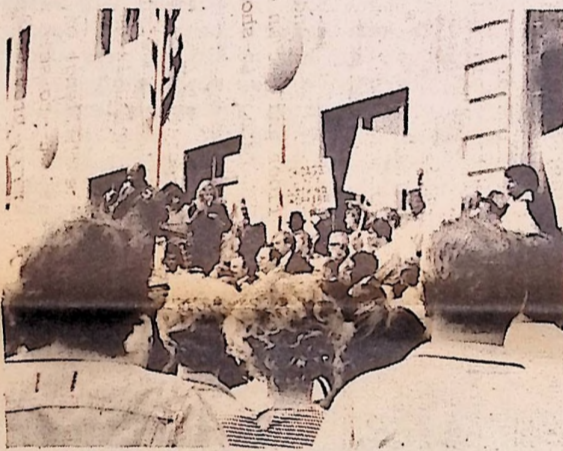
An unwritten "Gentlemen's Agreement" for a freeze on hiring is supposed to compensate teachers for the cut in the overtime pay rate by providing overtime work instead of hiring additional teachers. This immoral agreement is being opposed because it would kill the possibility of affirmative action in hiring as well as eliminate jobs in face of vast teacher unemployment.

A rank and file caucus, the Committee for Democracy and Action in Local 1600 (CDA), was strongly represented in the leadership of five of the eight striking campuses but was completely shut out of the negotiations. Nonetheless, CDA was successful in turning around the strike priorities to prevent the layoff of many new teachers. Over 100 hired on a 5-month contract received regular annual contracts. Support from the newly organized Black Faculty group was decisive in winning this demand. But other priorities, such as class size, return of department rights and cost of living increase were sacrificed.

Prospects for change now depend on the success of coalition efforts among rank and file unionists in CDA, Black Faculty, unaffiliated militant union members and the many former "conservatives" who are dissatisfied with the weak union leadership. The program for change includes democracy in the union, more union concern for educational questions, enforcement of the contract and closer relations with student and community organizations.

ROLE OF THE COURTS

Local 1600 is a classic example of anti-labor action by the courts and points up the dangers of compulsory arbitration. In 1966 Judge Covelli sentenced Norman Swenson (then, and still, local union president) to 30 days for disobeying the injunction against the first strike of the union. In 1971, frightened by this sentence, Swenson convinced the Local (by a narrow vote) to obey another injunction.



The CCC Board, pleased by its success, then lifted the injunction, as much as saying to the union, "Strike until you starve." For five weeks the strike remained 90 percent effective until the Board manipulated a few student "representatives" to bring the union into court again. Under threat of a new injunction, the Swenson

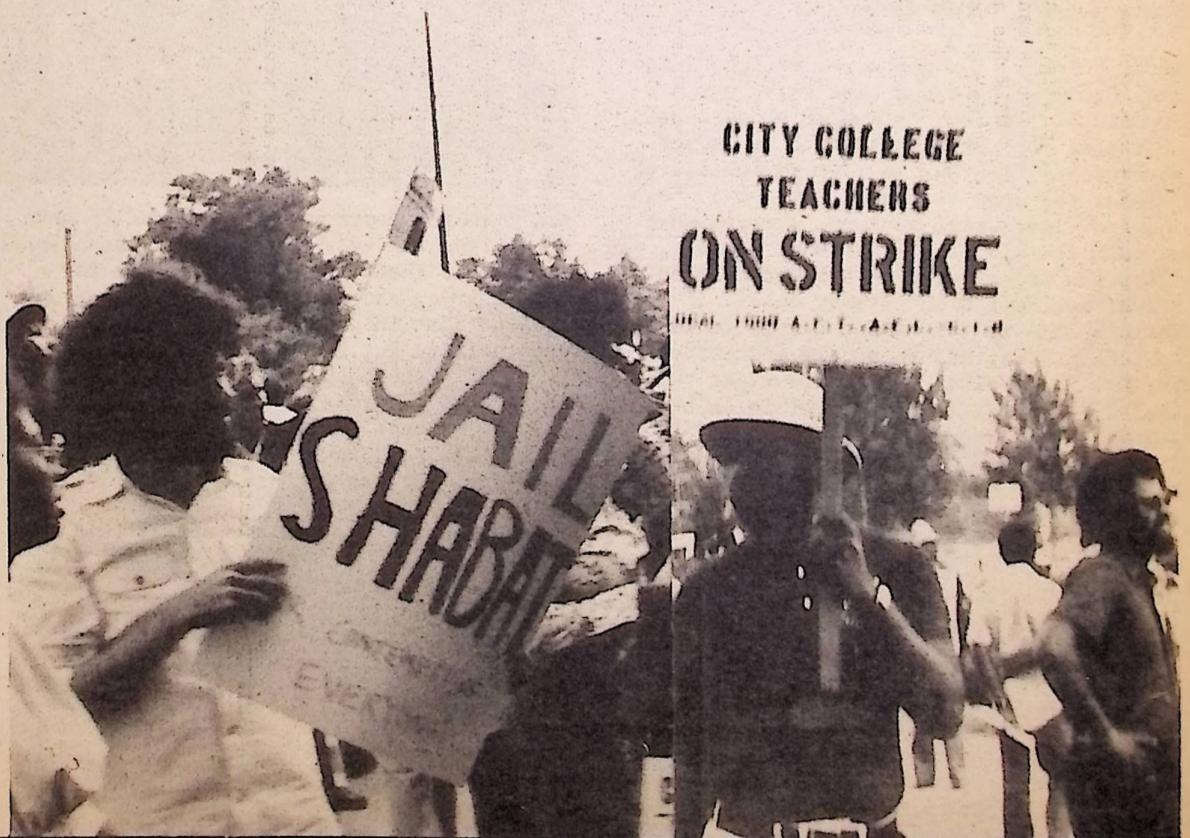


leadership agreed to let Judge Nathan Cohen take jurisdiction over the contract. The predictable result was a gutted union contract.

Again this year, another strike and still another injunction, issued on the first day. Swenson served eight days in jail but then capitulated on contract terms in time to save the negotiating committee from jail sentences.

WHAT WAY OUT?

According to Shanker, AFT National President, and echoed by Norman Swenson, the way out is collective bargaining legislation. The strategy has been to rely on promises by Illinois Governor Walker and some lobbying efforts by union members. Lack of a union policy for coalition with community and student groups has contributed to failure to generate enough pressure to get this legislation through the State legislature. To earn the support of the student body, which is over 50% Black, many members believe that the union must take a stand against racism and sex discrimination in the colleges.



R&F campaign to win California employees

by STEVE WILLETT
AFSCME Local 1695
Berkeley, California

Collective bargaining may be coming for the employees of the State of California. Legislation to this effect was almost passed this year--it is sure to come up again next year. Governor Jerry Brown is also considering the possibility of an executive order to establish bargaining for state workers.

There are over 200,000 people on the payroll of the state and its various agencies. Of these, perhaps 80,000 are members of the California State Employees Association (CSEA). CSEA is a management dominated association; its base is among professionals and it has a large core of "soft" members--members who joined mainly for various insurance plans but who have little loyalty to the organization.

CSEA is being challenged across the state by the American Federal of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO (AFSCME). Last spring an independent union of clerical workers in the state (Clerical and Allied Service Employees, or CASE) decided to affiliate with AFSCME. CASE already represents over 3,000 of the state's 30,000 clerical workers and is growing. Other similar organizations have or are considering joining with AFSCME--the California Rehabilitation Workers Union, the Parole Agents Association.

On the nine campuses of the University of California the situation is somewhat different. CSEA is relatively weak at UC and AFSCME's history goes back 25 years to the establishment of a local of custodians (and the first public workers' strike in the history of the state) on the Berkeley campus in 1950.

Early this year the functioning locals in AFSCME, in response to the movement towards collective bargaining legislation, drafted an organizing proposal and submitted it to the International. AFSCME International was impressed with the local initiative and agreed to fund an organizing campaign.



The campaign started small, especially considering the size of the job ahead (and the size of the state!). Three organizers went on staff with the task of establishing locals on the four campuses where none existed as well as reactivating two locals which had almost disappeared. In addition, the more established locals were to be expanded and a statewide newspaper was to be set up.

At the end of four months these goals were met--there are now locals on all nine campuses and the total membership is over 3,000 and growing. The second phase is now under way. This phase will have local organizers at each of the nine campuses with six more to be added to be used at large. There will also be at least two staff people, one to be in charge of the newspaper, the other to act as a coordinator. The goals of this phase are to double the membership with the aim of reaching 20% in as many key occupational groupings as possible by July 1976.

So what makes this operation different than many other campaigns to organize unorganized workers in the face of new collective bargaining legislation? Well, in this case the campaign was initiated by existing local unions instead of by an International union. The locals involved have a progressive history, marked by a concern for rank and file control and a series of principled positions and actions in the fight against racism, for affirmative action, child care and in militant struggles around various individual and shop grievances.

In the UC campaign this history has led to several important policies. First, all the organizers who have gone or will go on staff are rank and file union members elected by the locals where they will be working. Second, these staffers are responsible to and take their orders from the locals where they work. And third, the campaign has been marked by an ongoing concern for the development of democratic unions with an emphasis on each local's steward system. There have been steward training classes on each campus, in some cases many classes, culminating in a 2-day Steward's Conference attended by over 130 activists from across the state.

The campaign to organize University of California workers is off to a good start. Let's hope the impetus and direction of this campaign can be maintained until successful elections are held.

ARE YOU EXPOSED?

Trichlor is a killer

by JIM WILLIAMS
Co-Editor

Danger! The National Cancer Institute has issued an alert which warns that trichloroethylene, a widely used solvent for degreasing tools and equipment, is suspected of causing cancer.

Laboratory tests have shown that Trichloroethylene causes liver and lung cancers in animals who have been exposed to the substance.

Over 200,000 workers in the U.S. are exposed to the solvent, which goes under ~~many~~ about 35 different names -- but is commonly called Trichlor.

In steel mills, trichlor is often used in cleaning and degreasing the rollers in the rolling mills. In most machine shops, buckets of the substance are present for workers to dip their tools (and the hands) into.

Workers -- and a lot of doctors and scientists -- say there is no safe level for substances that cause cancer. In short, any exposure is too much.

The corporations take another approach. They say that there isn't enough proof -- that is, enough dead workers yet. So, the corporations want to stall and stall about reducing the level or usage.

If you use a degreaser in your shop, ask the company if it contains trichlor. If they refuse to say, or just give a brand name, call the Chicago Area Committee on Occupational Safety and Health at (312) 939-2104, or your local medical school.

CACOSH also recommends some other important steps:

1) Ask for a plan to eliminate trichlor from the air, and ask for a completion date.

1) See your doctor if you have any of these symptoms of liver trouble: nausea, loss of appetite, jaundice (yellow skin color), or weight loss.

3) Have the company, OSHA or the union monitor the concentrations of trichlor in the air.

Trichloroethylene has over 35 brand names. We list them below to help you see if you are working with this dangerous solvent:



- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| ACETYLENE | TRETHYLENE |
| TRICHLORIDE | TRI |
| ALGYLEN | TRIAD |
| BLACOSOLV | TRIAL |
| CHLORYLEN | TRIASOL |
| CIRCOSOLV | TRICHLORAN |
| DOW-TRI | TRICHLOREN |
| ETHINYL | TRICHLOROETHENE |
| TRICHLORIDE | TRICLENE |
| FLECK-FLIP | TRI-CLENE |
| GEMALGENE | TRIELENE |
| LANADIN | TRIELIN |
| LETHURIN | TRILENE |
| NIALK | TRILINE |
| PERM-A-CLOR | TRIMAR |
| PETZINOL | VESTROL |
| PHILEX | VITRAN |
| TCE | WESTROSOL |
| THRETHLEN | |

THE LAND OF THE FREE

Labor and the Bicentennial

by CARYL ESTEVES
LT Columnist

THE BICENTENNIAL--What do we think of when we think of the early history of our country? Mostly we think about pilgrims in black and white costumes sitting around a Thanksgiving table, having sought--as they told us in the third grade--"freedom to worship as they chose." Pocahontas throwing herself across the body of John Smith or somebody like that. We think of the Virginia planter, Thomas Jefferson, or the merchant John Hancock, or maybe Patrick Henry crying, "Give me liberty, or give me death," in some colonial legislature.

Stirring images these. But if your foremothers and forefathers in America go back to those colonial days, to those truly revolutionary times, chances are that they were neither merchants nor planters and that they did not come to this country seeking religious freedom but moved as working folk have always moved--to better their economic condition. A few of them, lucky ones who could pay their passage across the Atlantic, could command relatively high wages. Others, from Africa, came in chains and without choice to perpetual slavery. Of the Europeans, vast numbers came in a condition of temporary slavery, a peculiarly American institution known as indentured servitude.

Conditions for workers in England during that period were very bad. Unemployment was high, wages were low and inflation was rampant. In some countries contemporary analysts estimated that more than half the population subsisted on the 17th century equivalent of welfare, while others calculated that "poor rates" as they were called amounted to more than a third of the total revenue of the kingdom.

Wealthy and middle-class Englishmen saw the colonies as an excellent way of getting rid of this "excess population."

"Their principle reason for colonizing these parts," wrote the Spanish minister to England in 1611, "is to give an outlet to so many idle, wretched people as they have in England and thus prevent the dangers that might be feared of them."

Obviously, however, poverty stricken men and women could not afford the passage across the Atlantic, so they bound themselves out as "servants" in exchange for their passage, usually for a period of from four to seven years. On arrival in the New World they would be sold by the ship captain to the highest bidder, generally at a handsome profit to himself.

Most of these people came voluntarily, but great numbers came involuntarily, either as convicts sentenced for some time, or having been kidnapped for such sale. Particularly in the middle and southern colonies convicts were an important source of cheap labor. In fact, the demand for cheap labor was so great, and the profits to be made from the trade in servants so large, that British courts began to sentence more and more people to transportation.



A woman could be sentenced for having borne an illegitimate child; a small boy could have his sentence of hanging commuted to transportation for having stolen merchandise amounting to less than a pound in value. Convicts were valuable as laborers, since their period of service was generally longer than that of voluntary servants. So profitable was this trade that people living in the poorer areas of London and Bristol lived in fear of "spirits" or "man stealers", for kidnapping of men and women to sell as servants became an organized business, and the luring away of children with promises of sweets was not uncommon. Trickery of this sort was not always necessary, however, as government officials were known to sanction the roundup of poor or "fatherless" children in the port cities to sell in the colonies.

The main thing to remember about colonial America, that land that was to become known as the Land of the Free and so on, is that during the colonial period the labor force was mostly unfree. Some historians have estimated that as much as 70% of the non-slave population of the colonies arrived in this fashion. Free workers and artisans, it is true, could earn a good wage compared to their counterparts in Europe. In America even an unskilled worker could make two or three shillings a day compared to one in England, and an artisan or craftsman could make as much as 8s6p. So a planter or merchant figured he was getting a good deal by buying indentured carpenters or masons for three or four years for £20-30. Even an unskilled worker was a bargain for a mere £8-10.

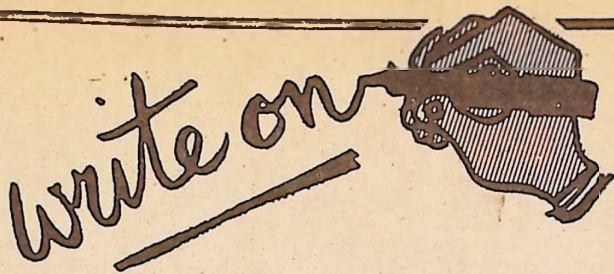
Conditions on board the ships which brought the servants over were so bad as to be almost beyond description--traveler after traveler tells of starvation and illness, food which had been rotten before it came on board or captains who refused to provide sufficient food in order to increase their own profits. Children under the age of seven rarely survived and one emigrant

tells of having seen 32 small bodies thrown overboard on one voyage. In 1783 it was written that of fifteen emigrant ships arriving in Philadelphia that year only two had arrived with those on board relatively well--1600 passengers had died. Two thousand German emigrants died at sea in 1749. On one ship in 1752 only 19 out of 200 survived; in 1745 another ship arrived in port with 50 living out of the original 400 who had embarked. Conditions were so bad that those few servant emigrants blessed with a humane or decent captain frequently felt moved to lodge testimonials in his behalf with the port authorities upon arrival.

While conditions for the white servants never quite approached the depths of sadism which the Black slaves endured, they were nonetheless bad enough that several colonial legislatures were forced to pass laws forbidding the private burial of servants--a frequent practice to conceal evidence of death from mistreatment; killing of servants shortly before their term of service was up had become common in order to save the master from having to pay the freedom dues. Beatings, brandings and chainings were common and accepted punishments.

Friendship between Black slaves and white servants was common. They participated in revolts together, and frequently ran away together. The masters were horrified at the amount of socializing and friendship that existed between them, and we can see some of the beginnings of institutionalized racism in their ravings against "...that abominable and spurious mixture which hereafter may increase in this dominion as well by Negroes intermarrying with English or other white women...."

These indentured servants had left little behind them to love in England and when the war of Revolution came they enlisted in large numbers in the revolutionary armies--often to the dismay of their masters who demanded payment for this loss of property--and thereby gained their freedom.



LIKED WOMEN'S ISSUE

To the Editors:

You can never know how happy I was to receive your *Women Fight for Equality* issue. It arrived just as we are moving forward with Rhode Island CLUW. As you can see by the attached copy of a local news release, our women very much need to read LABOR TODAY.

Margaret Cann
Warwick, R.I.

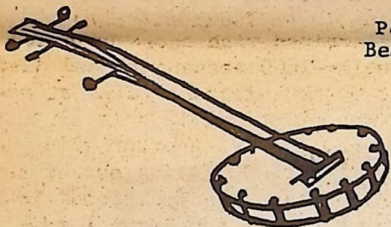
GE POISONS WORKERS

To the Editors:

It seems to me that union workers are going to have to make a much bigger effort to understand how industrial poisons are affecting their health. I was glad to see your article on OSHA in the November issue. Maybe you should do a story on the PCB hearings. General Electric had told the workers that PCB wasn't really dangerous. Now we realize that it's one of a whole lot of chemicals which altogether probably are the main reason why the cancer rate is so high.

I hope you'll do an article on this someday.

Pete Seeger
Beacon, N.Y.



ON SENIORITY

To the Editors:

In the October issue of LT, Fred Gaboury stated three methods by which labor can protect gains made during a period of falling economic conditions.

One of the methods offered for consideration was "plant system" seniority. Having worked under "uni-plant" and "plant-system" seniority for nearly fifteen years, I would like to share my experiences and compare the two. Although space does not permit a lengthy discussion, I shall attempt to hit the highlights.

Under "single-plant" seniority, it is true, many of the cunning practices of management seem to drift in. Psychologically perhaps, because the rank and file subconsciously link themselves more towards the company than towards the union. They begin to think in terms of that single plant as "their company," the place where they will spend years of their lives. A paternal pattern of thinking then develops. A heavy dependency upon the company rather than upon their particular skill. It is at this point, I have found, that management brings in their sleazy tactics to take full advantage of the situation at hand, by pitting workers against workers.

The "plant-system" seniority however, offers the reverse psychology. In this sys-

tem the rank and file seem to equate themselves more towards the union than to the company. Why? Their thinking changes from this one, isolated plant, with its familiar bosses and problems to several or many plants. In this, problems and bosses are not familiar. In this, the bosses are recognized as merely tools of the company. And in this, the rank and file recognize themselves as people. People working under an agreement whereby the union is to supply labor for certain tasks; at defined wage levels, for defined fringe benefits. Ultimately, they realize that they are skilled labor, leased to the company to do a specific job, with no strings attached. Just simply to do their job, at a leisurely gate, in an efficient but humane manner. At this point the rank and file become aware of labor, of its importance, of its pride. In other words, they begin to see the overall picture.

My feelings are that this system would be easier won as there is no direct cost involved to the company as opposed to the "reverse-hired-laid-off" situation. As I understand it, in the latter management would be responsible for a long term pay out of 90 to 95 percent of wages. Something they won't agree to very easily. Whereas the "plant-system" seniority offers desired results with no direct costs, which seemingly would be easier to win in bargaining.

In summation, may I suggest that first the door should be unlocked. Once it's unlocked,

it can more easily be pushed open. However, I whole-heartedly agree with Mr. Gaboury in the fact that labor must choose some method to maintain gains, to unite more effectively and to secure better working conditions.

We must reach out! A certain fellow was once quoted as saying "beaten men follow beaten paths."

Edward Dvorak
Vice-Chairman
UTU Local 980
Lisbon, N.D.

LABOR TODAY ME GUSTA

Queridos amigos:

LABOR TODAY está siendo recibido por mis compañeros de trabajo con mucho entusiasmo. Expresamos a ustedes nuestras sinceras felicitaciones.

Trabajadores de habla hispana también queremos expresar a ustedes nuestro apoyo a LABOR TODAY por 2 razones: por poner en nuestras manos un verdadero periódico unionista y segundo por publicar artículos en español. Para nosotros, las traducciones al idioma español de nuestro contrato y demás documentos de nuestra unión es una de nuestras demandas específicas.

¡Adelante hermanos unionistas!



Juan Ramirios
United Steelworkers of America
Local 1414 AFL-CIO
Torrance, CA

(Brother Ramirios expresses the satisfaction of his co-workers with the Spanish language articles in LT. He says also that translation of union contracts and constitutions into Spanish is a major demand of rank and file.)

GE profits up--wages down

from THE UNITED EFFORT
UE Local 124
Waynesboro, VA

Poor G.E. They only made three cents on the dollar last year. Shouldn't we feel sorry for them? Shouldn't we all work harder (for the same pay)? After all, only three cents on the dollar! The shareholders could make out better at a bank. They're doing us a favor by investing in G.E. stock.

Right? WRONG!

The three cents on the dollar is *not* profit. It is *return on sales*. Profit is *return on investment*. There's a big difference.

Here's an example, with simple figures. Suppose you want to go into the scissors business. Say you invest \$100 to set up your business--to buy a scissors machine and put it in your basement.

Now you're in business, and it costs you 99¢ to produce each pair of scissors--to buy the parts, pay a scissors machine operator, overhead, etc.

Suppose now you sell your scissors for \$1.00 each. Poor you! You are only making one cent on the dollar. Why didn't you put your money in the bank?

Here's why: Your scissor machine makes one hundred pairs of scissors each day. So each day you clear \$1.00--one cent on each of one hundred pairs of scissors.

After one hundred days, you have got your original investment back--\$100. After two

hundred days, you have made \$200, a profit of 100% over your original \$100 investment. And all the time you are only making one cent on the dollar!

What G.E. and other companies fail to mention when they talk about the one cent of the three cents on the dollar is *volume*. How many dollars worth of goods have they sold? And how does this compare to their original investment?

Our example above is oversimplified for the sake of explanation. Of course you don't just clear each penny you make on your scissors. Some of it has to be set aside to eventually buy a new machine, or maybe more machines if you want to expand. You may also have to pay more in wages if you put on additional operators. You might even put up a little shop. And you have to pay taxes.

By the time you do all this, your return on investment might be cut down to 15 or 20%. But you are still making out better than you could at the bank.

This is in fact what happens at G.E. Over the years, G.E.'s return on investment has stayed very close to 20%. This is the return on investment in G.E.--not the three cents on the dollar of sales.

So let's not shed too many tears for G.E. They're doing all right. It's those of us who actually produce the goods who are taking home less in real wages each week than we did 10 years ago, thanks to inflation.

WE CAN PRINT NEWS, BUT NOT MONEY!

Have you contributed to LT yet?

You've probably gotten a fund appeal mailing from LT, but what with the holiday season and all, it's probably still sitting on your desk. If you haven't sent in your contribution yet, we'd appreciate it if you could dig in and help us continue.

There are a lot of exciting labor stories coming up in 1976. Your contribution can help assure that we will be on the scene.

Like the man says, we can print the news, but we can't print money. Our printer prefers money.

LABOR TODAY ASSOCIATES
343 South Dearborn, Room 600
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Here's my contribution to LT's fund appeal. Keep in comin'!

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



LABOR TODAY ASSOCIATES
343 S. Dearborn, Rm. 600
Chicago, Ill. 60604
Telephone (312) 922-5560

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Union & Local _____

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SPECIAL REPORT

labor
today

Labor's stake in the '76 negotiations

by JIM WILLIAMS, Co-Editor
LABOR TODAY

The challenge of the 1976 negotiations is forcing many concerned trade unionists to re-examine many of the collective bargaining formulas that have been our mainstay since the end of WWII.

The continuing economic crisis has seen many programs designed to provide economic security bite the dust. The United Auto Workers' Supplemental Unemployment Benefits (SUB) funds, which took 25 years to build, were depleted after two years of heavy unemployment. Trade unions are beginning to look for new methods to deal with the questions of retirement and health security which increasingly defy solution at the bargaining table.

These programs were products of the late 40's and 50's, when many unions--including Walter Reuther's UAW--departed from traditional CIO policy and began to trade off working conditions for higher pay and benefits.

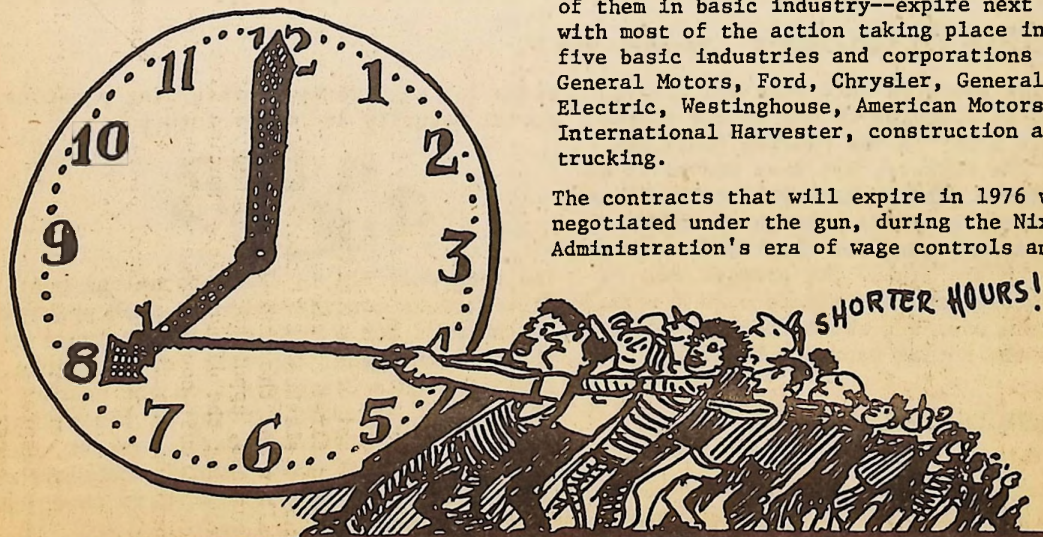
One of the great contributions of the CIO was to give workers a measure of control of their jobs and conditions at the workplace. Grievances were settled on the shop floor and not in costly arbitrations miles away and months later. Not only did the CIO manage to shorten the workday, it also eased the burden of work to a manageable pace.

Corporations were eager to buy back these gains for money. They knew that they could afford higher wages if they could speed up the work. They were aware that some union leaderships were willing to cede control of production.

The challenge of 1976 is how to turn the labor movement's bargaining strategy back around--to seek new formulas to regain control of our jobs and working conditions, and to provide jobs.

Contracts covering 4.5 million workers--most of them in basic industry--expire next year with most of the action taking place in five basic industries and corporations like General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, General Electric, Westinghouse, American Motors, International Harvester, construction and trucking.

The contracts that will expire in 1976 were negotiated under the gun, during the Nixon Administration's era of wage controls and



THE MONEY IS THERE!

Corporation profits up 17%

by JIM WILLIAMS, Co-Editor
LABOR TODAY

While working people continue to suffer from double-digit unemployment and double-digit inflation, big business is raking in double-digit profits.

The government has confirmed a resurgence in third-quarter corporate profits as it reported that after-tax profits in the July-September period rose 17 percent--the steepest upturn in 25 years.

Underlying the huge profit increase was an unusually sharp increase in "productivity" during the third quarter. The productivity gains offset, stabilized or pushed down unit labor costs and widened profit margins. The increase in productivity is based on increased speed-up and intensification of work for those still lucky enough to have jobs. Indeed, recent figures show an increase in overtime work--for those still lucky enough to have jobs.

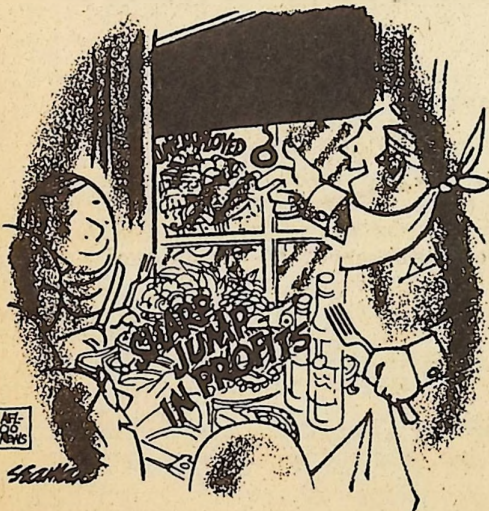
Most of the profit gains in the third quarter came from the manufacturing industries, particularly among motor vehicle producers.

Corporate profits from current production represented a 16.8 percent upsurge, the largest rise since a 22.9 percent advance in 1946.

After-tax profits in the third quarter were estimated at \$82 billion, up \$11.9 billion over the second quarter.

So, when unions go to the bargaining table in 1976, they should remember that things haven't been so flush for the corporations in a long time. The money is there, It's just a question of mobilizing to win it.

'Let's Keep This Private!'



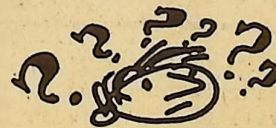
Pensions in danger (continued from p. 3)

The pension plans in auto were won through many days of slugging it out on the picket lines. The money in the pension funds belongs to the workers, but they proved to be no free lunch. The workers paid billions of dollars into the funds through withheld wage increases, worsened shop conditions and speed-up on the lines. The promise was that it would provide workers with a retirement income over and above the starvation level of the Social Security benefits.

REOPEN PENSION NEGOTIATIONS IN '76

The coming auto contract talks scheduled for 1976 give rise to some crucial ques-

tions for auto workers concerning pensions, Social Security and their future.



The rank and file in the auto unions must give serious consideration to such problems as the need for a cost of living clause in the pension plans, improved vested rights, pension rights transfers from one company to another, adequate funding of the plans, pension fund reporting to the workers, union voice in the administration of the plans and also the shorter work week to save jobs and pension.

Auto pensions in danger

by ED LOCK, Retiree
Ford Local 600
Detroit

What is happening to auto pension plans during the worst economic crisis since Walter Reuther hailed the first negotiated pension plan with the Ford Motor Company in 1949?

More than 124,000 auto workers are out of work, and the number is expected to increase greatly by 1980. As a result, questions arise about pension credits and benefits for those laid off and those retired.

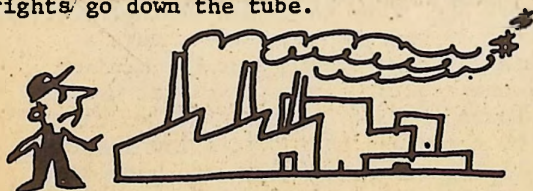
Few if any explanations are given auto workers about what happens to their pension credits when they are permanently laid off.

In early 1975 the Chrysler corporate bosses permanently fired 40% of their work force, blue and white collar.

Does a permanently laid-off worker lose his pension credits altogether? What happens to his pension credits if he goes to work for another company?

Under the Auto Workers contracts, all of those with less than 10 years service have no vested rights in the pension plan. The new Pension Reform Act, passed by Congress, does not change this.

The Pension Reform Act does, however, allow for a worker to transfer his pension rights from one company to another if the employer and the worker agree, but it isn't required. Thus for most workers laid off with less than 10 years of seniority, their pension rights go down the tube.



Those with over 10 years service, but with insufficient seniority to receive 30 and out benefits, will have to freeze their pension and wait to age 65 to pick up a much reduced benefit. It should be noted that of the 15,000 white collars fired by Chrysler, only 600 received early retirement benefits.

It is obvious that in this area, the Auto Workers union has been putting up a losing battle which may worsen in the days ahead as the auto companies, to maintain and in-

crease their profits during the change-over to smaller cars, and after, prepare more layoffs.

The 1976 Chrysler cars are using 20% fewer parts. Ford is using 56% fewer engine parts in the 1976 model.

Fewer parts, more imported engines and transmissions, more use of automation and speed-up for small car production spells chronic, permanent unemployment for thousands of new auto workers by 1980, and more shattered pension rights.

What about those lucky enough to beat the layoffs and expect to stick it out for 30 years with one of the auto companies?

Their main concern will be the funding of the pension plans for the next 10 to 20 years.



Information about the funding of pension plans is difficult to come by. It is not like a credit union, bank or union which gives you a regular financial report about the management of your money. The money of the auto pension funds are used by the auto companies for investment gambles in the Wall Street Stock Market and real estate trusts.

It is a pretty safe guess that the pension funds are under the same pressures from inflation, depression and the stock market dives since 1973 that the auto SUB funds, Blue Cross costs and the stock market itself were under.

Business Week magazine, in its June 16, 1975 issue, reported on a survey it had prepared on the pension unfunded liabilities of 200 of the largest corporations.

It showed that GM had a six billion one hundred million dollar unfunded liability as compared with four years ago when it had none. Ford had 2.7 billion dollars and Chrysler 1.8 billion dollars.

In short, the auto companies are cheating the future of these plans by not keeping them fully funded during the current economic crisis.

(continued on page 2)

YOU CAN WORK LESS - EARN MORE

The overtime trap



by CHARLES DEWEY
UAW Local 155
Detroit

The sacred principle of the short work week, the legacy of years of bloody struggle, stolen from us when the UAW bureaucracy agreed to compulsory overtime, must be restored. Recovery of the 40 hour week is not enough. Conditions created by modern technology make a 30 hour week with pay rates at least equal to the building trades not only possible, but an absolute necessity.

Long hours of labor, even when physically possible, tend to destroy workers as human beings--to turn them into vegetables. To realize our full potential, to properly develop our creativity, requires leisure time to study and to participate in the political and social life of our community and nation. We are being short-changed by politicians and employers who conspire to deprive us of the time and energy to change the conditions under which we live. Attendance at union meetings, for example, where workers gather to make plans and to organize activities to advance their interests, often suffers because of long overtime schedules.

Regardless of the evil effects overtime has on their health and their way of life, most workers still see overtime as the only way to keep their heads above the economic tides. Thus they find themselves on the treadmill of overtime and have to keep running just to stand still. This is the overtime trap!

If you told the average worker that by working less he could make more money, he would think you were crazy. Yet, this is true.

THE BOSS LIKES OVERTIME

Management understands the implications of a short work week only too well. Shorter hours for workers hits the boss right in the pocketbook because it means less pro-

fits for him and more money for the workers. This must be true because we know that employers always press for long hours of labor, even when they have to pay overtime rates. In fact employers like long hours so much that the toughest battles in labor history were those for the 40 hour week.

THE LEAST POSSIBLE

Many years ago employers concluded (very reluctantly of course) that a worker would have to be paid a wage which would not only enable him to exist, but would enable him to raise another worker to replace himself when he was thrown on the scrap heap. They discovered that even the most desperate or the most backward worker insisted on this minimum. Made bold by the power of their trade unions, however, and influenced by the abundance which they produced, workers gradually changed their notions about what their minimum requirements were.

THE BOSS'S GIMMICK

However, employers must still contend with the principle of the necessary minimum wage, and they still do this as they did a hundred years ago. They know that whether they work a man 30 hours a week or 80 hours a week, his pay check must cover his minimum subsistence requirements. So why not work him 58 hours or more for instance, so that he can be persuaded to accept a low rate per hour? Therefore, although the boss may bait the trap with a little extra pay for overtime, a long work week is still a phony device used to disguise low wages. Unfortunately, many workers discover this deception only when their overtime stops, and they find they cannot live on what the boss pays for 40 hours. The struggle which should have been fought earlier now must begin, often under adverse conditions. Insistence on contracts which limit the work week to 30 hours will guarantee an even higher rate. This is because the living wage which was paid by the boss for 58 hours must still be paid by him for 30 hours.

Live to work or work to live? AN EDITORIAL

The whole issue of shorter hours can be put this way: do you live to work or work to live?

Over the years, the bait of overtime pay has been used to lengthen the workday to provide cheaper labor for the boss. Many workers who grabbed at a chance to make an extra buck now find that overtime has become a necessity in order to make ends meet, rather than the luxury they sought.

We work in order to provide for ourselves and our families.

Few of us would spend one hour on the job if we didn't need the money.

That used to be a basic principle of the labor movement.

An old-time IUE organizer in Virginia once put it this way: "Any jobs where you can't make enough to live on in 40 hours ain't worth having. You don't live to work. You work in order to live. You don't want to spend one more minute in that factory than is absolutely necessary."

The labor movement has to abolish overtime and see that people make a decent living with a normal workday. But even more important, we have to cut that workday down to co-incide with our increased ability to produce.

Somewhere down the line, the trade union movement got side-tracked. Some of us, leaders and rank and file, fell for the overtime trap.

THE SHORT WORK WEEK

A short work week would immediately reduce unemployment and eliminate job competition, thus limiting management's ability to dictate wages and conditions. Membership in the unions would increase, adding to the organized might of the working class and strengthening its bargaining position. More Black workers, always the largest percentage of the unemployed, would be drawn into the labor movement, helping to create a new working class unity. Thus a short work week would create new progressive forces, giving the workers more bargaining power and making it a new ball game.

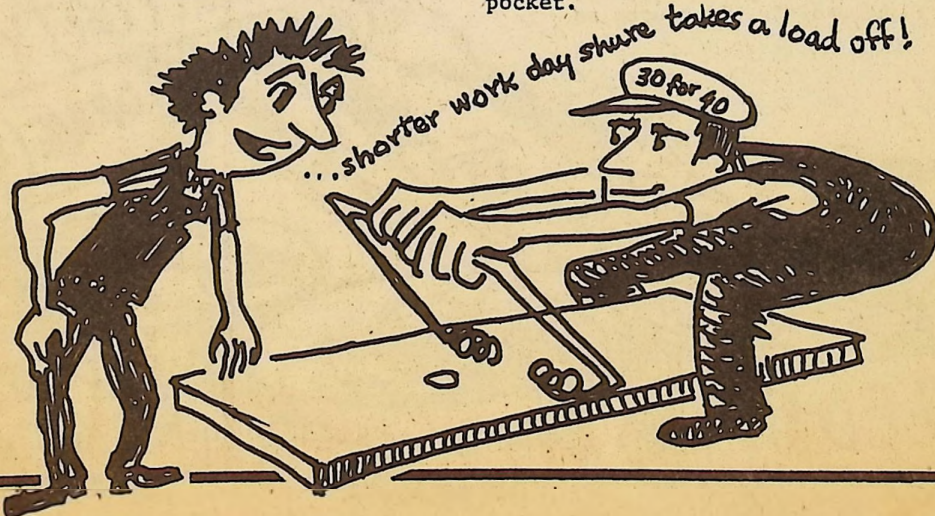
A short work week, an end to compulsory overtime (or any overtime for that matter) would be a step toward using our modern technology to serve people and not the interests of private profit.

FIGHT--DON'T BEG!

Years ago, in the days of the old Populist Party, farmers who were being overcharged by the railroads and underpaid for their grain, raised the cry "Raise less corn and more hell." Workers should adopt the slogan "Produce less profit and more hell."

CUTTING THE FRINGES

Another important but less basic reason for longer hours is that management often finds it more profitable to pay overtime than to pay fringe benefits for additional employees. Union pressure in recent years has forced the boss to face up to his responsibilities to his workers in the form of vacation and holiday pay, pensions, insurance, SUB, and unemployment contributions--to name a few. Any money saved by limiting the number of employees who are qualified to receive fringe benefits can go into the boss's pocket.



Productivity at Ford

by DUANE FRANKIE
UAW Local 600
Detroit

Although UAW leaders feel that "most production workers are still working at the same jobs and the same pace as before" (Detroit Free Press, 11-23-75), in many plants speed-up is a growing problem. In the Ford Dearborn Assembly plant, speed-up has taken place with a cut back in production. Although the company issues glowing forecasts of sales, the Dearborn Assembly began the 1976 model year for the Mustang II with a cut in final line speed from 60 to 40 cars an hour. Large layoffs accompanied the cut.

The most common opinion heard among the remaining workers is that the work load has never been as heavy as it is after the cut. The first reason is that when line speeds are cut the assembly operator has to perform more operations. It is easier for examples sake, to just shoot eight screws at 60 an hour than to shoot eight screws, put in some clips and put some stock in the car for the next operator. This larger number of tasks means more movements and it is hard to develop rhythm of work so the worker is working harder.

The main reason is that Ford has a massive drive to increase profits by reducing the number of workers more than any cuts in production. Production was cut to 40 cars an hour from 60 cars, or a 33% drop. The number of workers was cut by at least 37%, which means a 4% increase in productivity for the company.

Productivity is measured by number of cars produced per man hour of work and not by line speed per hour. So we have a case of a production decrease with increase in productivity and profits. Of course to

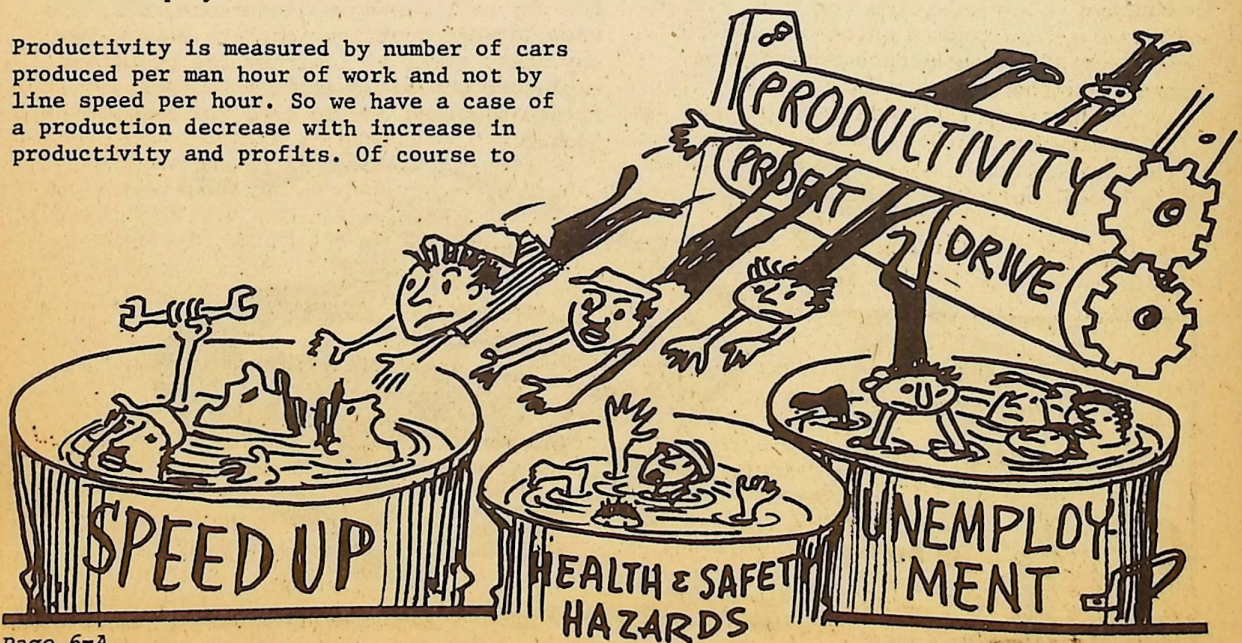
maintain this speed-up the company has tightened up its discipline and now penalizes workers more quickly and frequently especially for what is called "poor and careless workmanship."

Why did the company lay off workers instead of rotating layoffs among the two shifts as it had done for the 1975 model year? The company doesn't obviously expect any major jump in sales soon and is gearing up for big profits at lower production. By laying off younger workers permanently they will save on Supplementary Unemployment Benefits as the lower seniority workers use up their eligibility for these benefits sooner than longer seniority workers.

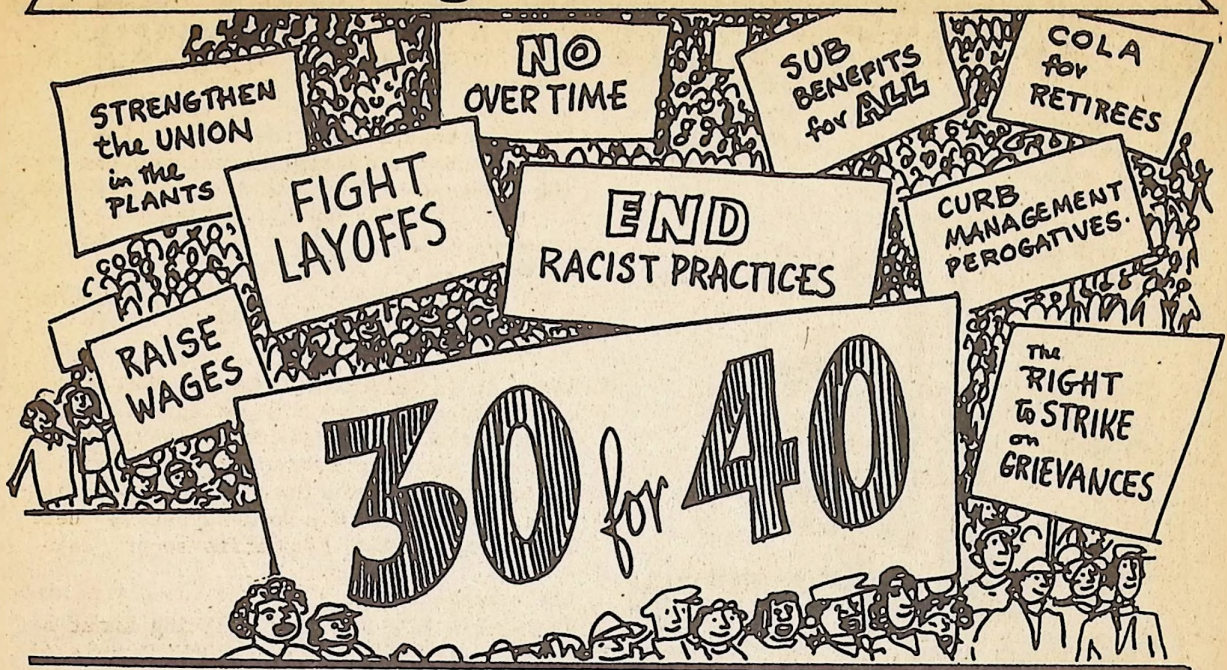
A sign that this letter is talking about a real problem despite any top UAW denials of speed-up, is that in October a rank and file group which spoke out on job overloading as a major issue had five candidates out of eight elected to the Dearborn Assembly Executive Board and two as alternates out of eight candidates.

The process of eliminating jobs has not stopped and is steadily continuing throughout the model year as management keeps pressing to get the same work out of fewer workers.

The workers in the Dearborn Assembly are increasingly determined that speed-up will be a big issue in the coming contract struggles.



AWAC Program for auto workers



AUTO WORKERS ACTION CAUCUS SAYS:

"To create and save jobs - thirty for forty"

The UAW has gone on record for "30 for 40" at convention after convention. Everybody says they support it. President Woodcock says he's for it. Secretary-Treasurer Mazey says he's for it. But when push becomes shove, "30 for 40" always gets lost in the shuffle.

"30 for 40" reduces the time we have to spend on the job by 25%. At current levels of production, the corporations would have to rehire enough workers to make up for that 25%. Also, \$5.00 an hour now becomes \$6.70 an hour under 30 for 40."

Things can be different this time around.

The place to begin is at our next local union meeting. The way to begin is to pass resolutions in support of the AWAC program to create and save jobs in the auto industry. The way to begin is to instruct our local union representatives to the Production Workers Conference to support this program.

Sure--it will take a fight to win "30 for 40", the program to create and save jobs in auto. But its a program we can win if we unite, organize and fight together. It's a program worth fighting for. It's a program that the membership will fight for. It's a program we can win.

AWAC's goal is to build a movement of production workers with enough power and support to make the UAW a fighting union again.

We need your help. We invite your support. For further information, contact:
AUTO WORKERS ACTION CAUCUS, P.O. Box 29802, Ecorse, Michigan 48229.

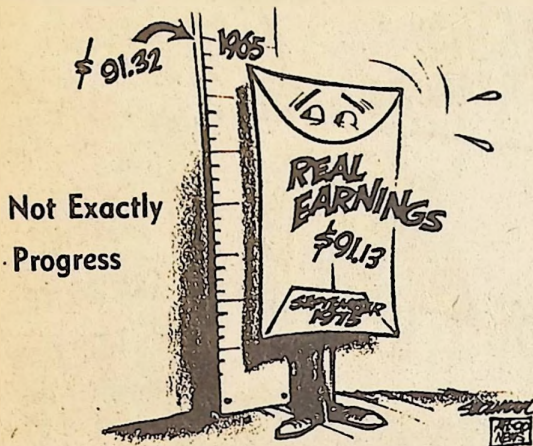


Put our brothers
& sisters back to
work..

Lasker Smith, UAW Local 2
Chairman

Norman Roth, UAW Local 6
Secretary-Treasurer

strictures. In every instance, the contract gains have been far outstripped by inflation. During this contract period, wages went up about 20.2 percent, while inflation increased 27.1 percent.



Unemployment, while acute in 1973, has risen to crisis proportions in 1976, with a national average of 8.2 percent. Millions of trade unionists are unemployed through layoffs, while others are underemployed by short time, fewer shifts, etc. The ability of the labor movement to represent the needs of all of its members is endangered by continuing unemployment.

The problem of the effects of racism has been increased in 1976, with the burden of the economic crisis being brought to bear most heavily upon Blacks, women and other minorities. Black unemployment figures are given to be at least twice those of white workers. Many of these workers, especially youth, who were just getting started in industry in 1973, have been forced out on the street through unemployment and through sometimes unfair and discriminatory seniority systems.

While in 1973 collective bargaining was endangered by open political assault by the Nixon Administration, today its foundations are being eroded by the continuing economic crisis which has permeated every aspect of American life. Many of the time-honored approaches to bargaining have been undermined. Fringe benefits (like pensions, supplemental unemployment benefits, medical plans) have been eroded as continued mass unemployment has drained them of funds. The UAW's SUB funds, which took 25 years to build, and only two years to deplete, is an example. It is unlikely that they will ever be rebuilt to the original level. Trade unionists are beginning to probe for new methods to deal with the questions of social and health security, which increasingly defy solution at the bargaining table.

There is a tendency to evade dealing with these problems in a major way. In fact, the prestigious management publication BUSINESS WEEK has already termed 1976 "Labor's Year of Compromise," gloating over the apparent lack of militancy on the part of some. BUSINESS WEEK is hoping that the economic crisis has softened up the labor movement to the point where more one-sided contracts such as I.W. Abel's Experimental Negotiating Agreement can be forced on workers.

While it is heard from many sides that "you can't win anything during a depression," it is also true that most of the major social gains of this century, unemployment compensation, social security and the right of collective bargaining itself, were won during the depression of the 30's.

The bargaining issue that is rapidly gaining favor with rank and filers is the shorter workday, with no cut in pay. While the slogan "30 for 40" has been around for years, this approach is being given greater attention throughout the labor movement. Recently the AFL-CIO Convention in San Francisco reaffirmed the AFL-CIO's support for the 35 hour week, while districts of the Steelworkers have called for the six-hour day.

The shorter workday demand has some obvious attractions:

- It means an actual raise in pay of up to 25 percent in some cases, not including premium pay for those jobs which may require more than 30 hours.
- It addresses itself directly to the question of unemployment. It is a trade union approach that could mean absorbing all of the unemployed. In continuous process industries such as steel, it would mean a 25 percent increase in employment.
- It created the full-employment atmosphere which is absolutely necessary to provide fair employment practices and job opportunities for Blacks, women and other minorities.

In short, the shorter workday is the single issue which cuts across all lines in solving the collective bargaining problems of the 1970's. It is also a demand which will raise the level of the collective bargaining process to a new high to meet the requirements of this new period.

Rather than a "year of compromise," 1976 is the "year of opportunity" to open new vistas in collective bargaining that will last for decades, as did the gains of the 30's.