

the rank and file in action

# Labor Today

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Mar. 1975



LET'S USE SOME COMMON SENSE...

# Don't 'share the misery' stand up and be counted

# Labor Today

by FRED GABOURY  
National Field Organizer  
TUAD

Contracts covering about 2½ million workers expire this year. These brothers and sisters will be face to face with the question of whether or not they can put together enough muscle so that they (and the whole US working class) can catch up with, get ahead and stay ahead of rising prices and increases in productivity.

This year's talks take place in the midst of the sharpest economic crisis in thirty years. Big business, its spokesmen in the media and its servants at all levels of government, hope to take advantage of growing unemployment and its attendant fears and apprehensions, to cow workers into settlements dictated on their terms.

There are already the first results of this brainwashing as employers everywhere attempt to take back everything that isn't nailed down:

● Construction laborers in the Chicago area passed up a previously negotiated wage increase.

● Midwest IBEW leaders, in a "share the misery" move, have agreed to a four-day work week (at four days' pay) as a "solution" to the high unemployment rate in construction.

● Guildsmen at the Washington Post have come up with the same gimmick, made even worse by their public pledge to perform as much work as done previously.

● Irving Bluestone, Director of the UAW's General Motors Department, has suggested that COLA increases go, instead, to SUB funds.

● Chicago Newspaper Publishers Association, arrogantly flaunting a "final offer," are depending upon a pliant union leadership to put a union label on a contract settlement that would deprive a third of the city's newspaper workers of their jobs.

This is a hell of a way to run a railroad and unless a groundswell develops from below this concern for corporate profits will gut 1975 negotiations. The "no-fight" drift that has characterized the US labor movement for the past several years will go on. The living standards of all US workers will continue their downhill slide.

In order to develop a fighting movement in defense of their living standards workers are going to have to keep a couple of things in mind:

● Workers are not responsible for the mess that the economy is in. We didn't jack up the price of food. We didn't raise rents or hike the price of steel, electricity or new cars. We haven't gotten any fancy tax breaks. No one is paying us any subsidies. (We can't depend on Ford, the Democrats in Congress or George Meany to get us any either.)

● While our wages have declined to the point that they buy less than they bought in 1967, the banks and corporations have been making out like gang-busters. Their profits, sweated out of the hides of millions of workers--men and women, young and old, Black, Brown, Red, Yellow and White, are at the highest rate in history and they're in a mad scramble to push them even higher.

● Neither working people nor union leaders have any obligation to anyone to worry about profits. We've got enough to worry about just trying to make ends meet. Our needs are the bosses' costs--they's why we built our unions in the first place. That's why we're fighting to make them watchdogs of the workers' interests instead of corporation lap dogs.

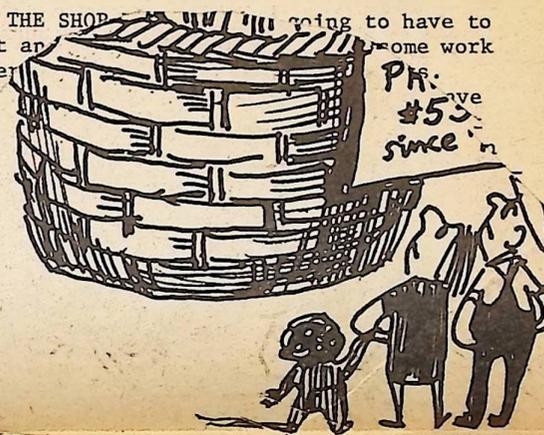
● Workers fell behind the cost of living by an average of \$304 last year. Without a fight, we'll be even worse off this year. That means that we're going to have to come up with some pretty hefty economic demands if we're going to fill the bill.

WE'VE GOT TO MOVE the demand for a six-hour day at no reduction in pay into the center of the bargaining table. The uncompensated-for increases in productivity over the last 25 years justify this demand,

to say nothing of the fact that a shorter work day is key in providing jobs for those who need jobs.

THOSE OF US SADDLED with contracts negotiated in '74 or '73 are going to have to generate a head of steam and re-open our contracts in order to re-negotiate wages and pensions. (Imagine contracts with government imposed wage increases of 5.5% and less--and there are millions of workers covered by them--in a situation where food prices have increased by as much as 50% in the last year.)

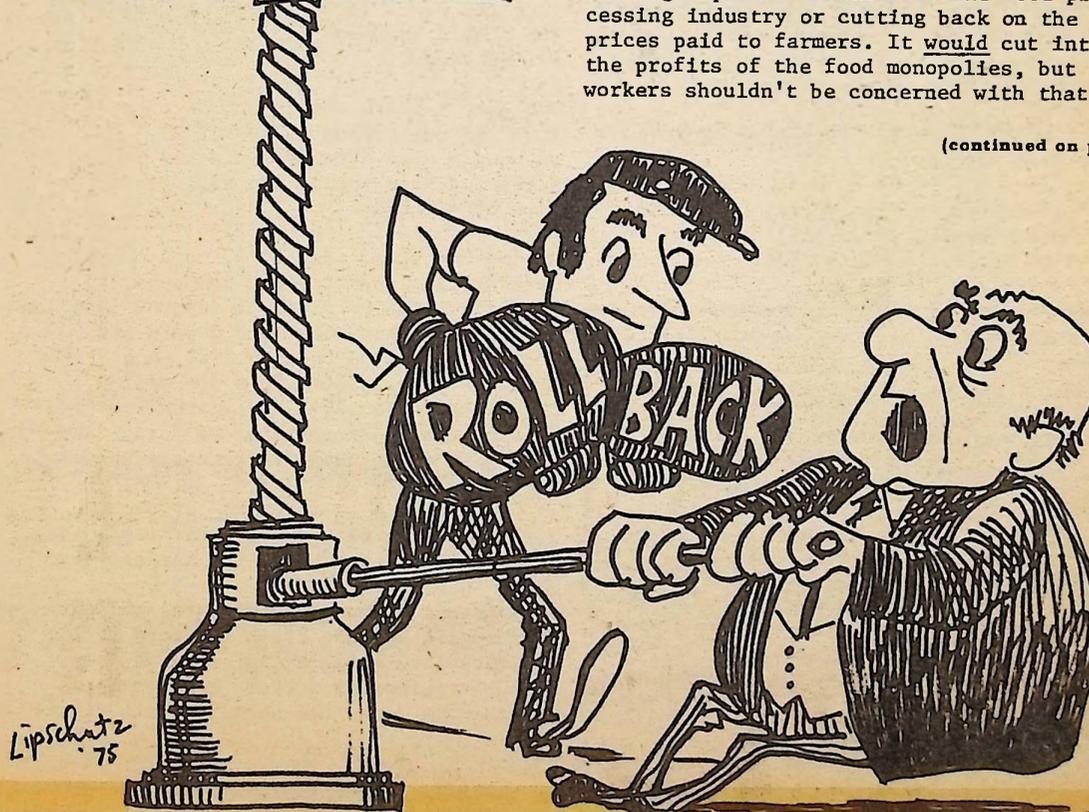
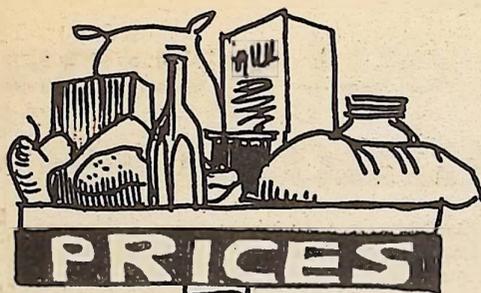
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ON PRICES--it doesn't take a genius to understand that there's only one solution: Roll 'em back and freeze them. Wack 20% off the present prices of food, rent and clothing, and we'll be well on the road to taking the worst sting out of inflation and unemployment.

Some say that it can't be done. It's true that it hasn't been done before. But prices have been controlled by Congressional action before. Food prices could be rolled back 20% (even more) without disturbing the wages paid to workers in the food processing industry or cutting back on the prices paid to farmers. It would cut into the profits of the food monopolies, but workers shouldn't be concerned with that

(continued on p. 7)



# Rank & file movement gets off the ground

by John Sutherland, Mike Knopp and Vic McKinley  
J.I. Case Bettendorf Works  
UAW Local 858  
Arrowhead Rank & File Committee

We began our organizing around contract issues during contract negotiations in June, 1974. We held our meetings in the Arrowhead Tavern. Our concern was that we not sell ourselves short in this contract. The industry was making tremendous profit gains and the Case company was no exception. We'd seen earlier contracts and had compared them to the one we were then working under and it was plain to us that we'd made no major changes in our contract in at least 10 years.

Money-wise, we'd averaged less than a 20-cent gain per year. We couldn't believe that we'd negotiated a perfect contract 10 years ago, and should have been content with that document forever. We knew better, than that from our experiences on the shop floor. We felt that this was the year for a breakthrough contract. A complete rewriting.

We issued a leaflet at the strike-vote meeting and led a floor fight on some of the basic issues. We were stunned that the local leadership was not pressing for the gains that could have been made. We were also becoming aware of how splintered the rank and file members were -- there was little unity and no rank and file leadership.

No one seemed to know what a strike vote was about nor did they seem aware of their right to know about negotiations. Nor did they exercise their authority as the rank and file to find out about and direct the negotiations.

We realized then that we had a task of unifying and educating. The company operates as a single unified entity -- so must the union. We began a struggle to educate the membership on their rights as the final authority in the UAW.

We are fighting to get greater membership participation in membership meetings,

trying to change them from rubber stamp sessions to exercises in rank and file leadership.

Our efforts to activate the membership did not go unnoticed by the local union leadership. In an effort to pacify us they picked one of our early leaders for Chairman of the Local Union's Education Committee. For some time we carried on our struggle through that Committee. We began New Member Orientation and Stewards Training Sessions. We ran the Local's picnic and we've shown Labor History films at the membership meetings. We also led a struggle over Safety and Health issues in the plant. That struggle is not over yet.

But we've realized recently that we cannot abandon the Arrowhead Rank and File Committee. We see now that in order to unify and activate the membership, to educate them on how to exert their authority we cannot rely only on the Education Committee. We must use both the Education Committee and the Rank and File Committee in the struggle.

We've now reached the point where we have sufficient leaders to carry on that dual fight and we are looking forward to the coming weeks with excitement over the new possibilities for the growth of the rank and file movement.

## VICTORY

### \$20,000 damages for red-baiting

by LABOR TODAY STAFF

When Mike Holodnak of Milton, Conn., was fired from his job last spring, it looked as though he was up against an unbeatable combination -- a redbaiting boss and an indifferent union.

Last month, however, he won both the right to his job and nearly \$20,000 in lost pay and damages from the company.

Holodnak, a frequent contributor to LABOR TODAY, was fired for authorizing an article in a local newsletter that was critical of both the company and the union leadership. After learning of the article, the company -- Avco Industries of Stratford, Conn., -- dismissed him from his job. Holodnak appealed the firing through the union-- UAW Local 1010--to an arbitrator, only to find that the union had aided the company in accomplishing his ouster.

Holodnak had criticized the company for union busting and scored the union leadership for their less-than-militant defense of the workers in the plant. When the case came before the government-appointed arbitrator, the union representatives did not object to questions from the management about Holodnak's political associations and beliefs. The arbitrator upheld the company's right to fire him.

Holodnak then sued the company, charging that his democratic right to free speech had been violated. He asked \$9113 in back wages and \$10,000 in punitive damages. A federal judge ruled in his favor recently, saying that the violations of free speech were so transparent that he was compelled to grant the suit.



(continued on p. 7)

## WE NEED A SHORTER WORKWEEK

# Layoffs wipe out gains for women, minorities

by JIM WILLIAMS, Co-Editor  
LABOR TODAY

The workers stood huddled against the cold, their breaths making vapor trails against the morning. Their eyes were focused on the boss standing on the loading dock.

"O.K., who'll work for a dollar?" Everyone's hand went up.

"Who'll work for fifty cents?" This time, fewer hands went up, but still plenty.

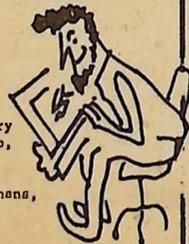
"Alright, who'll work for a quarter?" This time the hands were fewer and they hesitated as they went up. It was this group that the boss picked to work on the dock. The others hunched into their collars and walked away....

Who hasn't heard this story or ones like it from the depression of the 1930's? Millions of people were clawing for a few lousy jobs. God help you if you were Black, Latino or a woman.

During Christmas week 1974, more people were drawing unemployment compensation than since the program was enacted into law in 1937. In that week, there were more people unemployed than in 1940, one of the downturn years of the 30's depression. Sure, the percentages today aren't as bad as back then--but in terms of actual numbers of people unemployed, people are hurting plenty.

Things haven't changed in other ways, too. Minorities and women are the hardest hit.

In a matter of months, the gains of years of struggle against discriminatory hiring practices are going up in smoke as low-seniority minority workers and women are kicked back on to the street. Civil rights



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by the EDITOR

Today the nation is in the midst of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930's. Everyone is getting into the act with a solution.

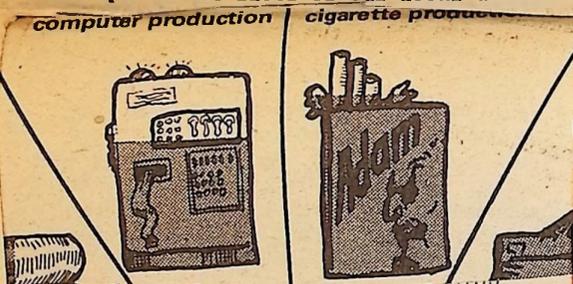
First it's President Ford with a fancy tax rebate-tax increase proposal that means more of the same--higher prices, higher taxes, higher unemployment, higher profits.

Then Speaker of the House Carl Albert comes along with his demand for standby wage controls.

Finally, George Meany calls a meeting of the General Council of the AFL-CIO to offer "labor's" solution.

A common thread runs through all of these Programs: the need for belt-tightening and bullet-biting. Workers are asked to increase productivity at the same time that decisions are made to hold the line on Social Security increases. A request for a three billion dollar appropriation to provide aid and jobs for unemployed workers is "balanced" with a proposal to increase military spending by 11 billion dollars. U.S. workers are threatened with new fuel and gasoline price increases while, at the same time, Secretary of State Kissinger threatened the world with renewed U.S. military intervention in Southeast Asia and new military adventures in the Middle East.

There are better solutions than those offered by Ford, the Democratic Party leaders of the Meany top brass. We think that they are going to have to be fought for on the shop floor, in the unemployment lines and on the floor of our local unions.



prices and unemployment require facts and information. So we put LT's research department on the case. We told them to do some digging--to find out what was behind the continuing decline in our living standards. We told them to pay particular attention to food and fuel prices and to find out why they were so damned high. We asked them to do some research into the question of productivity. And we asked them to take a look at military spending.

We hope that their work will make it easier for you to get a fight-back going in your local union.

Frank Rosen, President of UE District 11 helped prepare the material, as did our friends in the Research Department of the Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butcher Workmen. We got help from Labor Research Associates in New York. (For a concise monthly newsletter dealing with economic questions, subscribe to their ECONOMIC NOTES. It costs \$3 a year. Order from LRA, 799 Broadway, NY, NY 10033.)

We borrowed extensively from the NEW YORK TIMES, PROGRESSIVE, NEW REPUBLIC and the booklet "Why Do We Spend So Much Money" published by Popular Economics Press. (It's well worth the single copy price of 90¢ plus a dime postage. Their address is 5A Putnam St., Somerville, Mass. 02143.)

# Facts to fight the crisis

by LABOR TODAY  
Research Staff

## The market basket

Every three months the government figures out the annual food bill for a family of four. They've even given it a fancy name--Market Basket of Farm Foods. This Market Basket total is divided into two parts--the amount paid to the farmer and the amount that goes to everybody else; some for wages, some for storage and packing, some for profits.

At the beginning of Nixon's "controls" program (August, 1971) the market basket cost \$1,260. Now it's \$1,798. That's an increase of \$538 to the consumer.

We are told that there are two reasons for this--high wages to workers in the food processing industry and farmers who are making a killing.

## What about wages?

In 1956 there were 188,000 production workers in the packinghouse industry. Their hourly wages averaged \$2.08. Each worker put out 64.2 pounds of meat each hour. That's an average wage cost per pound of 3.24 cents.

By October 1974 the number of packinghouse workers had declined to 139,000. They were averaging \$5.32 per hour. Each worker was handling 124.7 pounds of meat per hour. Wage cost per pound: 4.19 cents.

Consider some other facts about wages paid to the some two million workers in the food processing industry:

- Cannery workers average \$3.00 per hour, when they work.
- Poultry workers--many of them in the non-union South--average \$2.34.
- Thousands more work at the rock-bottom minimum wage level that's \$2.00 per hour.
- Farmworkers get 1½ cents for every head of lettuce they harvest.

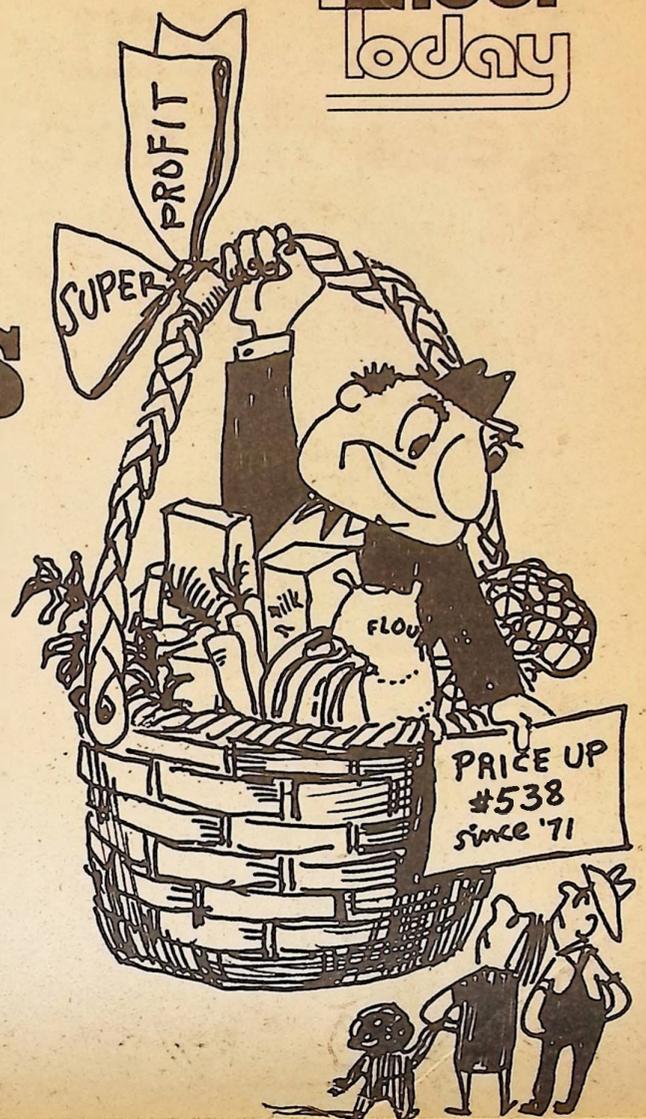
Sure shoots holes in that high-wages stuff, doesn't it?

## How about the farmer?

During the last 3½ years the cost of the market basket increased by \$538 (from \$1,260 to \$1,798). But of this \$538 increase, only \$236 went to the farmer.

Some farmers have made it big in the last couple of years. They're the big agribusiness outfits and they were doing pretty good even before:

- One percent of all farms produce 25% of all food.



- In 1972 the giant farm monopolies collected the lion's share of the \$5 billion in subsidies the government shelled out for not planting crops on 60 million acres of land.

But Farmer Brown, the family farmer, has been left out in the cold:

- More than ½ of all farms make less than \$5,000 per year before expenses.
- One and one-half million farmers live below the poverty level.
- Every week 1,000 farmers go broke.

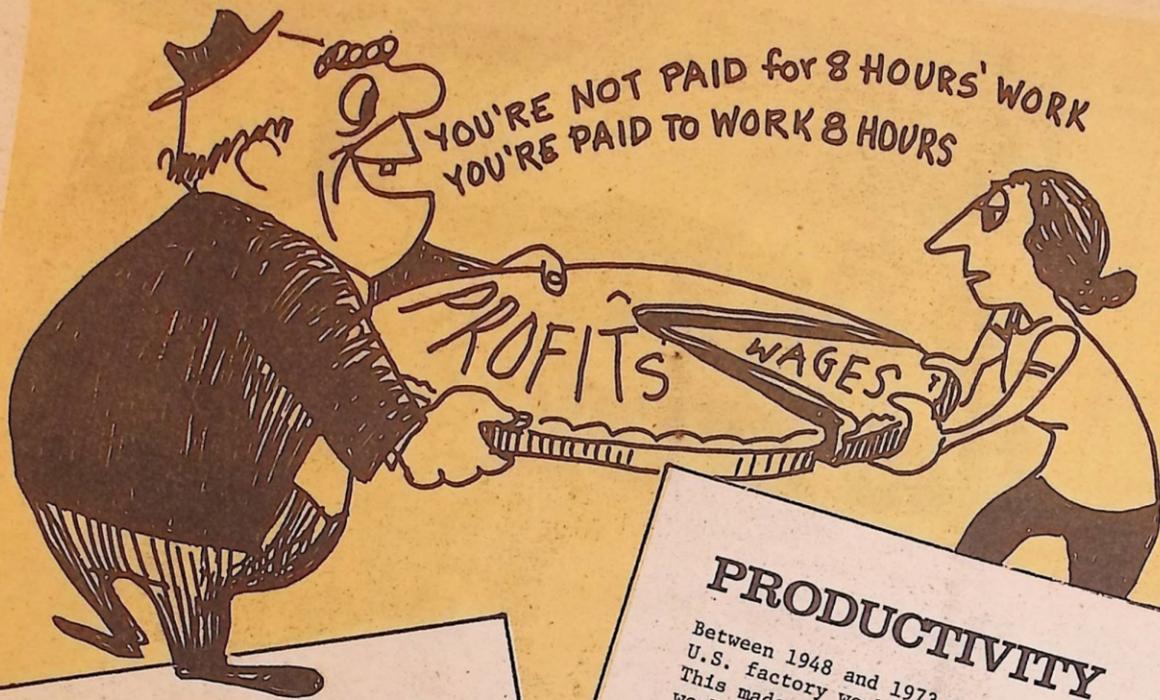
## Who's cashing in?

Safeway Stores, Inc. boosted its profits by 51% during the first nine months of 1974. At Kroger they did even better--profits up 94%. Iowa Beef, the nation's largest beef packer, took in 50% more. DelMonte, kingpin of the canning industry, upped its take 42% and Pillsbury tagged along with "only" a 32% jump. (The old record, set when A&P registered a 525%+ increase in between October '72 and October '73 was eclipsed when Great Western Sugar shook down consumers for enough to increase profits by 2,000 percent!)

## It pays to monopolize

There are between 35 and 45 major food lines in the market. Over the past several years Wall Streeters have been moving in on all of them. They have made special targets of 13 of these food lines.

(continued on page 6)



## OUR SHARE

A dollar-for-dollar for comparison between what workers get and what they produce shows that our share is going downhill. In 1947, for every dollar a worker got in wages and fringes, he produced \$2.37. By 1969 he produced \$3.09 for every buck of wages and fringes he got.

Or putting it another way: In '47 it took 3 hours and 23 minutes of the work day for a factory worker to produce as much as he got paid in wages and fringes. In '69 it took 2 hours and 36 minutes. That means the bosses were able to steal an additional 47 minutes from every worker every day by job overloading, speed-up and job combination.

JUST TO GET BACK THAT 47 MINUTES WOULD TAKE A 30% WAGE INCREASE!

## ENERGY

There's a lot of hoopla about the energy crisis again these days. Workers are told that they'll have to sacrifice; that Ford's threat to slap a \$3.00 per barrel tax on imported oil will mean a 10-15 cent-a-gallon increase at the gas pump.

Before falling for that line, take a look at what happened in the last year or so:

- In October 1973 the oil producing countries were getting something less than \$4.00 for a 42-gallon barrel of oil. The average price went up to \$10.80 last December. The per gallon price went up 16.2¢--from 9.5¢ to 25.7¢.

- Only a third of our gasoline comes from imported oil. Therefore, a 5.44¢ per gallon increase on all gas would have taken care of the 16.2¢ per gallon increase in imported oil. But what happened? Instead of 5.4¢ the price (according to the Consumer Price Index) went up 20¢.

- IN OTHER WORDS, THE OIL MONOPOLY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ITS CONTROL OF THE MARKET (AND THE GOVERNMENT) TO ADD 15¢ IN PURE PROFIT TO THE PRICE OF EACH GALLON OF GAS.



## PRODUCTIVITY

Between 1948 and 1973 productivity of U.S. factory workers increased by 181%. This made it possible for 14½ million workers to produce three times as much in 1973 as 13 million workers produced in 1948.

A factory worker with three dependents averaged \$62.42 per week take home pay in 1948. By 1973 the figure was \$142.90 --up 129%. Prices climbed 85% over the same period, leaving purchasing power up only 24%. That's not much of an increase for a three-fold increase in production!

## MONOPOLY PAYS

There are 213 major industries in the United States. In each of them, a few firms control an average of 42 percent of the business. This concentration of power is an unbeatable combination -- a red-baiting boss and an indifferent union.

This concentration of power is an unbeatable combination -- a red-baiting boss and an indifferent union. Last month, however, he won both the right to his job and nearly \$20,000 in lost pay and damages from the company.

The Federal Trade Commission today, a frequent contributor to higher--the top four companies control 60% of steel production.

## PORTRAIT OF A MONOPOLY

At latest count, Safeway owned more than 2,400 supermarkets, 109 manufacturing and processing plants, 16 produce packaging plants, 16 bakeries, 19 milk and 16 ice cream plants, four soft drink bottlers, three meat processors, three coffee roasting plants, a soap and peanut butter and salad oil factory, plus a fleet of 2,100 trucks and 60 distribution warehouses.

Some Safeway directors are also directors of the Bank of California, General Electric, Wells Fargo Bank, Shell Oil, Pacific Gas and Electric, Caterpillar Tractor and Owens-Illinois Manufacturers.



## These corporation avoided 1973 income tax

TEN major corporations in the United States racked up \$976 million in profits but paid no federal income taxes for the tax year of 1973, according to a recent congressional study.

The study was prepared by the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation. Assistance was given by the General Accounting Office.

In addition to the 10 companies that got a free tax ride, another 20 corporations making profits of more than \$5 billion managed to pay an effective federal corporate tax rate of between 1 per cent and 10 per cent. Their total federal income tax amounted to slightly under \$227 million.

Nothing illegal was done by the corporations in lowering their tax rates. They simply took advantage of the multitude of tax subsidies which have been enacted into the tax laws over the years.

The statutory tax rate for the corporations involved is 48 per cent. Yet the study discovered that altogether some 143 companies were paying 23.6 per cent less than one-half the statutory rate. Oil companies usually paid the lowest rates.

Following are the 10 major corporations paying no federal income tax in 1973--followed by the major companies that paid less than 10 per cent federal income tax:

Freeport  
Texas  
United  
Trans  
ConEd  
Ameri  
Weste  
Cherr  
Bank  
Cont

Inte  
Ke  
LT  
A  
O  
T  
C

ations  
income taxes

Company	Net Profit Before Income Tax	Approximate Effective Rate
Freeport Minerals Co.	\$ 23,958,000	Zero
Texas Gulf Inc.	67,442,000	Zero
United Airlines	98,711,000	Zero
Trans World Airlines	58,583,000	Zero
ConEd of New York	203,319,000	Zero
American Electric Power	194,285,000	Zero
Western Bancorporation	97,730,000	Zero
Chemical New York Corp.	74,765,000	Zero
Bankers Trust N.Y. Corp.	51,673,000	Zero
Continental Illinois Corp.	105,818,000	Zero
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 976,284,000</b>	<b>0.05</b>
International Harvester Co.	78,328,000	0.4
Kennecott Copper Corp.	211,980,000	1.2
LTV Corp.	65,171,000	1.4
Anaconda Co.	76,061,000	1.8
Occidental Petroleum Corp.	80,503,000	2.3
Texaco Inc.	1,317,300,000	2.5
Chase Manhattan Corp.	170,691,000	3.1
Gulf Oil Corp.	749,000,000	3.2
McDonnell Douglas Corp.	200,245,000	3.5
Standard Oil Co. of Ohio	113,008,000	4.5
El Paso Natural Gas Co.	105,134,000	5.0
Mobil Oil	873,027,000	6.5
Uniroyal, Inc.	55,725,000	7.1
International Minerals & Chemicals	73,614,000	7.5
Chrysler Corp.	353,700,000	7.6
Gulf & Western Industries	71,028,000	9.0
National Cash Register Co.	91,819,000	9.1
Southern Railway Co.	106,154,000	9.6
Union Oil Co. of Calif.	205,263,000	9.9
Continental Oil Co.	287,804,000	9.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,285,555,000</b>	



## UNEMPLOYMENT

More than a million workers lost their jobs in the last two months of 1974. In the last week of December, 630,000 workers joined the unemployment compensation rolls. This was the highest single-week increase since the program began in 1937.

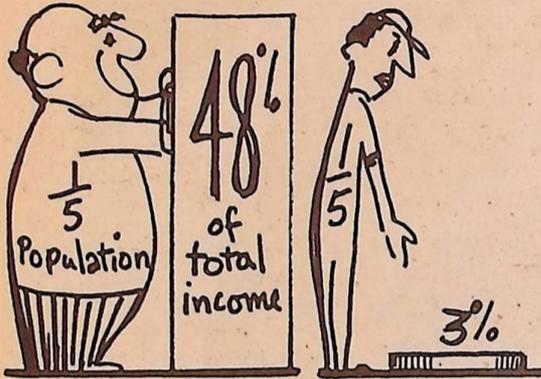
Automobile workers and construction workers felt the hardest pinch. They were joined by more than 500,000 workers laid off in manufacturing, another 50,000 workers axed in the construction industry (bringing the year-long total to 305,000) and 135,000 retail workers who saw their jobs vanish.

By year's end more than six and a half million workers were on the bricks and mortar at 7.1 percent. Neither figure tells the whole story:

- There are 850,000 "discouraged workers" who have given up looking for non-existent jobs. Because of this, they are not counted as "unemployed."
- For Blacks, the unemployment rate was 11.5%, for persons of Spanish origin the figure was 8.2% and for whites, 5.5%.
- Among Black teenagers, unemployment stood at more than 36%.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that female heads of households faced the "bleakest job market." By December their unemployment rate was 2½ times the rate of their male counterpart.

## The rich get richer

In 1968 the poorest fifth of families received only 3% of total income, while the richest fifth was taking in 48%. In other words, the income of the richest 20% is nearly equal to all the income received by everyone else in the nation. And within this top 20%, the top 5% of families amassed 22% of total income.



The effect of the federal income tax on all this has been very slight. The income share of the richest fifth is cut less than 2% after taxes. Despite a nominal tax rate of 50% to 70% for people in that bracket, the effective rate of tax is more like 25%. This is because high income taxpayers can take advantage of such provisions as preferential treatment of capital gains, percentage depletion allowances, and exclusions of interest on state and local bonds.

In general, earned income such as wages and salaries, which most families depend on, is subject to much higher effective tax rates than property income, such as dividends, interest and rent. This reflects the fact that U.S. tax legislation

## Time to make congress act

Here's a rank and file program to get Congress moving:

- Roll back prices
- Jobs for all at union conditions
- Shorter work-day no cut in pay
- Slash the military budget

is designed primarily to protect and encourage private investment. And the only people with money to invest are rich people.

Traditional political reforms have not prevented the continuing maldistribution of income and wealth. Despite various poverty and welfare programs, and while the country experiences a general rise in income, the absolute dollar difference between the families at the bottom and those at the top grows wider each year. One is forced to conclude that if change is to occur, more fundamental approaches are necessary.

Source: Uncommon Law, April 1974, newsletter of the Philadelphia Chapter, National Lawyers Guild



## Military spending

The United States and the Soviet Union both have enough atomic weapons to blow each other off the map several times over. The US has enough A and H bombs laying around to equal 615,000 Hiroshimas.

There's enough wallop on the world scene to equal 15 tons of TNT for every man, woman and child alive, and each year 40 to 50 billion dollars are wasted adding to the stockpiles.

More than 240 billion dollars of the world's resources are squandered in military spending. If the Ford Administration's request for military budget of 113 billion dollars is approved, the US will account for 45% of this world-wide waste.

Global military spending gobbles up more money than is spent to educate a billion school-aged children. World-wide military spending is greater than the total spent to provide health care for a population of nearly four billion.

The US stands at the head of the list in-so-far as military spending is concerned. It ranks fourth in per capita expenditures for public education, fifth in health care. Uncle Sam is 12th in the number of teachers relative to its school age population, 17th in physicians relative to total population, 13th in infant mortality rates.

Many labor leaders defend military spending because it provides jobs. The opposite is true. On a dollar-for-dollar basis, the same amount of money that provides a million jobs in the armaments industry would provide 1-3/4 million jobs for factory workers making goods for peaceful use. It would provide nearly 2-1/4 million construction jobs building homes, schools and hospitals. It would provide more than 3 million public service jobs.

## Corporate gain is workers loss

While 1973 was a record-breaking profit year for American business as a whole, it was a "mind-boggling" year for the 500 largest industrial corporations, according to *Fortune* magazine's latest annual study of the giant industrial U.S. corporations.

According to *Fortune*, "in a year when the economy was setting a blistering pace, their combined sales showed the sharpest year to year gain (10.6 percent) in the history of the list, and so did their combined profits (up a breathtaking 39 percent)."

The magazine points out that inflation helped produce these outstanding corporate results. *Fortune*, however, does not indicate the effect of inflation on workers' living standards. According to government figures, the corporations' gain was the workers' loss. The corporate price increases that brought these record profits reduced workers' weekly purchasing power by 1.5 percent in 1973.

In 1972, these industrial giants took \$1,896 in net profit for each of their

employees; this profit-take per employee jumped sharply in 1973 to \$2,490.

The economic strength of these 500 industrial corporations is immense. Of the 212,000 industrial corporations in the United States these 500 corporations took 79 percent of the profits registered by all corporations in 1973, with 211,500 corporations sharing in the remaining 21 percent.

The domination of these "500" has grown tremendously over the years. When *Fortune* first began to compile this list, in 1955, the "500" employed 44 percent of all industrial employees and took 53 percent of all profits. In 1973, the "500" employed 76 percent of all industrial employees, and, as stated above, took 79 percent of all profits.

## Facts to fight the crisis

(continued from p. 3)

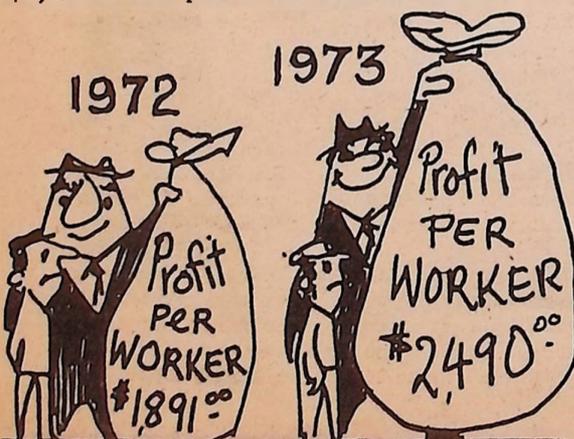
Take United Brands, formerly United Fruit. It controls more than 50 percent of the U.S. banana market. During 1968 and '69, U.B. bought out at least six major lettuce and celery growers in order to seize a "non-pre-emptible position as leader in fresh and semi-processed salad products." (United Brands later was able to raise the price of fresh lettuce by 90¢ a carton.)

Lettuce and celery have not been the only "successes" of the conglomerate take-over of the food industry. Today four firms control 90% of breakfast cereal sales. Four others account for 75% of the sales of bread and prepared flour. Four outfits

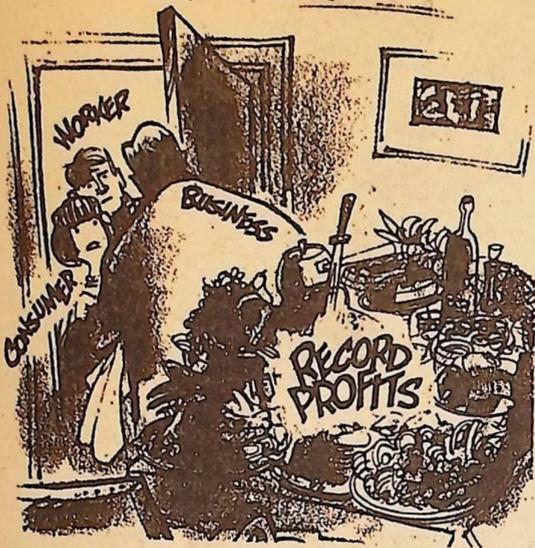


control 65% of the baking industry, 60% of the fluid milk and 70% of the dairy industry. Four corporations sell 65% of the sugar, 56% of processed meats, 80% of all canned goods. Campbell's produces 90% of all the canned soups in the country.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, monopoly control of the food industry is responsible for adding more than 2 billion dollars to the nation's grocery bill each year.



'Sorry, I'm Lunching Alone!'



## Don't 'share the misery'

when people are going around without enough to eat.

There's a simple, common-sense answer to unemployment. We've got to put the country back to work. That means jobs for all at union conditions; not penny-ante "public service employment" at poverty-level wages. It's very simple: We need houses, we need schools and hospitals and we need jobs. Let's make Congress figure out a way to match 'em up!

Common sense tells us that we've got to face up to the question of military spending if we're going to come up with a solution to the crisis. Stop and think about it: By its very nature military spending is self-defeating. It squanders the nation's human, natural and industrial resources. It dries up jobs instead of creating them. Military spending that gobbles up nearly a half of the nation's federal budget is the chief culprit behind high interest rates; high taxes on workers, and deficit spending. Congressional acquiescence to military spending--or new military adventures--will make matters worse, not better, for workers.

The corporate-government gang-up against workers and their unions requires this two-fronted fight back on the economic and legislative fronts. Unless we swing and land solidly in the pocket books of the giant corporations, we'll be counted out when the statistics are in at the end of the year.

It's a big job. It won't be easy. It was a big job to take on Tony Boyle and Sam Evett. But both jobs were undertaken and were done. We can do this one, too!

## Layoffs wipe out gains

(continued from p. 2)

programs that looked good in a time of relatively full employment are found to be almost worthless as the jobless lines grow.

Minorities and women aren't taking this situation without a fight. They and their unions in many cases are filing suits against employers, charging that the layoffs by strict seniority are reinforcing a past practice of discrimination.

In waging this battle to retain equal employment opportunities, workers are finding that employers are again anxious to use

write on

## SOME MILLER SUPPORTERS ALSO VOTED 'NO'

To the Editors:

Your discussion of the new coal contract in the January 1975 issue is one-sided.

You argue that a vote against the contract was a vote for the coal companies. This is not only untrue, but it is an insult to the nearly 35,000 miners (44% of the total) who voted against the contract.

LABOR TODAY makes it appear as if districts which voted for Miller in 1972 voted for the contract in 1974, and vice versa.

You say that the "for" votes were: "...offset by 'no' votes from three districts, western Kentucky, Illinois and the far West--strongholds of supporters of Tony Boyle."

I am sure the miners of Illinois will be surprised to hear their state was a stronghold for Tony Boyle. In 1972, 63.9% of Illinois miners voted for Arnold Miller; only two other districts in the whole union gave Miller a higher percentage of their votes! Illinois miners, moreover, rejected the contract by a slim margin of 51% to 49%.

Statistics do not confirm your point that the anti-contract vote was an anti-Miller vote.

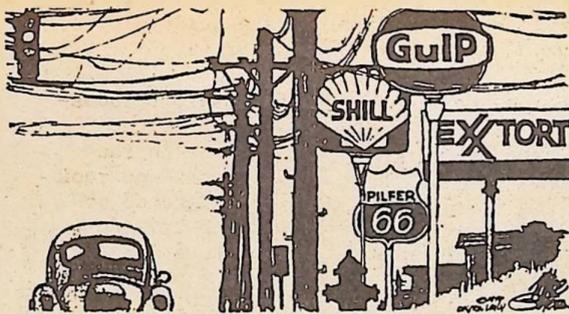
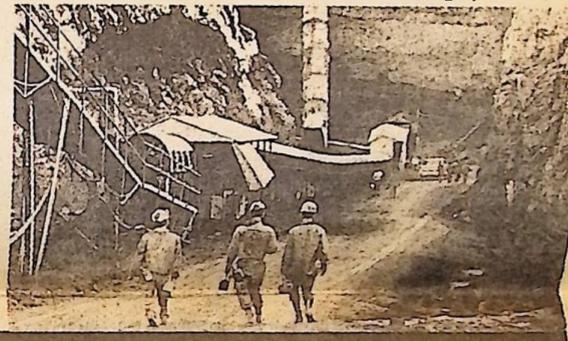
The vigorous discussions which took place across the coal fields are signs of a healthy and democratic union. Tens of

thousands of coal miners felt that they could win more from the profit-bloated (up nearly 200% in 1974) coal operators with another trip to the bargaining table. The miners know that the biggest oil, steel and electric power monopolies in the world own the mines they work in. They also know their wages are being cut by inflation, and wanted a bigger share of the operators' windfall profits.

Many people voted against the contract because of inadequate wage increases of 10%, 4% and 3%, because they did not win the right to strike over unresolved local grievances, and because pension rates differ between those who have already retired, those who will retire, and the disabled and their widows.

Even the majority of the miners who voted for the contract didn't label those who opposed it as company agents or Boyle supporters.

Paul Nyden  
Pittsburgh, Pa.



methods that would pit worker against worker as described in the story above.

The courts, so far, have given conflicting sets of signals.

In Louisiana, a judge ordered Continental Can to reinstate enough Blacks who had been laid off to keep the Black percentage of the hourly work force at 1971 levels. Otherwise, he ruled, "the company's history of racial discrimination in hiring" would unlawfully perpetuate "the effects of past discrimination."

However, at Wisconsin Steel, a judge has taken an opposite position that "An employment seniority system embodying the 'last hired--first fired' principle does not itself perpetuate past discrimination. To hold otherwise would be tantamount to shackling white employees with a burden of past discrimination created not by them but by their employer."

How the courts will eventually rule is anybody's guess. Though odds seem to indicate the latter decision at Wisconsin Steel will most likely prevail.

Trade unionists fighting both racism and unemployment are faced with a paradox, since they are dealing with the apparent clash of two "rights," the right of seniority and the right of equal employment opportunity.

It is this clash that the employers hope to exploit in order to divide working people and set back the clock on trade union gains. Although there appears to be no simple resolution to this problem, some things are clear.

The workers aren't responsible for the situation. The big monopolies and multinational corporations who have profited from racism and discrimination are. Therefore, workers are by-and-large rejecting "share the poverty" solutions.

The Emergency Conference on the Economic Crisis, called by TUAD last September urged a shorter work week as one solution. "30 for 40" has been a slogan of rank and filers for years. Maybe now is the time to put something like it into action. Many unions have begun to call for contract reopeners, and maybe this could be put on the bargaining table.

At the same time, "30 for 40" (or whatever) can be won through Congressional action by amending the Fair Labor Standards Act. When the FLSA was first passed, it essentially legislated "40 for 60."

This approach, shorter hours for no reduction in pay, ensures that the corporations will be forced to pay the burden of the social crisis they have caused, and will maintain the unity of working people.

## RENEW NOW, beat the price increase

After four years of staving off constantly rising paper prices, ink prices, postal rate increases and printing and shipping costs, LABOR TODAY regrets to announce that its yearly subscription rate will go from its present \$2.50 to \$3.50 with the May issue. The price of a single copy will rise from 25¢ to 35¢. The two and three year subscription rates of \$5.00 and \$7.00 will be left intact, however, in an attempt to encourage more cash flow and less book-keeping. For the time-being, LABOR TODAY's wholesale rates will also remain the same.

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