

# UNITED LABOR ACTION

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## 250 at Harlem Rally Demand: Save the Schomburg Center!



Paul Williams, one of the Schomburg Library workers, addressing a packed audience of 250 at the Harlem YMCA. Part of the overflow crowd were seated on the stage.

NEW YORK, Oct. 18—On Friday evening, Oct. 15, the Citizens Coalition to Save the Schomburg Center held a rally at the Harlem branch of the Y.W.C.A. Over 250 people attended the event, representing a wide cross-section of the Harlem community. The large turnout indicated the Black community's concern over the racist attitude the New York Public Library (NYPL) has shown over the years towards the Schomburg Center. This world famous collection of books, newspapers, manuscripts and pictures of Black people is being destroyed because of the racist discrimination practiced by the N.Y.P.L. administration.

The meeting was chaired by Larry Holmes, an organizer of the Citizens Coalition and a member of the Center for United Labor Action. The first speaker for the evening was professor John Henrik Clarke. He spoke movingly of the importance of both the Schomburg Center and the Y.M.C.A. Over the years both of these facilities have been used as the headquarters for Black art, literature, political and cultural movements.

Cicely Tyson gave her first performance here and Malcom X spoke in the very theatre where the Coalition rally was being held. Two of Arthur Schomburg's sons were present as Professor Clarke described the origins of the Schomburg Center (Arthur

Schomburg sold his collection for only \$10,000 so that it would remain in Harlem.) and his personal friendship with Schomburg.

Ali Rasheid, Minister of the Nation of Islam, Lillian Roberts, Associate Director of District Council 37, AFSCME, Claudette Furlonge, an organizer of the May 1 Anti-Apartheid Day Committee, Dennis Serrette, President of the N.Y. Chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, all spoke, and Glenderyn Johnson and Paul

Williams, both members of the Schomburg Staff and the Citizens Coalition, described the needs and the work that must be done to save the Schomburg Center.

Dennis Serette spoke about the need to defend the Schomburg Center and described other ways Black people have fought, from the slave ships to the streets of Soweto. Larry Holmes ended the meeting with a call for everyone to join the Citizens Coalition so that the culture and history of Black people would not be destroyed at the hands of racists.

### Broken Boiler Closes Schomburg-

NEW YORK, Oct. 18—The world famous Schomburg Center was closed to the public today because of the lack of heat, announced Larry Holmes of the Citizens Coalition to Save the Schomburg. The absence of heat in the building is due to a breakdown in the boiler over a week ago. There is no word now as to when the boiler will be repaired and the library re-opened.

"The boiler at the Schomburg has been broken for over a week. That such intolerable conditions have been allowed to exist highlights what the Citizens Coalition has been saying—

that a new facility in Harlem must be constructed immediately. It also underlines," Mr. Holmes continued, "the policy of racial discrimination practiced by the New York Public Library (N.Y.P.L.). Would the N.Y.P.L. allow Lincoln Center Library or the 42nd Street library to go without heat for so long? These glamorous buildings, located in high income white areas, are open today, but the largest Black library in the world is closed to the public because of racist neglect which has long characterized the N.Y.P.L.'s funding policy."

### Politicians Confronted at City Hall on Schomburg!

On Saturday, Oct. 17, at a meeting on the city-wide crisis held at City Hall, a strong delegation from the Citizens Coalition confronted Deputy Mayor John Zuccotti with their demands that a new building be constructed in Harlem to house the Schomburg Collection.

### Nov. 5—Next Coalition Mtg-

On Friday, November 5th, the Coalition will hold their next meeting at the Harlem branch of the Y.M.C.A., 180 West 135th Street, at which time additional plans for saving the Schomburg will be announced. Plans for additional rallies and demonstrations will be discussed. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M.



Members of the Citizens Committee to Save the Schomburg held a militant picketline outside the 42nd St. library in midtown Manhattan in September.

### In Ford Settlement—

## Local 900 Workers Show No Confidence in UAW Leaders

By a Member, UAW Local 900  
DETROIT, Oct. 15—On October 12, one month after the strike against Ford Motor Company began, the UAW membership ratified the new contract. The UAW did win some important concessions from the company in this new contract. It stopped the company's attempt to make union members pay for increased health care costs (except for \$1 more for prescription drugs). The contract included a new vision care and hearing aid plan for the workers, improvements in the sick and accident benefit plan, and improved funding for the Supplemental Unemployment Benefit plan. However, the large No vote on the contract indicated that a large segment of the membership felt the union should have gained more in this contract, especially considering the fact that the Big 3 auto companies are all making record profits this year.

The vote on the contract was: Skilled trades, 8,957 for and 8,468 against; and for

production workers, 35,192 for, and 22,026 against. The closeness of this vote occurred despite an intense campaign by the UAW leadership to sell the contract to the membership. This included full page ads in the Detroit newspapers encouraging UAW members to vote yes, and a slick brochure emphasizing all the good points of the contract which the leadership passed out at the ratification meetings.

Despite this propaganda campaign, in my local, Local 900 (which includes the Michigan Truck and Wayne Assembly plants in the Detroit suburb of Wayne, Michigan), the rank and file turned the ratification meeting into an open forum where many questions and objections to the contract were raised from the floor. The meeting was attended by about 1,000 people, despite the fact that many union members were not notified about it.

The objections to the contract included several different areas. On wages, the leadership claimed that we were to receive

a 20 cent plus 3 percent wage increase the first year of the contract. However, it was pointed out at the union meeting that 19 cents of that 20 cent raise was actually cost of living money which we had accumulated in the last contract, and only one cent was actually a new pay raise. Also, the 3 percent pay raise is being calculated on our old base rate of \$5.43 per hour, not on our new base rate of \$6.52 an hour with the old cost of living folded in.

The paid days off plan was exposed as being much less than the leadership had advertised. It consists of 13 new paid days off over the whole three years, with none in the first year of the contract. However, the new contract gives us only 18 paid Christmas days for the 3 years, not 23 like we had in the previous contract. Thus the new contract only nets us 8 new paid days off for the entire three years.

Objections were also raised to the fact that our almost non-existent voluntary

overtime plan was further weakened, and that the new contract said almost nothing about improving the grievance procedure.

At our ratification meeting, the union leadership was so desperate to sell the contract that our union president physically assaulted one union member who spoke against it. The membership forced the president to back down though. After this union brother then finished speaking, our union president had to publicly admit that everything he had said was true.

Throughout the strike, rank and file Ford workers showed a lot of initiative and militancy on the picket lines. Rank and file Ford workers are confident of taking the unity we displayed on the picket lines back into the plants with us, so we can carry on the fight against Ford Motor Co. for decent working conditions, and so we can transform the UAW into the fighting union it needs to be.



# Bitter Fight at King's World, Strikers Strong & Angry

By ARTHUR COVINGTON

LAKEWOOD, N.J., Oct. 18—Yesterday Teamster Local 177 warehousemen, drivers, and clerks of Kings World of Furniture in Lakewood, N.J., went out on strike. This action was the result of weeks of fruitless negotiations and delaying tactics perpetuated by the bosses to break morale and divide the unity of the workers. Due to the strong leadership of organizers Billy Graham and Jeff Sprague, the workers have been able to overcome latent racial frictions and produce a unanimous "yes" vote to strike.

The bosses immediately reacted by hiring scabs, putting shotgun riders on the trucks, and securing attack dogs to harass workers on the picket line. They cut off medical benefits, illegally fired the striking workers by putting ads in local newspapers stating Kings was a nonunion shop, and holding back payroll checks. These actions only stiffened the resolve of the workers to endure the harassment of the bosses and continue the strike until all contract demands are met.

The workers' contract demands are immediate reinstatement of a medical plan, a raise in base pay from \$2.50 an hour, and job definitions to work out a fair payscale. The only reply by King's was an increase of 12 cents an hour across the board and one additional paid holiday.

Going into its second month, the strike is still strong and unified. The workers have been able to turn back 98 percent of the trucks delivering stock to the warehouse and cut down 80 percent of the customers coming into the store. Company trucks have mysteriously become inoperative and a



Photo: J. Evenson

Striker at Kings World.

number of scabs have been discouraged from returning to work at Kings. The militancy of the workers was met by violent reaction of the bosses. Hired goons attacked the line in speeding cars and trucks, causing one worker to be hospitalized. The Teamsters reinforced the picket line with striking UPS drivers in a show of solidarity with the

# NYC Teachers Lose Checkoff right, Pay the Price for Racist Unionism

By a UFT DELEGATE

NEW YORK, Oct. 19—On October 13 the United Federation of Teachers had its right to dues check-off taken away by the New York Public Employment Relations Board. The crippling decision follows a series of fierce attacks on the union and the New York City school system. As part of the banker-inspired budget cuts, over 17,000 teachers have lost their jobs. A militant strike in September 1975 was defeated by the onerous Taylor Law penalties, which included a fine levied against each teacher amounting to two days' pay for every day of the strike, the loss of dues check-off, and the loss of tenure.

Despite the support of large numbers of parents and the sympathy of other municipal workers for the militant resistance shown by the UFT membership during the strike, Albert Shanker, president of the teachers union, has backed down at every challenge by the bankers and bosses. First, he accepted a "memorandum of agreement" from the Board of Education as settlement of the strike. In this agreement, he accepted a shortened school day for the students, longer work hours for the teachers, a freeze on salaries, and no restoration of jobs lost in the cutbacks.

One month later Shanker capitulated

workers of Kings. The bosses, intimidated by this show of worker power, called in local police to protect the store from the anger of the workers. The workers and union officials held fast and the police, themselves intimidated, retreated from the scene.

The latest tactic by the bosses was to go to the courts to get an injunction against the union. The company was unable to prove allegations of workers sabotage and the injunction was denied. The employees of Kings are determined to stay out until all just demands are negotiated and a fair contract is ratified by the rank and file.

Southern Bell's high rate robbery!"

The C.U.L.A. sister received applause from all but the company lawyers and the commissioners after her appeal.

There were previous hearings last winter where, because of public pressure, the PSC backed down and denied Southern Bell's request for a \$40 million rate hike. This fall Southern Bell came back with their exorbitant and inflated \$104 million request. Caught between a rock and a hard place, the PSC tried to get off the hook by presenting a "key witness" who claims to have made extensive studies and determined that the phone company only needs \$46 million (\$6 million more than they originally asked for last winter).

C.U.L.A. vowed to continue its opposition to this criminal rate hike which rested as a particularly difficult burden on those with Social Security, Welfare, and other fixed incomes. Already they are making the telephone into a luxury, when in fact it is a necessity, especially for the elderly, the disabled who need quick access to medical care and the outside world and to the many unemployed who need the phone to get jobs.

under pressure, and agreed to commit \$150 million of teachers' pensions to bailing out a city bond issue that the bankers wouldn't buy. When the mayor announced that city workers' paychecks would be reduced by 2½ percent because the city wanted to reduce its contribution to the pension funds, Shanker preached acceptance to the membership.

With this sad record of backing down, it came as no great surprise to the UFT membership that a bill to increase funding for the New York City school system was declared "unconstitutional" in a state court. The Board's (PERB) decision to eliminate checkoff is the most injurious of all these attacks. It will result in the expenditure of millions of dollars in the collection of dues directly from the membership. Shanker has already begun to lay off UFT staff workers in anticipation of a great reduction of the union's 60,000 strong membership rolls.

The cause of the decline of the UFT's power can be traced to Shanker's strategy of dividing the union membership from the Black and Latin communities serviced by the schools. In 1968, Shanker led a racist strike against the community control struggles in the local communities. Since then, he has presented the parents as the enemies of the teachers, even when the parents were struggling against the same budget cuts which were decimating the teacher's ranks. Shanker's popularity within the ranks has plunged to a new low.

The stage has been set for a serious challenge to the Shanker leadership within both the UFT and the AFT. Teachers are ready to listen to those who advocate a reliance on the militance of the rank-and-file in alliance with the forces in the community and other municipal unions, united against the vicious cuts in city services. Albert Shanker offers nothing but warnings of further defeats at the hands of the politicians and the bankers. The hope lies in the unity of the workers and poor of the city.

# Atlanta C.U.L.A. Fights Telephone Rate Hikes

ATLANTA, Oct. 19—"Let their rich stockholders tighten their belts a little bit, we're sick of it!" declared a spokeswoman for the Georgia Center for United Labor Action as she assailed the Southern Bell Telephone Company's request for a \$104 million increase in rates.

The hearing rooms were filled with opponents of the rate hike. In addition to the C.U.L.A., there were people from Atlanta Welfare Rights Organization, Atlanta Metro Summit Leadership Congress, striking DeKalb County workers, and many others. Speaker after speaker blasted the proposal, taking and holding the stand for over an hour and a half. Southern Bell is seeking 25 cent payphones, a 25 percent across the board increase in home phone rates, and a

non-refundable \$60 installation charge, which is a particular hardship on poor and working people, unemployed who have to move, and welfare recipients and people who live on fixed incomes.

The C.U.L.A. presented the Georgia Public Service Commission petitions with thousands of signatures of Georgia residents demanding no rate hikes and asking the PSC to roll back the already too high phone rates instead. The petition also requested evening hearings so that those most effected by the rate hikes could be heard.

Sister Breen, in her statement to the commission, continued, "It's clear that Southern Bell thinks that its sole responsibility is to make money for its stockholders . . . But we are fed up with

Southern Bell's high rate robbery!"

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**AT&T's Profits, Rates, Layoffs Rise**



A.T. & T. made over \$1 Billion in profit in the first three months of this year.

For anyone working for a living, \$1 Billion (even \$1 Million) is hard to picture. It would take someone who could save \$100 every week 200,000 years to save that much money. Stacked in \$1 bills, a billion dollars would be 63 miles high.

How did A.T. & T. make so much money in 3 months? According to John D. DeButts, A.T. & T's chairman, it was "rate increases" (!!), "higher productivity" (nerve-breaking speed-ups), and "general improvement in the economy". That's not what the 30,000 people A.T. & T. laid off this past year would call it.

# Neighbors Fight Racist Terror in Baltimore

By DOUG LAWSON

BALTIMORE, Oct. 17—The home of the Stewart family and a sister, Mrs. Fredonia Blango and her 13 year-old son was the target of racist nightriders here on September 21. The two very young Stewart children were endangered when two firebombs exploded on the back porch of their rowhouse, just below the bedroom.

The racists succeeded in gutting the family's back porch. The fire was put out, fortunately, before anyone was hurt.

The Waverly neighborhood where the firebombing happened is an area which has long had Black and white people living together. Racist attacks have increased in this area recently. Last year a young Black worker was stabbed to death trying to escape a racist attack.

When news of the firebombing appeared in the press, many neighbors were upset, angry, and disgusted. Neighbors visited the family and many decided to make their feelings public. More than fifteen friends and supporters, Black and white, along with many of their children, crammed into one of the area's tiny rowhouses to hold a press

conference.

At the press conference, Jeff Bigelow, president of Local 75A of the United Furniture Workers, AFL-CIO, read a statement from the Center for United Labor Action condemning the racists and expressing the organization's support and willingness to defend families in the neighborhood against racist attacks.

The press conference, including brother Jeff's entire statement, was a major news story that night.

C.U.L.A. also donated money to the Stewarts and Blangos as an expression of support. Afterwards, neighbors exchanged phone numbers to be prepared for defense against future attacks. Everyone was encouraged by the meeting—as Mrs. Blango said, "It was beautiful".

Although the cops had been conspicuously absent when the firebombing first happened, public pressure forced them to make four arrests later on.

The Waverly neighbors, the Blangos and Stewarts have said: **No More Racist Terror Here!**

**CENTER FOR UNITED LABOR ACTION OFFICES AROUND THE COUNTRY**

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### VEPCO Challenged at Public Hearing

# No Rate Increases—Stop ALL Cut-Offs!

By WARREN SECREST

NORFOLK, Va., Oct. 18—The State Corporation Commission hearing on the \$102 million rate increase requested by the Virginia Electric & Power Co. began today as a battery of VEPCO lawyers, bankers, and industrialists all eagerly prepared to steal more money from poor and working people. The well staged hearing took on a different character, however, when members of the Center for United Labor Action arrived and charged VEPCO with murder.

At this mockery of a public hearing, the money-mad corporation VEPCO and their partners in high rate robbery, the State Corporation Commission, were not only challenged, but visibly shaken when John Lewis of the C.U.L.A. presented five demands: 1) That VEPCO be indicted for

the murder of two Black children who died in a house fire where candles were being burned for light—VEPCO cut the family off because of their inability to pay the outrageous rates. 2) That a moratorium on cut-offs begin immediately—fully 8 percent of VEPCO customers have been cut off this year for inability to pay 3) That the SCC be investigated by a consumer commission because of a pre-hearing admission that VEPCO would be granted substantially what they requested 4) That the fuel adjustment clause, which allows VEPCO to pass on inflated fuel costs to consumers without review by the SCC, be struck from the law—VEPCO has been convicted of overcharging by using this clause. 5) That there be a rollback in rates—the C.U.L.A. has proved that 25 percent of Virginia's residents cannot afford the current

charges.

After these demands were read, members of the C.U.L.A. challenged the rich fat-cats even further: Hilda West, a welfare mother, threatened VEPCO with a utility strike in Norfolk's public housing projects because electric costs are being passed on to residents there; Gary Wilson, a printer's helper, charged VEPCO with racism in hiring policy, and services and charges to Black customers; Theola Johnson, community organizer and disabled mother, accused the commissioners of being unable to understand the needs of poor and working people because they all had silver spoons in their mouths.

The hearing will last nine days as Ms. Ida Outlaw, attorney for the C.U.L.A. legally challenges the rate increase on the basis of

inability to pay. While the legal battle is fought, community organizing continues in Norfolk. The campaign has gained a wide following as the result of a massive publicity effort, with the slogan "Say No to VEPCO" becoming a household phrase. Demonstrations have taken place outside the United Virginia Bank and VEPCO headquarters, where many people have closed their accounts with the bank, and solidarity has been expressed between demonstrators and VEPCO workers.

The popular appeal of the campaign and the massive support in the communities and at several rallies has shown hundreds of people that through a united fight, the rich corporations and their government stooges can not only be challenged, but can be forced on the defensive, and that the people will win.



Over 300 people, including C.U.L.A., said an emphatic no to racism in Boston in support of the East Boston, Dorchester and Hyde Park defendants.

## 300 Rally to Demand 'Free the East Boston Black Defendants!'

By FRANK NEISSER

BOSTON, Oct. 16—Today 300 people rallied and marched here in support of Black Defendants from East Boston, Dorchester and Hyde Park who face felony trials as a result of defending their families against racist attacks. The demonstration, called by the Committee to Free the East Boston Black Defendants, was endorsed by representatives of several unions, the United Farmworkers, numerous tenants organizations, and the Center for United Labor Action. It was also endorsed by Black families under attack in each community and groups that have participated in their defense, agencies and organizations in the Black community, and progressive and political groups.

The rally was chaired by LaVerne Swan, whose son Brian goes on trial on November 22 on charges of supposedly throwing a molotov cocktail at a white home after his mother's windows had been broken out for three nights in a row by racist gangs. Mrs. Swan took the racists to court and won a conviction—they spent all of one week in jail. Robert Phifer, who goes to trial next week and faces a year in jail on the Massachusetts Gun Law for defending his family against an attack by 200 racists with rocks, bricks and tire irons, was the featured speaker.

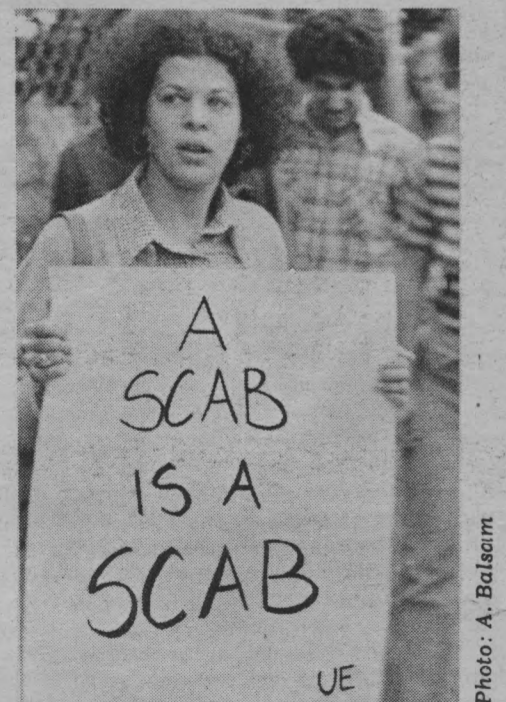
Earl Swindale told of how he was jumped in Maverick Square a week ago Thursday

and wound up in the hospital for 13 stitches and is now facing charges of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon. Jane Kaatz, a white woman who was arrested while defending Black homes in East Boston, explained how racism hurts all poor and working people and how white people must first and foremost fight the racism of other whites.

Harvard Stephens of the Third World Workers Association explained that Jim Crow was the reality in Boston and that the police and courts had shown what side they were on socially by encouraging whites who attack Blacks.

A spirited march to Central Police Headquarters ensued, where a picketline was formed. Elaine Lewis of the Committee to Free the East Boston Black Defendants led chants of "Free the Black Defendants, Put the Cops on Trial," "Drop the Racist Frameup Charges," and "Stop the War Against Black America."

In a militant speech she expressed the rage of Black people against their oppression over hundreds of years and against the police as the armed agents of their oppression. The demonstration was a strong message, carried on TV and radio and in the newspapers, to Drop the Charges against the Black Defendants and end the citywide police practice of arresting Blacks under racist attack while letting their attackers go free.



Strikers Picket Cambion gate

trial on the charges. Although the strikers have fought valiantly against scabs, cops, the courts, and the company, production continues at a 175 employee, non-union plant in New Hampshire, and, of course, is picking up again as scabs return to the Cambridge plant. Only with the all out support of organized labor and progressive people in the Boston area CAN WE DEFEAT Cambion's union-busting offensive, and win the wages and benefit increases we deserve!

## UE Cambion Strikers Battle Cops, Scabs & Courts

By CHRIS MYERS, a steward, United Electrical Workers and member of the Cambion Strike Committee  
CAMBRIDGE, Oct. 20—For six months the 270 workers at the Cambion electronics plant have been striking for better wages and fringe benefits and are now fighting for the very survival of the union.

Originally we voted to walk out April 14 when Cambion offered us only a 20 cent raise (13.8 cents for piece workers) in response to a list of economic demands presented by our union, the United Electrical Workers (UE).

For the last month, we Cambion strikers have also been fighting a back-to-work movement cultivated by the company. As of this writing, 21 regular employees are

crossing picket lines to scab on the strike.

When the first scabs started back to work on Sept. 14, (exactly 5 months after the strike began!), the Strike Committee reinforced the picket lines to try and turn them back. Large numbers of Cambridge police were called in, however, to escort the scabs through.

On the second day of the back-to-work movement, the windshield of a scab's car had an accident with a rock. In retaliation, police singled out shop president Ms. Sandi Polaski and arrested her on an assault charge.

Over the next two weeks another six pickets were arrested during skirmishes with scabs and cops. Most were charged with assault and battery after cops knocked

them to the ground and beat them up. Several women were beaten so badly the cops were too embarrassed to arrest them.

We heard that these clashes with the police had been mentioned at a City Council Meeting, so the Strike Committee requested time to present its grievances—the use of cops as mercenaries for Cambion. On Monday evening, Sept. 29, we demonstrated outside the Cambridge City Hall and then filed in to make our case to the Council. Our demand was to get the cops off the line!

As a result of the publicity generated, the company sent its vice president to the city council meeting the following week. He pleaded that the cops were necessary to protect the safety of "individuals who choose to work". He also told the Council to stay out of the issue as it was "rather complex."

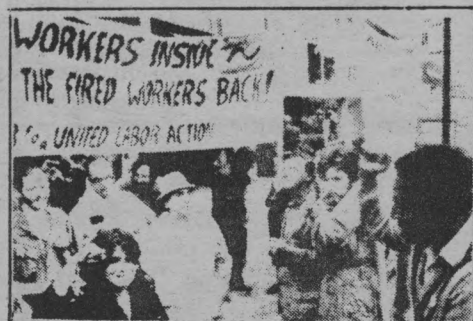
Shop president Polaski pointed out that all of the people injured during the clashes were picketers beaten by police, and that no scab had even complained of an injury! She also reminded the Council that in August four cops were suspended without pay for terms from 5 to 15 days because of charges of brutality brought against them by Cambion strikers after an incident in early May.

On Friday, October 8, while one Cambion striker was being acquitted of a vandalism charge in one courtroom, several other strikers brought charges of assault and battery against the company's chief negotiator in another. Union busting "industrial relations" manager, Bruce Rockcastle, was ordered to post \$100 bail pending

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Photo: A. Balsam