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the rank and file in action

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Labor today

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Letters to the Editor

Labor Today welcomes letters to the editor. Please be sure to include name, address, local union. Letters may be shortened to save space.

Tough times

Dear Editor:

Times are very very rough for any publication with the name "labor" or "union" in it.

Labor Today, which I exchanged publications with, must not die. It needs to be restructured; we need more news from LT. Also, the art work is just wonderful but the labor history calendar, for me, didn't work. An essay or photo from labor's history would have been better.

Good luck in your efforts to revive this unique publication. As an editor myself who sees years of his work stuck in a rut, I know how you folks are feeling.

Saul Schniderman
Editor, Talkin' Union

Guatemalan: 'Count on me'

Dear Editors,

Seven years ago, I decided to leave my hometown in Guatemala and move to the U.S.A. Leaving behind my family, with the idea of bringing them over later on, wasn't an easy decision, but the social, political and economic conditions there didn't leave me much choice. During this time, I have been able to complete my education and to get to know intimately the causes of the great disparity between rich and poor countries.

I am now returning to my country but wanted to express my deepest appreciation for having the chance to share with

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you common ideas for a better, peaceful world.

My best wishes for keeping up the struggle to bring a better tomorrow. Be sure to count on me in every fight for justice.

In solidarity,
Miguel Arturo Solares Rivera

Government employees debate union policy

Dear Editor,

I have been watching for some mention of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) convention which I attended this summer in Florida. Having seen none to date, I have taken the liberty as an active participant in one of the workshops to write a press release myself as an officer of AFGE Local 1138.

The political and legislative goals for AFGE were influenced by delegate participation in a workshop on national and international affairs during the 31st Biennial Convention held in Miami Beach from August 22-26, 1988. Workshops such as this one were instituted several conventions back through a grassroots action that now gives convention delegates an opportunity to debate policy in a setting that encourages discussion and input from more delegates. In spite of a floor attempt to disband the workshop process, the delegates empowered themselves further by asserting that the workshops should present all convention resolutions directly to the floor for vote, rather than by the Executive Council's appointed resolutions committee.

In every instance, the convention body voted with the progressive policies proposed by the workshop delegates rather than uphold the non-concurrence recommendations of NEC's appointees on all major foreign policy positions. All the progressive policies of previous conventions were reaffirmed, and some additional ones added.

A new policy statement on Latin America condemned "the violations of human and trade union rights by the

military dictatorship of General Pinochet in Chile." Another resolution put the union on record "opposing the barriers promoted by the Administration and our State Department which have virtually denied all personal contact between unionists from countries of differing ideologies." The statement continues, "AFGE must actively encourage and promote the expression of international solidarity with trade unionists from all countries regardless of ideology." The body also supported the controversial resolution that "urges the U.S. government to negotiate a bilateral, verifiable freeze with the Soviet Union."

Past resolutions that were reaffirmed were two that opposed "any military or economic aid to the government of El Salvador or intervention in the internal affairs of the government of that country," and "U.S. intervention in Nicaragua."

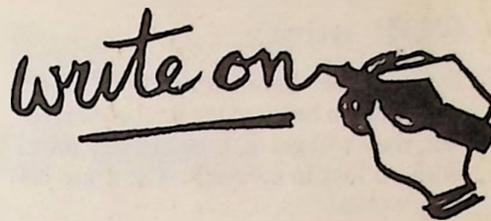
A highlight of the convention for me was a talk by Francisco Acota, U.S. Representative of the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), that was sponsored by Dave Schlein, District 14 National Vice President.

On national affairs, a statement was incorporated that stated that "by working with the Rainbow Coalition, we will enhance our ability to protect and improve federal social programs. . . . Therefore AFGE will endeavor to deepen and strengthen its ties with the Rainbow Coalition nationally and locally. . . ."

Betty Jean Carroll
Senior Vice President
AFGE Local 1138
Fairborn, Ohio

When a mine shuts down —Another Way

During the big fuss made by the corporations and the Reaganites over the plant closing bill passed by Congress that requires sixty days notice before shutting down a mine, mill, or factory, we received an interesting letter from a coal miner in the German Democratic Republic (E. Germany), which we want



*to share with our readers and all workers who have been victims of plant closings.
He writes:*

One of the oldest open-cast lignite mines in our country will close down later this year. It is the mine in Wulfersdorf in the western part of Magdeburg County. Coal mining in this area began 150 years ago. It is no longer economical to operate our mine, and most of our equipment will be taken over by a nearby colliery.

Ever since it was decided that our mine would be closed down, the workers have been kept informed about every step being taken. Every miner has had at least one conference with the union to talk over their future jobs. Most of us came up with our own suggestions and proposals.

From the very first it was clear that nobody would get the sack. Those who wanted to continue as miners got jobs in the open-cast lignite mine at Schadeleben, an hour by car from our old mine. One of them was Peter Kley, who started here as an apprentice fifteen years ago. He said, "I won't give up my career as a miner, and in Schadeleben they need miners. So I'll go there. My wife will also get a job there."

Hans-Joachim Jahnke, 57, feels he is too old to go to work by bus each day, and he will remain in the village to work in a new factory just now being opened. It will make metal sheets there for mining equipment. A program has started to retrain the miners as metal workers, tool makers and welders.

Oh, yes. Elderly miners who aren't up to traveling by bus or are close to retirement age will be allowed early retirement. Everything seems to be thought out well—in the best interest of the miners and of the nation's economy.

Continued on page 4

GDR mines...

Every miner knows that if his mine closes down because the coal is worked out, they will get satisfactory new jobs, with no loss in earnings. These are no idle words.

Ed.: Sounds like something worthy of study. Certainly a contrast to the chaos, disorder and anguish which victims of plant closings at General Motors, Western Electric, U.S. Steel and other mills and mines have gone through.

Citizen diplomacy

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your sponsorship of the Fourth Annual Citizens to Bridge the Gap Conference entitled, 'U.S.-Soviet Relations—New Possibilities.' We look forward to furthering our goals of increasing understanding, generating ideas for action and expanding citizen diplomacy.

Gene J. Podulka, Coordinator

Ed.: Among the workshops scheduled for this conference, to be held at De Paul University in Chicago, April 29, 8:30 AM-5:30 PM, are 'A fresh breeze blowing: effects of glasnost on the media' given by Igor Buly, Head Press Officer, Soviet Embassy in the U.S.; 'Labor union exchanges' by Fred Gaboury, UN delegate, World Federation of Trade Unions, and 'Protecting the environment: possibilities for U.S.-Soviet cooperation' by Val Adamkus, Regional Administrator, EPA.

LT Fund Drive

Dear Editor,

Labor Today is a must for labor's cause. I will do what I can to help it continue.

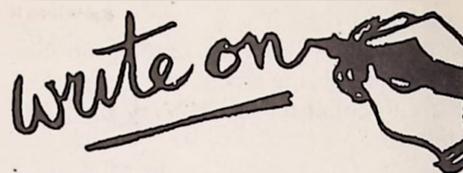
George Fishman, AFT Local 3
Highland Park, New Jersey

Ed.: This issue was largely made possible by the generous support of our readers who responded to our recent appeal. We appreciate the many thought-

ful ideas and suggestion for improving Labor Today and hope to incorporate them in the upcoming issues.

More than \$1500 has been received so far. In addition, readers sent in numerous requests for gift subscriptions, bundle subs, and enrollment in the Labor Today Associates group.

For \$100, you, too, can become an Associate for 1989. You will receive a year's subscription, all supplemental publications and special reprints of LT throughout the year, a quarterly report and questionnaire from the editorial



board, and your name and affiliation will be added to our monthly editorial box.

Special thanks to the retired union brothers and sisters who continue to give so much despite their limited incomes.

**Your right to know—
Sick buildings are bad for your health**

Do you experience fatigue, headache, eye irritation, or breathing difficulty at work? If your worksite is an enclosed office building you may be a victim of poor indoor air quality (IAQ), otherwise known as 'Sick Building Syndrome.'

The AFL-CIO Executive Council passed a resolution urging '...private industry and federal, state and local governments to provide for the identification and correction of IAQ problems and for the maintenance of acceptable indoor environments.'

A building is diagnosed as having 'sick building syndrome' when it

contains areas in which more than 20% of workers complain of acute discomfort that eases when they leave the area.

Inadequate ventilation is the primary cause of poor indoor air quality in more than half of the 'sick buildings' examined. Poorly maintained air conditioning and heating systems provide fertile breeding grounds for illness-causing viruses, bacteria and fungi.

If you suspect you work in an unhealthy building, contact your union representative, or your local OSHA office. It is your right to work in a healthy and safe environment. **LT**

Statement of Ownership

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. *Debbie Albano, Editor*

George Bush! Read labor's lips: No more PATCOs! Fly Union or Bust!

George Bush's denial of a Federal Fact-Finding Board to come to a just solution of the airline workers' strike against Eastern Air Line, unprecedented in the history of the White House, simply doesn't wash. It's too obvious that the President is in bed with the wily corporate chief Lorenzo, playing his shaky game of cutting the airline workers wages and destroying their unions. It's the same game, with a slightly different twist, that Ronald Reagan played in destroying PATCO.

If Bush would only read labor's lips today, he'd soon know the same trick won't work twice. After PATCO, a bright new card was added to the deck, on which is stamped **Labor Solidarity**. It's a trump card.

There has always been a concerted and coordinated effort by the corporations, the government, and the commercial media, to diminish and deny the role of the working class, to strip it of its true worth, to divide it into artificial groupings and sub classes—production workers versus service workers, white collar versus blue collar workers, city workers versus rural workers, unemployed versus employed, African-Americans versus white workers, women versus men, numerous other such contrived divisions—to obliterate the fact that they all work under the same general undemocratic conditions where ownership and management of the workplaces are in the remote and often hostile hands of the multinational corporations.

But then up come the union Machinists, pilots, and flight attendants, with their glorious message: "An injury to one is an injury to all" and at every airport where Eastern Air and Continental operate, pickets surround the terminals. They represent a united labor movement. The airline passengers, every trade, profession, every community and church organization, concerned with

fairness, workers' rights, air safety and democracy, have stood up together and belted out in chorus: "No to the Unionbusters! One for All and All for One. Solidarity Forever!"

To wrest the airlines back from the corporate raiders and secure the union and the jobs of our fellow workers will take a helluva fight. Labor's in a fightin' mood. No spectators needed in this match—Everybody in the ring!

Labor Today urges its readers to sign the pledge cards in this issue and send them to Lorenzo, President Bush, Continental and Texas Air. Call your representatives in Congress and let them know

you expect them to support the strikers; to assist in reaching a fair settlement; to pass HR 1231, which would require the President to appoint an emergency panel; and to pass SB 544, which would make Lorenzo liable for Eastern's debts. Strike funds and messages of support are needed and can be sent to: IAM, 1300 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Most important of all, working people from every walk of life are needed in even greater numbers every day at one of labor's most historic journey's in this decade—marching on the picketlines with the Eastern workers. **LT**



How to get involved in Jobs with Justice

Reprinted with permission from the *United Mine Workers Journal*.

Since last summer, union members across the United States have been involved in the Jobs With Justice campaign, both locally and at large, regional events. Listed below are some of the most commonly asked questions about the campaign.

Q. What is Jobs With Justice?

A. The idea behind Jobs With Justice is as old as the labor movement itself—solidarity. There are 15 million American workers organized in unions, and the purpose of the campaign is to focus that strength against specific targets, and to raise the issue of working people's rights to the top of the national agenda.

To do that, Jobs With Justice is asking every American worker to take a pledge, to make a commitment.

The pledge is simple. It says, 'I'll be there' at least five times during the course of the next year—talking to the members of my local, walking picket lines, attending rallies, testifying before Congressional committees, organizing in my community—to support other workers' battles for justice.

Q. What is the purpose of signing a pledge card? Members of my local are ready to support other unions in our area any time.

A. Most union members probably agree with you, but in the past, many labor struggles were often over before members of other unions found out about them and were able to offer their support.

The pledge card identifies union activists who can be called on in future fights and organizes their names in a central location so they can be contacted



when necessary.

Because of Jobs With Justice, for example, members of the United Auto Workers in New England found out about the UMWA's fight for a fair contract at Pittston. So, when a group of UMWA pensioners went to Pittston headquarters in Greenwich, Conn., to protest the cutoff of their health insurance, UAW members were there to support them on the picket line.

Q. Building a network of union members committed to solidarity with all of labor sounds like a good idea. But how do you get started?

A. That depends on the situation in your local union and in your area.

Most successful Jobs With Justice activities have been built around specific local workplace fights.

For example, the members of L.U. 1972 organized a successful Jobs With Justice rally in Omaha, Neb., that was linked to their fight against Peter Kiewit Sons, which operates both the Decker and Big Horn mines. When they were in Omaha, they met other union members who also worked for Kiewit,

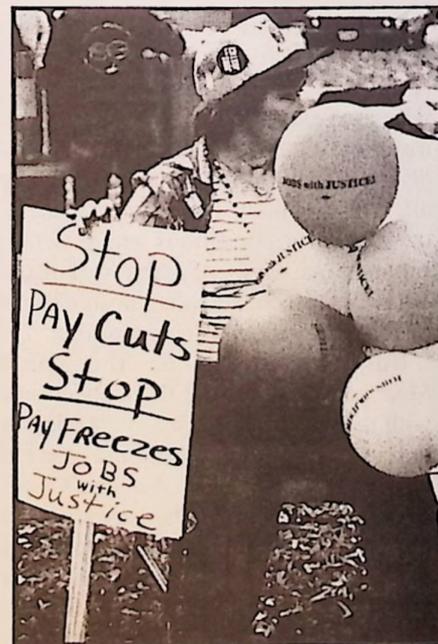
and found out that the company is attempting to get concessions from all their unionized employees and break their unions.

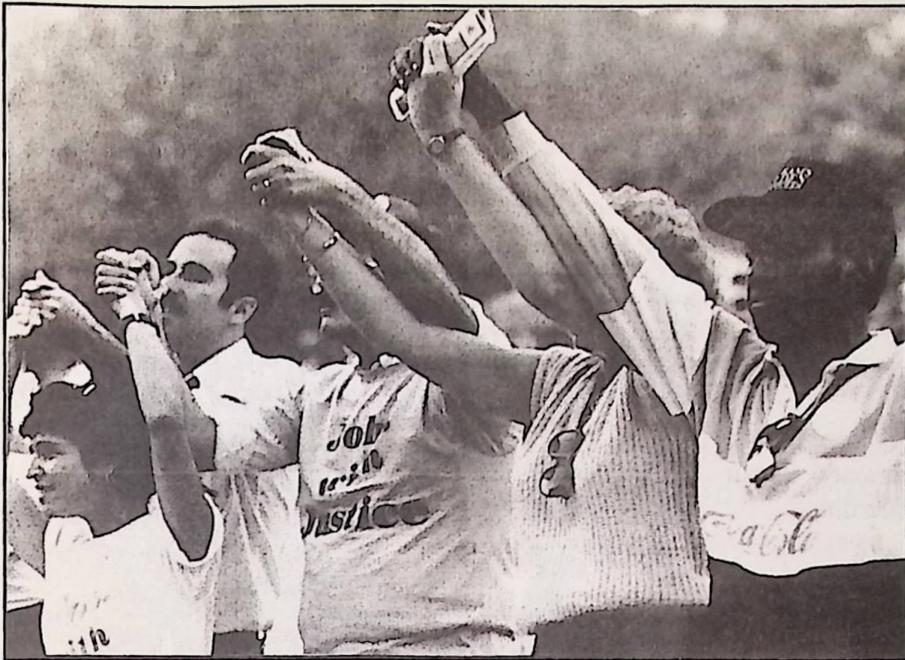
Because of Jobs with Justice, our members at Decker and Big Horn have gained a lot of support for their selective strikes, and labor in Omaha has found new allies, too.

Q. So my local has to organize a rally or a march to get involved in Jobs With Justice?

A. Not necessarily. You could also pass out Jobs With Justice materials and pledge cards at the mine, or hold an educational program about the campaign at a local union meeting.

Jobs With Justice has produced a whole series of materials—buttons, stickers, bumper stickers, leaflets, brochures and video tapes—that you can use for this type of activity. You can order these materials from the Jobs With Justice office by filling out the form in this journal or by contacting your International union.





Q. Then all I have to do to get involved is pass out pledge cards at work and get as many members of my local as possible to sign them and turn them in?

A. That's right. But you should remember that people should only sign the cards if they're serious about the pledge. It doesn't do the union any good to sign up 10,000 members for Jobs With Justice if we can't count on them when they're needed.

Q. What do we do with the pledge cards once they're signed and turned back in to our local?

A. You should do two things with the pledge cards once they're completed.

First, working with the other organizations in your Jobs With Justice coalition, you should set up a central filing system or computer data base containing names and information on all Jobs With Justice supporters in your area. That way, you'll be ready to contact people on a moment's notice whenever the need arises.

Once you have done that, you should send the completed pledge cards, or a list of names and information on your Jobs With Justice supporters to your

union's JWJ coordinator who will then forward those names to the Jobs With Justice national office.

That way, both your local Jobs With Justice coalition and the national Jobs With Justice organization will be prepared with a list of active labor supporters who are ready for any eventuality.

Q. You mentioned a Jobs With Justice coalition. Do we have to work with other groups in Jobs With Justice?

A. That's the whole point of the campaign—to build a coalition of concerned organizations who collectively are willing to speak out about the state of workers' rights in the United States.

As a Jobs With Justice local leader, you should contact as many groups as possible about the campaign: other unions, central labor councils, community groups, civil rights organizations, women's organizations and local politicians are some of the more logical people to start with. Explain the goals of the campaign to them and enlist their support.

You can also tie the Jobs With Justice theme into other activities, like picket lines, press conferences and rallies.

Q. How long is the UMWA going to remain involved in Jobs With Justice?

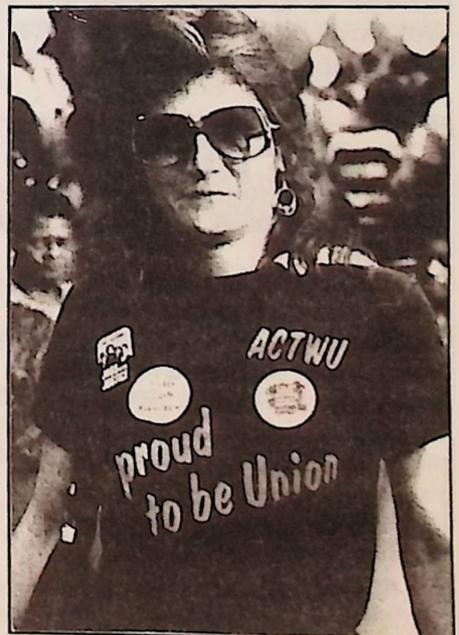
A. Jobs With Justice is an ongoing program and the union sees its activities continuing for some time, because Jobs With Justice is part of our campaign to build a stronger labor movement.

For example, in 1988, Jobs With Justice supported many labor struggles, including the battles of our UMWA brothers and sisters who are still fighting for new contracts. In addition, the campaign played a big role in the 1988 elections by registering working people to vote, and by supporting and electing candidates who will work to defend the rights of working Americans.

But 1988 was only a beginning. When you realize that the labor movement would have to organize 20 million workers just to reach the status that unions had in the United States in the years following World War II, it shows you how much work has to be done just to get the labor movement back to where it was 40 years ago. **LT**

It's Time To Take A Stand

Details on page 8.



It's Time To Take A Stand

Secure, stable jobs are disappearing.

Adequate living standards are being threatened as workers' wages and benefits are cut.

The right of American workers to organize unions and bargain collectively—fundamental to our laws and our way of life—is being undermined.

Our communities are plagued by business shut-downs, as corporations decide our future based solely on their quest for maximum profit.

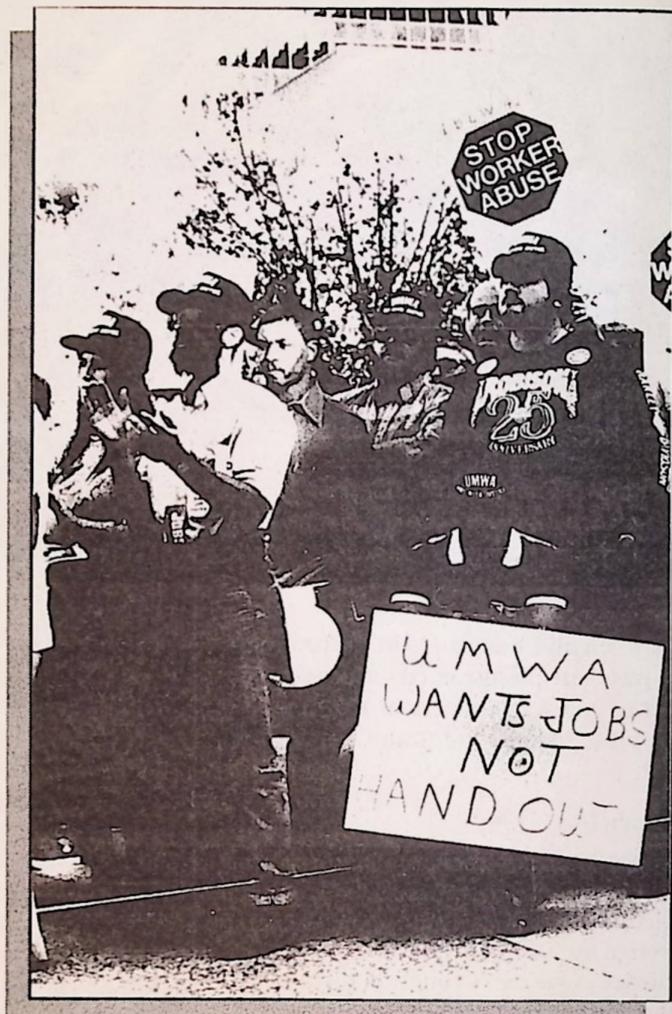
Public services like education and health care are being eroded by the shrinking tax base in many communities.

Our economy is being destroyed by a new generation of robber barons through mergers, buyouts, deregulation and privatization.

If you're concerned about issues like these, you should get involved in Jobs With Justice, a nationwide campaign aimed at restoring the basic rights of American working people.

You can get more information, and materials to help make your campaign more successful, by contacting your union's Jobs with Justice Representative or by getting in touch with the National Jobs With Justice office, P.O. Box 19128, Washington, DC 20036; (800) 424-2872.

LT



UMWA Journal

JOBS WITH JUSTICE SUPPORT MATERIALS

QUANTITY	ITEM	COST	QUANTITY	ITEM	COST
—	(A.) 2 1/4" JOBS WITH JUSTICE Slogan Button (white on blue, round)	\$15/100	—	(G.) VHS Videotape of Nationwide JOBS WITH JUSTICE Activities	\$5/ea.
—	(B.) 12" x 2 1/4" JOBS WITH JUSTICE Slogan Bumper Sticker (white on blue)	\$25/100	—	(H.) JOBS WITH JUSTICE Informational Brochure (Brochure with photographs highlighting nationwide JOBS WITH JUSTICE activities. This brochure includes pledge card.)	\$5/100
—	(C.) 1 3/4" x 2 3/4" UMWA Demands JOBS WITH JUSTICE Button, oblong 2-color JOBS WITH JUSTICE logo	\$25/100	—	(I.) JOBS WITH JUSTICE Statement of Purpose (Reproducible 8 1/2 x 11" black/white flyer with JOBS WITH JUSTICE logo.)	\$ 10/3
—	(D.) 3 1/2" x 2 1/4" JOBS WITH JUSTICE Slogan Sticker (white on blue)	\$10/100	—	(J.) JOBS WITH JUSTICE Event Flyer—Art Only (Two reproducible 8 1/2 x 11" and 8 1/2 x 14" flyers with space to promote your event.)	\$ 10/4
—	(E.) STOP WORKER ABUSE sticker (white on red, round)	\$10/200	—	(K.) JOBS WITH JUSTICE Pledge Card—Art Only (Reproducible pledge cards on 8 1/2 x 11" format.)	\$ 10/3
—	(F.) "I'll Be There" Pledge Cards (5x8, 2-color)	\$3/100	—	(L.) JOBS WITH JUSTICE Logo Sheet (Reproducible logos and slogans in various sizes for newsletters, t-shirts, stationary, etc.)	\$ 10/3

Total payment of \$ _____ enclosed. Make check payable to JOBS WITH JUSTICE. Allow two weeks for delivery. Rush orders: 800-424-2872.
Mail payment with this order form to: JOBS WITH JUSTICE, P.O. Box 19128, Washington, D.C. 20036.

I'd be all for ESOPs if . . .

by Pete Leki
LT Editorial Committee

Time magazine in its February 6 edition featured a 2-page spread on the "success" of ESOPs (Employee Stock Ownership Programs) in "boosting the spirits and competitiveness of American workers."

Prominently absent from the piece was the fact that in none of the ESOPs do workers **actually control** their own destiny as managers or shareholders. Avis (auto rental agency) is touted as a company "bought" in totality by its workers. Yet, the article admits that the company's 24 million shares are to be "gradually" released to the "owners" over 17 years while profits are used to pay off a \$1.75 billion loan!

Today, Avis' 12,300 workers own on average only 20 shares each, total value approximately \$200. If that's ownership, then this article should really have been on the humor page!

What are the editors of *Time* and other promoters of ESOPs trying to accomplish? They are trying to appeal to workers who are sick and tired of working for companies who don't give a damn, who are greedy, viscious and ruthless. ESOPs, as presently envisioned, are designed to lure working people into the illusion of worker ownership in order to make them work harder, produce more for less, and to accept concessions.

We have known this for some time. But the real question is how can we take the fraudulent abuse of ESOPs and the desperate hopes of workers and use them as tools to fight for real worker/community takeover and ownership of industry?

We need to study the experience of ESOPs and figure out what demands, what strategies are needed to gain **actual** worker control.

One crucial aspect is capitalization and financing. Workers, their unions, and their communities need to demand government subsidized capitalization of their workplace, in order to cut out or at least neutralize the role of private banks. If the taxpayers can bankroll Lee

Iaccoca at \$1 million a year, don't regular working folks rate some help?

This capitalization could come in the form of direct subsidies in modernizing equipment, processing or marketing; it could include refinancing of debts on a

long term, secure low interest or interest-free basis. Massive government support is routinely granted to private industry—nuclear power plant technology, developed at public expense,

Continued on page 23

"When workers become the masters of their own work place, an event of extraordinary importance will have taken place. We don't want to run industry just like the previous owners."

ESOPs at Eastern Airlines

At one point, workers at Eastern Airlines held 4 of 20 seats on the Board of Directors and an estimated 35% of Eastern stock. Most of this stock—25%—was gotten through a concessionary agreement which converted a wage reduction into a stock trust.

The unions' Board of Director representatives used their positions to advocate in the workers' interests. The introduction of new ideas and processes saved the airlines millions of dollars, making it profitable again.

But the onset of the economic crisis of the early '80's, Reagan's anti-labor offensive, including the deregulation of the airlines industry turned the experiment sour. While the Board of Directors was happy to have labor's cost-saving input, they turned to threats and intimidation when workers refused to take further concessions.

The Board voted 16 to 4 to sell the airline to "Mugsy" Frank Lorenzo to force a showdown while siphoning off assets (values created by the workers.) Part of the deal eliminated the workers from the Board of Directors and cashed in the workers' trust stocks.

At 35%, were Eastern workers within striking distance of actually controlling

their work place and destiny?

Chicago Machinist's District 100 Vice President Russ McGory expressed it well when he described the forces lined up against the workers. "We can't expect to get a fair hearing from the courts or the Congress. What we have to do is watch their feet, not read their lips. We have to know what these guys are doing. Our hope lies in people learning to support each other as workers, as the working class—automatically."

Corporate class solidarity allows Board of Directors and pirates like Lorenzo a lot of maneuvering room. A union that sought to buy out controlling interest in "their" company might find that no matter how much stock they bought they could never reach 51%. New stock issues, reorganizations, conspiracy and litigation could frustrate these efforts indefinitely.

Progress by workers in one division or corporation is contingent upon the development of higher political consciousness, organization, and class solidarity on the part of the whole working class. The machinists, flight attendants and pilots at Eastern are making an outstanding contribution to that process.

LT

LMPTs no substitute for a union

by Charles Spencer, Associate Editor

Almost any common sense person, regardless of political make-up, would suspect that there was something fishy afoot when management of a big steel corporation or automobile corporation or of any industrial enterprise which at its quarterly meeting of stockholders boasts about maximizing profits and never a word about their responsibility to their workers or to the community, suddenly gets religion and comes up with a neat plan to include their workers in the management of the works. It truly boggles the mind! And even more bizarre are the threats by corporations that they will shut down, go into bankruptcy, move to another state or another country if the union doesn't go along.

The idea of joint worker-management teams to run the works is not new in the United States, and has a symbolic significance. Workers have dreamed for a thousand years of getting the bosses off their backs and being treated as human beings.

To include workers in the management of industry was once upon a time a left wing idea, part of the credenda of Utopists, Christian Socialists, and some early trade unionists, who, not inclined to accept the more radical views of Karl Marx, were honestly searching for another way to stamp out the wrenching working conditions which prevailed in the factories, mills and mines.

Back in the 19th century, in a movement led by Robert Dale Owen, several experimental factories were established in England and the US which were designed to prove that joint management was workable and profitable. But, of

"These capitalists generally act harmoniously and in concert to fleece the people."

Abraham Lincoln, 1857

course, being only experimental, and on a narrow scale, and lacking capital, they never became practical models for the huge enterprises that were being developed throughout Europe and the US during the Industrial Revolution. However, the idea of workers involvement in management, in varied forms, left a lasting imprint on the thinking of workers all over the world.

But industry in the United States fought, and continues to fight, against any idea that workers have any rights at all in the workplace other than to do as they are told. The corporations, usually in no mood for social experiments, have insisted on their exclusive right to manage the workplace. The longest strike in the steel industry (117 days in 1959) was fundamentally over the issue of "management's right to manage." Small wonder that steelworkers are highly suspicious of the industry's motives in demanding Labor Management Participation Teams (LMPT).

If anyone harbored illusions that labor unions had finally been accredited as partners in collective bargaining, there was a rude awakening this month from the justices of the Supreme Court, which ruled, in a 6-3 decision, that workers who legally went out on strike had been legally superseded by the scabs who crossed their picket line and that union strikers legally and constitutionally go to the bottom of the company's seniority list on all matters pertaining to recall,

rates of pay, pension rights, vacations, promotions.

There is ample evidence of a concerted reactionary drive by management circles in the United States to maintain a union-free workplace, in order to cut wages, cut jobs, cut social benefits, eliminate costly safety measures, and to pit workers against workers. It is industry's way to maximize profits and be more "competitive."

It appears that the steel corporations and the automobile corporations are first in line, with contract demands for LMPTs or Quality of Worklife Circles (QWL), but many other companies are toting the line with similar manipulative schemes to encourage workers to identify their interests with that of the employer.

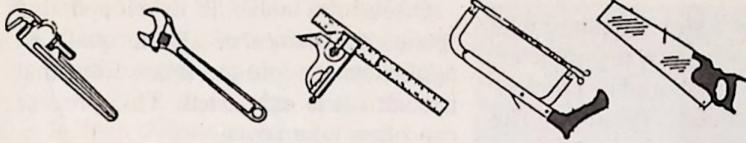
"The truth is, it is our capitulation, not our cooperation that they want."

Joseph Misbrenner
Pres., OCAW

The majority of trade union leaders are, at the least, skeptical of these so-called cooperative schemes. Joseph Misbrenner, International President of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers succinctly described them: "The truth is, it is our capitulation, not our cooperation that they (management) want." And William Winpisinger, IAM President, condemns it as "an iron fist in a velvet glove." Archbishop John L. May called them "a smokescreen for demands that labor make all the concessions."

The AFL-CIO News, in reviewing *Inhuman Relations*, by Guillermo J. Grenier (Temple University Press) wrote

Continued on page 23



Women in the Trades to step up the pace

An interview with Tony Hayes
Carpenters Local 1027

by Debbie Albano
LT Editor

Can you tell me a little bit about the evolution of this conference?

The first Women in the Trades Conference was held in 1984 in California, organized by the San Francisco-based Tradeswomen, Inc., which publishes the only national journal for tradeswomen in the country. The majority of the participants were from the West Coast, though women from across the country were in attendance, as well as a small group of international participants from Great Britain—about 500 trades women and advocates in all.

It was tremendously exciting. It was the first time that any of us had ever seen that many tradeswomen in one place! I remember that we held a caucus and 45 union women carpenters showed up. We spent much of our time just introducing ourselves, finding out how long each person had been in the trade; it was very important for us to “validate” each other—to recognize that there were other

women who had chosen this field and we weren't alone.

We decided to write a letter to the President of our International Union, expressing our concerns about the issues facing women in our trade. All of us signed it, sent it off, received a supporting statement from Joyce Miller, President of CLUW, and received a very open and serious response from our Union.

The first conference was successful for what it did—it sparked the beginnings of several local tradeswomen groups and established the idea of a national network of women in or wishing to work in non-traditional areas of employment.

The 2nd Conference sponsorship is much broader, more extensive than the first. It is being co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau



Tony Hayes

Tony Hayes has been a carpenter for 14 years. Against all odds, she became the first Black woman to graduate from the carpenter's apprenticeship program at Chicago's Washburne Trade School, run jointly by the Chicago Board of Education, the Carpenter's Union, and the building trades contractors. She eventually became an instructor there. A founding member of Women in Trades, an officer of Chicago CLUW, and one of the twelve volunteers coordinating the 2nd Women in the Trades Conference, she now works in the cabinet shop/maintenance department of the University of Illinois.

and the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, and has been endorsed by national CLUW, the Illinois State AFL-CIO, and many other local unions and women's organizations.

Without a national network and organizational structure it was difficult to organize the 2nd Conference any sooner. These mechanisms are necessary for a conference of national scope. Major funding was another obstacle. An ad was run in Tradeswomen, Inc.'s publication for volunteers to help organize this second effort. Both tradeswomen and advocates of jobs and job training for

Continued on page 12



For registration information turn to page 14.

Tradeswomen ■ ■ ■

women and affirmative action responded. After a great deal of grassroots organizing, advocating and proposal writing, the Labor Department came through with financial support in September of 1988. Until then, all the organizing was done on a volunteer basis, including phone bills and travel expenses!

We are projecting this conference's participation to top 1000. It is being publicized through unions, union and

This conference can share successes and develop new ideas. It can build bridges throughout the labor and women's movement. We're not just talking about confronting problems and those who perpetuate these difficulties but of building solidarity and unity.

labor publications, government and social service agencies, schools, and vocational training centers. There is tremendous interest and a feeling that this will be an historic event that women will want to be a part of.

There will be greater international participation this time, too. We just recently received a letter from a group of tradeswomen in Norway, some of whom are oilers and electricians on rigs in the North Sea, who wish to attend. We have extended invitations to women from Canada, Great Britain, Mexico, Japan, and we hope to have participation from some socialist countries, perhaps the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Why is it necessary?

It's the difference between continuing at a stroll or continuing at a running pace. This conference will add strength to existing organizations and give impetus to starting additional ones.

The struggle for equality is still a very real one, demanding and requiring depth and new approaches. This conference can share successes and develop new ideas. It can build bridges throughout the labor and women's movement. We're not just talking about confronting problems and those who perpetuate these difficulties but of building solidarity and unity.

What is it like for a young woman who wants to be a carpenter, a pipefitter, an ironworker—what are her chances of being apprenticed? What are the obstacles?

One of the greatest obstacles is a prejudice against people who "work with their hands." When I was in high school the people who took shop courses (or were shipped off to shop) were the ones who "weren't too bright; couldn't go to college; couldn't think; class troublemakers."

I always emphasize to students, educators and counselors, that people who work in the skilled trades not only work with their hands but they have to have a good working knowledge of science and math. Working in the trades is physics, chemistry, geometry, trigonometry and their practical application.

Given that a young woman has a good educational background, the next hangup is in the application process. Most apprenticeship programs take a limited number of apprentices on an "as needed" basis. In Chicago, for example, apprenticeship programs usually open up only every two, three or four years. You only have those opportunities to make applications.

The follow through is tremendously important. If an applicant misses an appointment, doesn't turn in a certain form, or turns it in late, she/he will immediately be disqualified.

Oftentimes a list is developed that retains the names of all the qualified applicants. People are taken from that list until it is exhausted. This process can often take years.

I think it's possible for a young woman to get through this—if only because of sheer grit and determination. If she is clear about her goals and doesn't allow herself to be distracted by the "goings on", the harassment, she'll make it.

It takes a lot of energy and support, however, because the harassment is not in the form of someone trying to beat you up, but the constant picking away at your confidence and your defenses.

Where does the support come from?

Your co-workers, friends, families, unions, CLUW, CBTU, women in the trades groups, etc.

I was one of the founders of the first trades women's groups in Chicago—Chicago Women Carpenters—that helped me and many other women. At the same time, I joined CLUW. It has been the most important organization for me because I was able to get an education about the wider labor movement, labor history, the issues all trade unionists were concerned with, and CLUW was instrumental in the development of my own leadership and organizing skills.

Would you comment on the recent supreme court rulings regarding the set aside for minority contracts in construction and the affirmative action plan of the South Bend Firefighters?

The continuation of the "open door" achieved by the Civil Rights Movement and the passing of the Civil Rights Act is directly related to contract compliance with regard to affirmative action goals.

High court deals low blow

AFL-CIO Executive Council condemned the Supreme Court ruling striking down an affirmative action plan enacted by Richmond, Va.

"We agree with Justice Thurgood Marshall" that the "battle against pernicious racial discrimination or its effects is nowhere near won," said the Council statement. AFL-CIO President Kirkland called the court ruling "clearly a big step backwards."

Executive Order 11246 and other pieces of legislation and court opinions pertaining to affirmative action have served to insure that the door stays open. Since the Reagan Administration, there has been a steady chipping away at those gains and the threat of the door shutting is very real.

We have continued to try to keep those gains. But we're looking for more, to increase the goals, to insure that the goals are complied with. Who will monitor the contractors and be sure they're going to comply? Where are the sanctions against the contractors when they don't?

If we don't have these government guarantees, then we could say that tax dollars are supporting discrimination. A state or federal highway system (such as the Dan Ryan project in Illinois) being built by contractors who refuse or are not forced to comply with fair hiring practices is a highway system built on discrimination with the people's money.

Will the fight for affirmative action take on a new level of activity?

It definitely requires new strategies. We're seeing the continuing backlash to affirmative action coupled with the bald-faced limitations of what our economy is going to provide for working class people. At least part of that strategy



issue. The issue is **did they discriminate?** Hiring records show very clearly that when there was affirmative action, much larger numbers of women, Blacks, Latinos were hired. And when there was no affirmative action policy, there were less. It's clear cut.

If I hit you with my car, but I didn't

enter the field through union apprenticeship programs. To my way of thinking it is certainly the better route because it is guaranteed, systematic training with good wages and benefits. Not to mention protection under a union contract.

Have you seen any changes, in terms of accessibility, to union apprenticeship programs for women over your 15 year tenure as a carpenter?

Yes. I think it's easier now. Not easy, mind you, **easier.** The novelty and shock of women in non-traditional work has begun to wear off. Originally there were a lot of stereotypical notions that women couldn't handle an apprenticeship program, either in terms of the physical or the technical challenges. Apprenticeship coordinators, vocational educators, union instructors have seen enough women go through programs now so that they are no longer as reticent as they had been.

There's still a long way to go for women working in the field, on the job site. There are thousands of men in the trades who have never worked with a woman and who have very chauvanistic attitudes about women working in the construction trades, for example. Some retain attitudes that "this is men's work," no matter what the competency of the woman worker is. There are also thousands of men who are very supportive of women in the field and who don't get "defensive" about "their" territory.

How do you talk to a co-worker who has sexist or racist attitudes—someone who rejects the concept of affirmative action because they have been led to believe that it is "reverse discrimination"?

The consciousness level regarding full employment and affirmative action is not very high. Many of our union brothers do feel threatened by women and people of color coming into the trades. They have a concept of affirmative action as something that requires the employer to hire people who are not as competent as their "nephew, son, or brother-in-law."

Until the Civil Rights Act, the Building Trades Unions operated behind

Continued on page 14

We're seeing the continuing backlash to affirmative action coupled with the bald-faced limitations of what our economy is going to provide for working class people. . . .

needs to be a fight to raise the class consciousness of our labor movement so that people can understand the economics of the system—that the system is created and perpetuated not to provide jobs but to keep us in competition with each other, to pit us against each other.

Until workers have a better understanding of the economic system, we can expect cries of "reverse discrimination" and other confusion.

The courts are trying to say that the victims of discrimination must prove the intent to discriminate. Intent is not the

intent to, it doesn't mean that you're not going to bleed.

What percentage of women in the trades are unionized?

I don't really know. It's difficult to say. A number of women started out as union members and faced some real obstacles in day to day work—especially in terms of sexual harassment, equal accessibility to jobs and training. Many of those women left to start up their own business.

On the other hand, lots of women

Tradeswomen . . .

closed doors. You had to have some connection in order to be accepted into an apprenticeship and then still faced interviews by boards made up of contractors, school administrators, union appointees, etc. After the passage of legislation that required an impartial way to assess the merits of apprenticeship applicants and a government review body that monitored these methods and results, the door opened to women, African Americans, and other minorities.

Since I joined the union and become more involved in the labor movement, my perspective has grown in being able to see the wider labor community. I try to give that perspective to my coworkers. I don't always talk directly about women in the trades but try to draw analogies with other aspects of the trades that they can identify with.

I've talked about the attack on Black trade unionists in South Africa and how it relates to our fight. The State of

SECOND NATIONAL TRADESWOMEN CONFERENCE

The Congress Hotel Chicago, Illinois
May 26, 27, 28, 29, 1989

For more information 2nd National Tradeswomen's Conference
write to: P.O. Box 91836
Elk Grove Village, IL 60009-1836

Illinois Building was built with steel from South Africa while the mills were shut down in South Chicago. This opens the door to seeing the connections—worldwide—that we are not separate from broader arenas of struggle. What happens to working people here happens to working people around the world.

When workers talk about the Japanese as threatening their livelihood, I talk about the multinational corporations—they are the ones trying to make the whole world their labor market.

There's a change going on in the labor movement in its ability to see the threads that connect us all. The fight is very hard because of unionbusting tactics, legislation that prevents certain solidarity actions in strikes, and so on. But because everyone feels the attack now, they also see the need for united efforts. The grassroots will follow a leadership that understands this. **LT**

The courts are trying to say that the victims of discrimination must prove the intent to discriminate. Intent is not the issue. The issue is did they discriminate?

March for Women's Equality March for Women's Lives

April 9, 1989
Washington, DC



Join one of the largest marches in American history to serve notice to President Bush, the Congress and the Supreme Court that the women of America demand the preservation of their constitutional right to freedom of choice.

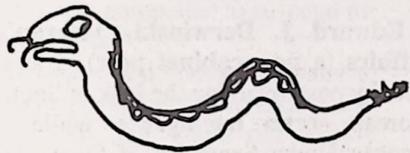
For further information contact NOW's National March Coordinating Office at (202) 331-0066.

Partial listing of participating organizations: American Association of University Women; American Civil Liberties Union; American Federation of Teachers; American Friends Service Committee; Association of Flight Attendants; Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; Coalition of Labor Union Women; National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Reproductive Health; Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Women for Racial and Economic Equality; Young Women's Christian Association of the U.S.

Can there be justice in the Supreme Court?

The Replacement Worker ain't nothing but a lousy scab

The U.S. Supreme Court has overturned past decisions and ruled 6 to 3 that "replacement workers" which were brought in during a ten week strike against TWA have acquired superior



rights in employment, promotion, and seniority over the union workers who were out on strike.

What is the "replacement" worker which has suddenly been elevated over a union member by the highest court of the land?

We have taken a long look at it. It walks like a scab, it talks like a scab, it smells like a scab, it huddles with the

bosses like a scab. You've guessed it. A REPLACEMENT WORKER AIN'T NOTHING BUT A SCAB!

Jack London, the American author of the early part of the century whose stories have been read by millions, defined the scab as follows: "After God had finished the rattlesnake, the toad, the vampire, he had some awful substance left with which He made a SCAB."

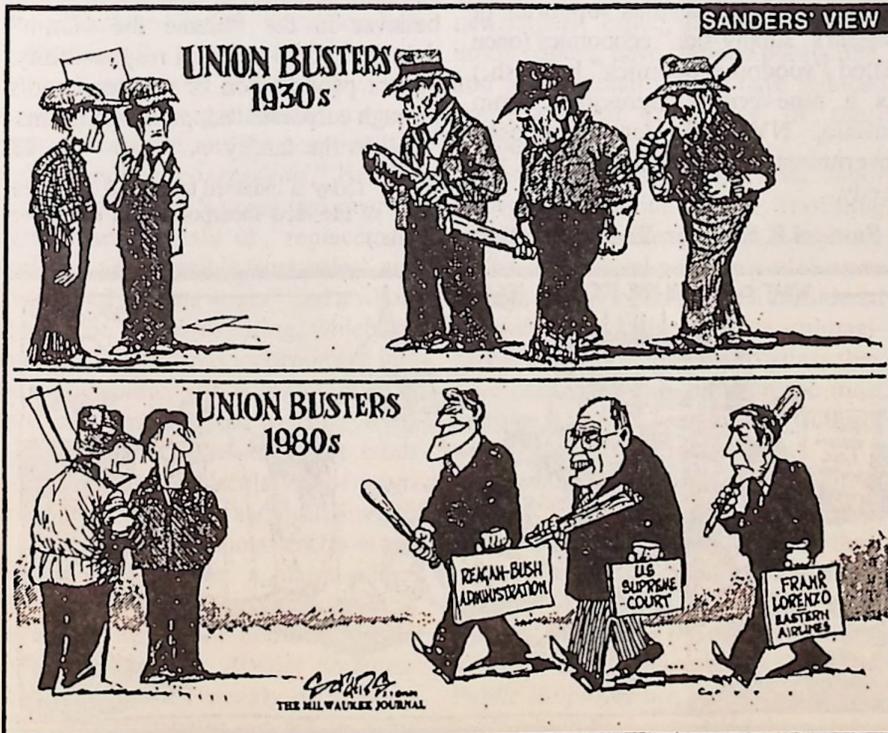
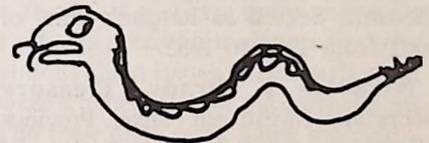
The plague of the SCAB in America has been deeply rooted in history, legend, song, and ballad. (Casey Jones being one of the most notorious strikebreakers.)

During the dark days of Reagan, the Supreme Court was altered and transformed into a political agency for the most reactionary corporate interests of America. Now its majority has swallowed, hook, line and sinker, the

ultra-right wing re-definition of a SCAB as a replacement worker, enshrined it on a throne of super seniority, and in one devastating blow reduced the loyal trade union member to the role of an outcast—a new kind of slavery.

We predict that they'll never get away with it. Never!

The labor movement has set March 21 as a day of demonstration on the Capitol steps in Washington to demand legislation to restore the full rights of unions, including the right to strike. Members of Congress who were elected with labor support must speak out. **LT**



Justice is not neutral

Revvng up its holy war against the working class, the Supreme Court upheld a law by a 5-3 vote that bars a family from receiving food stamps when one of its members is out on strike. The majority of the justices, without crossing their fingers, said that the law is a "rational effort" by Congress to remain neutral in a labor dispute.

Neutral? Neutral? Taking bread out of the mouths of the poor is neutrality? According to what dictionary? And this ruling was made a full six months before the same court, still on its wild rampage of terrorism against the workers, re-defined SCAB as a "replacement worker." **LT**

The Bush Cabinet All in the family

With the exception of Dr. Louis Sullivan's token appointment as Secretary of Health and Human Services (which had all the credibility of the Morton Downey Show) all the members of the Bush Cabinet are clearly out of the same corporate mold, whom nobody would be surprised to see sitting at the head table honoring Oliver North, or celebrating the establishment of a lower "pre-training" minimum wage.

We go down the list:

James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State. From Texas and heir to a family fortune dating to 1860. The chief architect of the Bush election campaign and credited with constructing the Willie Horton trick, injecting racism into the election. Served as Reagan's chief of staff from 1980 to 1985.

Nicholas F. Brady, Treasury Secretary. Investment banker. Previous Chairman of Dillon, Read & Co. and on the MX Missile Development Options Panel. A top Bush election campaign manager.

Richard Cheney, Secretary of Defense. A quickie replacement for John Tower. Served as House Republican chairman of the Iran-Contra hearings, and more than once proclaimed Oliver North a national hero. Claims no expertise on matters of defense, but Star Wars is one of his icons.

Dick Thornburgh, Attorney General. As Governor of Pennsylvania (1976-1986) instituted drastic social service cuts, and was a Reagan appointee to succeed the infamous Edwin Meese.

Manuel Lujan, Jr., Interior Secretary. As a ranking Interior Committee Republican (1981-1985) voted to cut billions from water pollution controls, and supported the oil interests' demands for oil exploration on the Arctic coastal plain.

Clayton Yeutter, Agriculture Secretary. Former president and CEO

of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, and "does a bit of farming" on his 2500 acres in Nebraska. As Reagan's Trade Representative, opposed farm subsidies both domestic and foreign.

Robert Mosbacher, Commerce Secretary. Made a barrel of money in Texas oil, and raised \$75 million as Bush's campaign finance chairman. Charged with holding big investments in Philippine oil which the deposed Marcos used to plunder the nation.

Elizabeth Dole, Labor Secretary. Presided over the deregulation of the trucking industry while Reagan's Transportation Secretary.

Dr. Louis Sullivan, Health and Human Services. Dean of Boston University Medical School and founder of Morehouse College of Medicine in Atlanta. Bush's lone African American appointment.

Jack F. Kemp, Housing and Urban Development Secretary. A pet of the radical right and zealous supporter of Reagan's "supply-side" economics (once called "voodoo economics" by Bush.) As a nine-term Congressman from Buffalo, NY, consistently opposed government social programs for the needy.

Samuel F. Skinner, Transportation

Secretary. Former chairman of Chicago's Transit Authority and director of the Bush election campaign in Illinois. Rushed with indecent haste to the defense of Frank Lorenzo and Eastern Airlines in the machinist's strike.

James D. Watkins, Energy Secretary. Chief of Naval Operations in 1982.

Lauro F. Cavazos, Education Secretary. Former President of Texas Tech. A hold-over from the Reagan cabinet. Other than being from Texas, it isn't clear how he fits in with the other members of the family.

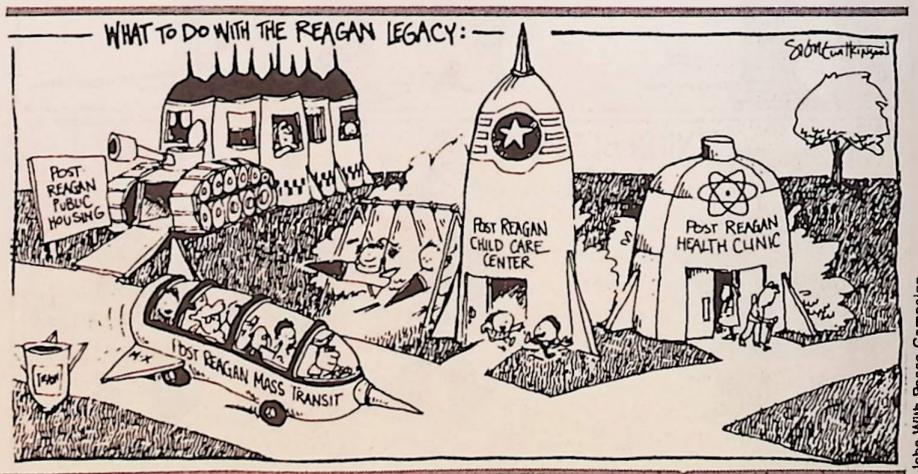
Edward J. Derwinski, Veteran's Affairs (a new cabinet post). Has a spooky past involving the leak of South Korean secret intelligence while a Reagan Under-Secretary of State. An undistinguished U.S. Representative from Chicago's far south side for 24 years, where he headed varied "ethnic Committees" implicated with pro-Nazis of the kind later uncovered on the Bush campaign committee.

Edward J. Bennett, Drug Enforcement Secretary (another new cabinet position). The new "drug czar," an appropriate title for all autocrats. Reagan's Secretary of Education. A true believer in the "blame the victim" theory of socio-political responsibility. Favors privatization of public schools through corporate "adoption" programs.

All in the family. . .

LT

(Labor Today is indebted to the UE News for many of the facts incorporated in the above article.)



Jobs With Peace Campaign

Tough times for labor press

"Times are very very rough for any publication with the name 'labor' or 'union' in it," writes the editor of that sparkling quarterly magazine *Talkin' Union*, and he sadly mentions that *Talkin' Union* may have to be reduced to publishing once a year.

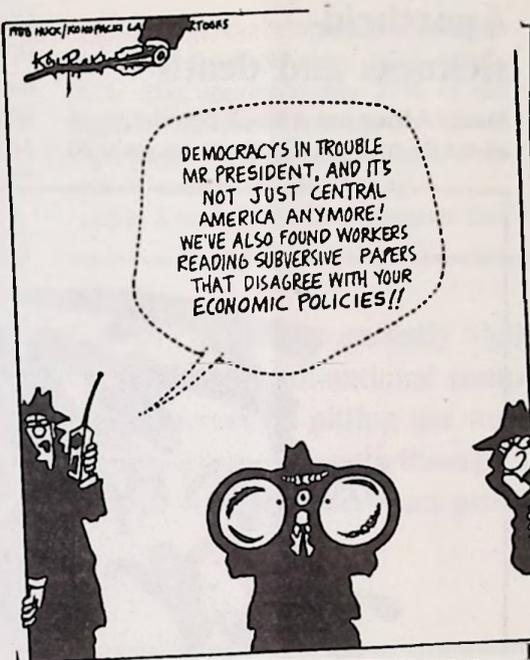
It seems that's the way it's been in the eighties with labor publications—reducing, missing, suspending, discontinuing, or hanging on for dear life by a shoestring. (Even *Labor Today* was compelled to suspend for six months.)

It was a real shock for many to read in the *AFL-CIO News* (nowhere else) that that grand old weekly journal, *Labor*, had quietly died and been laid to rest. It had been the influential organ of the railroad brotherhoods for almost one hundred years, and had reached a circulation of 900,000 per week.

It was a muted announcement; no death certificate was ever issued, so one can only speculate about the cause of death. It had to be that crafty right-wing virus that has been let loose with programmed instructions (from corporate controllers) to create "a union-free environment."

One hears about it every day, and especially when negotiations for a new contract come up, and the corporations are demanding "concessions." Besides "concessions" and "a union-free environment," there is talk of "replacement workers" and "flexible work rules" and "two-tiered training wages" and a whole new jargon of unionbusting, which the commercial press has incorporated into the body politic, and academia for the most part has accepted as Holy Writ.

There was a time in recent labor history when the circulation of labor newspapers, journals, and bulletins was in the millions. Almost every union member got to see a union-edited newspaper at least once a month. Local unions, central labor bodies, international headquarters, district organizations, all had their weekly or monthly publications, usually mailed to their



memberships. Sometimes, where the cost of mailing was prohibitive, the paper was distributed at the plant gate. Some were mimeographed, some used more sophisticated printing. Many were outstanding journalistic achievements. But in the last decade, many labor newspapers, especially the vital local union papers, have stopped publishing, and international unions have reduced the size and frequency of their publications.

Despite the handicaps that labor newspapers inevitably face, travelling upstream and battered from every side by the commercial press, and with never enough money or staff, often considered extravagant by harrassed or unimaginative union officers, nevertheless they have been able to express in the most intimate terms the fundamental truths of workers' lives and aspirations.

There has been a rich new growth of creative labor journalism, which, in some ways, has compensated for their reduced pages and cutbacks. The miners' *UMWA Journal*, the auto-workers' *Solidarity*, the oil and chemical workers' *OCAW Reporter*, AFSCME's *Public Employee* are prominent among those which have expanded their sights

to take in the broad social and political issues which their members confront—elections, jobs with justice, cultural developments, affirmative action, the environment—and still leave ample space for rank and file opinion, union news and reports. Worker's letters, some of them sheer poetry, find their way into the journals' columns.

We don't get to see many local union publications. But those we do see prove how much can be done with a half pound of mimeo ink.

The public media cannot be trusted to tell the truth about plant closings, about strikes, lockouts, minimum wages, racial discrimination or to publish anything other than the Hollywood or television stereotypes of workers and unions.

Rarely, if ever, are union members or officers asked for their comments or opinions about issues affecting them. It makes it a lot easier for the corporations to do their dirty work when the media "poisons the psychological wells" and turns public sympathy away from labor.

In every city and workplace there is unrest today among the people, and the commercial media either ignore it or report it from the standpoint of the stockholder.

A tragedy like the closing down of a steel plant or a coal mine which destroys the lives of hundreds of families and makes ghost towns out of precious communities, is usually reported these days in the financial pages of the newspapers—not the concern, in its view, of anyone other than investors.

Most commercial newspapers used to have a "labor beat." But that's all been changed. *The New York Times* has eliminated every one of its four labor reporters. One of the few metropolitan newspaper in the country which has retained its labor reporter is the virulently anti-labor *Chicago Tribune*.

No, this is no time to cut back on labor publications. The world is changing, and labor's side of the change needs to get out. **LT**

Who's who & what's what . . .

Who needs SDI?

An AFSCME Executive Board resolution titled "Freedom from Nuclear Threats" urges the United States to "pursue mutual nuclear test bans," and strongly states the union's opposition to the "militarization of outer space by SDI."



LT'S editor receives CLUW honors

At its annual international women's day banquet, Chicago CLUW presented the Florence Criley Award to several trade union women, including Labor Today's editor, Debbie Albano. Alluding to a Bruce Springsteen lyric, Albano said, "To my CLUW sisters, to my brothers and sisters at the Newspaper Guild, to the fighting machinists, flight attendants and pilots at Eastern, to everyone who has signed a Jobs with Justice pledge card, to those in the grapefields and the steel mills, 'you're the best of what we are. Don't let 'em stop us now.'"



Labor unity boost

On the heels of the Teamster's Union reaffiliation with the AFL-CIO, members of the West-coast based International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) voted three-to-one to re-affiliate.

Among other unaffiliated unions with which there are on-going negotiations with the AFL-CIO are the United Mineworkers, the National Education Association and the United Electrical Workers.

Apartheid— sickness and death

South Africa has a black population of about 25 million. Yet there are only 20

black dentists and 70 black pharmacists in that country. White South Africans have one doctor for every 326 people, while for blacks the ratio is one for every 3400.

FIGHT
MOURN FOR THE DEAD.
for the
Living!

More than 100,000 workers are killed by job-related injuries or diseases each year—almost twice the number of Americans killed in the Vietnam war. Major victories like the "right-to-know" about chemicals are important, but we must act on what we know to improve safety and health in our workplaces.

The UAW and other AFL-CIO unions have organized Workers Memorial Day to remember those victimized by dangerous work, and to further our struggle to improve safety and health on the job. Special events are planned in Ohio, Connecticut, Texas, Missouri, Nebraska, and other states. Unions and concerned groups are encouraged to plan events — and the AFL-CIO is asking workers to observe a national moment of silence at 2 p.m.—wherever major catastrophes and serious safety and health problems have claimed workers' lives.

On April 28, we'll remember those who have suffered and died—and we'll renew our commitment to ending the slaughter.

OBSERVE WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY, APRIL 28

Unionbusters conclave

Donald Dotson, former Labor Board chairman, and Robert Bork, defeated Supreme Court nominee, were two featured speakers at a recent union-busting conference sponsored by Human Resource and Profits Association.

Highlighting the conference were HRPAs "John Wayne True Grit awards," given to employers who successfully fought unions. The recipients were the Army Navy Clubs of Washington, DC; Mylan Pharmaceutical Co. of Morgantown, WV; Emerson Electric Co. of St. Louis; Appleton Electric Co. of Chicago; and Consolidated Glass Corp. of New Castle, PA.

HRPA also used the occasion to advertise a new quarterly publication on union busting, entitled "Union-Free Organizing" with a one-year subscription cost of \$495.

Why Americans don't vote

The last general election garnered the lowest voter turnout since 1924, barely 50%. The approximately 27% of the eligible vote Bush won was the lowest percentage for a President in a two-person contest in this century.

IAM Local 1125 editor suggests that

the low voter turnout "shows a lack of confidence in the system," adding that "if there was really something to vote for, the polls would be flooded." He also believes that the American people realize a fundamental truth about our political system. "It is a system where important decisions are made in the corporate boardrooms, not in the town or state legislatures or even in Congress."

"We must be constantly vigilant to insure that we do not allow the multinational companies, nor our governments, to succeed in pitting the workers of one country against the other. It is only through strong international solidarity that we as workers can prosper."

UAW President Owen Bieber
speaking with Japanese workers

Labor's growing vision in the arts

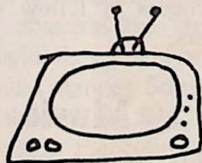
Fighting ideas take wing

by John Fromer

Labor culture is booming. Must be a sign of the times. The most fighting trade union ideas are taking wing through songs, theatre, video, and the written word. Don't think this workers' culture isn't around 'cause you don't hear it on the radio. Back in the '30's millions of people knew union songs that only hit the air waves through picketline bullhorns. The music was passed on through common struggles shared across the country. Today again, the workers' inspiration through the unions' blood is running, and visa versa.

In Washington D.C., Chicago, Detroit, Seattle, Tennessee, and San Francisco annual festivals of labor culture are held. Hundreds of musicians, artists and trade unionists attend workshops on everything from getting workers' images on television to the art of picketline singing and then take these ideas back to their union halls and worksites around the nation.

John Fromer is a singer-songwriter in the Bay Area, performing with the Freedom Song Network. An Executive Board member of his AFTRA Local, producer of "Home Turf," a local television program for teens, Fromer was also the producer, editor, and writer for "High Stakes at Morenci," a video documenting the Phelps-Dodge strike of USWA members. Complete with footage of the Arizona National Guard, sporting automatic weapons and driving tanks, "High Stakes" shows how zealous the corporations and the government can be in their unionbusting, scab-running efforts. "High Stakes at Morenci" is available from Open City Video, San Francisco, Ca.



Television

The most powerful cultural medium in the U.S. today is television. The broadcast industry has traditionally been controlled by the rich and the right wing. Yet there have been a number of

breakthroughs as well as some under-utilized areas of access to the airwaves. For those of us with union blood in our veins seeing the "Union Yes" campaign on TV warmed our hearts. It is so rare to find positive images of unions on the tube.

In California we've broken new ground with a program organized, funded and sponsored by the trade unions that airs on 5 different PBS stations. "California Working" combines high production values with content that

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promotes unionism and deals with the crucial issues facing workers on the job today. From health and safety segments to pieces on organizing the unorganized the footage is also made available to unions as an organizing tool.

On a smaller scale, labor programs are popping up around the country on cable access channels. Most metropolitan areas have channels where you can develop production skills while putting shows on the air. The audiences are usually small but can be encouraged through labor organizations.

Video is also becoming a valuable organizing tool, a way of getting the word out. Get a camera and shoot your strike. A picture is worth a thousand words.

While programs by and about labor are few and far between we must never give up on pressuring the major media to do more. By law the air waves belong to the public. If your local station fails to show up at a rally, get everyone at the rally to call in and ask why. They're more likely to show up the next time.



Theater

Union struggles have built in drama. No wonder labor theater is experiencing a renaissance, from street skits to major stage productions.

For a number of years New York's healthcare workers union, Local 1199, has led the way in promoting and funding culture in recognizing the important role it plays in the life of the union. "Take Care III", their latest production for and about healthcare workers, just completed a 5 week tour of 25 hospitals. A national tour (sponsored in part by Bruce Springsteen) of steelworkers from the shut down Bethlehem Steel Mill in Vernon, Ca. telling their stories in "Lady Beth" moved thousands and received ovations wherever they performed. For the 100th Anniversary of the Haymarket Affair, 1986, the Chicago Federation of Labor

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commissioned a play about the martyrs, their trial and execution. For hundreds of trade unionists, it made history live and relevant, bringing proud tears of recognition to many a workingman's eye.

The Labor Institute for Public Affairs and the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles put together a wonderful musical based on the lives of service workers called "The Greatest Stories Never Told."

The San Francisco Labor Council is about to stage an original play about organizing the unorganized. Theater is a tool all can use. The grape boycott is back in the streets with skits and songs. At a recent nurses strike rally in Oakland every hospital performed their own skits to the cheers of fellow workers and supporters.

Music

"They're moving my job to who knows where and putting the blame on me," the words of a UAW worker from Detroit are sung from Pittsburgh to Portland. "I just came to work here, I don't come to die," a west coast longshoreman's song rings true to the miners in West Virginia or the women



on the assembly lines of Silicon Valley.

Songs about work and unions are being written everywhere. They're being passed on at festivals, on tapes, in books and songsheets, being passed on through a movement, line to line, march to march. In the San Francisco Bay area there is a large network of musicians who do union support work. There are few picketlines that don't involve music, from symphony musicians on machinists' lines to the Sacramento labor chorus turning the chants into songs. Music is back in the union halls, inspiring, unifying and putting the beat back on the line. Check it out, make some music yourself. Write a parody on your favorite top 40 tune... "I Left It on the Grapevine"?

Just remember, the music and the talent are out there. The songs and skits are being born where folks are struggling for a decent life. If you don't find 'em, make 'em up yourself. **LT**

Cities declare themselves "Shell Free"

Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn issued an executive order barring his city from buying Shell products until Royal Dutch/Shell cuts all ties with South Africa.

Flynn announced the policy at a news conference Dec. 13, and said he would work to persuade other mayors to take similar action.

"Apartheid is the political and social means used in South Africa to oppress the black majority, and Shell literally helps to fuel that system," Flynn noted.

"We need campaigns such as the Shell boycott to remind ourselves and our community of the suffering and injustice in South Africa."

Mine Workers President Richard Trumka, who co-chairs the national



BOYCOTT SHELL

Labor Boycott Shell Committee, praised Flynn's action and said, "Now it is time for other mayors of conscience in city

after city across this great country to say 'no' to apartheid by boycotting Shell."

Later the same day, the city council of Berkeley, Ca., voted to make their city "Shell Free" as well. The council said the city will "refrain from conducting business with Royal Dutch/Shell and Shell Oil Co. until Royal Dutch/Shell completely withdraws from South Africa."

The South African anti-apartheid coalition, the United Democratic Front, sent a message praising the action by the city of Boston.

"We rejoice in every single blow against the apartheid regime and companies which fuel it," said UDF leader Farid Esack. **LT**

What is SACTU?

from *South Africa Labor News*, Oakland, California.

What is SACTU? What is its history?

Trade unionism in South Africa is as old as trade unionism in North America. The only difference is that black trade unions weren't legally recognized by the government until 1979.

SACTU itself was formed in 1955 following the dissolution of the TLC (which organized only on color lines). SACTU decided to organize unions on three principles: The South African struggle was of all working people, black and white; The trade union struggle cannot be isolated from political organizations; The trade union movement cannot isolate itself from any community organizations which also fight for equality.

In the 1960's, SACTU and many other political organizations were banned: first the Communist Party in 1950, followed in 1960 by the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress, and finally, SACTU. The government tried to eliminate all opposi-

tion. SACTU activists were banned or killed. Trade union leaders—like Vuyisile Mini and L.S. Ngudle—died in prison under mysterious conditions after being framed for acts they never committed.

How did SACTU survive under such conditions?

The government made it impossible for SACTU to work as an above ground, free, democratic trade union. Like the ANC before it, SACTU decided that rather than abandon the struggle of working people, they would organize in an underground manner. Some SACTU activists left the country. SACTU people remaining inside the country formed underground cells or committees.

Then, in 1973, a wave of strikes in Durban eventually engulfed the whole of South Africa. New trade union groups emerged as a direct result of SACTU's underground work. One such organization in the 1973 strikes was

A brief interview with Peter Mahlangu SACTU representative in Canada

SAWU (South African Allied Workers Union) of which I am a member. Many unions forming the present Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) were a direct result of SACTU's efforts.

Tell us about COSATU's development.

In 1977, the Viehan Commission was set up to bring unions under the control and influence of the government. This commission recommended unions be recognized, but they were supposed to register and submit their membership lists and state of financial affairs. Thus the government would have had a clear picture of how many people were organized and how to control or destroy the unions. As government leader Kruger said, it was going to "bleed black unions to death."

By the time this commission's recommendations were implemented in 1979, community-based trade union organizations were already flowering. These

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unions resisted registration for a while, but finally we decided they should comply. The registered unions asked parallel union groups like TUCSA (Trade Union Council of South Africa) to have unity talks in 1980.

These discussions resulted in the revival of above ground trade union organizations belonging to just one federation—COSATU—formed in 1985. Many other groups presently fighting the South African regime, such as the United Democratic Front (UDF) were, in fact, the direct result of the efforts of SACTU and the ANC's underground structures inside South Africa. **LT**

Belgian strike to support UFCW organizing effort

In a pioneering effort of international labor solidarity, Belgian food store workers are staging a series of 24-hour strikes to protest the treatment of their American counterparts who work for the same multinational company.

At the request of UFCW Local 400, the 150,000-member Belgian Retail Employees voted to stage a “rotating general strike” against the Delhaize supermarket chain's 160 stores. Delhaize controls the growing Food Lion chain of 522 stores in Southeast and Middle Atlantic states. UFCW Local 400 represents some 40,000 supermarket and other retail workers in Washington, DC, Virginia and Maryland.

Local 400 president Thomas R. McNutt said Food Lion management's threats and intimidation against its employees have thwarted union organizing attempts. He said the chain's low-wage, no benefit jobs have forced union food workers to accept concessions as well as the closing of some two-dozen food stores. **LT**

Brazilian steelworkers killed by police

Last November, the Brazilian Armed Forces and Military Police attacked the

Union for IBM in South Korea, none yet in U.S.A.

IBM workers in South Korea ended a 24-day sit-in and hunger strike in February this year after the U.S.-based transnational computer giant agreed to reopen collective bargaining talks.

IBM reportedly agreed to accept

workers' demands for a wage increase and that the union be allowed to have full-time officers and an office on IBM property.

So far, none of IBM's workforce in the U.S. is organized. **LT**



Ken Owen, UAW Local 1999

striking steelworkers at the the National Steel Works Company in Volta Redonda, Brazil, killing five workers and injuring hundreds. The workers had occupied the plant to demand a shorter work day and an increase in wages.

The strike ended after 15 days when the workers agreed to a 15 percent salary increase.

The workers had seized the Volta Redonda works, Brazil's top steel producer, in a dispute over wages and working conditions. An inflation rate of over 700 percent is destroying Brazilian workers' living standards while companies have unlimited power to close

plants, ignore union demands and call out the army to crush Constitutionally guaranteed protests.

The USWA, the International Metalworkers' Federation, the Center for Trade Union Rights, the WFTU and other international labor organizations have demanded that the Brazilian government punish the soldiers responsible for the workers' deaths and injuries.

To add your protest and demand an inquiry into the murders and prosecution of the officials responsible, send messages to President Jose Sarney; Palacio Planalto; Brasilia, Brazil. **LT**

LMPTs . . .

Continued from page 10

in a recent issue: "Workers and unions have good reason for being skeptical of management-initiated employee involvement schemes." Then it answers "No" to the rhetorical question, "Does that mean that all quality of worklife programs are bad and should be resisted by union workers?" and agrees with the author that "the essential ingredients are a union awareness of the pitfalls, and a management that does not view work circles as a technique to weaken unions."

The growth and development of the trade union movement in the United States could be crucially influenced by how workers react to the issue of Labor-Management Teams. It certainly would be a tremendous and daring social advance for the entire nation if unions were successful in establishing a higher level of democracy in the workplace, which includes genuine worker's self-management as a natural and necessary right. **LT**



ESOPs . . .

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was basically handed over to private corporations (and look what a mess they've made!)

Secondly, the mechanisms for buyouts

should include a thorough housecleaning of the original Board of Directors and establish new boards with a clear social and working class agenda. The fight for real worker ownership and control has to be waged by trade unions, rank and file members and leaders that are class conscious and class struggle oriented.

The cynical snickering in the *Time* article about workers being bosses misses the point. When workers become the masters of their own work place, an event of extraordinary importance will have taken place. We don't want to run industry just like the previous owners. We want democracy, a cooperative and strong relationship with the community that would include integrated subsidized housing, day care centers, clean environment with trees, parks and swimming pools, affirmative action, apprenticeships and research facilities. A successful fight for this real change in ownership presupposes a union that is conscious of the breakthrough it is making.

Thirdly, a vigorous political fight needs to be waged in order to bring clarity to the uplifting, liberating, yes, revolutionary significance of a worker/community buyout. Unions and their independent political organizations at work in the factory, community, and board of directors are key to this vision and political consciousness.

If this was ESOPs, then I'd be for them. **LT**

Corporate Treasurer:

"I'm just wild about ESOPs."

Excerpted from *Time*, February 6, 1989

Thanks to hefty tax breaks that the government allows for ESOPs, investors who launch a takeover can reduce their borrowing costs if they set aside part of the stock for employees. "Every corporate treasurer is looking at it," says Paul Mazzilli, a principal at the Morgan Stanley investment firm.

One tax incentive allows a company sponsoring an ESOP to deduct not only the interest on the loan to buy stock for the plan, but also the principal.

Another tax break gives banks and other lenders a 50% deduction on their income from ESOP loans, which enables them to charge lower interest rates to companies that borrow for such programs. "These are the kinds of tax incentives that corporate owners dream of," says ESOP expert Joseph Blasi of California Polytechnic State University.

For all their promise, ESOPs can mean sacrifices for workers. In many instances, employees accept wage concessions in return for their stock. But an ESOP is no guarantee that a company will thrive. Despite its ESOP plan, New Jersey's Hyatt Clark Industries, a ball-bearing maker, collapsed in 1987 because of poor labor relations.

The ESOP surge has raised some eyebrows in Congress. For one thing, ESOPs were never intended as a way for corporate managers to entrench themselves against takeover bids or for corporate raiders to enrich themselves. For another, the cost of providing the tax breaks is running as high as \$3 billion a year at a time when deficit cutting is urgent. **LT**

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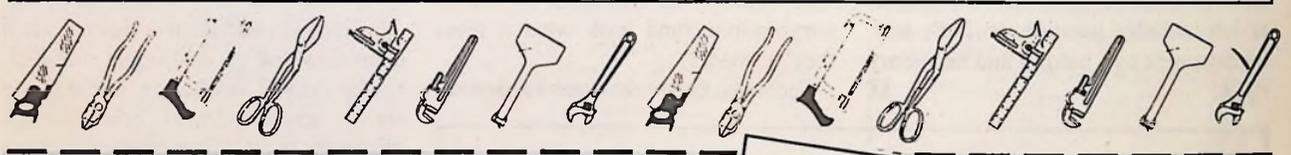
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