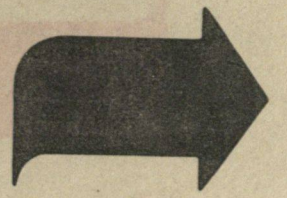


Workers



Atlanta's Mead Corporation officials finally agreed to meet with the negotiating committee of the Mead Caucus of Rank-and-File Workers Wednesday, September 6, to discuss their demands, presented to the company at the beginning of the caucus' three-week-old strike. Officials of the company had refused to deal with the caucus and their demands since the beginning of the strike. During a rally held Wednesday in Maddox Park at which Rev. Hosea Williams, of the Metro Atlanta/Dekalb SCLC addressed the strikers, word came that the company would meet with the caucus.

During the rally Williams praised the strength and unity that the caucus had shown in outlasting the divisive tactics the company used to try to break the strike. Seven hundred of Mead's 1200 employees are involved in the strike. He deplored these tactics and the parties involved. During the period that the company had refused to deal with the caucus committee, it mounted a large campaign to bring workers back to their jobs and discredit the Rank-and-File Caucus. The Black public relations firm of Wright, Jackson, Brown, Williams and Stephens (state legislator Ben Brown is a partner) which is retained by Mead, bought up large amounts of time on radio stations WIGO, WXAP, and WAOK, which are oriented toward the Black community. The company

Mead workers caucus recognized

used this radio time to issue pleas for workers to return to work.

Atlanta Mead Corporation President R.M. O'Hara had admitted the need for a "new mechanism" through which workers' grievances could be brought to him directly, but said that federal law forbids the company to deal with anyone except the legally recognized union in discussing grievances. He did not mention a section of the National Labor Relations Act that allows companies to deal with groups of workers with grievances that are not in opposition to the present work contract. In hopes of ending the strike, O'Hara set up a committee, hand picked by him, to be replaced after 90 days by elected

representatives to meet with him monthly and discuss grievances. He ignored the fact that the employees had already formed their own "new mechanism" for dealing with grievances and had elected a negotiating committee. The company had previously refused to deal with the committee because of the presence of Williams and because they objected to dealing with committee members, especially Sherman Miller, chairman of the 30-member steering committee and member of the October League.

In addition, the company and the Atlanta Printing Specialties and Paper Products Local 527 sent letters to all employees imploring them to return to work and let their demands be handled by an "expanded labor-management council" or face possible loss of seniority. Several workers have already been fired or suspended for their part in the strike. Most of the company's attempts to subvert the strike came over the Labor Day week end, but by Tuesday, when the strikers still showed up in force at the picket lines and the ranks of those out remained high, the company was forced to meet with the Rank-and-File Caucus and hear their demands.

Within the list of the caucus' 40 demands are calls for the company to "end the present intolerable and unhealthy working conditions" and to "end present racial and un-American-like hiring and promotional practices." But the demands noted that "there must not be any benefits granted to Black hourly employees that will discriminate against and repress the white hourly employees."

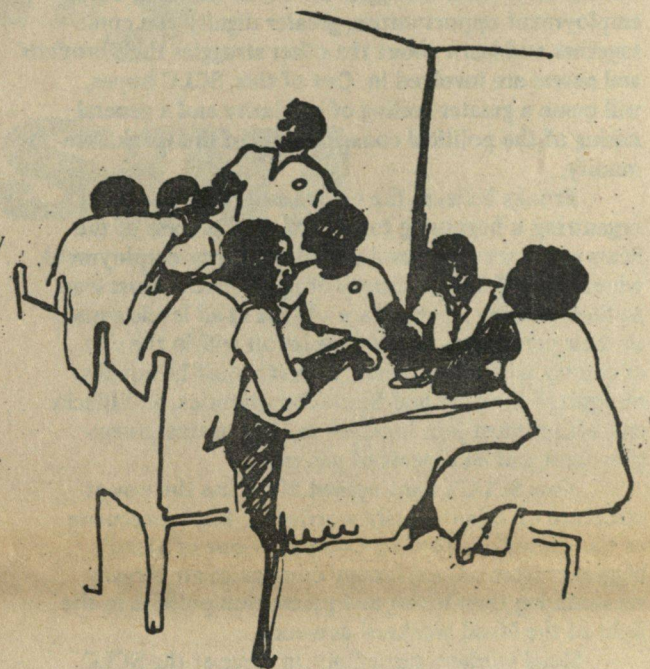
In addition, the Mead Caucus of Rank-and-File Workers, "reflecting the sentiments of the vast majority

of the hourly employees," charged that the Atlanta Printing Specialties and Paper Products Local 527 with "deliberately neglecting its duties to insure the rights and needs of its paying members." They demanded "the immediate resignation of all union officials and a new election," and in the event that this was not effected, declared the officials impeached for their participation in creating a "sweetheart union."

Although several white workers have joined the picket lines, an estimated 75 white workers are out, and although there are rumors of growing support with white workers inside the plant, no large show of support by white workers has occurred yet, and the vast majority

of the 700 striking workers are Black.

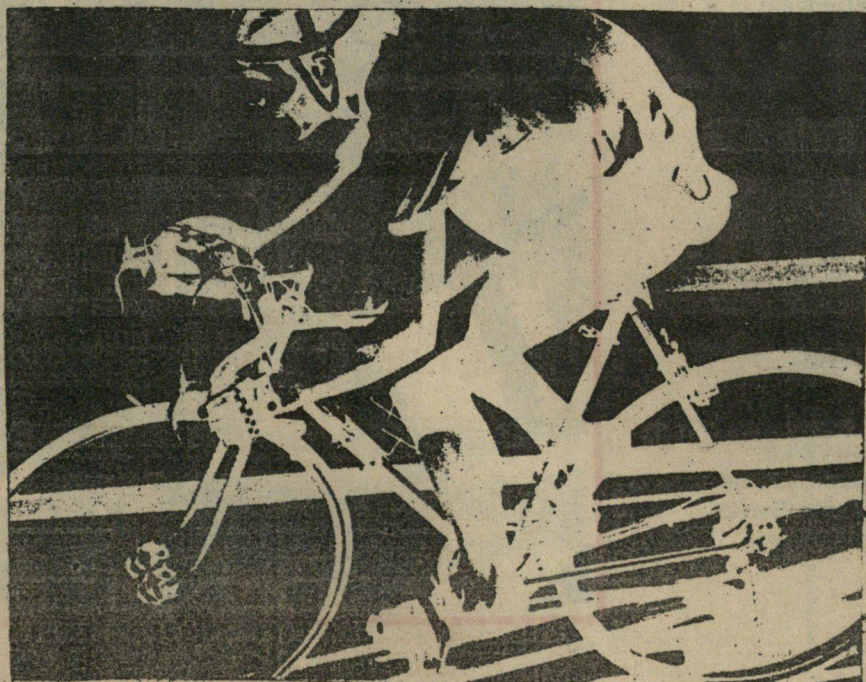
The mass rally Wednesday was called to help counter the company's attempts to weaken the strike and to begin to move support in the Atlanta community for the strike as it now goes into its fourth week. Boycotts of Mead's major customers by stores and individuals are being organized throughout the city. Coca Cola, Pepsi, Budweiser, Schlitz, and Morton Foods are the main targets of these boycotts and committee members are meeting with the heads of the local plants and distributing agents of these products asking them to support their demands by not buying Mead products. They are weighting their appeals with the possibility of boycotts of their products.



Committees have been established to raise food, clothing and monetary aid for the strikers and their families. SUPPORT should be sent to: Mead Caucus of Rank-and-File Workers, Metro Atlanta/Dekalb SCLC, 2348 Boulevard Drive, NE. Telephone: 378-9382.

Support is also needed for the six Mead workers who were cited for breaking the injunction and will go before the Superior Court September 15 at 9:30 am. Your presence in court will help!

-bill lundberg



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