

BUFFALO

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WORKERS'

MOVEMENT

NEWSLETTER

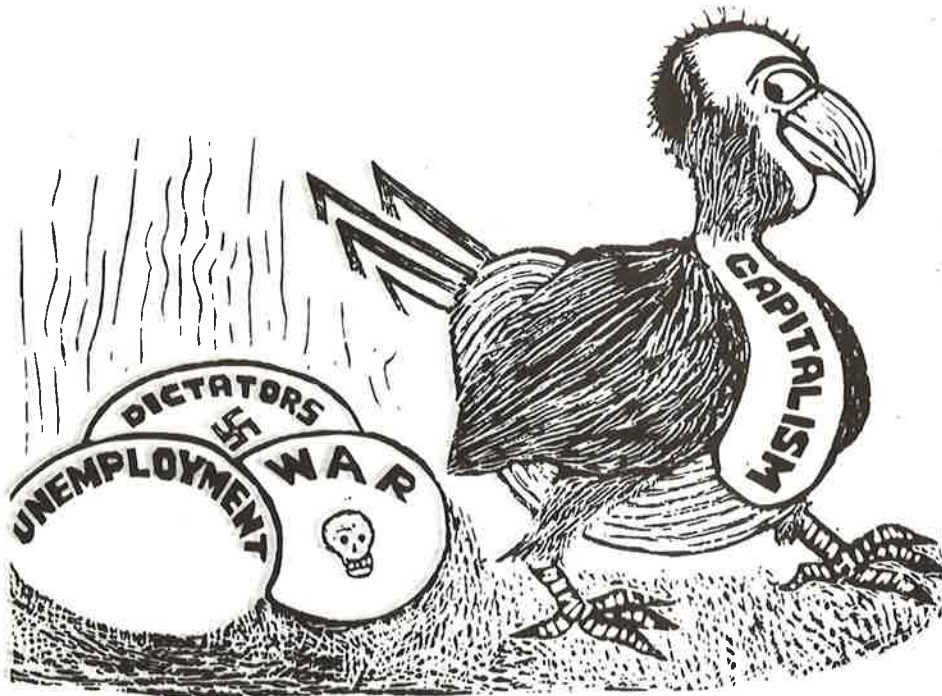


DECEMBER 1977

Special Issue
HEALTH & SAFETY AT YOUR WORKPLACE

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**A BIRD THAT LAYS SUCH ROTTEN EGGS
IS LONG OVERDUE FOR EXTINCTION**



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BWM NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

The wolves are at our door and it's bound to be another long cold winter in the Queen City. At present our financial resources are few. We can no longer afford to mail out the hundreds of newsletters we do bi-monthly. We are appealing to you for assistance. We need subscribers to our newsletter. This is the first time we've ever asked this of you and we wouldn't if we didn't have to. If you subscribe we will continue to send you the best newsletter in this city with a communist viewpoint and analysis. In the next few weeks you may be receiving a call from a BWM member or supporter. We are asking our friends to send us five dollars for a one year subscription to the newsletter. Make checks payable to the Buffalo Workers Movement. Please.



The Buffalo Workers Movement, basing itself on scientific socialism, guided by the analysis of Marx and Lenin and the recent struggles of communists throughout the world. We are working people who see the need to organize the fight for our daily needs: food, housing, education, the right to work, and to maintain a decent livelihood. We recognize the need to organize ourselves into fighting trade unions and democratic community organizations before we can successfully fight against the repression in our lives and the exploitation of our work.

We also believe the root cause of the governmental repression, the hassles at work and crime in our neighborhoods is in the capitalist system itself. Massive layoffs at Bethlehem Steel, Western Electric moving from Buffalo overseas; gouging utility prices; Buffalo's inferior schools and death-causing pollution are all related to the system of profit-making that is inherent in capitalism.

We are committed to building a revolutionary movement among working people and their allies to overthrow the profit system, replacing it with socialism. We seek to totally abolish the exploitation of our work and the oppression in our lives. The special oppression that national minority people and women face daily must also always be attacked if we want to end all aspects of oppression.

But the working class lacks unity, training, organization and leaders. How do we build a revolutionary movement? How do we unite and build a working class movement beyond the day to day



Letters to BWM

The Editorial Board encourages letters and comments from our readers. Material will be kept confidential and reprinted by agreement of the author(s) and the Editorial Board. We ask that letters be typed or neatly printed, double spaced and kept to 250 words or less. KEEP THOSE LETTERS COMING.

struggles for our livelihood? A necessary ingredient in this revolutionary plan, we believe, is the development of a vanguard party, whose leadership is recognized by a majority of working people. Such a communist party did exist in the late 1920's and 30's in the United States. But that revolutionary core which did so much to build the modern industrial trade unions and resist the rise of fascism in the United States abdicated its base among industrial workers and its role in the fight against U.S. Imperialism. That party remains as revisionist today as it did beginning in the early forties.

The development of a revolutionary party, a detachment forged from the working class is therefore the most pressing task that we see ahead of us. And only conscious prolonged activity can build such an organization.

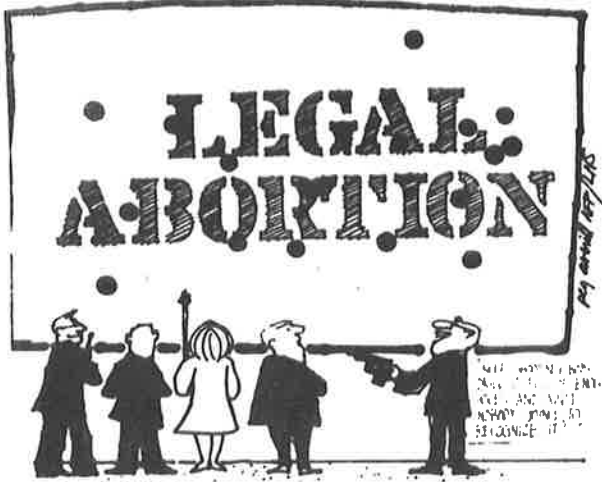
We recognize that the view of the world from Buffalo and the struggles that take place here daily are limited in their local perspective. But this city and in fact the entire country needs a left perspective as an alternative to the narrow media clique that reports on news events in this society. We need to develop a newspaper as a tool that working people can take up and use as their own: to analyze local, national and world struggles. We see the necessity of providing information and analysis through this newsletter which can contribute to the development of a class conscious working class movement. To this end the Newsletter of the Buffalo Workers Movement is dedicated.

The Hyde Amendment

an attack on women's rights

The Congress has been deadlocked for more than four months now over the issue of Medicaid payments for abortion. The focus of their debate centers on the language of the Hyde Amendment to the 1978 Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) appropriations bill.

The Senate version of the Hyde Amendment would allow the expenditure of Medicaid funds for abortion only if the pregnancy is the result of rape, incest, is a threat to the life of the mother or is deemed by a physician to be "medically necessary". Last September, the House voted 252-164 against the Senate version and in favor of an even more reactionary wording which permits Medicaid payment only in the event that the woman's life is in danger. Local House members Nowak, LaFalce and Kemp voted to oppose the Senate version.



KEEP SHOOTING BOYS, DRILL IT FULL OF ENOUGH HOLES AND AIN'T NOBODY GOING TO RECOGNIZE IT!

The adoption of either form of the Hyde Amendment represents a set-back to the hard fought gains made by the women's movement for the right of women to exercise control over their own lives. The Hyde Amendment is a response of the ruling class to the economic crisis of U.S. capital. It represents one phase of an organized attack by the ruling class and its forces of reaction against the interests of the working class in general, and specifically against the interests of poor, minority and young women. The Hyde Amendment is an attempt to weaken the unity of working

people by creating divisions along such lines as welfare recipient vs non-welfare, men vs women, white vs national minority and higher income vs lower income. In addition, the issue of abortion has been used to divide people by creating a moralistic, hypocritical hysteria around the "sin and evil" of abortion. The capitalist class needs these divisions because it is easier for them to extract profits from people who are busy fighting amongst each other rather than being united against the profit squeeze. The need to divide working people domestically is particularly important at a time when U.S. capital is facing set-back after set-back on the international scene (Vietnam, Cambodia, Angola, Mozambique, OPEC, etc.) and hence must look toward increased internal exploitation.

ANTI - ABORTION FORCES

As a result of pressure generated by the Women's Liberation Movement of the '60's & '70's, the Supreme Court, in 1973, was compelled to acknowledge the right of women to safe, legal abortion. However, this acknowledgement was only very reluctantly put into practice. This is witnessed by the fact that by May, 1977, some 4 years later, over 80% of all public and 70% of all non-Catholic private hospitals still refused to provide abortion services. In addition, 15 states had passed laws and developed policies which denied poorer people Medicaid payments for abortion. Twenty states were meeting less than one third of the needs for abortion services.

The conservative and reactionary forces involved in denying the right to safe, legal abortion on the local and state levels have also been active on the national level. The Right to Life campaign is a well-organized, influential movement which has escalated the drive to make all abortions illegal. It has won passage of a call for a "right-to-life" Constitutional Amendment in nine state legislatures with nineteen more scheduled for consideration this January. The campaign has been well-financed, particularly by the Roman Catholic Church. During the period January 1976 to March 1977, the Diocese of Buffalo contributed \$12,000 to the more than \$459,000 collected by the Catholic Church nationwide during the same period. The Right to Life campaign, although its constituency is about 85% Catholic, has developed alliances with a number of anti-working class organizations. These include ROAR (the racist anti-busing group in Boston), the Ku Klux Klan and the John Birch Society.

Last year, Congress passed the first Hyde Amendment, which was essentially the same as the now-proposed House version - federally funded abortions only when the woman's life is in danger. Entangled in court challenges, it has only recently gone into effect. (The 1976 version has remained in effect during the present period of Congressional haggling.) Despite the Hyde Amendment, a number of states were, for a while, meeting the entire cost of Medicaid abortions.

Then, this past summer, the Supreme Court ruled that state support for Medicaid abortions is voluntary. As a result, 20 states immediately cut off funds. To date, only 13 states are still subsidizing abortion costs, but attempts are well underway to halt these payments. In Illinois, Massachusetts and Michigan, the right to safe, legal abortions has been preserved only by their governors' vetoes. Override attempts have already been initiated. In Oregon, Maryland and Virginia, funds may be cut off within the next few months as a result of legislative action.

JUSTICE THURGOOD MARSHALL, IN HIS DISSENTING OPINION, WROTE "...THE COURT WELL KNOWS ITS DECISION WILL HAVE THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF PREVENTING NEARLY ALL POOR WOMEN FROM OBTAINING SAFE AND LEGAL ABORTIONS... I AM APPALLED AT THE ETHICAL BANKRUPTCY OF THOSE WHO PREACH A 'RIGHT TO LIFE' THAT MEANS, UNDER PRESENT SOCIAL POLICIES, A BARE EXISTENCE IN UTTER MISERY FOR SO MANY POOR WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN."

In New York, the State Department of Social Services has continued to provide funds for Medicaid abortions which a physician deems are "medically necessary". However, several county legislatures including Niagara County, have already voted to suspend all such funding by their local governments. It is possible that by next year, the State legislature will attempt to cut off all state funding for Medicaid abortions. The legislature has already axed \$120,000 in funds earmarked for local assistance family planning programs.

In neighboring Niagara County, the anti-abortion forces, led by Niagara Falls right-to-lifer/legislator Louis Caggiano, have been successful in creating a moralistic hysteria. This September, the Niagara County Legislature voted 23-7 to hold back all county funds for abortion. The hypocrisy of this is seen in the fact that during the 12 month period 10/76 to 10/77, Niagara County paid between \$4,500 and \$7,125 as its share of the cost for some 90 to 95 Medicaid abortions. In a total social services budget of \$40,000,000, this seems almost insignificant. They spend more cutting grass and pruning trees!



Legislator Caggiano's attitude exemplifies the ruling class' complete disregard for the welfare of poorer women. In response to the fact that making abortions illegal will result in the injury or death of hundreds of women, Caggiano likened getting pregnant to robbing a bank, "If you rob a bank, you have to pay the penalty." It's a warped mind that views human sexuality as a crime with children as the penalty. He and his followers are "infuriated" because of the terrible sin and evil of abortion", yet oppose sex education as "pornographic and creating the appetite for sexual relations in young adults". Caggiano is a valuable tool for the ruling class to use in confusing, dividing and weakening working people.

FACTS ABOUT ABORTION

In 1976, approximately 1 million abortions were performed legally in the U.S. 300,000 of these were paid thru Medicaid at an average cost of about \$200 each. This represents less than one-twentieth of one percent of the entire HEW budget. The Pentagon can spend the same amount in less than 5 hours. Of the 300,000 Medicaid abortions, about one third involved teenagers and one third involved minority women. All were poorer women of working class background.



The issue is not whether women will have abortions, but how they will have them - whether it be a safe, legal abortion performed by qualified personnel, or an illegal, dangerous one performed by incompetent butchers or by self-induced methods such as coat hangers. Studies have shown that women who need abortions will get them by whatever means are necessary. The economic and social pressures

generated by capitalist society are responsible for women being forced to decide between the risk of death or bearing a child they know they do not want or can not adequately care for. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare has estimated that the denial of Medicaid funds for abortion will cause the deaths of 250 more women at the hands of back-alley butchers or through self-induced abortions. In addition, 25,000 more women will be seriously damaged by botched abortions.

No contraceptive method is 100% effective. In fact, 1 in every 3 couples practicing birth control methods will have an unwanted pregnancy within a five year period. Abortion is not a preferred method of birth control. Rather, it is a last resort method which guarantees the right to choose to have a child or not.

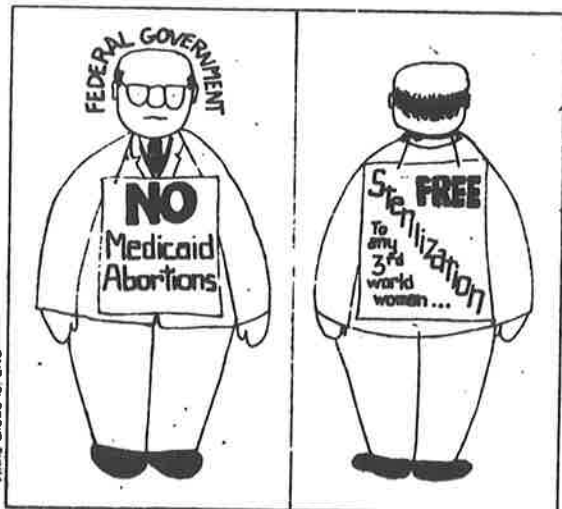
STERILIZATION - NO CHOICE AT ALL

More and more poorer women, because they cannot afford a safe, legal abortion, cannot have or do not want a child at that particular time of their lives, and because they don't want to risk the consequences of an illegal abortion, will be compelled to submit to sterilization as a means of "birth control". Sterilization is not a choice - it's a method of population control which the ruling class forces on national minority and poor people in an effort to relieve the pressures generated by these sectors. The highest unemployment, the greatest need for social services, the most militant unrest, and the sharpest contradictions of capitalism are felt in the Puerto Rican, Black and Native American communities. While 7% of white women of child bearing age have been sterilized, for Puerto Rican women, it's 35%; for Black women, 20% and for Native American women 14%. John D. Rockefeller III, chairman of the President's Commission on Population and the American Future, explains why the bourgeoisie has pumped millions into sterilization programs: "...slowing the rate of population growth would ease the problems

facing the American government...Demand for government services will be less than otherwise and resources available for the support of education, health, and other government services would be greater." Last year, the federal government granted \$350,000 to a Tubal Ligation Clinic in San Francisco, to perform 1,000 sterilizations as part of a "pilot project". A similar clinic has been established in Syracuse.

PRO - ABORTION FORCES FIGHT BACK

National women's rights and civil rights organizations, together with localized coalitions have been working to form an effective fightback campaign. In Buffalo, on October 14, the Coalition for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA) organized a spirited demonstration in the downtown area in which over 200 people marched to demand the right of women to abortion on demand. CARASA was formed largely in response to the Hyde

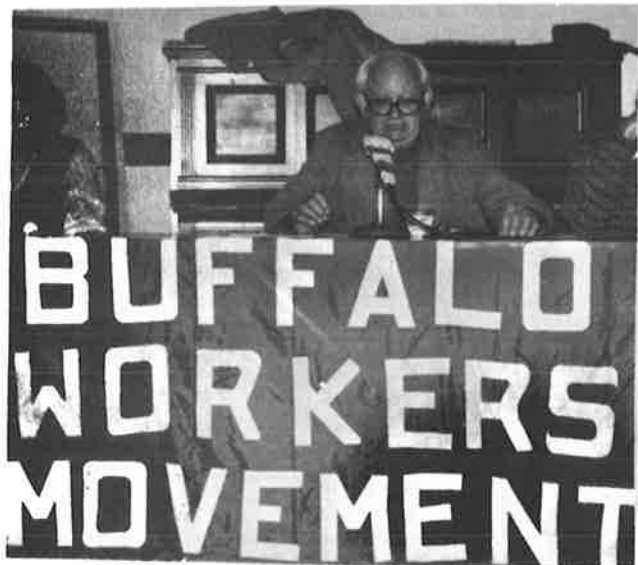


Amendment. The Buffalo Chapter of the National Organization of Women (NOW) is also taking action. For example, a candle-light vigil was held last July 14. Both groups are continuing to work on ways to address the struggle for women's rights to abortion.

Nationwide, over a dozen pro-abortion demonstrations have taken place in as many cities, involving thousands of protesters. Recently, over 1,500 supporters of abortion rights picketed HEW Secretary Califano in New York City. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) recently launched their top-priority \$200,000 "Campaign for Choice" which is the most intensive single-issue project the organization has undertaken since the 1973 drive to impeach

Richard Nixon. The campaign is a coordinated lobbying effort involving 42 state legislatures. Its goals are to reinstate state funds for abortion, guarantee access to abortion facilities at public hospitals and block calls for a constitutional "right-to-life" amendment.

The right of women to abortion on demand and to Medicaid abortions is a struggle which is in the interests of all working people. Building the necessary broad based support is not an easy task. It means breaking down the many barriers which the ruling class has set up to divide us. It is necessary to link men and women; Black, white, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Native American; young and old in this struggle. We should fight for the right of all women to free or low-cost abortion on demand, combined with a program of education on and development of contraceptive methods, accessible at low cost not only for women, but for men as well. We should defend the right of every woman to determine the size of her family and the role she will play in this society as a whole.



On Oct. 23rd Wilfred Burchett, internationally known revolutionary journalist, spoke to a packed crowd of 130 people, sponsored by the Buffalo Workers Movement. On his first tour of the US, Burchett spoke in Buffalo about many topics, including the current situation in Africa, reconstruction in Vietnam, and Euro-Communism. Burchett then spoke to a crowd of 250 on Oct. 24 at SUNYAB, sponsored by the Third World Student Ass., and a large number of other campus organizations.

BOOK REVIEW ON F&L WORKERS CONT

documentation, including many pictures and even unpublished letters of the AFL and the Socialist Party, the book is a forceful indictment of craft unionist AFL collaboration and social democratic betrayal. Foner takes us through a blow by blow description of the struggles to build a fighting trade union. It's actually exciting reading! He examines the enigmatic leader, Ben Gold who, as an open communist, became president of the 100,000 member F&L. It shows us how the mobsters were kept out of the union and how to struggle against bureaucratic union machines. At best, and in an undogmatic and popular style it shows us the course of development of the U.S. labor movement and the process of change and transformation in the hands of masses of workers with communist leadership in one particular union.

The second labor study group at Unity Books continues to use the history of F&L as its basic text. Unlike other books on labor history, this book does not indulge in the "story telling" of days past which is the most popular writing style of most labor summations. The book is full of strategic and tactical approaches to the trade union struggle. United Front tactics are clearly spelled out throughout the book. Errors are openly admitted and strengths and weaknesses are assessed. The alliance built between left wing and center or middle elements of the union is highlighted and the development of this alliance is shown to be the moving force for fighting, class struggle trade unionism. For these reasons, this book is an invaluable resource for our movement. It is hard cover, 700 pages, loaded with pictures, cheap (\$5.00), and available at Unity Books. GET IT!

The KKK in Buffalo (part 2)

Since our last newsletter, a good deal has happened with the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) locally. Their attempt at a court suit appeal to be placed on the ballot as the White Unity Party was quashed. Without this instrument to conduct legal, mass election work through their White Unity Party (WUP) front, they have resorted to actions of a terrorist nature. At this point these actions are unsystematic and somewhat disorganized. They are calculated, however, in that they have specific target areas for racist agitation. There has been agitation and attacks on Black high school students at South Park and Riverside. At South Park, they distributed racist slingers and incited a crowd of white youths, with the KKK in the lead, to throw rocks at Black students waiting for a school bus, injuring several and sending one 16 year-old to the hospital. At Riverside, after a fight between Black and white students and a day of racial tension, men with hoods over their heads were observed riding through the school's parking lot. It seems that the KKK activity at Riverside was minimal. The most blatant act of Klan savagery was the shooting of an 18 year-old black youth as he sat in a car directly in front of Klan Mayoral candidate Wayne Whiteside's house, seriously wounding him (shattering his trachea), a wound for which he is still hospitalized. The Johnson youth had supposedly said something to a white woman who then entered the Whiteside residence, from which a group of about 10 white men emerged, had words with Johnson and then one of the men drew a handgun and shot Johnson as he sat in his brother's car. All of this took place in view of a half dozen witnesses. Immediately after this incident, one of the witnesses viewed the local KKKers removing some rifles from the back of one of their member's car, also in front of Whiteside's. Could you imagine such an incident taking place in front of a progressive storefront like Unity Books, and what the reaction of the police would be? The KKKers got off with an investigation to search for more facts and a "motive" in the search for justice by the local police. Can you believe this? In the most half-hearted attempt to cover their own asses, the police, a few days later, arrested KKK leader Karl Hand, even though they had a positive description of the assailant and Hand did not fit that description.

Hand has now been released and has filed a \$4 million suit against the City of Buffalo. He has retained an expensive lawyer named David Jay, who is on the Board of Directors of the ACLU. At this time, unlike other chapters of the ACLU, the Buffalo Chapter is not defending the KKK. Jay seemingly is defending Hand from an idealist freedom of speech and expression

approach to the law. What all of these incidents show us is that the local KKK is, with increasing boldness, becoming an action-oriented group that will combine legal and illegal activities to obtain its goals. Violence and terrorism are a staple of their illegal activities.

THEIR REAL THOUGHTS ON THE SHOOTING OF MICHAEL JOHNSON

Although the local KKKers have vehemently denied involvement with the shooting of Michael Johnson and deny that they would ever participate in such an activity, their fraternal organizations and literature state otherwise. Their real position is exposed in the National Socialist Bulletin, a NAZI publication to which the Buffalo KKK is a contributor and a fraternal member. In the past six months in the U.S., there have been numerous attacks on Black and Jewish people in which racist organizations have been implicated, the most widely known being the case of Fred Cowan shooting up his workplace, and the most recent being an attack by a young rifleman on Black picnickers at Charleston, N.C. In all instances, murders have occurred, and in both of the aforementioned, the murderers have committed suicide. The racists view these attacks as an outgrowth of their racist agitation and urge their continuation on a national scale. In fact, they applaud these racist murders. In the October '77 internal newsletter of the National Socialist Bulletin, they state,

"Our task must be to coincide with these killings. We must act in a manner not only to inspire these killings, but to compliment them..."

"Nazi killers are on the loose and striking at will!...the killers prefer to die! No prisoners, no stories, just dead n..... and jews. Perfect!"

Well, the scum hit Buffalo, ruining the life of a healthy 18 year-old man; they shot him in front of a half dozen witnesses and got away with it! The Klan and other right wing activist groups have been mobilizing throughout the U.S. The most recent episode of Duke and company has taken place with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the KKK volunteering for border patrol to keep out illegal aliens, which made national news with an orchestrated splash. They are receiving great press and cooperation from the Federal INS. At the Johnson shooting, a witness saw the KKK removing a cache of rifles from a car near the incident. They are getting prepared, they take themselves seriously and they are taking action.

RIGHT WING SLIME ATTEMPT TO UNITE

Unlike the United Klans of America (UKA), headed by Robert Shelton (the turkeys who demonstrated a dozen strong with robes on the Columbus, Ohio capital steps), the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (KKKK), under the leadership of David Duke, view themselves as the modern Klan. They are the largest KKK in the U.S. They stress modern hair styles and clothing, education and a "new approach to racism" (which is just the old one dressed in mod clothes). The KKKK would never pull off the pitiful, isolated, foolhardy UKA activities such as the Columbus demo. They prefer to enter hot spots in a position of strength. The new Klan views themselves as the catalyst of reaction in the U.S. They view themselves as the cadres of the right and concentrate on areas with a high degree of racial tension for agitational activities. They have employed some of the organizing tactics of the anti-war movement, utilizing the sensationalism of the media, the legal system (even recruiting the ACLU), and direct concentrated actions to draw the fullest acclaim to their activities. They are also spray painting racist slogans with their address on walls and most recently began spray painting stop signs with a stenciled EVE - "STOP EVE"- their view of the elections. They have been very successful in utilizing the Buffalo media to the hilt.

The local fascists show even more initiative than this, though. The right wing in this country is about as split as the left. The local Klan on May 28, 1977, held a unity meeting between different fascist organizations from Cleveland, Cincinnati, Wilmington, Delaware and Toronto to band together into a right wing federation. A similar meeting was held in Cleveland with an even broader representation a few weeks later. The point is that the local fascists are the ideological leadership for this conciliation between the Klan, Nazi and white racist organizations. This is why we should oppose them and rout them out of our city all the more quickly. The problem with our movement is that we have a good deal of excess baggage to rid ourselves of before we can adequately fight the right, not the least of which is the white chauvinism within our movement itself.

The question is, "Are we (the left) prepared at this time to fight them? Are we prepared organizationally and politically to take them on? Do we combine appropriate forms of work? Or, for that matter does our movement take itself seriously enough to prepare for this struggle?" At this time, we think not, and we will state the reasons why later in this article.

We think that an organization such as the KKKK are only the tip of the iceberg of the possible growth of fascism as the economic crisis in the U.S. deepens. Although certain segments of the U.S. suffer a good deal of oppression, particularly in urban ghettos,

we do not think that fascism exists as a full-blown system in the U.S. today. This is not to say that we should wait till it is a full-blown social phenomenon to oppose it. In fact, it is now important to prepare the masses for the struggle before us and oppose the fascist embryo in the most militant way possible. To refuse to do otherwise is to fail to understand that in all advanced industrial capitalist nations in the throes of economic crisis, fascism has, to a certain degree, developed a social base. To fail to recognize this and call ourselves Marxist is a sham. How will the capitalist resolve the current economic crisis? (1) A war (every 20 years, as the saying goes) or (2) an intensification of the exploitation and oppression of poor and working people. That's right. Fascism is a way out for the most reactionary sector of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class to resolve the current economic crisis. The Klan and their cronies are just the front men, the advanced guard for this tried and tested method of holding profits and power. This is the only way for the U.S. bourgeoisie to go. Hundreds of examples can be used to point out this growing reactionary trend. The question for us is how do we best oppose and defeat reaction? Are we being alarmist? Are we getting hysterical about just a few right wing crackpots? Many would say we are. We don't think so.

THE LIBERAL OPPOSITION

There are those in our community who say the KKK should be ignored and isolated as the right wing sect that they are and by us publicizing their activities in our newsletter we are giving them more attention and undue publicity. To those who hold this view, we think a cursory study of the development of fascism in Italy or Germany would raise a few eyebrows. Essentially it's the same as, "Well, they're not bothering me." In the sheltered world that some of us can crawl into, this is probably true (for now). But ask the 15 year-old high school student with rocks bouncing off her head, or the KKK victim on Bailey (the ones we know about), whether they exist or not. It is this same viewpoint that holds that the KKKK is no more than a gang of stupid racist thugs, totally ignoring the fact that our country is run by some smart racists. It is bunk to think that intelligence or the lack of it correlates with racism. This form of petty-bourgeois, holier-than-thou arrogance is an abject refusal to analyze the material world around them. It is intermixed with the view that American democratic traditions, namely bourgeois democracy, will naturally prevail and the only way to eradicate racism is to raise everyone to the intellectual level that the non-racists are at. It is this same faith in American democracy and our "neutral" legal system that guarantees racist organizations their rights to disseminate, organize and strike at will in our communities on a daily basis. This is the most

putrid form of liberalism going, and unfortunately, it affects a good many of us, especially those with a lengthy background in the academic community. For the most part, when these individuals confront racist behavior, they recoil in abhorrence (maybe to Williamsville). Well enough for the liberal opposition. What about the left - those who should be in the forefront of the struggle against reaction?

THE LEFT - SECTARIANISM IS THE MAIN TREND

The leftists in our city and our nation are certainly a mixed bag in their opposition to reaction. On the one hand, we have the so-called communists of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) who fret about groups such as the KKKK and propose, as a strategy, that we have laws passed in the US that ban their existence. Jimmy Carter should ban the clan, that is. As if, with the same swift stroke and with a popular base of sentiment, it would be as easy to ban the communists. This faith-restoring gesture in capitalist law shares its bed with undying faith in bourgeois democracy. It fails to understand that reaction has as its foundations, the capitalist system itself, and this economic relation is maintained and forcefully managed by the same legal system that we are supposed to be begging to ban the Klan. Of course, if the U.S. was a socialist state, such as Cuba, where racism is illegal by law, it would be different to legally ban them. As for the U.S., such a maneuver only acts as a cover to restore confidence in a legal system that sides with reaction and attacks working, poor and minority people every day. Other communists, especially of the "new communist" genre, hold an arrogance of self-importance which is based on presumptions and not reality. They approach it as a given that in the struggle against reaction, the masses will take care of them. "We can smash them anytime. All you have to do is follow us!" Of course, regardless of the fact that no one is following them, and the level of class consciousness of our movement and of the class as a whole is very low, our presumptuous friends proceed on their glorious path of unreality. Some of them even view the U.S. now as a fascist nation, and to read their literature, one would think it time to organize underground resistance units, much the same as progressives did in Europe during WWII. This abstraction of fascism and confusion of the current state of bourgeois democracy only serves to make the question of opposition to reaction a matter of debate between leftists - empty phrase-mongering and inaction. Unfortunately, all these groups are plagued by sectarianism - all attempting to organize their own little pockets of anti-fascist resistance for their own self-serving so-called "political reasons" while reaction in the U.S. is having a hay day. Putting their own subjective wishes and needs for their "organization" first while sacrificing the real needs of the mass movement, is the calling card of these sectar-

ians. We have to wake up and rid ourselves of such childishness. Attacks on all fronts, especially on minorities, are escalating week-to-week and in this city, the opposition of the left (ourselves included) has been pathetic.



BUILD A BROAD UNITED FRONT

THE MAIN STRUGGLE MUST BE AIMED AT RACISM

The focus of the struggle against reaction (in this the KKKK) should not be stifled by sectarianism or abstract debates about fascism, or who is or is not leading the working class. We have to understand that, in fact, none of us are leading the working class (except for a small segment of it), and we should step down off our high horses of self righteous revolutionary purity. We should form a broad anti-fascist, anti-racist front and focus our struggle against the KKKK. The spearhead of this struggle has to be the fight against racism, and white people have to be in the forefront of that struggle. Racism is the driving force of all reactionary movements in this country and real class divisions exist due to it. It is not for us to blind ourselves from this reality in orations of red glory, but to face it head on in our communities, where we live and where we work. What this would then involve would be an attempt at involving the masses of people in the struggle and not the secular left community. It would involve taking the struggle to our unions, our community organizations, where we live and work. The emphasis would be on mass struggle and mobilization. The KKK are to be rid from our communities, and throwing out such elements provides an effective target to stimulate and expand this broad anti-racist and anti-fascist struggle. We think that white people have a special responsibility in this struggle for, certainly non-whites face racist oppression as a fact of life and in fact, a good number of whites are racist. It is up to whites to take it nose-to-nose in their communities with racist elements. At the same time, we must join with national minorities, uniting to fight racism and fascism. We must understand that it is in our economic and political interests to rid ourselves of the ideologies that stand in the way of the liberation and fulfillment of all people. A united front against racism and fascism is essential for this.

Puerto Rico (part 2)

This part examines the history of colonial domination of Puerto Rico, first by Spain, and then by the U.S., and the development of the independence movement as a response to this domination.

COLONIALISM AND THE ROOTS OF THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

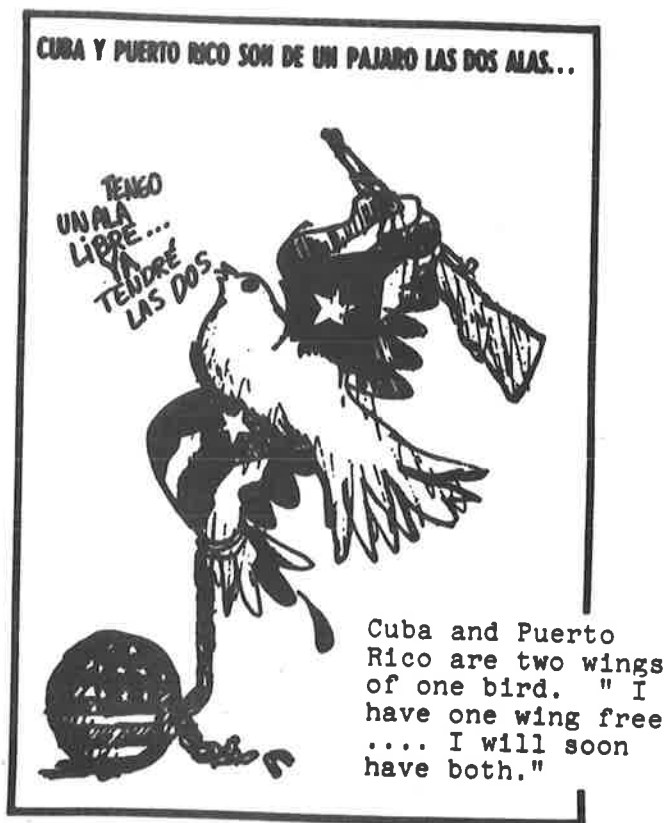
The history of Puerto Rico is the history of a people struggling to have control of their own country. The drive for an independent nation has been a reality of Puerto Rican life since the Grito de Lares in 1868. The revolutionary nationalism of this period had its fullest expression in Dr. Ramon Emeterio Betances, Eugenio Maria de Hostos, and their Cuban counterpart, Jose Marti. In these men lay the authentic spirit of opposition to colonialism and a rejection of reformism. Spain in the late 19th century was a tottering imperial power. Economically backward, beset by civil war and class struggle, she was not capable of granting her colonies more liberal regimes. Betances refuted those who looked to Madrid for reform with his statement, "Spain cannot give what she does not have."

This article is part of a continuing series dealing with the status of the United States and Puerto Rico. We will have copies of the completed series made available. Please write to us at Unity Books if you are interested.

Historically, the struggles for Puerto Rican and Cuban independence are closely linked. These two islands were the last and most important of Spain's colonial possessions in the New World, and there was much interaction between their nationalist forces. In 1865, the Republican Society of Cuba and Puerto Rico was formed. Its constitution read in part: "Only by the force of arms can we wrest from the government and the Spanish nation the right to manage our own affairs, enjoy our liberty, insure and defend our interests, and occupy the position that is due us among the nations of the earth."

Under the inspiration of Betances, on September 23, 1868, the Republic of Puerto Rico was proclaimed in an insurrection in the City of Lares. The demands of the rebels of El Grito de Lares were the abolition of slavery, independence for Puerto Rico, and the establishment of a democratic republican government. The rebellion was quickly crushed, but a few days later on October 10, 1868, the Cry of Yara burst forth in Cuba. This rebellion marked the beginning of a series of protracted wars that culminated in War for Independence in 1895. After the failure of the revolt at Lares, Betances dedicated himself to helping the revolutionary Cubans. Other Puerto Ricans distinguished themselves in the Cuban revolutionary wars, among them General Juan Rius Rivera. When Marti founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party in 1892, he stated in the party's principles that the purpose of the party was to achieve independence in Cuba and "to encourage and help Puerto Rico in her struggle." A Puerto Rican section of the Cuban Revolutionary Party was established.

Because of the common cultural and historical background, and their common struggle against Spanish and later American domination, it is said that, "Puerto Rico and Cuba are the wings of the same bird". The sense of common struggle against U.S. domination is evidenced today by Cuba's support of Puerto Rican independence in international forums such as the U.S. and solidarity with independence forces on the island.



U.S. TAKEOVER

By the late 19th century, the United States had become a major industrial power and joined the European countries in the quest for colonies. Since the early 19th century under the Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. considered all the countries in the Western Hemisphere to be under its control. Later on, interest turned to directly wresting Cuba and Puerto Rico from Spanish control. This culminated in the Spanish American War of 1898. By this "splendid little war", the U.S. acquired her first colonies.

By the 1890's, the U.S. had actually supplanted Spain as the major commercial force in Puerto Rico. Threatened on the one hand by the Cuban revolution, and on the other by the United States, Spain granted Puerto Rico a considerable degree of autonomy in 1897. The granting of autonomy was a tool to win over the liberal forces to support Spain in the face of the growing U.S. influence in the area. Hardly had the autonomist government begun functioning when the U.S. forces invaded the island in 1898.



The supplantation of the Spanish by the U.S. colonists brought profound transformations to the Puerto Rican economy. Along with the military came the invasion of U.S. monopolies. In 1899, Puerto Ricans owned 93% of the farmland and the major export crop was coffee. Due to currency devaluations, land seizures, tariff laws and trade restrictions the small farmers were ruined. Sugar became the islands most

important product. By 1930, 80% of the people in the countryside were landless. Their only means of survival was to work on the U.S. plantations at starvation wages, (75cents a day for sugar workers in 1926). By the early 30's 60% of the sugar, 80% of the tobacco, 60% of the public services and banks, and 100% of the shipping were each controlled by 4 or 5 large foreign companies.

THE LEGAL COVER

At the same time, the U.S. government set the framework for the political status of the colony. By the Foraker Act of 1900 the U.S. Congress gave themselves the power to legislate for the Puerto Rican people, or exempt federal legislation as they saw fit. In 1917, under the Jones Act, the U.S. Congress decided without consulting the Puerto Rican people that they were all to now be U.S. citizens. Along with this "privilege" came the "privilege" to be drafted into the army to fight W.W.I. At other times Congress has seen fit to exempt Puerto Rico from Federal legislation, most notably the minimum wage laws.

Until 1948 the governor of Puerto Rico was a North American appointed by the president of the United States. Most of these political appointees did not speak Spanish, often they did not even know where the island was. Not only did the governor have a veto power over all legislation, but the president of the U.S. retained a final veto power.

Up to the present day Congress can not only make laws for Puerto Rico or exempt it from U.S. law, but they can annul any laws passed in Puerto Rico. In addition, Federal Courts have virtual discretion to override the jurisdiction of the Puerto Rican Courts.

THE NATIONALIST RESPONSE

Independence within the framework of electoral politics has always been a major tendency in Puerto Rican politics. In 1912 the majority Union party under the leadership of Jose de Diego made independence a major issue on its platform. During the 1930's, when the world-wide Depression gave the issue of independence a big push, the Liberal party who called for "unconditional independence" received 170,000 votes in 1932 and more than 250,000 votes in 1936. Luis Muñoz Marín, the most important figure in modern Puerto Rican history, initially built his populist image by being an advocate of independence.

With the death of Jose de Diego independence was eliminated from the Union party's platform and the independentistas were purged

from all political posts. As a consequence of this, the most radical element of the Union party founded the Nationalist party in 1922 - a party specifically dedicated to the struggle for independence. In 1930 Pedro Albizu Campos, the most famous nationalist figure in Puerto Rican history, became the President of the Nationalist party. It was he who infused a radical tone into the party, in the tradition of Betances, which was to characterize the party from then on. 1932 marked a decisive break from electoral politics by the Nationalist party. In that year the elections brought into power those parties advocating continued collaboration, while the Nationalists received only 5,000 votes. It was clear that colonial elections did not solve the problem but merely helped to perpetuate it. It was at this time that Albizu Campos declared his resistance to colonialism and the regime in power, at the same time proclaiming the need for armed struggle to achieve independence.



The 1930's were dominated by the Great Depression that shook the roots of the capitalist economies of the world. In the colonies the crisis and human misery inflicted was even more severe than in the metropolises. With the collapse of the agricultural markets in Puerto Rico large segments of the population were forced to the verge of starvation. The relationship of economic crisis and colonial exploitation became brutally clear.

THE HOSTILITIES BEGIN

It was in such a context that the Nationalist party refused to play the game of colonial politics and demanded uncompromisingly that independence was the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people. The colonial regime could not tolerate a movement like the one led by Albizu Campos, which sought to go to the root of the problem. Cold blooded repression was the response to the Nationalists.

On October 24, 1935 the "Massacre of Rio Piedras" occurred, in which 4 nationalists and one policeman were killed and 40 others were wounded. On February 23, 1936 two nationalists, Hiram Rosado and Elias Beauchamp executed the chief of police, Colonel E. Francis Riggs, who was responsible for the Rio Piedras Massacre. The two were arrested and shot to death at police headquarters. Following the death of Riggs, President Roosevelt and Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes ordered that the Nationalist leaders be jailed. The first trial ended in a hung jury. At the second trial, a jury composed of ten North Americans

and only two Puerto Ricans found Albizu Campos and his companions guilty and they were sentenced to up to 15 years in prison.

On March 21, 1937 - Palm Sunday - 150 colonial police opened fire on a peaceful nationalist parade in Ponce. A parade permit had been granted, but was revoked at the last minute. In what was known as the "Ponce Massacre", one hundred demonstrators were wounded and 19 were killed.

Washington responded to this explosive situation by, on the one hand, buying off those opportunistic politicians who worked within the framework of colonial politics, while on the other hand physically liquidating the radical Nationalist party. The fierce suppression of the Nationalists by the North American colonialists marked the beginning of a hardline policy against dissent, which continues til this day.

In the next part of this series we will examine the policy developed by the U.S. government of cultivating those Puerto Rican politicians willing to "play ball" as a tool to permit the continued U.S. domination of the island.



BOOK REVIEWS



Political Economy by A. Leontiev

BOOK REVIEW OF POLITICAL ECONOMY BY
A. LEONTIEV, PROLETARIAN PUBLISHERS

Capitalism is the economic basis of most of the world. (The other system is socialism, under which 40% of the world's people live.) The exploitation, hardship and suffering that we in this country and the rest of the "Free World" encounter is directly related to the system of production known as capitalism.

One of the greatest contributions of Karl Marx is an analysis of the interrelation between the existing material conditions and the underlying means of production. Marx goes beyond static comparisons, and shows how capitalism necessarily arose from conflicting forces in history, and illuminates the underlying contradictions that are today tearing it apart. This analysis of economics is called political economy.

Capitalism is not the eternal system that has been hammered into our heads by every institution from the public schools to channel 4. Capitalism, like slave societies or feudalism exists in a definite historical context. The force in history that transforms society from one form of production to another is class struggle.

Political economy is an invaluable tool to understand the underlying nature of our society and provides a sound basis on which to address our problems. For people who accept the Marxist interpretation of history, an understanding of political economy is vital.

In the late 19th century Marx published his analysis in a huge, 3-volume work called "Capital". It is a long and arduous work to go through. A more practical approach for beginners is to first read "Political Economy" by A. Leontiev. This book was written in the Soviet Union in the early 1930's. It was written as a textbook to introduce people to the basis of Marxism-Leninism. The Soviet Union was the first nation to throw off the yoke of capitalism, establish the dictatorship of the working class and embark on the road to building socialism. At this same time, the Great Depression of the 1930's was threatening the very existence of capitalism. In contrast to the growing impoverishment of the rest of the world, the Soviet Union was achieving real advances under socialism. Here was the realization of all of Marx's theories. "Political Economy" is filled with these historical examples that give vitality to the text.

In addition, "Political Economy" incorporates Lenin's concepts of imperialism and monopoly capital. Such trends had only just begun to emerge in Marx's lifetime, but today they constitute the dominant factors of capitalist society.

In many ways, "Political Economy" is an excellent introduction to Marxism-Leninism. It is short, concise and very readable. It is filled with historical examples and even has questions at the end of each chapter! The book starts off with an introduction to the dialectical materialist conception of history and the centrality of class struggle. It deals with the mode of accumulation and exploitation of capitalism and the effect of this development on the working class. Finally, the book deals with the inherent contradictions of capitalism, and the deepening of the crisis under monopoly control and imperialism. Throughout the book, the alternatives of Socialism in the Soviet Union are contrasted to capitalism. The resolution of this intensifying crisis can be only capitalist war or proletarian revolution.

The prognosis of the book has, in many ways, been historically validated. The growth of fascism during the 1930's as a response to the Depression, W.W.II, the Chinese Revolution and the surge of nationalism in the colonies of Asia and Africa all vindicate the dialectical materialist conception of history put forth by this book.

History of the Fur and Leather Worker by Phil Foner

BOOK REVIEW- HISTORY OF THE FUR AND LEATHER
WORKERS UNION - by PHILIP FONER

Phil Foner has been mentioned in the pages of this newsletter a few times in the past years. He is probably the best Marxist labor historian alive in the U.S. today. This book is one of his finest. It is the history of the development of a trade union that represented one of the most progressive forces in the U.S. labor movement, the Fur and Leather Workers Union (F&L). It covers the union's development from 1830 to 1949. With thorough

FILM REVIEW: HARLAN COUNTY U.S.A.

It took the miners in Harlan County three years on strike to win a contract for their union at the Brookside Mines. It cost the life of one miner shot down by company goons. The strike and the struggle is described in an excellent movie entitled Harlan County, USA, to be shown in Buffalo on December 10. The film will be sponsored by the labor study group at Unity Bookstore (426 Grant Street).

Harlan County, Kentucky occupies a special place in U.S. labor history. It was the scene of some of the most violent labor struggles of the 1930's, when the National Miners Union of the Communist Party-led Trade Union Unity League went on strike, 42,000 strong, to organize the mines. The bitter fights of the '30's have been immortalized in any number of songs and stories. Harlan County came to be known as Bloody Harlan. But what is often forgotten is that the UMWA often lost. After the bloody shoot-out known as the "Battle of Evarts", when many miners and strikebreakers were killed, the UMWA moved out of Harlan County. Many mines there have remained unorganized, or with company unions, right up until today.

The Brookside and Highsplint Mines were two such mines. In 1973, the miners went on strike to gain recognition for their union, a local of UMWA. Miners were making \$26 a day, working up to 10 hours in mines which were unsafe. They had no contract and no right to strike over safety issues. Black lung disease from the coal dust affected everyone who worked in the mines for a long period of time. The mines were dangerous. Just 4 years earlier 78 miners died in the nearby Farmington mine when it blew up.

The Strike

The strike was hard, with the Duke Power Co., which owns the mines, hiring scabs and gun thugs to break through the picket line. Gun battles at the mine site were not uncommon. Miners' homes were attacked at night by gunfire. At one point, the courts granted an injunction against the miners prohibiting more than six miners on the picket line. At this point, the women in the community stepped in to play a decisive role. The women had organized themselves into the Brookside Women's Club earlier and had been supporting the strike all along.

When the injunction limited the picketers, the women joined the picket line. They stayed on it as long as it was necessary, until the

The film shows all of this. The filmmakers lived with the miners for all three years of the strike. They walked the picketline. were



HARLAN COUNTY U.S.A.

Produced and Directed by Barbara Kopple Principal Cinematography Hart Perry
Director of Editing Nancy Baker Rated PG

beaten by the scabs, and lived in the homes of miners. They filmed in the jail, in the courtroom, and on the picketline. The color documentary is skillfully made to tell the story of the strike. This is not one of those documentaries which shows "all sides". Instead, the movie comes out squarely in favor of the striking miners.

SHORTCOMINGS

While the film brilliantly portrays the struggles of the strikers and their enemies and shows how a militant rank-and-file can win a long battle, it has one major weakness. It does not fully show the positive role played by the UMWA. The UMWA put over \$2 million into the strike, which was a key one for the union. A victory at the Brookside mine would open the way to organization of many of the unorganized miners in Harlan County and Eastern Kentucky. The UMWA put pressure on the state government to get the police who were supporting the scabs away from the mine. The union also organized a nationwide campaign against Duke Power Co. which hurt the company. The UMWA organized the mass rallies seen in the film, bringing miners from all over the East to Harlan County. The UMWA had its international representatives negotiate with Duke Power, instead of the usual district representatives. The Union also sent in a full-time organizer to work with the strikers. Little of this is reflected in the film. Indeed, the UMWA is rarely seen at all, except at the end when it is shown unfavorably, giving up the right to strike over safety issues in the national contract. This issue is more complicated than it is shown to be in the film. It is true that the UMWA did not win this issue in their contract, but the union worked for it in the contract negotiations.

Because the strike at the Brookside and Highsplint Mines was a test case for the reform movement in the UMWA, this organization was backing the organizing effort in Harlan as strongly as it did. It is true that Arnold Miller and his team failed to continue the fight for reforms begun by the Miners for Democracy, and have moved backwards on a number of issues. But that is no excuse for ignoring the positive role of the UMWA in Harlan County during the strike. In this case, the filmmakers idealize the power of the rank-and-file movement. This tendency to idealize is also

reflected in the failure of the filmmakers to point out that while a victory was won at Brookside, the strike was lost at the neighboring Highsplint mine which now has a company union.

Nevertheless, the film is a great achievement, certainly one of the best movies about working people to come along in a long time. It makes clear that unionizing efforts - long, bitter struggles - are not only a part of our history, but continue right to the present time. The vicious struggle between the miners and the bosses comes across with all its intensity. And that struggle continues.

**WORKING PAPERS
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If you are interested in the political activities of the BWM and our perspectives on such issues as women's oppression, trade unions, national oppression, party building and the international situation plus other major issues - our working papers are now published. At the present time we are only distributing them on a person to person basis; not through the mail. If you are interested write us: BWM, P.O. Box 6, Station G, Buffalo, N.Y. 14213, or call 882-8232, 6 to 9 PM weekdays. Give us your address or phone number and we will contact you.

Right now, just a few miles from the Brookside Mine, 150 miners are on strike at the Justus mine in Stearns County, owned by the Blue Diamond Coal Co. They went on strike in July, 1976, seeking recognition of their union, another local of the UMWA. The company hired gun thugs, and one miner has been wounded in the leg by rifle fire. Five goons have been wounded. Last May, 27 miners and a UMWA organizer were arrested and charged with kidnapping, robbery and assault. Their trial, which has been labelled a clear frame-up by close observers, began on October 25th. If convicted, they face charges of up to sixty years apiece. Meanwhile, the company got an injunction in October limiting picketing at the mine entrance. The Stearns County miners made national news when they fought the Kentucky State Police resisting the injunction and the entrance of busloads of scabs into the mine on October 17. Over one-hundred miners were arrested. Reports from Stearns County indicate that the struggle there will intensify in the weeks to come. It is for that reason that the showing of Harlan County, USA here in Buffalo on December 10 will be a benefit for the miners in Stearns County. Bring your family and friends, both for your own benefit and to express solidarity with workers in this bitter struggle. If you can't come, send a letter of support or donation to the Stearns Miners Womens Club co/Irene Vanover po Box 488 Stearns, Kentucky 42647

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RACISM AND THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

A PWOC Pamphlet

RACISM AND THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT analyzes the role of white supremacy in the US, particularly in the trade unions... Who profits and who pays from the oppression of Black people?... How can racism be licked?... How do activists in the rank and file movement build this fight? Amply illustrated and written in popular language, Racism and the Workers' Movement can be a real tool for building the struggle in your shop or union.

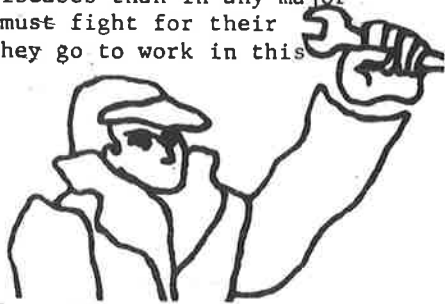
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AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

PREFACE TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE ON HEALTH & SAFETY

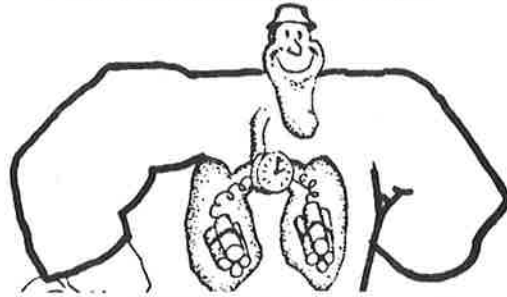
Workplaces throughout this country are dangerous because they are designed to produce the highest profit with the least amount of costs. Since machines are considered more important to maintain than workers, working people end up on the short end of safety considerations every time. The companies see safety and health standards directly cutting into their profits. The Steel Companies have used the ploy of "excessive environmental standards" to pressure the EPA to cut back on all steel safety and health codes. 14,000 workers were killed by industrial-related accidents last year, while, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, between 2.2 and 2.5 million people are suffering from serious work-related accidents or diseases every year. Cancer has begun to reach the epidemic stage in the United States. Last year, 360,000 people died of cancer. Reliable estimates say that 90% of cancer is caused environmentally by industrial pollution. Of the 500,000 workers who are now working with asbestos, one fifth will die of lung cancer and another one fifth will die prematurely because of lung diseases. About 100,000 miners in the U.S. today suffer from Black Lung, 6,000 of whom die each year from this affliction. From 1958 to 1970, accident rates rose by 20% in industrial assembly line work. More working people are dying from these accidents and diseases than in any major war. Working people must fight for their survival every time they go to work in this society.



In this issue of our Labor Round-Up, we are concentrating on the damages to our lives caused by accidents and diseases from industrial work. Our intent is to bring out the facts about some of the many occupational diseases and accidents. Only by knowing the facts can we then organize against these dangers. Many working people go to work not knowing of the dangers to their health or the high risk they are facing of an industrial accident. People are trading their health away for the companies' profits and a barely livable wage.

We all need to educate ourselves about the dangers of industrial hazards and pollution so that we can discuss and choose our methods of changing conditions to deal forcefully with the issues of safety and health. We have got to get more organized!

THE LONG SLOW KILL



We can differentiate between those injuries and/or illnesses which are the result of long-term, accumulated exposure and those which are related to immediate, short-term safety hazards. First, the long, slow kill. A person's respiratory system is one of the most important routes of entry for polluting and toxic substances. The lungs contain millions of tiny air sacs that transfer the oxygen from the air to the blood stream. If large doses of dust get inhaled daily, the very thin membranes of these air sacs are torn and then scarred. Silicosis is the disease that develops from breathing small particles or dust over a period of time. Chronic, long-term silicosis is a silent killer of foundry, steel and iron workers. Even though it may take years for silicosis to become extremely bad, this killer shortens the lives of each one of us in the foundry or steel mill. One article in the Labor Round-Up is from a coke oven worker and details some of the dust problems at Donner-Hanna in Buffalo.



Violations . . . What Violations?

TOXIC CHEMICALS

Other major pollutants that reach our lungs every day are the industrial chemicals pumped into the air in every large city in the U.S. Most workplaces are filled with hundreds of chemical fumes, gases, and vapors, some of

which are very harmful. According to a report from a group of industrial hygienists, in 1970, there were between 6,000 and 12,000 toxic industrial chemicals. Yet the government had only 410 listed for control. At present, about 3,000 new chemicals are introduced into industry every year. The most extreme danger among all the industrial chemicals are the carcinogens, which accumulate in a person's body to eventually produce cancer. Cancer is ranked second only to heart disease in causing premature death to Americans. Unlike with food, where people have at least a small chance of choosing foods or eliminating those known to cause cancer, or exercise that people can do to improve their hearts and health, at the workplace, people must breathe the air. And the chances of getting cancer accumulates with the amount of exposure to chemicals like coke gas, benzene, certain solvents, chromates and the hundreds of other chemicals that can cause lung and organ cancer. One out of every four Americans will develop cancer during their lifetime. These cancers are equally caused by smoking and by occupational exposures to chemical pollution.

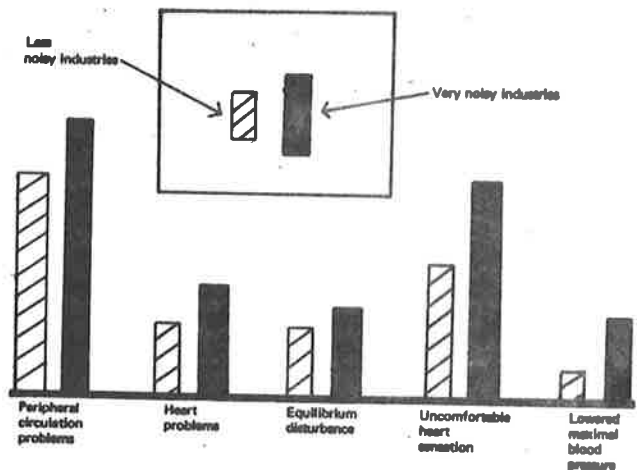


What can be done? We can learn about the dangerous effects of certain chemicals like those mentioned in two of the following articles on benzopyrene and benzene. We can demand the company publish all the generic or chemical names of the industrial chemicals that we work with on the job. Many safe chemicals can be substituted for the dangerous ones. Exposure levels to many toxic chemicals can also be reduced. All solvents and toxic chemicals can endanger our health. Toxic chemicals will harm the skin and make us feel drunk and dizzy. Some affect our blood. Others affect our liver, our kidneys, our eyes and hearts, almost every organ in our bodies.



WHAT'S THAT? YOU SAY NOISE IS POLLUTION TOO? SAY WHAT?

Besides chemical and physical hazards on the body, stress, noise and tension can have disastrous effects on people's health. Noise and vibration can cause a person to slowly go deaf, to have greater tendency for heart trouble along with digestive and circulatory problems. Prolonged exposure to vibration can affect your bones, muscles, organs and brain. It's not enough for the companies to provide ear muffs, or ear plugs as a solution to noise pollution. Safety equipment is almost never built for comfort. The more important solution is to remove or dampen the noise makers. This again requires much organized effort by people who are working in the noisy plant.

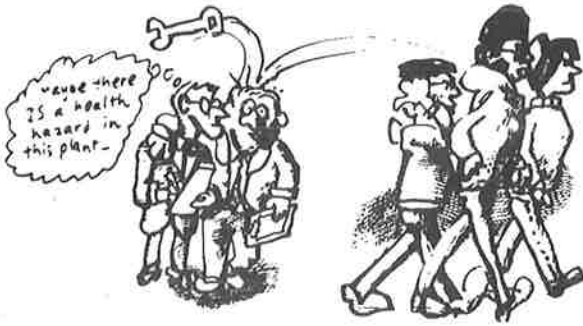


COMPARISON OF EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF NOISE

ACCIDENTS ON JOB - 3 SECONDS THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

The counterpart to health on the job is SAFETY. Accidents are caused by a combination of working people being tired and fatigued, especially from repetitious assembly work and the unsafe working conditions. If one or two workers go to management with a safety problem, their usual response is "We'll see you later." If safety inspectors are due to check out the plant, they usually announce themselves to the plant management and all the guard rails go up and material is cleaned from the aisles. There are many hazards that represent a serious threat to the health and safety of people working in a shop. But the best method of cleaning up a shop or reducing safety hazards is to carefully organize co-workers with a clear picture of what the hazards are and how they violate governmental standards (especially Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards; documenting the company's long-term knowledge of these safety hazards and their unwillingness to improve these conditions.

Knowing these hazards we finally have to organize our fellow workers to fight for the demands, whether we bring this fight to the union or directly on the shop floor.



Accidents don't just happen. They are produced by speed-up. In this issue of the Labor Round-Up a worker from Trico writes about how at least one line of workers is forced to take off safety switches in order to make piece rates. Working people are permanently disfigured with the loss of fingers or with gashes in their hands from the riveting machines that literally drive metal through their bones. Accidents can be prevented. But just like pollution, accidents are not a "people problem" but a company problem. The companies want strict division of labor, with no consideration that people would be more refreshed if their jobs were rotated; the company puts everything in terms of a time and motion study, to produce humans as appendages of the machine instead of the other way around. In the name of safety, organized workers may be able to slow down the speed of the line, something that the bosses want to decide solely for themselves. But again, these actions take careful, painstaking organizing. It's our lives that we must protect. To eliminate these hazards requires protracted effort: organizing meetings, agitation and concrete effort. The alternative it to accept the pain of accidents and poor health that companies are willing to give us.



CHANGING WORKING CONDITIONS? ORGANIZE TO FIGHT BACK!

We are intending to offer some guides to action on the shop floor, in struggles with our unions, a discussion of tactics in how to use some governmental laws and agencies to stop safety and health hazards at work. They do not require a great knowledge of the law or of science, but it does require a real attempt to gather all the facts on our side. This is where we begin to see how the facts are in our favor. But getting people to act on these facts of poor safety and health conditions is another matter. Use and knowledge of people's rights under OSHA is necessary.



But...

the most important aspect is unity for organizing the collective action that working people at the shop need before they produce a petition, before they stand up at a union meeting, before they produce a leaflet or call for an on-site inspection by OSHA. The cruel hard facts are that this society is run by a small group of monopolists; that there are fewer than 500 inspectors available to inspect over 4.1 million workplaces. Legal exposure standards exist for only about 500 of the 15,000 toxic industrial chemicals. The facts are that only 26% of the working people in the U.S. today have a union that might begin to take up the struggle for better working conditions. But the important thing about the facts is that people who are organized and who base their actions on the real world of everyday work and who want to

control their own lives, can change "the facts". We, in cooperation with other safety groups in Philadelphia and Boston are providing a brief outline on safety and health rights under the OSHA act. Safer times are ahead if we build the struggle for better safety and health.

WHAT TO DO WITH OSHA

WAR AT WORK

It sounds like war – 20,000 dead, 2.5 million seriously wounded. These are the yearly casualties of on the job accidents suffered by workers in the mills, mines, ports, and factories in the United States. At the same time, no one knows for sure how many thousands of workers are crippled by diseases – lung problems, heart diseases, cancer and other illnesses – caused by job exposure to excessive heat and noise, and dangerous dusts and fumes.

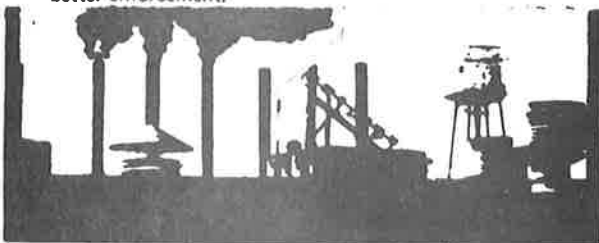
The overwhelming majority of job-related deaths and accidents are due to unsafe work conditions, not – as the companies would have us believe – dumb and careless workers. Now, in the midst of the economic crisis, companies are likely to pay even less attention to safe work conditions in their drive for greater profits.



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT

Unions fought to pass the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. This law sets standards for exposure to some harmful materials and provides for inspectors to make investigations and issue citations for violations. Corporations fought the law and were successful in weakening it in some important ways: inadequate penalties; long delays, in the appeal procedure, and inadequate standards.

There are fewer than 500 inspectors to investigate over 4,000,000 workplaces! Though the law is inadequate, it is important for workers to use the safeguards and rights it does provide while fighting for better standards and better enforcement.



YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW

1. If you file for an inspection, the government cannot disclose your identity to the company if you ask that it remain secret.
2. A representative of the workers (usually the union) has the right to accompany the inspector around the plant.
3. You have the right to observe all testing and to see the results.
4. You have the right to be notified by your employer whenever you are being exposed to dangerous conditions.
5. You have the right not to be discriminated against because of any action you take under this law.
6. You can sue the company and the government, if conditions are not improved.

OSHA INSPECTION

If you believe that unsafe or unhealthy conditions exist in your plant, you can demand a federal inspection by making a written protest of work hazards to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA),

Federal Office Building
11 W. Huron Street
Buffalo, N.Y. 14202

If something seems likely to cause accidents or illness, even if not immediately, it may be illegal.

Examples:

- a. Concentrations of gases, vapors, fumes, dusts, or mists in the air.
- b. Loud noise.
- c. Slippery floors, open pits, lousy housekeeping and sanitation.
- d. Flying particles from unshielded grinding or cutting.
- e. Unguarded gears or cutting edges on machines.
- f. Exposure to potentially harmful chemicals – many solvents, fluxes, coatings, metals, etc.



Donner-Hanna Coke:

An Explosion Waiting to Happen !

Donner-Hanna Coke is a major polluter for South Buffalo-Lackawanna. However, for Donner-Hanna workers, it is the major polluter and an employer with minimum maintenance and maximum profits as a general program.

Located on Abby Street, between Republic Steel and Tiff Farms, Donner-Hanna is the coke supplier for Republic Steel's Buffalo plant and National City Steel, the two steel companies sharing in its ownership and control. It also sells such coke by-products as manufactured gas to National Fuel Gas, ammonium sulfate (used as fertilizer), light oil (further refined to become gasoline) and coal tars. The process of making coke itself requires taking coal and cooking it in giant ovens for about nine hours at temperatures ranging to 2400° F. The hot coke is then pushed into a special rail car which runs it into a quenching tower, where it is cooled with massive amounts of water. Then the still hot, steaming coke is sent, via conveyor belts, either to rail cars to be shipped or to be piled for storage. This process continues at all times, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

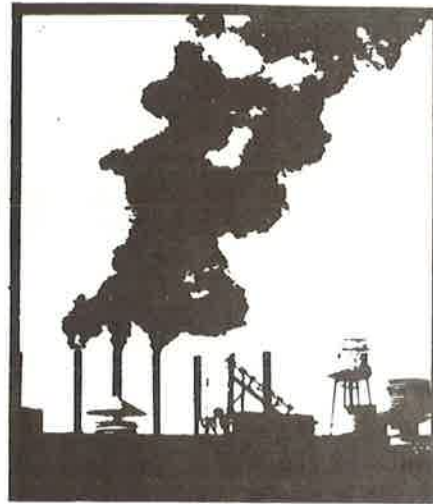
Black Lung in Buffalo?

In order to cover the pollution and safety hazards, it will be easiest to go through the plant step by step, as a lump of coal might. The coal arrives by rail cars, which are dumped, with each load analyzed for various factors, and then is piled to be used. The coal is then taken from these piles, processed and sent to the ovens. This movement creates two major health hazards. The long, slow one is the clouds of coal dust. The workers in coal handling resemble coal miners at the end of a day, and working there leaves you coughing up black dust. The question of black lung disease must be a real one for long-term workers in this department. The immediate health hazards are the dangers of the moving belts, the gears and drive belts which are often left unguarded, and which need constant repair and maintenance.

Breathing is a Cancer Hazard

The next step is the coke ovens themselves, with their leaking filler plugs on top, and the end doors which continually are seeping gases.

In this area are either older Black men, or young men of many nationalities. At one time this area, the dirtiest and hottest of them all, was seen as an area reserved for Blacks. Then, in the mid-1960's, much automation took place and there was a reduction in the work force on the ovens. Now the work is less physical than before, although there is plenty of shoveling spilled coke. However, as a result of mechanization, the work now requires a more constant attention and presence. Thus, workers aren't able to go off, take a break and get some cleaner air. Working on the oven is like standing on top of a charcoal broiler during a constant light-up. The gases are tremendous. Signs, often hidden or neglected, reading "Cancer Hazard - Do not eat or smoke" should be expanded to ban breathing. The heat is fearsome, especially on those hot summer days when the only place to be is the beach, if only you didn't have to make a living.



In addition, there are often open flames, as gases escape from the ovens and ignite. Although less mechanized than coal handling, this area has plenty of direct safety hazards, including antiquated filler cars and pusher cars (used to push the hot coke from the ovens). The hot coke is then quenched, which sends enormous quantities of steam and vapor into the area. If you work downwind from a quenching tower, you get sprayed with a "rain" coming from the condensed vapor, which has a remarkable sting. It is quite unhealthy because of its combination of water with the residual ammonia on the hot coke. Working for a single day in that "rain" will leave your lips raw and skin stinging.

Now, that original lump of coal is a piece of coke, and it is quenched, then taken away again by the familiar and unsafe conveyor belts. The major health hazard now is with the by-products. There are pipes going every which way in the plant; some carry compressed air, some city water, some river water, others steam, while a number - many running virtually the length of the plant and lying in a trench covered with wooden planking - carry volatile chemicals, gases and inflammable oils. Recently a welder sparked a fire which was barely stopped before getting into this trench. A fire here would quickly spread the length of the plant, ignite the benzol plant, where there are large tanks of light oil (only slightly less explosive than gasoline), or even touch off the giant tank where manufactured gas is stored.



The possibilities of a danger such as that are ghastly enough under the best of circumstances. However, Donner-Hanna is hardly the best of circumstances. Fire hazards are common place, with leaking pipes the norm, and maintenance absolutely minimal. Meanwhile there are several hundred construction workers whose main tasks are to install new equipment to speed up production or to repair old equipment which is so dilapidated that it is inoperative. Hardly a week goes by when a worker isn't injured by something that a decent, up to date operation would avoid. A ruptured steam line scalded a worker who was fixing another pipe above that; burns from steam, hot coke, gas flare-ups; equipment breaking; all of this is seen as normal operation.

The Company, the Government and the Union Versus the Worker

Why do conditions such as these persist? Two of the biggest reasons are a weak union and government safety and pollution regulations which are ignored. Donner-Hanna is the only major plant in Buffalo which has scab construction contractors working side-by-side with union contractors. During recent negotiations between Donner-Hanna and the union reps of USW Local #2268, there was a cloud hanging over the workers. That cloud consisted of the fact that some of the scab construction workers had stayed in the plant during last winter's blizzards and helped run the production phase. That memorable day in January stopped the second shift from getting to work, plus (more importantly) it emphasized the possibilities of the company to weather not only a storm, but a long strike. The possibility of Donner-Hanna attempting to break the union was strong enough that safety and health were relegated to obscure bargaining points. The major points were wages and in-plant apprenticeships into skilled positions. Health and safety, two items of great need for coke workers, are left to be enforced by OSHA, which apparently turns the other way at Donner-Hanna's need for profits at the cost of shorter lives for workers.

The things that need to be done at Donner-Hanna are many. Local 2268 (USW) needs to join with the buildings trade unions and have all scab contractors and workers removed from the plant. The membership - the rank-and-file themselves - need to fight for greater safety and health precautions. There must be greater emphasis put on building a strong union, and not ignoring it out of the pessimism brought by its present-day weaknesses. And all workers must realize that the company has no right to make profits at the expense of workers' lives.

Workers Fired for Refusing Hazardous Jobs

The courts continue to deny the right to a safe workplace despite OSHA's pronouncements to the contrary. The most recent ruling comes from a Federal District Court in Ohio which decreed that workers could legally be fired for refusing to work on an unsafe job. This ruling came despite Section 11(c) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). The Act supposedly "guarantees" the right to refuse a perilous job without fear of retribution or discrimination from the company. The Act supposedly "allows" workers to file complaints, institute proceedings, and exercise any other "right" "guaranteed" by the Act. The judges in Ohio certainly knew how to interpret the law - for the employer, that is.



The Ohio ruling contradicts the Federal District Court of Michigan which last June decided that Babcock and Wilcox could not fire a worker for refusing to work on the underside of a multi-ton hopper suspended by a crane. Babcock and Wilcox, a multi-million dollar construction firm, had the cold-blooded nerve to try to force a worker to risk his life to put some valves on the hopper.

In yet another flip-flop last December, courts in Georgia and Ohio once again took a swipe at workers' rights by ruling that Daniel Construction and Whirlpool could fire workers for refusing deadly jobs. In both cases, the courts said that OSHA does not grant the right to refuse work under circumstances which may constitute injury or death, even if the threat is "imminent" and "immediate". According to the Daniel Construction decision, the only thing we can do when faced with "imminent danger" by the boss is to notify the Secretary of Labor with a request for an inspection!!



It's clear where the courts stand on safety - right alongside the bosses. With that kind of buddy-buddy relationship we really can't expect much from them except more negative rulings, more firings, more slap-on-the-wrist fines for violations and more accidents that maim and kill. That's what we can expect - unless we put pressure on OSHA and the companies to meet our needs.

That's where our rank and file union organizations are so important. As members of different unions, we have to make sure that the union is uncompromising when it comes to health and safety grievances. The contract is another means to fight for health and safety - both through general issues and through issues which relate to specifics of our different job situations. For example, our contracts should contain the basic right to red tag an unsafe job (i.e. refuse to work until the hazard is removed) and to walk out when health and safety issues are ignored. For specific demands, we should examine the problems we face every day. For example, the company should be providing work gloves, protective clothing and better equipment, or whatever is needed to work a job with our maximum safety and health in mind. On the shop floor we should be talking up health and safety; pushing grievances, getting fellow workers conscious of our rights under OSHA, citing violations, etc.

In other words, we have to fight to make our workplaces safe. If we wait for the courts to do it for us, we'll be dead and buried. It's up to us to do the pushing. While the courts and bosses seem to care less about our health, we have better plans than to be maimed, crippled or killed for the sake of their profits.



TRICO: A BUTCHER SHOP!

Why has there been such a dramatic increase in accidents and injuries at Trico Products Corporation in the last few months? With the status of our new union UAW still in doubt and the Trico Workers Union still doing nothing except trying to collect more dues, the company is taking advantage of the situation. With old machinery that they will not repair, Trico is increasing our hours of work and continuing the speed-up rates on the production lines. Consequently, we are becoming more fatigued and having more accidents.

UNSAFE MACHINES

The old machinery at Trico is actually shaking to pieces, but the production supervisors want to wait until the winter inventory vacation - without pay - before they repair this equipment. Meanwhile, we keep getting hurt. Fingertips have been smashed or lost because of the foot controls they have on the machines instead of the safer hand-trip controls. Fingers have been smashed because the machinery double trips just as one of us is reaching to remove the assembled part. Pants will sometimes get caught, along with our fingers, in stoppers on the belts. We only have 5 fingers on each hand - how much flesh and blood do we have to give to Trico?

SPEED - UP

Work speed-up and longer hours of work have also caused many accidents. People at Trico are now working nine and ten hours with high-rated jobs causing extreme fatigue. Does Trico care whether we are getting hurt more regularly? Never! Line rates are now up to 1,000 to 1,200 per hour. These rates include breaks which have to be made up. Side jobs (work that is not directly on the assembly line) are rated even higher nowadays. So accidents are now occurring at the high fatigue times of late morning and

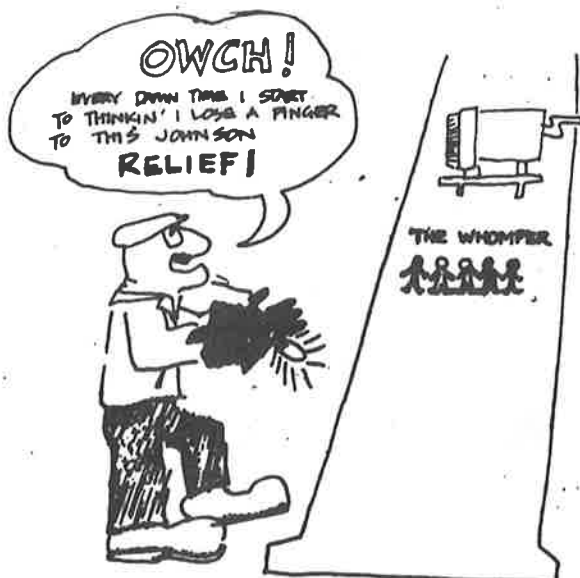
early afternoon at all three Trico plants. The line rates were too high for one broken machine at the #3 plant two weeks ago and a Trico worker received a crushed middle finger. During a work speed-up also at the #3 plant, parts flew out of the machine causing an eye injury to a woman working at that machine. Both younger and older workers are forced to work through their breaks and part of lunch in order to make up production because they have such high rates set.

INFORMATIONAL NOTE to those people who have never worked in an incentive plan:

Companies like Trico who have incentive rates force workers to work harder. Company time study men come to set a base rate for a certain job, say 675 pieces per hour. This rate is usually set by timing one person working fast for only one hour - no breaks and usually while he or she is fresh. This is how the base rate pay is set. But base rate pay is purposely set low so that workers have to work harder to make "incentive rate" just to receive a fair wage. This incentive rate is usually 110% to 130% higher than the already sped-up base rate. Trico bosses always offer the excuse that "incentive rate" is strictly voluntary, "we are not forcing you to speed up". Sure, Trico, and buying food to eat is "voluntary", it's our "choice".

When people are hurt at Trico, the treatment, rather than being good, is the worst. We Trico workers think there is no comparison. The overall purpose of the medical staff is to act

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BENZENE KILLS SLOWLY

the Sweet Smell of death

153,000 working men and women in the U.S. are exposed each day to benzene. Short term exposure to high concentrations of benzene can cause blistering, nausea, breathlessness and even convulsions or death. Even more insidious and in the U.S. more common, is contact with very small amounts of benzene. After months and years of daily exposure, trace quantities of benzene can cause leukemia - cancer of the blood.

Benzene is a clear, non-corrosive, flammable liquid. Consumers rarely come directly in contact with it in their homes. However, in about 1200 workplaces across the U.S. benzene is either produced (chiefly by petroleum refineries, though also as a byproduct in coke ovens), or is used as a solvent for other organic chemicals (especially in chemical laboratories), or is used as an intermediate in the production of other chemicals such as styrene, phenol, cyclohexane, pesticides and aspirin. In Buffalo and Niagara Falls there are several thousand workers who are potentially exposed. Industries and processes using benzene include the petrochemical, printing, lithograph, rubber cements, rubber fabricating, paint, varnish-stain removers, adhesive chemicals, scientific laboratories, and gas stations.



HOW BENZENE KILLS

Benzene can enter our bodies directly through skin contact but more commonly is inhaled in vapor form. It takes an air concentration of only 250 parts per million (ppm) for a few minutes to produce the nervous system effects which are responsible for most of the short term symptoms of poisoning. That's only 250 particles of benzene for every million particles of air. As we all know dizziness, nausea, fatigue, loss of appetite and irritability are not always due to benzene exposure, and thus workers, and especially their super-

visors often assume such symptoms are "the flu" or a hangover instead of the first sign of what can become a fatal chemical poisoning. Benzene will cause immediate death at levels of 20,000 ppm (2%).

When OSHA was established in 1970, it set a standard for benzene that limited worker exposure to 10 ppm averaged over 8 hours with an absolute peak exposure of 50 ppm. Compliance by industry was to be attained by making changes in the processes involved with benzene. Only in cases of emergency were respirator masks to be used by the workers. If a worker could smell the sweet aroma of benzene, his or her work place was breaking the law. The OSHA standard was designed, at least on paper, though not very well in practice, to protect us from the short term toxicity of benzene. But what about the long term effects? These effects were completely ignored.

Exposures to benzene in concentrations too small to cause immediate symptoms may, many years later, give rise to aplastic anemia (a decrease in production of all types of blood cells) or leukemia, (cancerous overproduction of non-functioning white blood cells). Because of this lag time, and because these diseases may occur in the absence of benzene exposure, it has been difficult for workers and their union representatives to see the connection between work and health. The big oil companies have hired medical and scientific experts to report that benzene at levels of 10 ppm does not cause cancer. But even in the ranks of the experts paid by the big companies there is dissent. Dr. Eckardt, Director of Medical Research at Exxon, suggested "eliminating exposure wherever possible and reducing it to the lowest possible levels where complete elimination cannot be accomplished".

CANCER FOR WORKERS

- PROFITS FOR COMPANIES

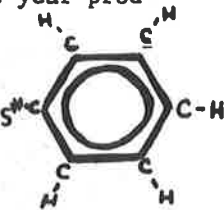
In April of this year a study of leukemia rates amongst rubber workers in a Goodyear plant in Ohio showed a level ten times greater than that expected in the average population. OSHA finally moved and issued an Emergency Temporary Standard for benzene at 1 ppm. Just as quickly the oil companies went to court and got an order to stall changing the standards. This legal battle is still going on following months of hearings in which OSHA proposed a permanent lowering of the benzene standard.

In late October of this year a research institute in Italy released the results of its carefully controlled studies on animals which shows that benzene causes cancerous tumors in certain glands and in the skin. The Italian scientists explain that up till now such tests have been either poorly run or poorly set up and so have been inadequate in proving the tumor

causing effect of benzene. The magazine "Chemical and Engineering News", a mouthpiece for the chemical industry, termed the findings "a bombshell". As of press time neither OSHA's nor industry's response to the report is known.

However, in a report published in the same magazine a few weeks later entitled "Key Chemicals Benzene", not a single word is said about the cancer hazards associated with benzene. Instead the report laments the "lack-luster market" and hopes for the "prospects for an upturn in (benzene) prices". The report clearly states that the chemical companies are hoping that consumer spending, especially for such items as tires and carpets, will boost their benzene profits. Last year 1.2 billion dollars worth of benzene were produced in the U.S. . This year production will increase by 5%.

**FIGHT CONTINUES
AGAINST DEADLY CHEMICALS**



The significance of the fight over benzene is that working people are no longer willing to put up with exposure to the poisons and carcinogens which the companies so profitably promote. On one front OSHA is taking the stance, (at least for the moment) that any exposure to a cancer causing substance which can be prevented must be prevented by the employer. On another front unions like the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers and the United Rubber Workers have begun to push for lowering the benzene standard. In addition these unions use contract clauses to see if any chronic trends like anemia begin to appear. They also push to see that any employee found to have some harmful health effect due to the job maintains the right to another job without loss of pay or seniority. But the fact still remains that of the more than 48,000 workers exposed to 4 or more hours of benzene per day less than half work with any type of protective equipment. But this situation can be changed by mobilizing the strongest front of those mentioned- ourselves! On the shop floor we have to be the ones leading and pushing the fight for health and safety. The task - to educate, agitate and organize fellow workers to take whatever stands are necessary to see that the companies clean up their act.

The increasing accumulation of facts concerning the hazards of benzene exposure and the continuing resistance of the companies to stop poisoning working people in their quest for greater profit can be used to sharpen the antagonistic relationship which exists between the corporations and us. Working people can no longer accommodate the bosses' threats that OSHA or the union will "make them go broke". We have to meet the companies head on- our lives depend on it!

BUFFALO LABOR HISTORY

PROJECT

Through the winter months a few members of the BWM and friends will be putting together some materials to produce a pamphlet on the history of labor struggles in Buffalo. From the Buffalo switchmen's strike of 1893 to the work of the unemployed councils of the 1930's led by the C.P. to the first strike victory of any major plant of the steel industry at Bethlehem Steel in February 1941 where 65 CIO local unions fought the police to a standstill up to the present day will be covered. If you would like to assist us or if you have material which you would like to see included, feel free to contact us at 882-8232 or by mail: BWM, P.O. Box 6, Station G, Buffalo, New York 14213

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Deadly Pollution in the Steel Industry

Bethlehem Steel lays off 7,300 workers in Lackawanna and in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Many workers with years of seniority find themselves without work. What's the explanation? According to the steel companies, one of the reasons is that they have to spend too much money on pollution control, and it's cutting into their profits. This explanation is no explanation at all; it's an out and out lie. Over the past four years, the steel companies have spent only about 15% of the money they invested in new construction for anti-pollution equipment. This amount has not been going up. The federal government has done little to stop pollution by the steel industry, despite the fact that steel is one of the worst polluters. Steel industries continue to poison their workers and the public. Bethlehem Steel claims that anti-pollution equipment was going to cost \$200 million in the next few years. But Bethlehem has revenues of \$5.3 billion a year. And it plans to save \$120 million as a result of recent lay-offs.

COKE PRODUCTION IS DANGEROUS TO OUR HEALTH

One of the main sources of pollution in the steel industry is the coke ovens. Coke is made from heating coal, and coke is necessary to transform iron into steel. Many workers in a steel plant work on top of or nearby the coke ovens. And coke oven workers are 10 times more likely to get lung cancer than the general population. Prolonged work on the coke ovens for any length of time is a sure way to an early grave.

Heating up coal to make coke produces a lot of by-products, some of which are re-used, but others of which go up into the sooty smoke which comes out of coke ovens. One of these by-products is called "benzopyrene". It's a chemical which causes lung cancer. It's the same chemical which is found in cigarette smoke. There is no controversy about it. Everyone agrees that it causes lung cancer. And coke oven workers breathe it steadily 8 hours a day. The federal government did not even regulate it until January of this year. And even now "regulation" is a joke. The steel industries have until 1980 to clean up their coke ovens. And even then, there is no guarantee that things will change. The federal government has little power to enforce its "regulations."

Making coke is a big business, and cleaning up the coke ovens would require a lot of money, money which the steel companies don't want to spend. Coke production in the U.S. runs to \$1.1 billion a year, and the coke ovens themselves are worth about \$3 billion. Almost all coke is made by the big steel companies. And they are going to keep making it. There is no other way to make steel.

It's not that the steel companies don't know how to clean up the coke ovens. They do. Basically it involves reducing the exposure of the workers around the coke ovens to the benzopyrene particles. It means building ovens with better doors so the gas does not escape, and building sheds to keep it out of the air. But the steel companies don't want to cut into their profits, so 22,000 coke-oven workers in the U.S. continue to breathe huge amounts of poison.

**"TRUE, YOU HAVE THIS BREATHING PROBLEM,
BUT LET'S ALSO CONSIDER THE PYTHON'S SIDE--"**



Right now there are two coke ovens in operation at Bethlehem's plant in Lackawanna. Donner Hanna and Allied Chemical also make coke in the Bethlehem area.

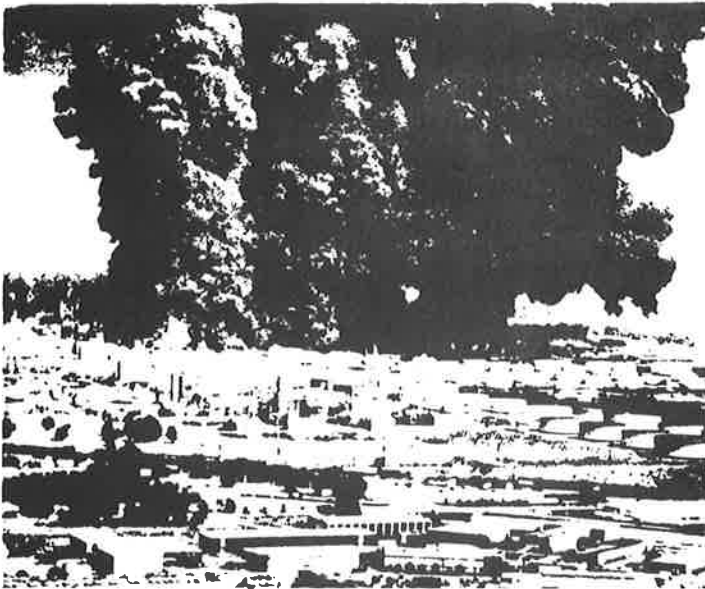
Each coke oven is composed of dozens of "batteries". Batteries are separate ovens, each over 20 feet tall. The coal is dumped into the top of the batteries and then heated to over 2,000 degrees for 15-20 hours. All the material except for carbon burns off, and the almost pure carbon which is left is called "coke". The coke is then pushed out of the coke ovens, drenched with water to cool it, and taken in railroad cars to the blast furnaces where it is used as fuel to melt down and purify iron to make steel. At all stages, dirty soot is given off which contaminates the workers. The soot also gets in the air and poisons all of us in Buffalo. The effects of the poisoning are not immediate. It takes years and years. But the end result of such poisoning is lung cancer. Coke oven workers breathe in more of the soot than the rest of us, which is why they get lung cancer more than the rest of us.

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OCAW Demands Resignation of OSHA Bureaucrat

AN INJURY TO ONE
★ IS ★
AN INJURY TO ALL

LOCAL 1-128
OCAW



Explosion at Mobil's Beaumont, Texas, refinery in 1970 killed two workers.

Citing "incompetent" handling of complaints, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) has demanded the resignation of the Dallas, Texas region OSHA administrator, Robert Tice. The Dallas region includes Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas and New Mexico which makes up three-fourths of U.S. oil refining and petrochemical capacity.

OCAW blasts Tice for being "consistently weak in enforcing the law, particularly health standards, and specifically against large corporations." These charges are backed by the fact that Tice issued an after-the-fact fine of \$13,000 for safety violations which led to an explosion and fire at a Texaco oil refinery. The fire killed 8 workers and hospitalized 14 others, many with multiple-degree burns. Texaco's response shortly afterwards was, "Well, we lost eight the other day." In addition, OCAW is fed up with the handling of benzopyrene exposure investigations at a B.F. Goodrich chemical plant and at the same Texaco refinery (see article in this issue of BWM Newsletter).

Tice claims the demand for his resignation comes as a surprise because "we have liaison with all organized labor groups in our area" and have been able to resolve previous "complaints". Well, it's really no surprise at all that working people are sick and tired of safety bureaucrats like Tice who act to protect the interests of the big corporations while sacrificing workers. It's no surprise that OCAW won't put up with "liaisons" who put a price tag of \$13,000 on eight lives.

The issue of health and safety is particularly sharp in the chemical industry. Every year chemical workers produce billions of dollars in profits. Every year, hundreds of chemical workers are injured and killed because the processes which they operate are unsafe. OCAW's demand is a positive step, not because it will correct the inherent shortcomings of OSHA, but because it publicly exposes the blatant collaboration between OSHA and the corporations. It puts them both on notice to a working class ready to fight for the right to a safe work place.



Convention Report

Teamsters for a Democratic Union

Rank and File Teamster Fight Back

At their second national convention, Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) vowed to "challenge Frank Fitzsimmons everywhere we can." The Sept. 24-25 convention, held on the Cleveland State University campus, attracted over 350 rank and file Teamsters from the U.S. and Canada. Among these was a Buffalo delegation, from its recently formed chapter, who heard the National Steering Committee member Pete Camaratta say, "They (the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) officials) won't give up easily. They won't walk away from their big salaries and their power. It's really like a war." Thus, the attitude of TDU's second year was presented.

The National Convention

The convention was opened by a counter demonstration of about 250 Cleveland-area Teamsters led by top Ohio Teamster official, Bill Presser. This is the same Bill Presser who, 20 years ago, burned his local's books rather than show them to Senate investigators from the McClennan Rackets Committee.

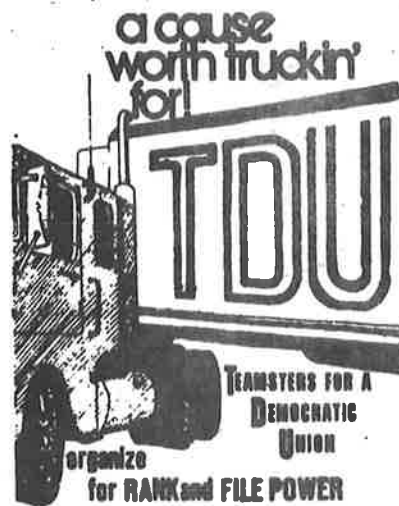
After viewing this circus, the rank-and-filers opened their convention with reports from the "hot spots" of the first year. Workshops and trade meetings were held each day with both having strong emphasis on organizing and gaining control of locals. Harry Patrick, reform advocate from the United Mine Workers, was a guest speaker, leaving the message, "...the one thing in your movement, and any movement for reform, is that the real enemy is the companies. That's the people you gotta get at."

On the final day, a new National Steering Committee was elected. Constitutional amendments and new resolutions were also passed. The most important resolutions were the Rank and File Bill of Rights and the start of a Right to Vote Campaign for all national officers.

Structure of the Delegates

The delegates came from 20 states and one Canadian province. Most of these were from sectors of the trucking industry and its related warehouse workers. The amount of women and Blacks attending reflected what has been the image of the Teamsters Union for years: relatively few. Most female Teamsters are from United Parcel Service warehouses and their number at the convention was more than the number of Blacks. Although Item X of the Rank and File Bill of Rights opposes discrimination

due to age, race and sex, and supports affirmative action programs, a view of the delegates suggests that it is much harder to put beliefs into practice. A resolution supporting the Equal Rights Amendment was passed. Due to the crunch of time in the final minutes of the convention, a discussion on racism was tabled till the National Steering Committee. This tabling action closed the convention on a sour note for delegates who felt it was too important an issue to table.



Buffalo Situation

Buffalo has seven Teamster locals with a combined membership of 14,600. This represents a perfect victim for the "divide and conquer" tactics of the IBT officials who have long played local against local; trade against trade. This has kept rank and file dissatisfaction from becoming organized. With the seven locals representing such diverse trades as gravediggers and many types of trucking, local TDUs are faced with a difficult organizing task.

Buffalo Issues

The two main issues that have brought local dissident Teamsters together are (1) the growing corruption at local and national levels and (2) the mounting dissatisfaction with many contracts, especially as to how they omit a decent grievance procedure and work rules. Many Teamsters feel their local union officials are not corrupt. Since the only pressure these local officials have felt has been from the higher levels, they have swayed in the direction of these corrupt bureaucrats. Consequently, one of the primary goals of all TDU chapters is to sway the balance of pressure to the rank and

Is Bethlehem Steel Going Broke?

Bethlehem Steel is in trouble; no doubt about it. So is the whole steel industry in the U.S. But the steel industry is the backbone of the U.S. economy, and the government can scarcely afford not to bail it out. If Nixon gave Lockheed a bundle to pull them out of bankruptcy, and Ford did the same for Pennsylvania Railroad, you can bet that Carter will do what has to be done to help the steel industry. And the industry will take some more off the backs of the workers, who are always the worst hurt when the big monopoly corporations "run into financial problems". The labor movement in steel is weaker than the companies, and the present leadership of the steelworkers union will make any concessions "necessary" to preserve its cushy position and help out management. Any union leaders, like Abel, who gave up the right to strike in 1971, are not union leaders, but sell-out bureaucrats.

A general crisis

The steel industry is in trouble because the whole economic system in the U.S. called monopoly capitalism, is in trouble. There is insufficient demand for steel because the depression of 1974 continues. Steel, the basic barometer of industrial capitalism, is just an indicator of the overall economic crisis. The problem is world-wide, but it's a little bit worse for U.S. steel because the steel producers here are one of the most backward monopolies in the U.S. Seven steel companies control 70% of production, and technology in steel here hasn't really improved that much since the plants were originally built in the early 1900's. Monopoly capitalism in steel, as in everything, has proven to be an inefficient system. This doesn't mean that the steel industry won't bounce back; they probably will, at least for a while, based on the massive concessions they have been getting during the present crisis.

IMPORTS?

For example, take the question of imports. Despite all the publicity about rising steel imports, the current volume of imports is down from the peak year of 1974. It is true, nevertheless, that imports are hurting U.S. steel companies. Japanese steel, until a few weeks ago, sold here at 10-20% below U.S. costs. The Japanese were selling at a loss. They would have been able to sell at 5% under U.S. costs and still make a profit here, but they chose to sell below their own costs in order to gain more of a share of the U.S. market. The Japanese steel industry is also controlled by big monopolies. These monopolies are more efficient and more modern than the U.S. steel monopolies, and the stronger Japanese have been cutting into the U.S. market. Of course, it is interesting to note that U.S. banks are heavy investors in Japanese steel. There has been a

struggle here, to some extent, between U.S. industrial capital and U.S. bank capital. Maybe the U.S. banking investments in Japanese steel were not so important. In any case, the U.S. steel industry has had its way on imports. The government has restricted Japanese imports and upped the cost of Japanese steel by 30%. This should help the U.S. steel companies make more profits. But according to Carter's own commission on steel, reduced imports will lead only to higher prices for U.S. steel, but will not yield new jobs. The federal government has also agreed to paying tax dollars out to steel workers laid off (20,000 since mid-summer), and this takes the burden off the steel companies to pay their own laid off workers.

The case of Bethlehem steel is a good example of how the companies are making a good deal out of an economic crisis. Bethlehem is the 2nd largest U.S. steel producer, and employs 92,700 steel workers. 7,300 others are recently unemployed, laid off in the last four months. The lay-offs occurred at the plants in Buffalo and Johnstown, Pa., where costs of production were 30-40% higher than at Bethlehem's newest plants. Bethlehem was glad to get rid of "excess" workers. In Buffalo, for example, Bethlehem announced a 40% reduction in production and a 30% reduction in work forces. Actually, however, the 40% cut in production was calculated on the basis of maximum production in the past. But Bethlehem in Buffalo hasn't produced the maximum of 4.8 tons of steel for years. Current production is actually 3.5 million tons, and the cutbacks mean that production will fall to 3.2 million tons, and the real reduction will be only 12%. In other words, Bethlehem in Buffalo found an easy way to lay-off workers. Local union leadership has not done much protesting so far.

A CORPORATE DINOSAUR!

Bethlehem is one of the most backward of U.S. monopoly corporations. It relies almost completely on steel. It hasn't bought up other companies and diversified the way other steel companies have. All the decisions in the company are made by a small group of very old men in Pittsburgh. When these men decided to lay off 3,500 workers in Buffalo, they



notified the local plant manager (a Mr. Daggett) with only a few hours notice. They sent him the press release he was to use when he gave a press conference to announce the lay-offs. Accustomed to making money hand over foot, the leadership of Bethlehem steel is proud and conservative, and very centralized. But they were running into some serious problems, and they have taken steps to correct them.



WHAT BETHLEHEM WANTS - BETHLEHEM GETS

For example, Bethlehem stock has fallen from \$48 a share to \$20 in the last four years. The company's credit rating has dropped from Class A for the first time ever. When Bethlehem announced its cuts in production this year, the dividends of their stock fell by 50%. Bethlehem took the largest loss in the last quarter year ever taken by a U.S. company (\$477 million). But Bethlehem has bounced back in fine corporate style. It just got a \$417 million tax credit from the U.S. government, the largest ever given to a U.S. company. A lot of its losses are really in pension funds that will be paid out over the next several years, but which were counted all together for now (\$483 million). Import competition has been restricted, as the Japanese have been forced to pay tariffs. New York State set back its date for compliance with air pollution laws from 1980 to 1982. Erie County offered any environmental concessions necessary. The state is planning to declassify the small rivers which flow past Buffalo, so that Bethlehem can claim they are not moving water and that therefore do not have to be able to sustain fish life.


So, all in all, what Bethlehem wants, Bethlehem gets. Looks like the company will make out all right.

USW MUST FIGHT BACK !

Not so for the steel workers. U.S. steelworkers make 50% more than the average factory worker. They have won these gains with years of militant strikes behind them. But no longer. The union leadership is so wealthy that it has become an enormous power itself. The bureaucracy of the USW can spend so much money that it can almost buy elections outright. But while the union bureaucracy is fat and happy, the rank and file steelworkers are not. Steelworkers are seeing their wages cut by inflation every year, and their very jobs are threatened by the massive lay-offs in the industry. The 1.4 million members of the USW are growing more and more determined to throw out the corrupt union leadership. The union bureaucracy just barely won the recent union elections when McBride defeated a rank-and-file rebellion led by Sadlowski and his Fightback Organization. Charges have been filed by Sadlowski claiming massive fraud by McBride in the elections. The Sadlowski forces ran with a good program which is needed now more than ever to confront the massive lay-offs. In Buffalo, steelworkers favored the Sadlowski program and voted against the McBride slate. The program reads:

1. Shorter work week, 8 hours pay for six hours work.
2. A freeze on steel prices
3. No forced overtime
4. No more subsidizing of foreign investment.
5. A united action to work for a peacetime economy.

Only a fight for such a program by steelworkers can prevent companies like Bethlehem Steel from carrying out its program of wage cuts, speed-up and lay-offs.



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TDU

file, replacing all the officials who need to be with ones who truly are representative of the rank and file. Mere replacement of these people is not enough, however, and most TDU leaders realize this. Therefore, the making of a new organizational structure is needed, especially as to what is voted on, by whom it is voted on, and how it is voted on. At this time, it is not clear how this structure would look on a national level, probably since there is still so much to be done at the local levels which must precede any national changes.

Future of Buffalo TDU

Much needs to be done in Buffalo. There are rank and filers to convince that change is possible, that there is something more required of each union member than just paying dues for "a service". By-laws (the rules of the locals) must be changed; consolidated pressure brought before bargaining tables; unity between all trades and locals; and unity between the sexes and races. Literally, what must be done is to change each local so that it not only represents its own rank and file, but does so in unity with the other locals so that a strong, common front is presented for reform of the IBT.

One fact is becoming clearer each month - the corrupt bureaucrats of the Teamsters who have ignored the rank and file for too long are finding themselves with a lot of angry - and increasingly organized - rank and filers on their hands. And Buffalo is no exception.

TRICO

as an official cover-up for the accidents. Their more immediate purpose is to return the still injured worker to the production line. The first step in any serious accident case is to call a cab. The average time of waiting for this cab is from 15 minutes to 2 hours. The doctors also don't like Trico workers going to their own doctors since it usually means they will be out of work longer. It also might cause more public exposure to the vivious working conditions at Trico.

ORGANIZE FOR CHANGE

All these facts about accidents are only good if we organize to do something to change this condition. We need to organize ourselves to directly deal with the speed of the production line. We need a union that will back us up when we fight to change these unsafe working conditions. A union is not just going to be handed to us on a platter. We are the union - we are going to have to build it with our own struggles against Trico. Only we Trico workers are going to stop these accidents.

DEADLY POLLUTION

Why isn't something done? Some people have been trying. For example, the steel union locals at Bethlehem's Sparrow's Point plant in Baltimore hired a scientist in 1973 to do a study, and it was that study which proved that coke oven steelworkers die of lung cancer ten times as often as the rest of us. The steelworkers unions have been putting pressure on the federal government to stop the pollution.

But the federal government has done little. Right now, there are over 1,500 chemicals which are known to cause cancer which are present in workplaces in the U.S. The federal government regulates only 17 of them. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) is responsible for health and safety in the workplace. OSHA says that over 1 million Americans are exposed to cancer-causing substances on the job. But OSHA hasn't done much about it. It's understaffed and underfinanced, and the big companies are fighting in court OSHA's right to inspect the workplace unannounced. It's been admitted that under the Nixon administration, OSHA chief Guenther delayed setting pollution standards, bowing to pressure from private industry. It's likely that the same kind of thing goes on today in OSHA under the Carter administration.

And the coke ovens continue to pollute the air for all of us. Recent studies show high amounts of benzopyrene in Buffalo's air. This city, like all industrial centers, has a very high rate of cancer.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the government agency which is supposed to control pollution outside of the workplace. But the EPA can't do it. The EPA relies on the states for enforcement of national standards, and the state governments have cut back funding for the pollution control agencies during the present recession. The EPA has become, in its short 7-year history, a bureaucratic monstrosity. It has to go through endless procedures to set standards, and even when it does, it can't enforce them. Private industry fights EPA continually in the courts. One Bethlehem Steel official admitted that the company would rather spend \$1 million fighting EPA in court than spending the same amount on equipment to control pollution. A recent study of EPA's control over steel industry pollution concluded that the EPA is afraid of the steel industry and that little progress has been made in pollution control from the steel industry between 1972 and 1977.

