

Labor/CommunityALLIANCE

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DECEMBER 1999

SAN FRANCISCO'S HUMEFAMILY -- BUILDING ARIGHTWING EMPIRE ONDRIED GARLIC AND ABUSTED UNION

By David Bacon and Bill Berkowitz

King City is a tough agricultural town about an hour south of Salinas, at the high end of the long, thin valley that bills itself as the vegetable capital of the world. In King City, vegetables are king -- people mostly work in the fields picking them, or in the huge Basic Vegetable Products plant, drying garlic and onions for shipment all over the world. It's been the height of the



harvest season since June, but for the last four months, the movement of vegetables through the city and its plant has slowed to a trickle. Instead of running the production lines around the clock, Basic Vegetable's 750 workers have been standing guard in the streets outside. In front of the huge dryers, their picket lines are squeezing the plant's output to a fraction of its normal level, while life in this workaday town has ground almost to a halt.

Like the many strikes that have embroiled California's canneries, packing sheds and food processing plants over the last two decades, this one is not driven by demands for vastly increased salaries and benefits. In fact, the single hottest demand has come from the company. Basic Vegetables has called for the workers and their union to pay the costs the company has incurred in breaking their strike.

The conflict in King City is driven as much by ideology as economics. Company founder Jaquelin Hume, a stalwart of San Francisco's Republican Party who died in 1991, helped create the highly-developed conservative infrastructure of think tanks, policy institutes and foundations which perpetuate the right-wing revolution of the 1990s. Today Hume's son William carries on the family's political legacy, providing the financial seed money for many of the state's most notorious right-wing "wedge" initiatives, political campaigns and candidates.

The Hume family celebrates the free market. In 1983, with the

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Photo by Mike Rhodes

On November 14 over a thousand strikers and supporters marched on Basic Produce in King City.

LABOR/COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

The Labor/Community Alliance is independent and dedicated to building a coalition of organized labor and progressive community groups to pursue economic and social justice for working people in Fresno and the Central San Joaquin Valley. The Labor/Community Alliance is affiliated nationally with Jobs with Justice. This newsletter is published monthly.

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WANT TO BE A COLUMNIST?

The Labor/Community Alliance wants to run a monthly media column - current movies, on-going radio, upcoming TV, etc. - that addresses our issues. Anyone interested?



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I am writing to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your help and support in securing passage of AB 537, the California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000. After three heart breaking failures over the course of five years, our fourth and final attempt at passing safe schools legislation was exhilaratingly successful. Governor Gray Davis signed AIB 537 on October 2, 1999.

In announcing his signature of the bill in front of almost 2,000 community members at a dinner at which the President also spoke, Governor Davis read an eloquent and moving letter he received from Judy Shepard, the mother of Mathew Shepard, the college student who was attacked and beaten to death because of his sexual orientation. In her letter, Mrs. Shepard implored the governor to sign AB 537. "My son Matthew was murdered last fall by two young men who spit anti-gay epithets at him, even as they beat him to death," Mrs. Shepard wrote. "If legislation such as AB 537 had existed in my home state of Wyoming, perhaps such troubled young men would have learned a fundamental respect of all people." "Mrs. Shepard," Governor Davis said, "today, I signed that bill into law."

The signing of this bill has sent a thrilling and welcome message across this country that California will no longer tolerate violence and discrimination against her children. Every child deserves the dignity of an education free from intimidation harassment and fear. You understood that and worked hard for this result. Without the strong support of people like you, this victory would never have been possible. Thank you and bless you.

Sheila James Kuehl
California Legislature
Assemblymember, 41st District

...

Dear Editor,

Another Peace Challenge: issued to those dissatisfied with HOW they are engaged in their peace work.

To complement the Fresno Center for Nonviolence's Peace Challenge for Youth, I'd like to issue a Peace Challenge for Adults. The problem is this: how to translate our most personal issues and practices into a public practice? How do "I" (each of us) use what matters most to us as we work with others?

This is not an altogether new question. All of us join--or create--various institutions designed to engage ourselves in principled action. For me, the Center, and the Labor/Community Alliance, represent those efforts exactly. I do not feel the need to create a new organization...but I do need help in identifying clearly what more I want from the involvements I have; encouragement in asking for those additions or changes; and guidance in finding ways to proceed more satisfyingly. Sort of a peacemakers support group.

My hope would be to find a few others interested in this kind activity, willing to commit a half-day to meeting each other deeply and creating a working relationship; and then to meeting regularly (twice a month?) for at least 3 months. If interested, call me at 266-2559.

Richard Stone

SON OF 187

By: Gloria Hernandez

Soon, people will be gathering signatures for a new Proposition, similar to prop 187 which will bar the Legislature from approving new laws providing benefits to illegal immigrants. The proposed law would also require law enforcement to check the citizenship of every person arrested.

This new proposition will force California to:

- ◆ Conform with a provision of federal immigration law that prohibits state and local governments from providing benefits to illegal immigrants;
- ◆ Establish a document verification bureau to help state agencies weed out ineligible applicants;
- ◆ Direct the state to verify that applicants who apply for driver's licenses are here legally;
- ◆ Call on schools to determine which students are of illegal status;
- ◆ Grant state residents the right to sue any state agencies for violating the measure; and
- ◆ Give lawsuits preference over other civil actions pending before a court.

More taxpayer monies will be used to implement the above if the "Son of Prop 187" is passed. Right now, the state uses over 1.8 million dollars just to verify the legal status of DMV applicants. Imagine the amount needed for the "document verification bureau", for which the training of state employees would cost millions of dollars. Consider also the cost of the huge number of appeals that will be filed when one's status is judged incorrectly, which is normal, since the INS computers are often wrong. The appeals would cost us millions of dollars, as they would include the salaries of Administrative law judges, interpreters, and staff time to represent the state. Of course the person could also qualify for legal services to appeal the denial of their benefits.

Why call the schools and check on children's status? The U.S. Supreme Court has already said undocumented children can go to school up to the age of 18 (consistent with the UN Declaration of Human Rights). My biggest concern is allowing people the right to sue our state agencies, and getting court preference over other civil actions pending before the court. Before domestic violence, before housing conflicts, before civil rights cases? You be the judge. Do you think they should have this right?

We all know what happen to the last Proposition 187, after many expensive lawsuits, the matter was finally dropped. Why, are we allowing these people to waste our time, our precious tax paying money and energies? We know that our energies and monies are being channel to fight the "Son of 187" instead of allowing to concentrate on the census and the politics of the year 2000. We know that our families are fighting hard to become citizens and voters. Will the "Son of Prop 187" be the tool we use to wake the sleeping giant? When will these people stop their divisive actions? Can we put the anger aside and work hard to be one great state instead of a divided state? The governor is trying to set up better trade with Mexico; NAFTA, GATT, and other trade treaties are being renegotiated for the betterment of this country. Why then do point the finger at the newcomers if we are the cause of them immigrating to our state and country?

MARCH BALLOT INITIATIVES

It's time for action Fresno! The March 7, 2000 ballot is only months away. The Fresno Chapter of the ACLU (FC-ACLU) urges you to become more educated and involved in defeating two WEDGE initiatives on the March ballot. The two initiatives (no proposition numbers yet) are the Wilson Juvenile Crime Initiative and the Knight Initiative, also referred to as the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Both these initiatives use scapegoats in order to divide and mislead the populace.

The Juvenile Crime Initiative was sponsored by ex-Governor Pete Wilson, and contains many provisions from his crime bills that were rejected by past Legislatures. The initiative targets youth and is marketed as a cure-all for juvenile and gang crime. It will push youth (as young as 14) into the adult justice/prison system, give prosecutors greater judicial powers, expand three-strikes, and create a need for new prisons, all at a time when juvenile crime is declining. The initiative provides no resources for prevention or intervention and will cost taxpayers in excess of hundreds of millions of dollars each year. For more information on this initiative you can contact Californians for Community Safety at (415) 437-4009 (www.jjic.org), the ACLU of Southern California at (213) 977-5250, or the ACLU of Northern California at (415) 621-2493 (www.aclu.org).

As a response to this initiative, the California State Legislature has a watered-down version of this initiative, SB 334. The bill has some money for prevention programs, but it still has many of the draconian provisions from the initiative. The FC-ACLU encourages you to contact your state senator to vote NO on SB 334.

The Knight Initiative is sponsored by anti-labor, right-wing State Senator Pete Knight and is one of the many anti-gay/lesbian bills sweeping across the country. The initiative targets same-gender marriages for discriminatory treatment by only recognizing out-of-state marriages between a man and woman. It fuels homophobia and has much support (both money and organizing) from Radical Right groups. This initiative is only a first step in the agenda to deny gays and lesbians equal rights. We must deal a blow to the Radical Right and protect our values of privacy and tolerance. For more information, contact Californians for Fairness at (415) 227-1020 or (323) 860-7363 (www.NoOnKnight.org) or ACLU.

The FC-ACLU urges you to take action to defeat these two initiatives. Get the word out to your local clubs and organizations. Write letters to the editor of the Fresno Bee and other local papers. Invite speakers to talk about these issues at your clubs, churches, schools etc. And finally, Register to Vote as many people as possible and VOTE NO on both initiatives.

**Saturday, December 11
12 Noon - 4 PM**

The traditional WILPF Holiday Peace and Crafts Faire featuring WILPF resource materials, crafts vendors, live music, UNICEF cards and materials, informational tables from many of the Fresno peace and justice groups, good fellowship, delicious homemade soup and breads. No admission charge! Come and support people making hand made goods in Fresno. The big red church (First Congregational Church) on Van Ness and Yale, near Fresno high School.

Call 291-4948 for more information.

FRESNO CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE

MONEY MATTERS

The Center's phone-a-thon will have occurred by the time this is printed. We depend on this mild incursion into your privacy to supply a substantial amount of our budget for the new year. If you have already made a pledge, thank you. If you were not reached, or are not on our donors list, please consider sending us a check. If the Center, as a public facility and an advocate for nonviolence, is important to you, help us keep our doors open.



NEW HOURS

Speaking of open doors, Matilda Rangel and Valta Pointer have volunteered to staff the Center Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4-6 p.m. They will be available to answer questions, distribute literature, loan books and videos, and sell UNICEF cards. This is an experiment--use it or lose it.

PROJECT REPORTS

The Peace Challenge for Youth has extended its deadline for applications until Dec. 15. We are delighted with the projects submitted, but several groups we thought would be eager to participate have not responded. If you have connections with groups of teens, please encourage them to try to "Make It Better" and earn substantial prizes. Contact Richard at 266-2559 for more information.

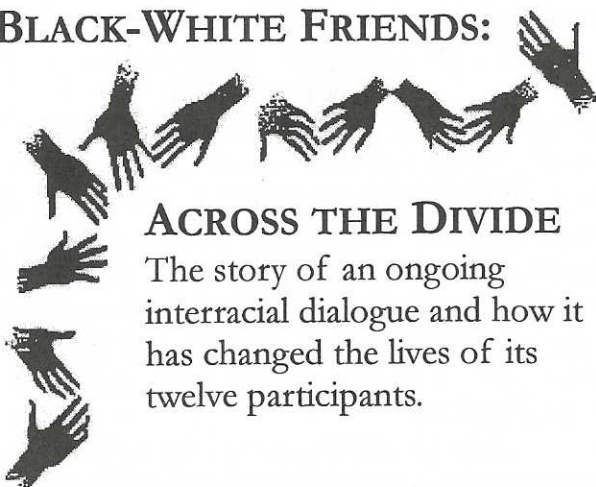
The Central California Institute--a progressive think tank being organized by Vincent Lavery and Jacqueline Elliott--is into its next phase of development. It has identified several experts and is recruiting their participation as "fellows" We are pleased that Jackie has agreed to serve on our Board of Directors and act as liaison between the Board and the Institute.

The Black/White group continues into its third year. It has produced a booklet recounting its experiences, which will be on sale at the Center's booth at the WILPF Craft Faire on Dec. 11, or during Center open hours.

SECOND TUESDAY

Kehinde Solwazi will discuss his involvement in creating a KWANZAA celebration in Fresno. Join us on Dec. 14th to learn about the history and significance of the extended affirmation of traditional African values. Potluck at 6:30, program at 7:30.

BLACK-WHITE FRIENDS:



ACROSS THE DIVIDE

The story of an ongoing interracial dialogue and how it has changed the lives of its twelve participants.

The Welch Report Nov. 11, 1999. The CTBT Vote -- a Post-Mortem.

The U.S. Senate has voted 51-48 against ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, falling 18 votes short of the two-thirds needed to ratify. The vote was taken without a single hearing in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Appeals by President Clinton and by 62 Senators to postpone the vote, allowing for more hearings and discussion, went unheeded by the Senate leadership.

Rejection of the CTBT, the first time since defeat of the Versailles Treaty that the Senate rejected an arms control treaty, brought shame on the Senate and an international outpouring of concern about a renewed arms race. This defeat opens the door to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, risks a return to dangerous testing practices, and seriously undermines U.S. credibility in the world community.

The 51 Republican Senators who opposed ratification generally fall into three categories:

1. About 15 of them believe that this and all arms control treaties are bad; these Senators want to keep the U.S. number one in the arms race. Senators Trent Lott and Jesse Helms (chair of Foreign Relations) fall into this category. They saw that they could defeat the treaty by rushing into a quick vote with little time for education and debate.
2. Another group, numbering at least 30, decided that this was a good opportunity to inflict a defeat on President Clinton. They decided to play politics with a major nuclear weapons treaty.
3. Several senior Senators, generally inclined to support the CTBT, voted against ratification because of lack of sufficient information from top-level Administration officials on key aspects of the CTBT, such as verification. The Administration's effort on behalf of the CTBT, though substantial before the vote, was weak and disorganized during the preceding two years (preoccupation with Monica?).

What lies ahead? Three important questions arise now: Can the Senate ratify the CTBT at a later date, will the U.S. resume testing, and what is the future of the CTBT worldwide?

Technically the treaty can be brought up anytime for another Senate vote -- this defeat is not permanent. Practically, however, it will not be brought to a vote until 2001 at earliest, there being no hope of approval until Clinton leaves office.

The U.S. will not resume testing while Clinton remains in office; however, a detonation at the Nevada Test Site on Sept. 30, 1999 was the 7th. U.S. "sub-critical" nuclear test since Clinton signed the CTBT in 1996.

Indications are that most other nations, including the 51 that already have ratified the treaty, want to keep it alive, although it cannot enter into force until ratified by the U.S.

ACTION: The CTBT issue needs to be raised in Senate election campaigns over the coming year.

Tell President Clinton that he can take other steps to fashion a lasting legacy on nuclear weapons, including a) removing all U.S. nuclear weapons from hair-trigger alert, b) preserving the ABM treaty, c) rejecting national missile defense, and d) declaring a NO first-use policy, promising the U.S. will not use nuclear weapons unless first attacked with such weapons.

(Source: (National) Physicians for Social Responsibility)

(Continued from page 1)

encouragement of President Ronald Reagan and Attorney General Ed Meese, Hume founded Citizens for America, a right-wing lobbying group which, according to columnist Sidney Blumenthal, aimed at "organizing chapters in every Congressional district in the land, bringing the message of the free market and the free world to the grass roots."

In King City, the Hume family's devotion to the free market is more than an abstract principle. "I have no question that the company wants to break our union," says Fritz Conle, organizer for Teamsters Local 890. "The company has seven other plants, and I think they're using us to teach them a lesson. They don't ever want to see a strike at any of their facilities again." The King City conflict began when the union's contract expired last summer. In bargaining for a new one, workers asked for 2% wage increases in each of three years, and no cuts in existing benefits. But the company put concessions on the table. It proposed cutting workers' hours from 8 to 7.5 per day, which would have substantially reduced the income of the plant's seasonal workers, who only work six months out of the year. Further, Basic Vegetable demanded the right to contract out 30 permanent year-round jobs. These are jobs for the most part held by workers who have used their long years of seniority to get off the production line.

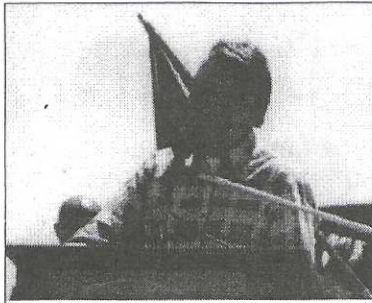
"They're older folks, the mothers and aunts of many of us," says striker Jose Medico. "Many of them wouldn't be able to handle it if they had to go back onto the line at their age."

Behind the demands for concessions, is a distinctly un-free market idea, strikers allege. In the early 1990s, Basic Vegetable tried to expand into the world market, and built plants in Spain and Mexico. However, the overseas ventures turned out to be big money-losers, and were eventually shut down. "But instead of accepting their losses, now they want us to pay the bill," says striker Saul Venegas. Conle asserts that there's no question that the King City plant makes a healthy profit for The Basic Companies, its parent corporation.

Basic Vegetable spokesperson Jay Jory, of the Fresno-based law firm Jory, Peterson, Watkins and Smith disagreed with Conle, saying that the plant had not been doing very well financially. Jory cited a study by the Bain Group which, according to the company, "revealed...that BVP's major competitor was gaining market share and enjoyed a significant advantage in labor costs." The plant was facing a potential shut down, said Jory, and there needed to be "a belt tightening throughout the company...[to make the plant] more productive and more efficient."

Once workers rejected the concessions and struck the plant on July 7, company demands escalated. Basic Vegetable proposed eliminating the union pension plan completely, replacing it with a 30¢/hour contribution to a 401k savings account. It proposed keeping the wages of newly-hired workers \$3/hour below those already in the workforce, and charging them \$180/month for healthcare. The company wanted vastly increased subcontracting rights, and the ability to grant promotions to whomever they wanted, rather than going by seniority. The final straw for the

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"When you attack the Teamsters here, you will have to contend with all of labor in California."

Art Pulaski, Secretary-Treasurer
California Labor Federation

BIONEERS: FUTURE JOBS APLENTY, IF...

By: Phil Erro

I recently participated in the Bioneers conference in the San Francisco Bay area and would like to share this strong message from that meeting: There will be plenty of future jobs, IF WE UNITE TO CREATE THEM. As one of the speakers emphasized, the best way to have a future we like is to create it to our liking. The speakers were saying that if we remake capitalism to obtain the utmost productivity from resources instead of labor, we will have plenty of rewarding jobs caring for precious resources.

The capitalism we've had for the past 200 years has been defined by the captains of industry (including agribusiness). These captains have organized their factories, fields, and other means of production to maximize the amount of product per hour of human work. This has achieved cost reductions and hence more profits for the captains. It has also resulted in too many goods and too few jobs. Wal-Mart is jammed full of "goods" we don't need. Fresno County had 11.5% unemployment in October this year. We have new 8,000 square foot houses at the north end of Fresno occupied by two people. We have 30 farm workers living in 900 square foot houses built circa 1910 20 miles south of Fresno.

So how can we make the poor richer and the rich poorer? We're stuck with capitalism, but we can change how it does business, IF WE UNITE AND TURN CAPITALISM AROUND. We need to join Amory Lovins and Paul Hawken, to mention just two people well known among the powers that be, as they preach to the captains of industry and lobby state legislatures and the U.S. Congress to put more value on water, forests, and soil (among other resources). In Fresno and Madera Counties, we could lobby our boards of supervisors to allocate funds to restore the upper watershed of the San Joaquin River to good health so that the San Joaquin would yield more water to irrigate crops as well as supply drinking water to Fresno and other cities near the San Joaquin River. Selective removal of trees and shrubs in the High Sierra in Eastern Fresno and Madera Counties to improve percolation of snow and rain water is labor-intensive work and would create many rewarding jobs. We could also lobby for crews to plant diverse trees, shrubs, and other plants in the Sierra Nevadas to diminish the prospect of an insect wiping out all our red firs, for instance. This reforestation work would give thousands of people jobs that would give them the satisfaction of knowing they were helping make our Sierra forests healthy again. We need to band together and demand that money be budgeted for paying crews to plant vegetation along stream banks and in the upper watershed of intermittent streams in the Sierras and our West Hills to check soil erosion and restrain the ferocity of those streams, that too often ravage our farmlands.

Where would all this money come from? It could come from the assets of the ten wealthiest captains of industry in the San Joaquin Valley, the State Treasury, and the U.S. Treasury. For sure this won't happen if we do nothing. If we unite and all march in the same direction, we'll at least have a snowball's chance in Hell of making it happen. After all, the powers that be in these United States in 1790 thought that people who did not own land would never vote.

To find out more about Bioneering read the book: Natural Capitalism, By: Paul Hawken and Amory Lovins or call the Rocky Mountain Institute: tel.: (970) 927-3851 e-mail: outreach@rmi.org

Calendar of Events December 1999

Wednesday, December 1, 5:30 PM

Planning meeting for the immigrant rights/Union organizing conference at the Northern California Coalition for Immigrant Rights, Central Valley Office 2014 Tulare room 716. Call 226-0477 for more information.

Saturday, December 4, 9:30 AM

JFK Club of the San Joaquin meeting at 255 N Fulton St in Fresno. American Studies Fellow Ray Ensher will facilitate a discussion on "Urban Sprawl-Myth or Fact" with invited guests Gene Rose and Loyd Carter. Details 439-8140

Saturday, December 4, 5 PM

Human Rights Fundraiser. Amnesty International will host its 16th annual fund-raiser and human rights awareness event at the home of Clement and Dorothy Renzi, 4227 N Wilson in Fresno. Tickets are \$15 and available at the door. Call 224-0924 for more information.

Tuesday, December 7, 7 PM

Community meeting to talk about police conduct with Police Chief Winchester at St. Alphonsus Catholic Church, 1207 Trinity in Fresno. Call Jesus Padron at 442-3120 for more information.

Thursday, December 9, 6 PM

Meeting of MAPA Del Valle (Mexican American Political Association) at Arte Americas, 1630 Van Ness. For more information call 485-4707 or 252-3330.

Friday, December 10, 10 AM

Human Rights Day! There will be an action/ press conference at the mall space between the state and federal building to remind people about the Human Rights Declaration and to state our opposition to various upcoming items affecting Latinos, immigrants and workers. Such as the bracero program, the call for amnesty, the call against the son of Prop 187 and the call for the participation of the census and other items. The No Nos Vamos committee invites other groups to use this action to announce their plans, wishes and desires for the year 2000. The group will meet Tuesdays at noon at Centro Bellas Artes to plan for the action. All are invited, Call Gloria Hernandez at 497-0833.

Saturday, December 11, 9:30 AM

Fresno Center for Nonviolence monthly board meeting. All welcome. 985 N Van Ness.

Saturday, December 11, 12 Noon - 4 PM

The traditional WILPF Holiday Peace and Crafts Faire featuring WILPF resource materials, crafts vendors, live music, UNICEF cards and materials, informational tables from many of the Fresno peace and justice groups, good fellowship, delicious homemade soup and breads. No admission charge! Come and support people making hand made goods in Fresno. The big red church (First Congregational Church) on Van Ness and Yale, near Fresno high School. Call 291-4948 for more information.

Tuesday, December 14, 6:30 PM Potluck and 7:30 PM Program

Second Tuesday at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness. Kehinde Solwazi will be hosting the event which will be an informational program on Kwanzaa. Kwanzaa is an African American series of holidays starting December 26 through January 1.

Wednesday, December 15

Deadline for submissions to the January issue of the Labor/Community Alliance Newsletter.

Thursday, December 16, 7:30 PM

Death Penalty Focus meeting at the Center for Nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness.

Monday, December 20, 7:30 PM

Amnesty International will meet at the Center for nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness. Call 224-0924

Friday, December 24, 5 - 6 PM

Street Heat on KFCF 88.1 FM featuring Labor and Community Activists.

Monday, December 27, 6:30 PM

Labor/Community Alliance monthly meeting at 985 N Van Ness.

Friday, December 31, New Years Eve Party

There will be a New Years Eve/New Years Morning Peace vigil at the Center for Nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness organized by "Dances for Peace." Details are not yet available. Call Ellen Bush at 431-1462 for more information. This event is intended as a local "presence" for the Millennium 2000 gathering in the Nevada desert.

MARK YOUR JANUARY CALENDAR

Friday, January 14

Garlanding Ceremony for Martin Luther King (MLK) event

Saturday, January 15

MLK breakfast

Sunday, January 16

MLK Candlelight Vigil

Monday, January 17

MLK March

Saturday, January 22

Immigrant Rights and Union Organizing Conference

For up to the minute information about what is happening in Fresno's progressive community join the Labor/Community Alliance email alert network. We send out an updated calendar of events once a week and alert you when there is an emergency rally or demonstration. This is a free service. You can join by sending your email address to clr2@jgc.org and saying you would like to subscribe to this service.

(Continued from page 5)

workers was when company negotiators proposed that strikers pay an additional \$20/month for their medical care until the company's strike-related costs had been repaid. When the union filed unfair bargaining charges with the National Labor Relations Board, the last demand was withdrawn, but the rest still stand.

At the beginning of the strike the company immediately began hiring strikebreakers, stashing them at motels in King City and nearby Soledad, and even brought in busloads from other rural towns. Strikers claim that local jails have also been a source of recruits. At the end of September, Basic Vegetable announced it had permanently replaced its striking workers. They could return to work, the company said, but only to about 100 temporary seasonal jobs. The rest, and best, of the jobs would now belong to replacement workers.

Bringing in strikebreakers has been the source of violence and increased confrontations. On August 18, a car full of strikers followed a bus carrying strikebreakers back to the small town of Avenal, on the West side of the Central Valley, over the mountains from King City. As strikers, leaflets in hand, sought to talk to workers getting off the bus to go home, they were instead confronted and beaten. One striker ran down the street, pursued by his adversaries. A local woman, taking her children home, passed by in her car and opened the door, urging him to take refuge inside. Her car windows were broken out as her children and grandchildren watched in terror. "This attack was orchestrated by Pedro [Ayala], a labor contractor for Basic who, upon getting off the bus yelled that the company had given them the 'green light' to physically injure the strikers," said a statement issued by Local 890. Jory denies this version of events and claims that "Basic had nothing to do with this incident," and that it was union supporters who initiated the violence.

Jerry Hume is only following in his father's political footsteps. In 1933, Jaquelin Hume and his brother Bill, established the Basic Companies, which became the world's largest processor of dehydrated onions and garlic. Jack Hume was part of a small coterie of conservative California businessmen who were longtime friends and financial backers of Ronald Reagan - encouraging his entry into public life, hiring his political consultants and bankrolling his 1966 gubernatorial campaign. He joined Justin Dart, the drugstore tycoon; Holmes Tuttle, the automobile dealer; Earle Jorgensen, the steel distributor and others in Reagan's unofficial "Kitchen Cabinet."

However, funding right-wing causes is where Hume really shines. According to the Citizenship Project, a community-based organization founded by Mexican immigrants and unionists in Salinas, and DataCenter's ImpactResearch Team, Hume and his family have contributed heavily to dozens of right-wing causes and candidates, including:

- ♦ 1995 -- \$100,000 to the California Republican Party;
- ♦ April 1995 -- \$25,000 from William's wife Patricia to Proposition 209, California's anti-affirmation action initiative;
- ♦ 1996 -- \$150,000 to the California Republican Party; \$100,000 to the Governor Pete Wilson Committee;
- ♦ April 1998 and May 1998 - two \$100,000 contributions to Californian for Paycheck Protection (Proposition 226), the anti-union ballot initiative;
- ♦ 1998 -- \$50,000 to the campaign for Proposition 227, the Ron Unz-sponsored initiative which banned bilingual education in California; and
- 1996-98 -- \$105,000 to school voucher initiatives in Oregon, Colorado and Wisconsin, and \$20,000 to Gloria Matta Tuchman,

anti-bilingual education and pro-school voucher spokesperson, and candidate for California State Superintendent of Schools. Hume gave an additional \$100,000 to Tuchman one week before the November 1988 election.

In addition to these contributions, Hume gave the RNC/Republican National State Elections Committee over \$165,000 in 1999, and donated \$1,000 or more to the campaigns of George W. Bush and Sen. Phil Gramm (R-TX). This year Hume also gave at least \$1000 to Sen. Gordon Smith (R-OR). Smith is co-sponsor of two Senate bills which would allow growers to bring workers into the country, and make their legal immigration status dependent on their jobs. This would be a big step towards reestablishing the old "bracero" contract labor program, which held immigrant farmworkers as virtual indentured servants through the 40s and 50s. A renewed "bracero" program would reduce farmworker wages drastically, providing an enormous financial reward for the growers who supply the Basic Vegetable plant with its garlic and onions.

While Hume continues his political fundraising for Republicans, the union in King City is escalating its campaign. Basic Vegetable counts among its clients a number of corporations with high-profile consumer food products - Kraft, Lipton, McDonalds, Church's Chicken, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, Cisco, Maizena and Nestle. The union intends to focus attention on their use of products from the struck plant. On November 4, hundreds of strikers surrounded the Transamerica pyramid on Montgomery St., where the corporation has its headquarters, in a move designed to make the company's actions a political issue in San Francisco.

Workers hold a weekly candlelight vigil and prayer service every Friday night from 11PM to midnight outside the plant. And on November 14, over a thousand strikers and supporters from several Salinas Valley communities marched from the King City park, through downtown and out to the plant for a major rally.

The vegetable season is drawing to a close in King City, and it appears like the strike may last at least until next year's season begins in May. Thus far, only 25 of the 750 strikers have returned to work. "If we lose the strike, and the union too, the only other work here in King City is in the fields," explains striker Lupe Vasquez, who has worked at Basic Vegetable for 31 years. "That's where many of us started years ago, and we don't want to go back. With a secure, union job at Basic Vegetable, we've been able to settle down, buy homes, send our kids to college, and have a much better life. That's why we're fighting so hard - we won't give that up."

David Bacon, photographer and associate editor for Pacific News Service, is a regular Bay Guardian contributor. Bill Berkowitz, edits CultureWatch, a monthly newsletter tracking the conservative movement, published by Oakland's DataCenter (culturewatch@datacenter.org).

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP
Christmas is coming. By "adopting" a striker's family for the Holidays, you can show the true spirit of the holidays.
Please contact
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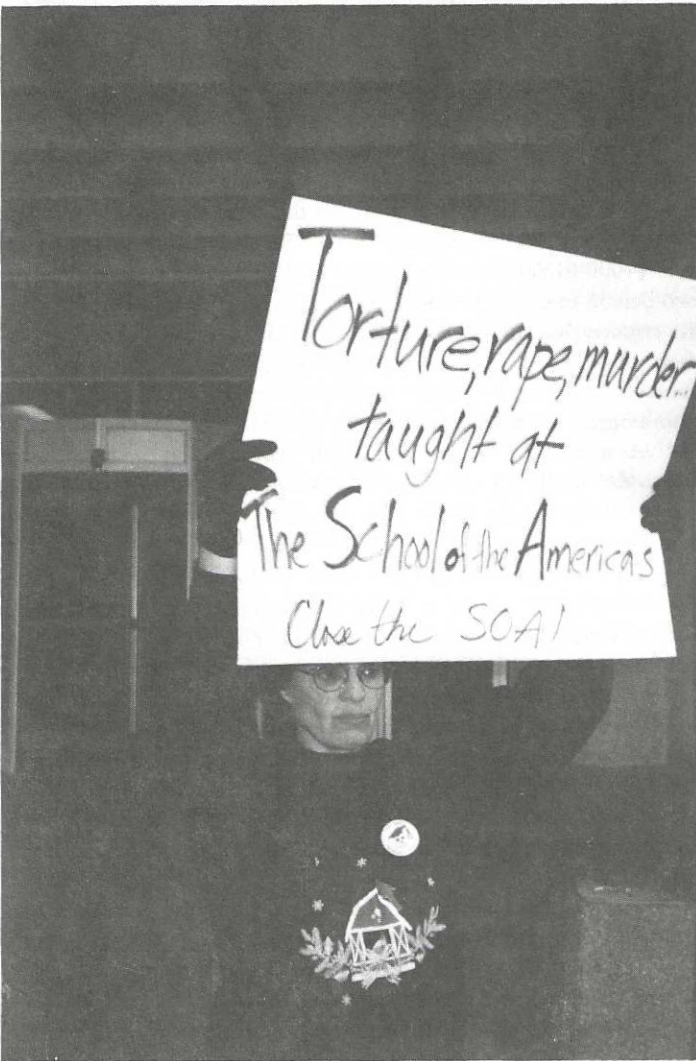


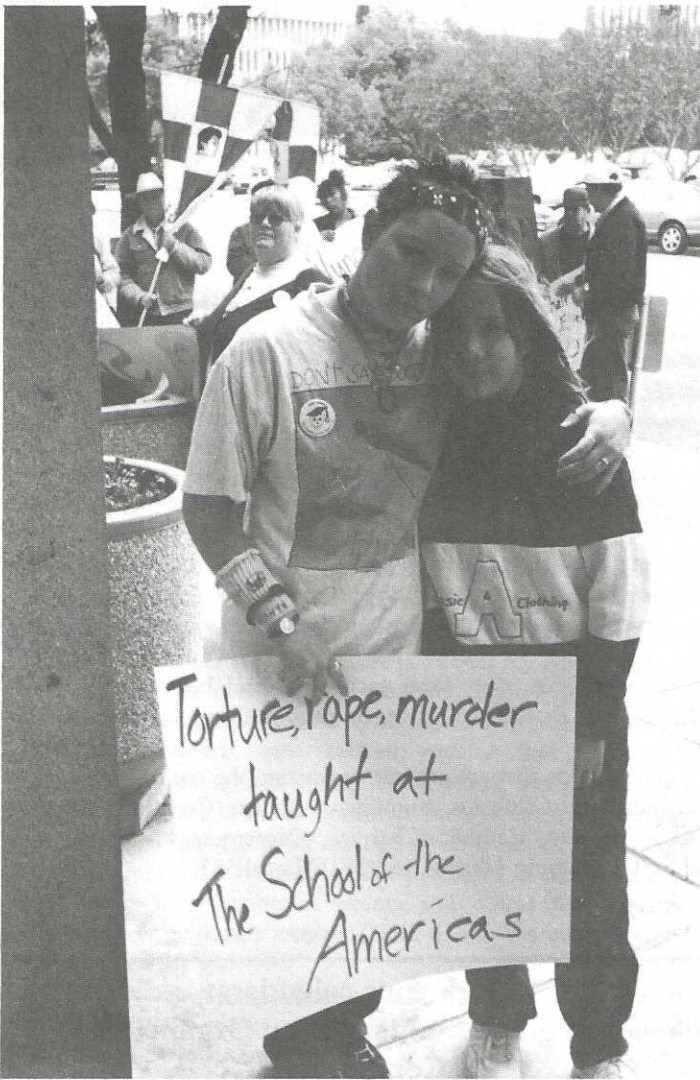
SHUT DOWN THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS!

Demonstrations took place in Fresno and around the country last month to shut down the School of the Americas. Our local demonstration was sponsored by the Saint Benedict Catholic Worker and included shutting down the Federal Building for about 30 minutes. Liza Apper (pictured below left) carried a massive cross and blocked the front entrance, preventing anyone from coming or going. When the security guards opened the side doors supporters placed black coffins in front of the doors forcing everyone to step over or around coffins to get into the Federal Building.

The School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia trains its students, most of whom are from Latin America and the Caribbean, in techniques including torture, execution, blackmail and arresting the relatives of those being questioned. Even the New York Times has said "An institution so clearly out of tune with American values...should be shut down without delay."

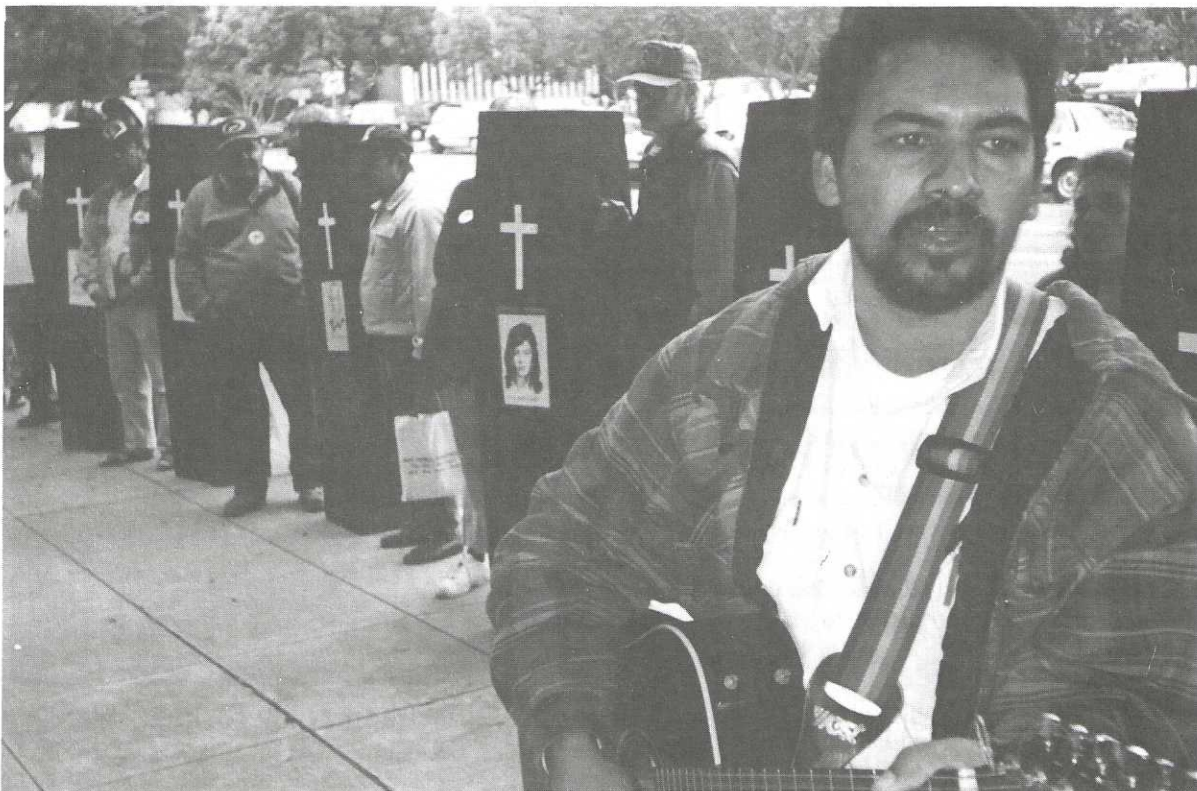
You are encouraged to call or write your representative and Senators demanding that they immediately shut down the SCHOOL OF ASSASSINS. For more information contact the Catholic Worker at 229-6410, email: PaxOSB@aol.com.





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The Labor/Community Alliance is also distributed
through the offices of many Union Locals.



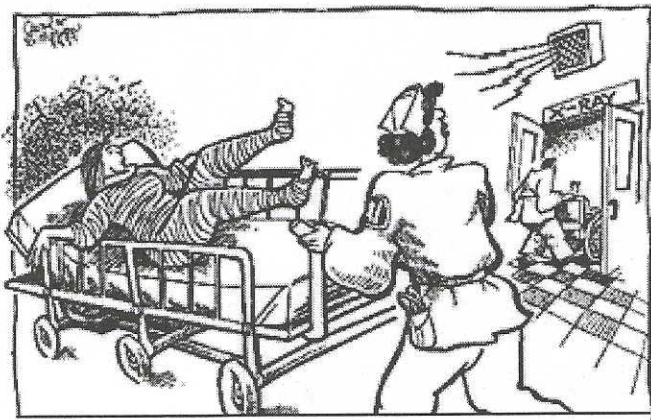
Valley Labor Chatter

NURSES UNION PUSHES HEALTHCARE SAFETY

As healthcare becomes increasingly shaped by the bottom-line mentality of bean counters, nurses, doctors and other healthcare workers find themselves powerless to insure a safe hospital stay for their patients. Many feel that hospitals are frequently dangerously understaffed to the peril of their patients.

Representing thousands of healthcare workers throughout the state, the American Federation of Nurses (AFN) has stepped up to support conscientious professionals in their advocacy for their patients. AFN is pushing the State of California to police hospitals in this area. AFN wants the Department of Health Services (DHS) to establish nurses to patient ratios for acute hospitals and to conduct unannounced inspections of these hospitals. DHS currently has no requirements for staffing in hospitals and provides hospitals with inspection dates far in advance. Many healthcare professionals feel that this amounts to virtually no real policing of hospitals and allows for very dangerous practices.

AFN is conducting a survey among all nurses in the Fresno, Merced, and Visalia area. Local nurses are being asked their opinion on safe staffing ratios at acute hospitals and other safety issues. The survey results will be part of a statewide effort to formulate a proposal for the DHS. For more information call AFN at 275-1404.



"Nurse Adams, please report to rooms 13 through 100 immediately... you have patients who need your attention."

SHEET METAL WORKERS RALLY FOR RAISES

On November 12, eighty members of the Sheet Metal Workers Union Local 162 and their supporters staged an informational picket line at the sites of their four employers in Fresno. Over two hundred workers who are covered by a master contract have been working without a contract since June 1. They have been in bargaining since April 16.

"We had a very successful rally today" said Luciano Olivar, business representative for Local 162. "We want the employer to come back to the table and bargain cost of living raises for both the apprentices and the journeymen".

The four local sheet metal companies - Air Control Balancing, Champion Industrial, New England Sheet Metal, and Patton Sheet Metal are all members of the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning

Contractors National Association. The group bargains a master contract with the union. Under the agreement the union agrees not to strike and the employers agree to not go non-union. New England Sheet Metal is negotiating for the group.

LOCAL GROUPS PLAN IMMIGRANT RIGHTS CONFERENCE

- ◆ *How do Unions Work?*
- ◆ *How do community groups work?*
- ◆ *What are the obstacle to organizing immigrants?*
- ◆ *What tactics have been successful in organizing immigrants?*

Are you interested in these questions? If you are then plan on attending a conference on January 22, 2000 so you can meet with others in the San Joaquin Valley who share your interest.

Several community groups and union organizers are planning this conference in hopes that these two different types of organizations can learn from each other and begin to help each other in their shared goal of organizing immigrants to defend their rights.

The groups that are actively organizing the conference include the Northern California Immigrants Rights Coalition, the Pan Valley Institute, Catholic Charities, Carpenters Local 701, the Labor/Community Alliance, and SEIU Local 535.

Mark your calendars:

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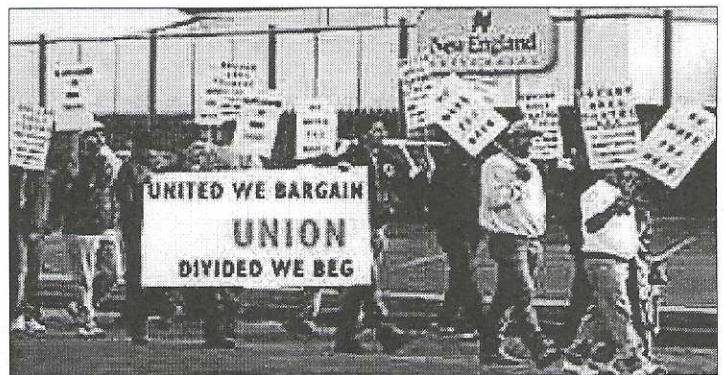
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Sheet Metal Workers Rally for Justice!

Photo by George Ballis

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THE AFL-CIO REVERSES COURSE ON IMMIGRATION

By David Bacon

While union leaders from around the country met at the AFL-CIO convention inside the cavernous Los Angeles Convention Center, a group of painters stood around outside, talking about the gathering's hottest issue—immigration.

One organizer from the San Fernando Valley thought that current immigration law wasn't being enforced strictly enough, especially the employer sanctions which make it illegal for undocumented workers to hold a job, and for employers to hire them.

"Unless the enforcement of these laws is implemented, the underground economy and the abuse of these workers is going to continue," he said. "[Undocumented immigration] decreases our industry, it brings our industry down. These workers are working around lead and other toxic chemicals they're not trained to handle, they're working in our city schools contaminating our children."

A second organizer next to him disagreed. "They're just here to make a living. We're not here to discriminate against anybody doing that," he declared. He called the undocumented hard workers. "They just want what America has to offer. We should try to get justice for them, a more open door policy so they can come in. They're going to be a positive addition for America."

In southern California, the painters union has about 3000 members, but another 9000 painters—the vast majority immigrants—are unorganized. In one of their union's recent organizing drives, the organizers said, undocumented workers were

called at home by their boss and threatened with deportation if they supported the union.

This small discussion about how, and even whether, to organize immigrant workers goes on all the time, and not just in California or among painters. Unions across the country are trying to decide whether undocumented immigrants are a threat or are potential union members.

This year the debate finally hit the floor of the AFL-CIO convention. It marked the first time since 1986, when it supported passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act, that the federation has debated the contentious issue. But this time, instead of seeing immigrants as a problem, it was clear that unions have begun seeing them as the solution.

"For immigrants to build a better future, they need to build a union," said Eliseo Medina, an immigrant from Zacatecas who went on to become a leading organizer for the United Farm Workers, and now the Service Employees union. "But I am also convinced that as the labor movement is the best hope for immigrants, so are immigrants the best hope of the labor movement."

It's not hard to understand why he and others take that view. Unions represent about 14% of U.S. workers today, down from 35% in the early 1950s. To maintain that percentage, given the growth of the workforce and structural changes which eliminate many jobs, unions have to organize 400,000 workers a year. Last year, unions organized 475,000 workers recording positive growth for the first time in decades, although not by much. To grow by just one percent, they have to organize 800,000 people. And the AFL-CIO's organizing director, Kirk Adams, says that they really need a million workers in the pipeline "partly because we need to grow, but also because of the noise that creates."

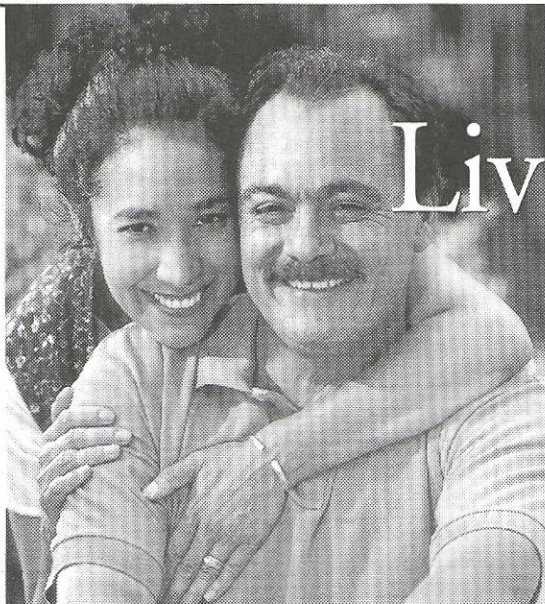
Where are those organizing drives going to come from? Who is it, in the modern American workforce, that actively wants to be organized?

Immigrant workers are at least part of the answer to a growing number of unions. In fact, the history of labor organizing over the last decade in Los Angeles, where the convention met this year, is largely the story of immigrant workers organizing against heavy odds. Immigrant janitors defied police beatings in Century City in 1989, recovering union contracts for SEIU Local 1877 in the city's office buildings. Immigrant workers in Local 11 have made the Hotel Employees one of the strongest unions in the city. Carpenters, harbor truckers, garment workers, factory hands, and tortilla drivers have all staged pivotal strikes and organizing drives. Day laborers, domestics and gardeners have built independent organizations, even in the absence of labor law protection and support from local unions.

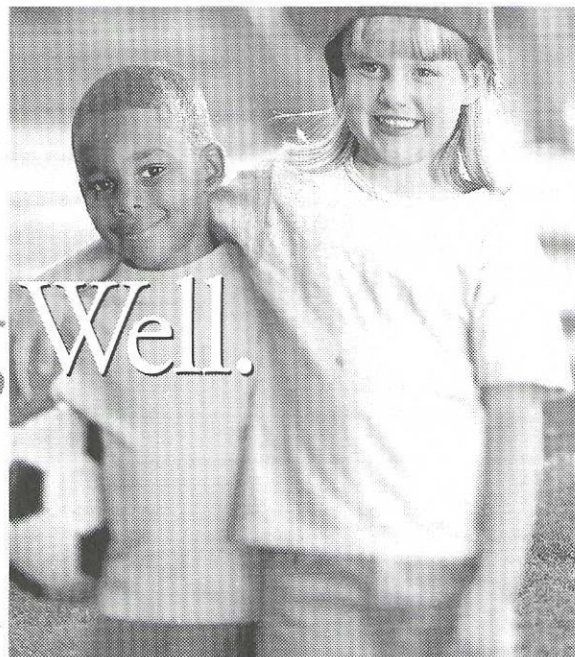
The AFL-CIO now confronts the reality, however, that the law it supported in 1986 has made it harder for unions to organize and represent immigrants, not easier. Finally, a rising tide of labor opinion says that support was wrong. This summer, beginning in California, labor councils and local unions began passing a resolution calling for the repeal of employer sanctions. The resolution spread to Oregon, Washington, and New York. International unions began debating it. When it finally hit the convention floor on October 12, national union leaders joined in the call for repeal.

Arturo Rodriguez, president of the United Farm Workers, listed a long series of examples, in which sanctions were enforced in order to break union organizing drives, or led to mass firings among already-organized workers. At the Bear Creek Production Company, the world's largest rose grower in California's Central

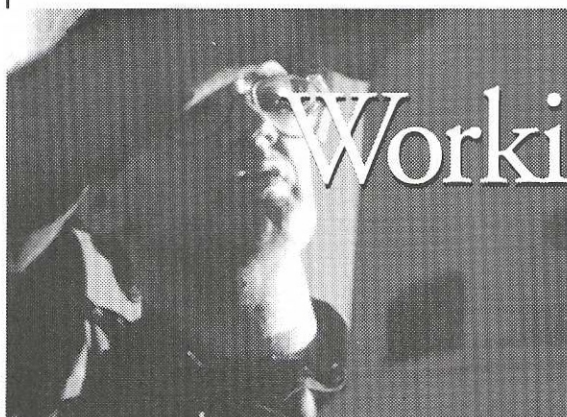
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BOOK REVIEW

THE TRANSFORMATION OF U.S. UNIONS *Voices, Visions, and Strategies from the Grassroots*

By: Mike Rhodes

Membership in U.S. Unions has declined from 35% in the mid 1950's to under 15% today. This trend is continuing and many Union supporters fear that Organized Labor is becoming an increasingly irrelevant factor in the fabric of society. The time for "business as usual" is over!

In 1995 the AFL-CIO elected new leadership that vowed to revitalize organized labor. President John Sweeney and the New Voices slate was elected and committed themselves to putting the movement back into the Union movement. This book is about the struggle currently taking place in organized labor. In a series of articles written by labor activists, scholars, and journalists it explains and documents the vital importance of union democracy, the importance of workers' taking matters into their own hands by participating in union decisions, by holding their leaders accountable, and by reaching out to the larger community.

"The labor movement can be rebuilt only with a more critically conscious, engaged rank and file who see their unions as the most effective, perhaps the only, instrument for realizing their hopes and dreams for themselves, their families, their communities and society, writes Michael Eisensher. Unions must bust out of the mold of "Business Unionism" that they have been locked into for the past 40 years. It is not enough for unions to negotiate contracts with employers, develop partnerships with corporations, and rely on politicians to solve the problems of the working class.

The Transformation of U.S. Unions is calling on profound internal change from the grassroots which promotes an organizing model to re-build the union movement. The Unions themselves must put more resources into organizing and members need to feel more connected to the decision making process. It is argued that organized labor needs to build coalitions with community groups and work together to build a Labor/Community Alliance (like ours). There is also an excellent article on Cross-Border Alliances in the Era of Globalization by Bruce Nissen.

Organized labor has a long way to go in rebuilding its influence in society and becoming a powerful voice for economic and social justice. Since the New Voices slate was elected progress has been made. For the first time in many years union membership has actually increased, but not enough to show a percentage increase in union membership (because of all the new workers entering the job market).

While things are getting better, the challenge is that not all Union Locals & Central Labor Councils have got the message that we can no longer rely on "business as usual." There is very uneven development of implementing the organizing model and building Labor/Community Alliances throughout the country. This transformation is a work in progress and will take many years before we see substantial and visible results.

Kim Moody, in the article "The Dynamics of Change" concludes: "The matter at hand, then, is more than a debate over

tactics and techniques, whether it involves new organizing, winning strikes, or even gaining political effectiveness. Labor is searching for an alternative perspective about the nature of unions in this globalizing era. Do the workers seek a unionism based in a rank and file willing and able to confront capital and its relentless drive for profit? Or do they settle for one that seeks alliances with the employers and hopes somehow to ride the forces of exploitation to prosperity? Do workers seek a spruced-up business unionism with a consultant's vision of politics, or a social movement unionism rooted in the actions of the rank and file? The types of leaders we seek, the alterations of union structures and strategy we need, and the active agent we look to rest on the answers to these questions."

This is a wonderful book for anyone interested in understanding the current dynamics of the labor movement. I highly recommend it for Union members, community activists, and everyone concerned with issues of economic and social justice.

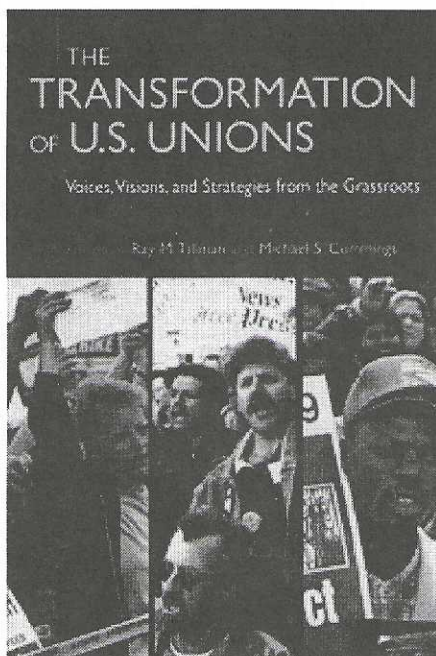
THE TRANSFORMATION OF U.S. UNIONS

Voices, Visions, and Strategies from the Grassroots

Edited by Ray M. Tillman and Michael S.

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(Continued from page 11)

Valley, 15% of the firm's 1000 UFW members were fired after the INS came in to review their documents.

"These are not workers who came here yesterday," he recounted bitterly to delegates. "These are workers that have been here 15, 20, 25 years, have houses, have families, are in the educational system, have paid taxes all these years, are members of their communities. They asked them to demonstrate their status in this country. And then they were evicted and lost their jobs."

"I see immigration law the same way I did when I first started as an organizer," says UNITE regional manager Cristina Vasquez, who came up out of LA's garment shops two decades ago. "It's a tool of the employers. They're able to use immigration law as a weapon to keep workers unorganized, and the INS has helped them use it."

The impact of the enforcement of employer sanctions on unions and workers is growing even more acute, because the Clinton administration has chosen to make the workplace the focus of immigration law enforcement. According to INS Commissioner Doris Meissner, "work is the incentive that brings illegal immigrants into our country." Preventing workers from entering the U.S. without visas, therefore, depends on removing them from the workplace. This new INS strategy is called "interior enforcement"—enforcing immigration law away from the border.

The INS workplace enforcement program depends heavily on a new set of relationships with other government agencies. An agreement with the Department of Labor, for instance, requires federal inspectors looking for violations of minimum wage and overtime laws to also thumb through I-9 forms verifying immigration status, looking for discrepancies which could lead to deportations.

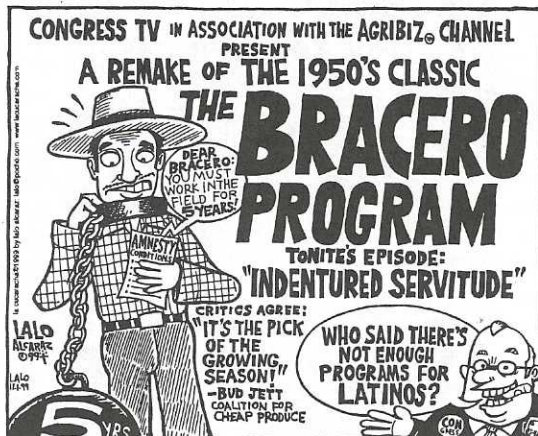
Even more threatening to unions and immigrant rights groups, however, is the intention of the INS to use Operation Vanguard, an enforcement program in which the INS takes control of personnel records of a company, to push for an expanded guestworker program. INS Regional Director Mark Reed says Operation Vanguard will cut off the supply of undocumented workers to those industries dependent on their labor, provoking a political outcry for a new program to bring contract workers into the U.S. The last U.S. experiment with contract immigrant labor, the bracero program of the 1940s and 50s, was described as "legalized slavery" by its own former administrator Lee G. Williams. By their nature, contract labor programs give employers not only the power to fire workers, but in effect the power to deport them as well.

Efforts by employers and the INS to regulate the supply of immigrant labor are certain to be met with fierce opposition from unions, however. As was clear at the AFL-CIO convention, many have begun to see immigrant workers as the key to their survival, convincing them that the century-old hostility towards immigrants by the conservative wing of the labor movement must be reversed.

Under the pressure of the immigration resolution, the AFL-CIO held a press conference before the convention opened, announcing a series of hearings around the country on immigration law. Cities selected so far include New York, LA, Chicago and Atlanta, although more may be added. They will hear testimony by immigrant workers and organizers, detailing experiences in which

workers rights have been undermined by INS enforcement actions, and by the use of immigration law by employers.

The testimony they present is likely to reflect the experience of Dolores Alcala, who, like most immigrants, expresses a mixture of gratitude to the U.S. for affording her economic opportunity and anger over her exploitation. Alcala was only 11 years old when she went to work in the green onion fields in the Mexicali Valley, just south of the U.S. border. She left for the other side when she was 15.



"I was afraid to come here, especially by myself, but my need was stronger," she remembers. "My family went hungry all the time, and I just needed to eat. My mom and dad are still back there." But in Los Angeles, although she was able to find a paycheck in a garment sweatshop, she also found she was not accepted. "What I didn't expect was so much discrimination, so much abuse, especially in the factory," she says. While she holds her boss responsible, she thinks the law shares responsibility. "I think it should be changed," she concludes. "We all have a right to work and eat. The immigration law is just trampling on all of us."

And for the first time, it seems like the top leadership of the AFL-CIO agrees with her. Linda Chavez-Thompson, the federation's executive vice-president, announced the hearings and then told the convention that "it is time, long past time, to address the nation's failed immigration policies."

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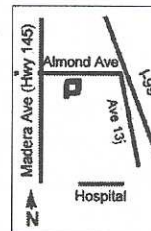
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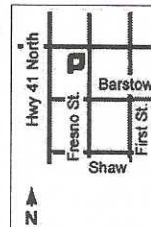
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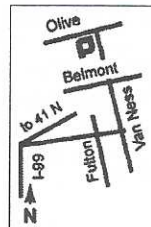
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The Labor/Community Alliance will publish a Spanish Language edition in January. We are actively soliciting articles. If you have an idea for an article call Mike Rhodes at (559) 226-0477. Completed articles are due by December 10.

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