

United Labor Action

an injury to one is an injury to all

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CENTER FOR UNITED LABOR ACTION

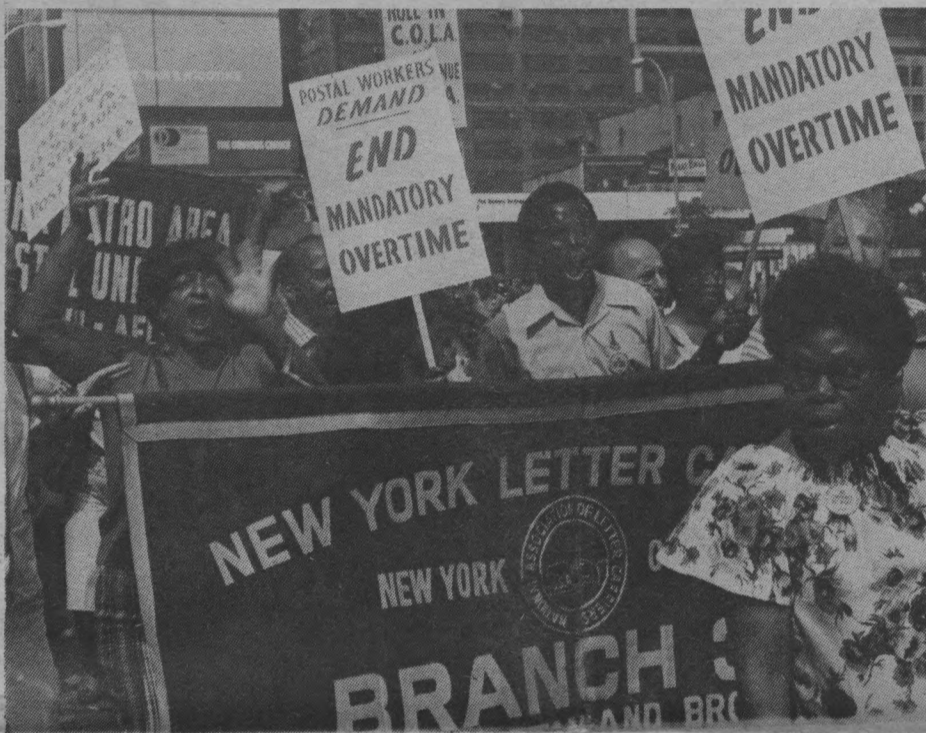
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Labor Donated

Ten Cents

August 1978

P.O. Rank & File Stamp on Contract!



These postal workers, picketing at the General Post Office in New York City, are determined to win a fair contract. photo: Bill Hackwell

Washington D.C.

WASHINGTON, D.C., Aug. 8—Opposition to the proposed three-year postal contract is growing and becoming organized in the D.C. metropolitan area. The sense of relief felt by postal workers when the settlement was reached thirty minutes before the expiration of the old contract, has changed to feelings of dismay and anger as more and more details of the agreement become known.

"Vote No" movements are strong in all three major unions here. The National Association of Letter Carriers branches have issued leaflets opposing the contract, and are continuing their Committee on Preparedness, to coordinate any possible work stoppage that may result from rejection of the contract. Their recent convention adopted a constitutional amendment to require a work stoppage five days after rejection if negotiations are not resumed. The area locals are also demanding amnesty for the workers in New Jersey and San Francisco who were fired during the walkout strike.

A rank-and-file caucus from the Mailhandlers union at the D.C. Bulk Mail facility, held meetings during shift changes attracting up to 100 workers to debate the new contract. The sentiment was strongly

continued on page 2

Chicago

By a member of the American Postal Workers Union Chicago Local
August 8—Chicago postal workers are almost to a person unanimously opposed to the tentative contract which our national union leaders unfortunately agreed to. After some 1500 workers picketed the main post office here on July 12, momentum for a strike when the old contract expired on July 20, really built up fast. Almost everyone felt let down, when the deadline passed and news began to leak out about the lousy settlement. "Nothing but peanuts" was a typical comment, "with food prices rising so fast we can't stand for a cap on our cost of living raises."

"Two percent," complained one worker. "That sounds like the nineteen fifties." Everyone agreed that with such a poor pay package some gains could have been made in working conditions. Instead management has been given a freer hand to harass, discipline, speedup and reduce the workforce. That's why Chicago postal workers are voting no on ratification.

As we go to press this reporter is leaving for the APWU national convention in Denver. **United Labor Action** will have a report on developments there and the outcome of the ratification struggle in our next issue.

Cleveland

By a member of the Cleveland Ohio Postal Workers Union

CLEVELAND, Aug. 10—Whether a postal worker sorts mail by hand, sits behind a letter sorting machine, sells stamps at the counter, or loads sacks of mail, one thing is for sure—we are all united in our opposition to the proposed postal contract.

The anger of most of the workers here was expressed at the Aug. 1 meeting of the Cleveland Ohio Postal Workers Union (COPWU).

"It's the worst contract the union has ever signed," spoke William Burrus, Cleveland APWU (American Postal Workers Union). Burrus served on the union's National Rank and File Advisory Committee and voted "no" on the pact, and voted not to send it out for ratification, but to send it back to the negotiating table. The Rank and File Advisory Committee had formulated the negotiating demands and goals. "To accomplish none of these goals, and then to present it to the membership for approval is an insult to the intelligence of postal workers," Burrus told the lively meeting.

Many union members spoke up against the contract. One woman felt that "we've stepped back 30 years."

Before the meeting ended a resolution was unanimously passed calling for amnesty for all fired workers and expressing "concern about the intervention of the federal courts into the affairs of our union."

The main task here now is to turn out a strong "no" vote on the contract.

A special edition of the local's newspaper, "Spirit", is being distributed on the job, with a front-page headline, "Vote No". The "Spirit" editorial expressed the feeling of all the COPWU workers: "The COPWU must stand together and say through non-ratification that we would like a new contract. A contract which we feel was bargained for in good faith and which would be acceptable to the grass roots."

New York

By two members of the NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers)

NEW YORK, Aug. 9—A contract has been negotiated between the Post Office and the postal unions representing over 500,000-

continued on page 4

'SAY NO TO VEPCO!'



These pickets are informing people of the growing fight against VEPCO's \$246 million rate increase.

By PHIL WILAYTO

NORFOLK, Aug. 10—If one slogan is on the lips of the poor and working people throughout the state of Virginia, that slogan has got to be "Say No to VEPCO!" First raised by the Center for United Labor Action some five years ago, this demand has become a battlecry for Virginians outraged at the "high-rate robbery" of this powerful utility monopoly. And this fall, once again, that cry will be raised by thousands of voices as VEPCO demands yet another rate increase.

The Virginia Electric and Power Co. (VEPCO), is a \$3 billion utility company whose major stockholders are all powerful banks and financial institutions, such as the Rockefeller-controlled Chase Manhattan Bank. It is the fifth most expensive utility company in the country, with rates that have been increasing in recent years at twice the

rate of inflation and twice the rate of consumer consumption. It pays its corporate president, Stanley Ragone, \$83,000 a year in salary alone, while it cuts off thousands of people, for inability to pay. While its

The C.U.L.A. asked VEPCO to discuss their requested rate increase at a public forum sponsored by various union locals. VEPCO refused. They have publicly promised to meet with community organizations in the past. Asked for an explanation of their refusal to speak at our forum, VEPCO representatives said "it's none of your business." The forum will still be held in the near future. For more information call the C.U.L.A. at 627-6380.

executives and banker-stockholders live high on the corporate hog, its hands are *continued on page 4*

N.Y.C. PRESS STRIKE

Times, News & Post Declare War on Union Labor

The Workers Fight Back —see pg. 2

Issues at Michigan AFL-CIO Convention

'Tax Revolt' and Labor Solidarity

By an Alternate Delegate

DETROIT, July 26—This year's Michigan State AFL-CIO Convention resoundingly denounced California's Proposition 13 and phony "tax revolt" efforts in Michigan. State AFL-CIO President Bill Marshall said in his opening remarks to the more than 1,000 delegates, "the tax frustration our members feel is real. But the tax referendums now before us, Tisch, Headlee (Detroit's Proposition 13 type amendments) are not the answer. We must demand real tax reform, not more giveaways to business, which will cut services to our members and

various "tax revolt" proposals, two by the Michigan Federation of Teachers and one by AFSCME (American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees) Local 457. However all three were referred to the state AFL-CIO executive board for further study.

AFSCME Local 457, representing Detroit Health Department workers, staffed an anti-tax revolt table at the convention. The table was covered with clippings documenting the Tisch and Headlee Amendments' benefit to big business, and the real effects of California's Proposition 13. Green badges stating "Tax revolt—NO THANKS, We Say Tax Big Business and Banks" were distributed to delegates. Many delegates who wanted to help defeat the phony tax revolt amendments in their area signed up to join the fight.

Despite the fact that politicians roamed around the convention hall trying to drum up support for their campaigns, another thread ran through the convention, one more in harmony with the history of struggle that gave birth to our unions. Resolutions were adopted to support the J.P. Stevens boycott; against Michigan Bell charging for Directory Information; supporting city control of Detroit's only public hospital, Detroit General; against the recent Supreme Court decision allowing unannounced police raids on newspaper offices; and for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.

But more importantly, the convention called delegates to action. On Tuesday morning delegates were scheduled to join the picketline at striking Harper-Grace Hospital in Detroit. This threat persuaded management to bargain through the night

and reach a settlement much more favorable to the workers than the union-busting "offer" they had begun with.

Delegates representing many international unions joined the ACTWU (Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union) in confronting department store managements, forcing agreements from several big chains to stop carrying J.P.

Stevens goods. A similar cross-union delegation helped revive stalled negotiations for RWDSU (Retail, Wholesale & Department Store Union) members at Meyers Thrifty Acres.

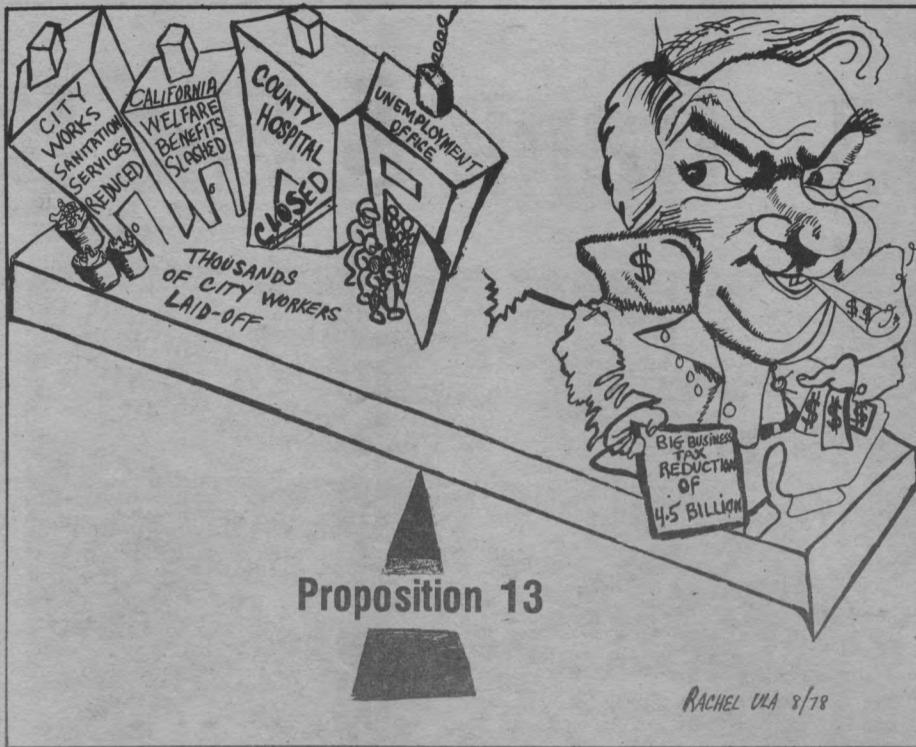
Although these are still small steps, they are an effective example of the strength of labor solidarity.



AFSCME Local 457 table at the State AFL-CIO Convention in Detroit.

throw our public employees on unemployment."

This note continued and intensified throughout the three-day convention. Three resolutions were submitted opposing the



New Contract Won in Harper-Grace Strike

DETROIT, July 26—After a 30-day strike, the workers at Harper-Grace Hospital ratified their new contract today.

Eighteen hundred Harper-Grace workers walked out on June 26th after negotiations had broken down. At issue were union protection against sub-contracting out whole departments, raises and other fringe benefits.

The Harper-Grace bosses tried every trick in the book to break the strike. They ran ads in the daily papers for scab labor, they brought in a professional strikebreaker, and of course lied about how much the strike affected the running of the hospital.

The Harper-Grace workers got widespread labor support. AFSCME hospital locals called a support march and rally. Over 800 people—Harper-Grace strikers and supporters—walked the lines July 13. The State AFL-CIO Convention delegates were going to march 1000 strong with the Harper-Grace workers on July 25, but the night before the Harper-Grace management decided they wanted all night negotiations

to hammer out a settlement.

The new contract ignores President Carter's meager wage "guidelines" of 5 percent. The settlement contains raises of 8 percent a year. The average wage at Harper-Grace is around \$4.00 an hour. Even 8 percent is barely more than just a beginning to getting what is needed to live on.

The contract also stops Harper-Grace from its wholesale closing of departments and sub-contracting out the work. The union also won more stewards on the floors. This is also the first area contract that provides for Martin Luther King's Birthday to be a holiday.

The strength of the striking workers and the massive show of labor solidarity not only won the strike, but strengthened other hospital workers fighting the same attacks.

—D.C. Postal Ranks Want to CANCEL Contract

continued from page 1

opposed to ratification, and a vote was taken to follow New York workers if they walked out.

The Executive Board of the Prince Georges, Md., local of the American Postal Workers Union voted unanimously to oppose the new contract and to support amnesty for all strikers. They sent a letter to General President Emmett Andrews, informing him the local sees amnesty as a top priority. In addition, a special edition of the local newsletter, The Union Dispatch, headlined "Vote No" was printed and distributed on the shop floor. Reception of the flier was good, and informal polls show the overwhelming majority of clerks and maintenance workers opposed to ratification. The Baltimore area local of APWU voted in a general membership meeting over seven to one for rejection, and called for a picket line at the main office, and to support amnesty for strikers.

At a meeting July 29, two national officers came to the area to try to convince members to vote for ratification, but had a hard time selling this idea to the audience. One mailhandler stated, "I don't see anything in this contract that sticks up for our rights." And the clerk added, "you said that they had a gun at your head during negotiations. Well, in return, you gave them a cannon."

Clerks at the Prince Georges facility have taken to wearing printed T-shirts and clipping signs to their I.D. badges to express their feelings. One sign, pinned to a letter sorting machine operator's shirt, summed up the feelings of postal workers throughout

N.Y.C. Press Strike!

By G. DUNKEL, an unemployed pressman
NEW YORK, Aug. 9—The New York newspaper publishers are out to break the pressmen's union by provoking a strike.

In a calculated and deliberate insult to the union, management walked out of a negotiating session and posted new work rules. If the union had accepted these rules, it would have signed its own death warrant. 800 of its 1600 members by management's estimate would have lost their jobs. Even union brothers with 20 years seniority would have been on the bricks.

This attempt is part of a nationwide program that dates back to the early '70s when the American Newspaper Publishers Association laid out \$6 million to set up a school in Oklahoma to teach junior management how to scab on newspaper workers. Among its successes was the Washington Post, where the pressmen's union was completely destroyed.

One pressman said, "They think they can beat us back but they're wrong. We're going to win." Another said, "OSHA (the Occupational Safety and Health Administration) had to get a court order to inspect this place. (The Times' pressroom.) We have to breathe inkmist, solvents, work in filth, climb up and down and run all over a block-long machine. We don't get breaks—even for a breath of fresh air. Now they want us to do the same amount of work with half the people."

This is a speed-up, pure and simple. The New York Newspaper Publishers want to

pay fewer workers for the same amount of work and make more money. While the technology involved in setting type has changed drastically in the last ten years, from hot type to cold type, presses remain basically the same. They are only a little faster and bigger. The plates have changed—the new plates are lighter and not as thick, but they are the same size as the old ones. There is no way that this change could cut in half the number of workers needed to run a press in safety and without tremendous strain and exertion.

In the recent Guild strike at the Daily News, the pressmen made their solidarity with the Guild absolutely clear—three pressmen were hurt on the picket line. The Guild has responded by backing the pressmen and refusing to cross their lines.

The publishers have threatened to produce and distribute their papers with scabs and rats if the strike lasts more than a few days. The Daily News thinks that they'll fly papers out in helicopters if push comes to shove, or in rented trucks.

"They'll make millions, no billions if they get away with this," a striker said. "They busted the pressmen at the Washington Post but in N.Y.C. all the unions are together." Another added, "With reduced manning, they'll take away our lunch breaks."

The strikers are strong and determined to win. The response of one pressman interviewed was this: "If a delivery truck crosses our line, it's war."

Dear Editor: Our Hospital Negotiations...

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Since my last letter there have been some major changes in the way negotiations have been going.

Our AFSCME Local was one of the first to offer support to the Harper-Grace Hospital workers strike. We walked the picket lines with the strikers and got other AFSCME Locals to support the strike. When our sister Local, 457, called a solidarity march and rally we joined in the work. Our bargaining committee came over from negotiations and joined our contingent of over 20 people from all three hospitals in our Local.

The support work had an effect on our own bosses. The Hospital Management Committee made a point in negotiations of raising that they knew who was on the picket line and when.

While the hospital committee made jokes about the city walk-out, we know it worried them plenty. The hospital finally stopped dragging its feet in negotiations when the Harper-Grace workers won their strike.

The hospital also saw our union sisters and brothers walking off the job for three days. The hospital knows the spread of labor militancy and solidarity sets an example and strengthens us in our fight.

125,000 CETA Jobs Slashed

NEW YORK, Aug. 10—The House of Representatives voted yesterday to cut \$1 billion from the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), thus slashing the number of CETA jobs by almost 125,000.

This callous act comes in the face of an unemployment rate that is rising, especially in Black and Latin and other poor communities.

While CETA programs have generally

given little real training in skills, it has provided much-needed jobs for hundreds of thousands who would otherwise be jobless.

Congress has been cutting all essential services, such as CETA and aid to senior citizens, while voting for the biggest military budget in history. They must be reminded that it's jobs that put the bread on the table, and not some piece of war machinery like a \$2 billion aircraft carrier.

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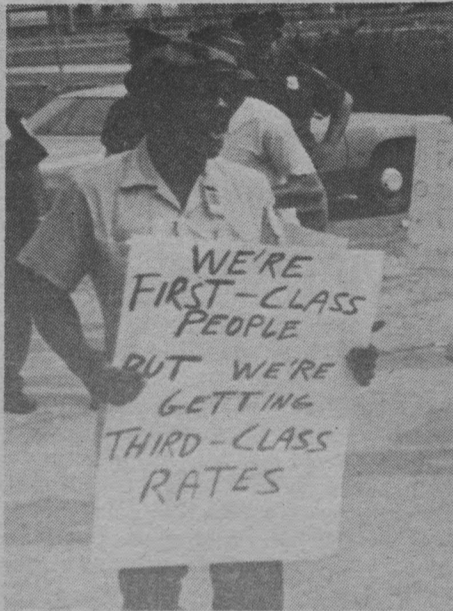
Journal of the N.J. Postal Wildcat

By a mailhandler from the Jersey City Bulk Mail Center

On Friday July 21, 1978, the workers at the New York Bulk and Foreign Mail Center in Jersey City, N.J., were involved in a wildcat strike which lasted five days. I kept a journal of the events, and the following article consists of the most recent entries in my "wildcat journal."

Wednesday morning, July 26—7:00 A.M.

Workers are talking about yesterday's decision by the New York Metro Local of the American Postal Workers Union to hold a strike vote later in the week. This is the moment we are waiting for. If the local votes to strike, our wildcat strike will continue with union sanctions. We are also listening



One of the many pickets at the Jersey City Bulk Mail Center. photo: G. Dunkel

to shop stewards from the New York Metro Local, telling us that if Metro votes to walk out the New York Local of the National Association of Letter Carriers will go out also.

We are ecstatic. This important vote could spark hundreds of thousands of postal workers to go out on strike against this stinking take-away contract. But for the time being it is the sentiment of the workers here to go back to work and push hard for everyone to vote "yes" for the strike.

It is getting close to starting time for my shift which is 8:00 A.M. The fired workers

standing around in front of Stella's Inn, our make-shift union hall, are telling the workers who are going back in that the fight for amnesty is closely linked to the struggle for a good contract. The solidarity here is tremendous.

7:55 A.M.

We are now walking past the spot where we were picketing. About ten feet from this spot is the first checkpoint. There seems to be a convention of postal inspectors and uniformed security guards with the latest array of movie spy cameras and walkie-talkies. This scene reminds me of the line the apartheid regime in South Africa forces Black people to go through when they report to work. We made it through OK only to repeat the same performance only 50 feet from the first checkpoint. The inspectors are carefully looking at our badges and referring to a list of names of people who have been fired. As we filed by, the inspectors would say, "God, how did we miss you?" I am getting very angry from this harassment.

Inside the facility, we can cut the atmosphere with a knife. No work is being done. We are standing around talking about the previous five days. We are asking about our fellow workers who have probably gotten fired. We hear that management is compiling more names for the chopping block. The atmosphere here is just like a prison. Some of us worked an entire day and received our notices to be terminated. Others got them within 15 minutes of entering the building. It is very difficult to work under these conditions. We do not know when or if we will be fired, and we are giving each other support saying that if we are fired, we will be in good company. We will fight hard to get everybody's job back with no reprisals.

During the day, I am talking with as many workers as I can about the injunction that basically says that not only is it a crime to strike but just talking strike also constitutes a crime.

Saturday, July 28

The judge has barred the New York Metro Local from taking a strike vote. We are angry as hell that this anti-labor judge is ramming these decisions down our throats. He is interfering with the internal affairs of our union, has tried to stifle our free speech, has revoked the 14th Amendment, the right

to withhold our labor against involuntary servitude. This is so true because we are working without a contract. Finally the injunction has set the stage for the arbitrary firing of over 100 workers in our facility.

The overwhelming feeling of the workers inside is that the fired workers should be rehired with full back pay. We are organizing a vote no campaign on the sell-out contract. We have spoken to lots of workers and everyone plans to vote no on the contract which steals from our pockets and

puts plenty into the pockets of the rich in the country. We feel that no foreman, judge, general manager, Postmaster General or President of the United States can tell us what to do or say. We also feel that our union leaders should not be coerced into accepting the terms of the all-encompassing injunction and that we as rank-and-file postal workers will continue the fight for a better life for not only ourselves and our families, but also for all workers and oppressed people.

500 at Stearns Miners Rally Say 'No Way' to Company Union



This banner, showing the determination of the Stearns miners to win, was presented at a rally of over 800 people on the second anniversary of their struggle. It was made by Faye Keith, vice-president of the Stearns Miners Women's Club.

By JAQLYN O'MALLEY

AUGUST 8—Despite intensified efforts by the Blue Diamond Coal Company to break the two-year-old strike of the Stearns miners, the workers "are determined to stick with the strike to get a United Mine Workers (UMW) contract," according to Faye Keith, vice-president of the Stearns Miners Women's Club.

"The company has been going like crazy," she continued, "to try to force the striking miners to abandon their struggle by setting up and 'recognizing' the Justus Employees Association as a bargaining agent representing scabs currently employed in the mine.

But strong voices of support for the Stearns miners sounded loud and clear on July 17 when 800 people gathered in the pouring rain to mark the second anniversary of the strike.

The company has resorted to its own "union" after the combined might of the company, the courts, police, the company's hired gun-thugs and strikebreakers all failed to crush the miners' determination. The company claims it does not have to negotiate or bargain with the UMW. In response to this, the UMW has filed unfair labor practice charges against Blue Diamond with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Of course, it must never be forgotten that the very purpose of the NLRB is give legality to all the bosses' unscrupulous acts against the workers once the NLRB has ruled in their favor.

If the NLRB decision goes against the UMW at this level, it can be appealed, and fought. And it could very well end at a higher level in a victory for the miners.

Such was the case when Sibley's Department Store in Rochester, N.Y., filed an NLRB suit against the Center for United Labor Action for its activities carried out in solidarity with the then-striking Farrah workers. At stake was labor's right to free speech and the rights of all workers to organize support and solidarity. Finally, after many months of battling, organizing and publicizing the case, the C.U.L.A. won with an appeal to the Washington NLRB.

This is only one example of workers' united determination and fighting spirit ending in victory.

The mine at Stearns has been shut down solid for two years, and the miners, their families and supporters are more than ever committed to fighting on. And this is despite all the pressures that have come to bear against them, from the increasing distortions in the press to police attacks.

But the miners and "the women are really getting strong," as Faye Keith puts it. "The miners could never work in that mine without a UMW contract because of the lack of safety. The Women's Club wouldn't want our husbands to go back."

The striking miners and their families need your support. Send contributions to: Stearns Miners Women's Club, P.O. Box 488, Stearns, Ky. 42647.

Atlanta Benefit Planned to Support the Two-Year Strike at Stearns, Kentucky

South Bend Park — Saturday, August 19 — 2 - 6 p.m.

— Entertainment — Watermelon — People's Auction —

Sponsored by the Atlanta Center for United Labor Action, telephone (404) 627-2801

Solidarity With J.P. Stevens' Workers

DETROIT, July 26—Delegates from the AFL-CIO State Convention representing unions such as AFSCME, Steelworkers, Building Trades and others, together with ACTWU (American Clothing and Textile Workers Union), confronted management at area department stores this week, successfully using labor muscle to get J.P. Stevens' sheets and towels off the shelves.

Stores in Michigan that have agreed to honor this boycott of J.P. Stevens products are K-Mart's, Sears and Wards. J.L.

Hudson's agreed to cut back. These agreements must be monitored, however, to insure compliance. Be sure to check the label when you buy.

Some AFL-CIO delegates were especially vigilant and spotted J.P. Stevens labels on the table cloths at the Hyatt-Regency Hotel where their convention was being held. Conventioneers made the hotel remove all these products, and for the rest of the convention sat at tables covered with white paper.

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Fraser Quits Carter Committee

NEW YORK, Aug. 1—United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser quit Carter's Labor-Management Group on July 19. "I cannot sit here seeking unity with the leaders of American industry," Fraser said, "while they try to destroy us and ruin the lives of the people I represent.

"I believe leaders of the business community with few exceptions have chosen to wage a one-sided class war

today in this country," he continued, "a war against working people, the unemployed, the poor, the very young and the very old, and many in the middle class in our society."

Reflecting the views of many rank and file auto workers, Fraser made a call to "reforge the links with those who believe in struggle, the kind of people who sat down in the factories in the 1930s and who marched in Selma in 1962."

In Detroit, Contract Violations and Forced Overtime Trigger— 3-Day City Workers Strike

Special to United Labor Action
DETROIT, Aug. 4—Sanitation workers and bus mechanics supported by Recreation Department, Election Board, "911" operators, bus drivers and Teamsters, launched a three-day strike at midnight, Monday, July 31. Although inhuman forced overtime in sanitation and transportation was the most publicized issue, the root of the strike was the city of Detroit's wholesale contract violations.

Up to 16 hours overtime per day, seven

days per week, was made mandatory. In addition, overtime was not scheduled in advance. Many unionists called it "outright slavery."

A very telling sign of how little regard the city administration has for the workers, their union, and their contract is the city's refusal to implement arbitration decisions favoring the union. According to the contract, arbitration is supposed to be binding on the city as well as the union.

Other issues included seven-day operation

without breaks, no transfer and seniority rights to court employees, abuse of out of class assignments and increase in "confidential" workers who have no union rights or equal pay.

Several weeks ago the unions initiated talks with the city in an attempt to resolve these issues, but the administration wouldn't budge. 3,500 city workers represented by six AFSCME locals were forced to strike.

On Tuesday afternoon, August 1, an injunction came down ordering the strikers back to work. Mayor Coleman Young demanded that all strikers ignoring the injunction be fired.

On Wednesday morning, in defiance of these edicts, the buses and garbage trucks didn't roll. Many workers recalled the recent example of the miners who faced down the President of the United States and Taft-Hartley injunction—and won.

Taking the mayor at his word, AFSCME municipal locals that hadn't joined the initial walkout prepared to shut the entire city down if any workers were fired.

Although some supporting locals had returned to work on Thursday morning, sanitation and bus mechanics held firm. Later that day the mayor agreed to meet with the President of Metro Detroit AFL-CIO Council, Tom Turner, and President of Michigan AFSCME Council 25, Bob Johnson.

The city, in a more agreeable mood promised they would reenter negotiations, live up to the contract and not discipline any strikers.

Although many workers were skeptical of the city's sincerity, and ready to stay out longer, all locals returned to work on Friday. AFSCME Local 312 voted to return to work for 30 days. If their grievances aren't settled in that time, the bus mechanics' local made it clear they are willing to go out again.

At a time when municipal workers' wages and working conditions across the country are being attacked, Detroit City workers have held the line. As the leaflet issued by AFSCME Council 25 said "Together we must turn this situation around!"

Haitians March for Human Rights



NEW YORK, Aug. 3—Some 300 Haitians and their supporters marched through Midtown Manhattan today demanding political asylum for Haitian refugees. The marchers, who kept the line 150 strong for a total of six hours, also demanded that the U.S. government stop supporting the corrupt and brutal dictatorship of Jean Claude Duvalier in Haiti.

Haitians form a large part of the population of undocumented workers in the New York area. They escape from Haiti by the hundreds each week, seeking refuge from the starvation, thirst and brutal repression they face in their homeland. Most often they try to go to the nearby Bahamas, by boat. Frequently they face extreme danger at sea, and recently nearly 200 died when their boats sank.

U.S. corporations dominate both Haiti and the Bahamas, so the refugees rightly feel their unemployment and desperation can ultimately be traced back to Wall Street. And, in response to those who claim the undocumented are a drain on the U.S. economy, one of the picket signs read "undocumented workers pay taxes, too."

Undocumented workers face desperate conditions here in the U.S., too. Forced by their illegal status to work at the most menial and difficult jobs, they are frequently blackmailed by their employers, who threaten to have them deported. But more and more undocumented workers are starting to organize openly, demanding asylum and union rights.

All workers will gain when undocumented workers win these rights and no longer have to accept starvation wages and horrible working conditions. Because, as the Postmaster General and New York's big newspaper publishers are now proving, bosses will try to get as much for as little as they can force out of workers. Bad conditions and lack of rights for one group of workers is a threat against all.

photo: G. Dunkel

—Stop Vepco's Rate Hike

continued from page 1

stained with the blood of elderly people and young children who have frozen to death or have been burned alive in houses cut off from electricity.

This is the VEPCO that now wants a \$246 million rate increase, an increase that would mean a 25% hike in residential electric bills.

In reluctant response to the demands of organizations like the C.U.L.A., the State Corporation Commission has scheduled regional hearings in September on this new proposed rate hike. In the Tidewater area, the hearing is set for September 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Chesapeake Civic Center. This inconvenient time—a working day following a holiday, and the day school children return to classes—isn't calculated to enable many poor and working people to attend. Even so, the SCC commissioners (all of whom were appointed by ex-governor Mills Godwin, a former VEPCO lawyer), can expect some stiff opposition to the rate hike.

The C.U.L.A. has drawn up a resolution opposing the rate hike and has sent copies to 70 Tidewater labor union locals and 25

adopt the resolution and present it to the SCC in September. The initial response has been extremely good. Union locals such as Teamsters 822 are planning on sending representatives to the hearing. Communication Workers Local 2202, and Retail Clerks Local 233, Hotel, Restaurant, & Cafeteria Workers Local 23, and Carpenters and Joiners Local 2514, among others have offered to work to help build public support for a denial of the rate hike. The NAACP in Norfolk is already planning to send a representative to the hearing.

C.U.L.A. members have been speaking at local union meetings, meetings of community organizations, and have spoken on a number of radio programs. In addition, C.U.L.A. is distributing copies of a new six-page brochure that details the truth behind VEPCO's mad drive for profits at the expense of the hard-pressed consumer.

With the labor unions and groups like the NAACP and Consumers Congress taking a stand against the rate hike, the SCC commissioners are beginning to feel that wrathful groundswell of opposition from the workshops, the factories, and the communities where VEPCO bills hit the hardest and where the anger is the most intense.

This year, the cry of "Say No to VEPCO!" will resound louder than ever before, so that even the sacred corporate boardrooms of

'Cut Taxes—Not Services'

By ANNE MAYES

NORFOLK, Aug. 3—"I had to wait 2½ years for a cost of living raise and that was only \$3.00 a week. When I saw that check I felt like telling the city council what they could do with their starvation raise," said a Norfolk city employee at a meeting tonight on a tax cut proposal. Several community civic league members organized the meeting to build support for a local Proposition 13 to lower Norfolk's property tax rate from its present levy of \$1.62 per \$100.00 to \$1.15 per \$100.00 of the assessed valuation as shown on the tax records of June 1978. To achieve this goal of a 25-30% reduction in taxes, some of the civic leagues have set a target of 30,000 signatures on petitions to be presented to city council on August 29.

The Coalition of Norfolk City Employees has worked hard to protect employees' jobs and demands. The coalition has also come out in opposition to a tax cut movement which, like Proposition 13, would result in widespread layoffs and cutbacks.

Some civic league members at tonight's meeting expressed concern over possible cuts in services if a tax cut is won. Black community leaders explained that their people have suffered the most in the process of past efforts by the city to lower the

budget. "The poor and the minorities are always going to be hurt when things have to be cut," said Mr. Raymond Pittman, a Black man from Chesterfield Heights. "We may get this tax cut, but are you then going to back the old man who has to go to the hospital and can't get a ride? Will you back the old people who don't have any food?" His important questions raised comments from the retired people present at the meeting.

While leaders of this petition drive for tax cuts pledged that the leagues would mobilize to oppose any cuts in areas like education or social services, they made no guarantees in their proposal that services would not be cut. Norfolk City Council is already famous for a housing plan that destroys Black and poor white communities without alternative low income housing available. And these local politicians have been quick to approve spending for exclusive neighborhood improvements, as well as many projects aimed to attract and benefit businessmen. What is really needed is a tax reform movement that increases social services, educational, housing, and all benefits, at the expense of big corporations and the military budget.

—N.Y. Postal Workers Nix Contract

continued from page 1

postal workers. Under the threat of felony charges (Postmaster General Bolger sent out over 500,000 letters threatening postal workers with firing and arrests if they strike and dare to struggle for a decent contract), the Post Office is trying to shove a disgraceful contract down the workers' throats. But they're not going to have an easy time of it.

The terms of the contract agreed upon are a two, three, and five percent increase respectively over the three years of the contract, in face of the government's projection of an inflation rate of greater than 10% a year. The Cost of Living Adjustment is not to exceed \$500 regardless of the rate of inflation.

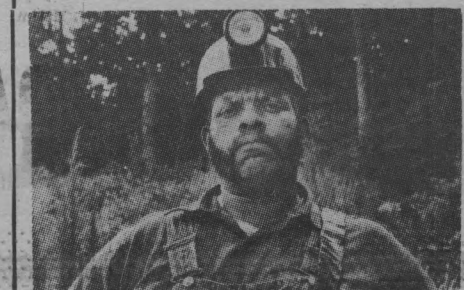
Everyone felt that such a humiliating contract cannot go without being challenged.

And it didn't! Almost immediately after the contract terms were announced, gut anger erupted in the bulk mailing centers in New Jersey and San Francisco, where a wildcat kept 90% of the workers out. These reporters, both members of the NALC but at different P.O.'s, saw anger and bitterness over the terms of the contract.

The Rank and File Bargaining Advisory Committee which represents a national cross-section of the American Postal Workers Union members, voted overwhelmingly to reject the contract. At the NALC National Convention held this week in Chicago, 5,000 delegates voted to reject the contract. Voting has already begun on the contract and the votes ought to be tabulated by Aug. 25, and if our stations are any criteria to be measured by, the vote will be 100% NO.

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