

NATIONAL TELEPHONE FRACTION BULLETIN

Number 2

August 1976

The New York Trial. George, George, Ilene, and Brent had their trial last night (Wednesday). In George W.'s words, it was a "horror show." The Union restricted presentation of evidence and objected to virtually every point made. For all the odds against them, the feeling was that they did very well, both in laying the basis for a court appeal and in making the necessary political points. The thrust of the defense was political repression -- they were able to get in Dempsey's remark to a steward's meeting that "they couldn't get a fair trial." A rumor is that they will be found guilty (verdict to be announced by this weekend) and will be told to pay back the money raised at the raffle or face a 5-year suspension. The first appeal (in a month) is to the Executive Board, then to a membership meeting, then to the International. We're hoping that 2nd Ave, Chief Steward Tom Sites (their main accuser) discredited himself enough throughout the campaign that we can get him bumped from his position.

I've enclosed two copies of United Action (New York) that deal with the charges.

Workers' Power Circulation Drive. As you should have found out through your branch, we will be beginning a 4 week WP circulation drive in September. I'm happy to say that New York and Louisville have already started their sales campaign, and are resuming outside sales. New York is planning to distribute a leaflet with a collage of WP articles dealing with Telephone, announcing that they will be back to sell the paper. We did this in Seattle with some success. I've enclosed a copy of a leaflet I made up there a year ago which we handed out the day before we went down to sell. I'll be in touch with the other fractions in the next two weeks about the sales campaign.

1977 Contract. The newsletter which we are going to send out with ~~the personal letters to initiate the contract campaign has been~~ written in rough draft form and will be finished this weekend.

Leaflets originating from the Dayton, Ohio local (#4322) have found their way onto bulletin boards around the country. They call for 30 and out at \$800/month. This is a good demand and goes far beyond anything the Bargaining Council is likely to adopt without extreme pressure. We'll be in touch with them soon.

At the last Louisville Executive Board meeting, the local VP brought up how they've been getting extremely poor service on grievances from the District 10 leadership. The feeling was to push for Fernandez to run against W.W. Brown, the Intl VP from District 10 in the next election, though Fernandez might not be willing.

Fraction Reports. The only fractions which have sent me written local reports in the last month have been Louisville and St. Louis. This situation is intolerable -- a lead from the Center depends on our being able to analyze the activity, problems, perspectives, etc. of each local fraction to draw the correct political conclusions from them about how to proceed, both locally and nationally. I expect written reports from each fraction for the next bulletin by Monday, September 20.

Next Bulletin. The next bulletin will be sent out with the papers on September 24. By then we will have clear perspectives on local activity, where we will focus on building strong fractions, a national CWA speakers tour, and recruitment targets. We also hope to have the revised draft on the contract campaign.

Miscellaneous. We have two new (industrialized) members in the industry, one on the West Coast, one in the Midwest. Also, there are close contacts in two Midwest branches where we have no members at present. Fraction members will be speaking to them. I have a new home phone #: 313-345-9648). Next week, the industrial fractions will move into a new office with a new phone #, to be announced soon.

The perspectives of the Louisville CWA fraction for this period are attached. Most of the energy in the St. Louis CWA work has gone into the Gary Tyler campaign. Sixty people have signed the petition at one building and petitions have begun to be circulated at two other buildings. Their program for future Gary Tyler work includes a disco fund raiser to be held at the union hall in September and also the endorsement of the local executive board. Prospects are good for the first but dimmer for the second.

Fritz N.

WORKERS' POWER

On this leaflet we've reprinted several articles from the newspaper WORKERS' POWER. They all talk about things that directly concern telephone workers -- company plans for speed up and lay-offs, what the union should be doing about it, and the fight against discrimination at the telephone company. You'll find a lot of information that wasn't in the P-I, the Times, or the Scanner. That's because WORKERS' POWER is a worker's paper -- written by workers for workers, from the point of view of those of us who live by our own labor -- not the bosses or union bureaucrats point of view.

WORKERS' POWER is the only national newspaper to give accurate coverage to the struggles of the CWA rank and file, the plant, traffic, and production workers who keep our phones working all across the US.

WORKERS' POWER provides continuing reports on how rank and file phone workers -- and teamsters, autoworkers, steelworkers, miners, and others -- are organizing to remake our unions into real fighting unions. We can't live off what Ma Bell and Glen Watts -- and all the other "labor management teams" like them -- promise us. They care a lot more about the company's economic status than ours!

WORKERS' POWER is a biased paper. We are against lousy wages, speedup, layoffs, racial and sexual discrimination. We are for workers' control of production and socialism.

You may not agree with all that we say. But let us know what you think. We'll be selling here every week.

CWA - CHANGES COMING

"If you were making one thousand dollars a week, would you still come here and bitch?"

That's what Connie Carlson, a telephone worker, asked co-workers during the last round of contract negotiations. And, she reports, the answer was "Yes!"

Things haven't gotten better for employees of Bell Telephone since then, either, she says. With the recession, one of the world's biggest corporations is finding more ways to pinch pennies out of its employees--ways that hurt.

"One of the basic things that is really boiling is the absentee control plan. This plan, which is almost nationwide, allows no more than three absences of any kind and/or six days a year.

They are including doctor's appointments, and there is no such thing as an emergency or child care difficulties.

"We are losing people with years and years of seniority and there is no chance of arbitrating.

SPEED-UP

"This is tied in with speed-up. Every department is seeing speed-up. Everything is "work volume" or "work productivity." Many people's jobs are simply being phased out."

Telephone workers hope that the next contract will improve their situation. But that depends on how the union fights for a good contract.

Most telephone workers are represented by Communication Workers of America (CWA). CWA held its convention recently, and Connie was a delegate.

She reports, "A motion on contract negotiations came up on the first day of the convention. It would prohibit all news black-outs and require that a strike vote be taken before the expiration date of the contract.

"It would also require that a strike begin on the date of expiration if there is no offer from the company by that time. It would also prohibit the International from entering into any national agreement that might affect critical local bargaining.

"There was very heavy debate on this issue. We lost, but it was really close.

The vote showed a lot of anti-International feeling.

"Last year during contract ratification," Connie said, "The company was leaking what the offers were. But the members were in the dark about the whole thing. We took a strike vote at the eleventh hour and the strike was called off.

"Many people feel the union sold out for agency shop in '76. Local leaders were really mad. They felt that they had been made to look like fools in front of their local members.

Local leaders aren't the only ones who were mad. The members are mad too, because they have to work under this contract every day. Many feel that the union needs a new leadership that will fight for them. They are disgusted with Glenn Watts, CWA's President.

"In every district and in between districts there are people who speak to each other and maintain communications about how to change the union structure and make it more responsive to the needs of the rank and file people. But mostly it isn't organized," she said.

WORRIED

Nonetheless, some CWA leaders were worried about the opposition.

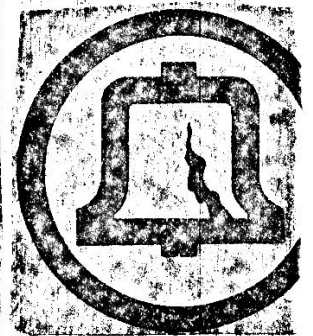
A constitutional amendment designed to cut off rank and file opposition was put forward by the San Francisco local. This was easily defeated.

It would not allow anyone to willfully publish and distribute unauthorized material in the name of the union or local, or (use) the

union seal in such unauthorized printed material that would tend to bring the union or local thereof into disrepute, or would tend to interfere with organizing efforts, or tend to cause a breakdown in the confidence, morale, or unity of the rank and file."

"Even the constitution committee recommended against adopting this amendment, it was so outrageous! It was just resoundingly defeated."

The next thing to defeat is Bell, and the union leaders who the company walk all over employees. And it will take organized movement of rank and file workers to do that.



ON SALE HERE TOMORROW

LAB
DON

Discrimination: AT&T Is Still At It

by Jim Woodward

The phone company has long been known as the worst employer in the country when it comes to racial and sexual discrimination.

And they're still at it. Even the government says so.

In 1973, AT&T agreed to a well-publicized court order, requiring it to make special efforts to hire and promote minorities and women.

Previously, work at the phone company was strictly segregated. Women were in the lower-paying, more tedious jobs of operators and business representatives, while men had the craft jobs. Within the crafts, blacks were generally given the lowest paying and hardest jobs working on the frame.

Since 1973, not much has changed. An officer at the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission estimates that two-thirds of the Bell operating companies are not in compliance with the original court order.

"We just haven't had enough interest from women for the heavy kind of craft jobs like pole climber, truck driver, or installer-repairman," claimed a spokesman for the company.

The truth is that the company has followed a vigorous policy of harassing the women and minorities it has hired into these positions until they quit or are fired.

When an ordinary person fails to comply with a court order, that person is quickly found in contempt of court and slapped in jail. But AT&T is being given a second chance. Operating on the philosophy that what failed the first time might work the second time, the government is back in court with another agreement.

MA BELL'S HAPPY

And AT&T is happy. Weston Clarke, AT&T vice president says the new agreement "satisfactorily resolves many questions that have burdened our affirmative action program."

The court has not yet approved the deal, however. One barrier is the opposition of the Communications Workers of America and some smaller telephone unions.

The CWA, by using the bargaining muscle of organized telephone workers, is the one organization that could have forced the company to stop its discrimination. But the union kept its mouth shut until the government went to court.

Then the CWA started hollering about collective bargaining and how the government wanted to destroy contract provisions. That may well be true, but the union has left itself wide open for such attacks by its inaction on discrimination.

What CWA should be doing now is fighting for effective action on discrimination. Instead it is defending a seniority system that is so modified by "qualifications" and "needs of the service" clauses that the company often has a free hand to overrule real seniority.

CWA Officials Defend Free Enterprise and Layoffs

DETROIT—At its March 3 membership meeting CWA Local 4001 (Detroit) passed a motion in opposition to all layoffs. The motion called for "all necessary union action, up to and including a national strike, to re-open the contract to secure guarantees against layoffs."

The resolution stated that the CWA International Executive Board's proposals for stopping layoffs were inadequate because they accepted the right of the Bell system to lay off its workers.

Apparently the Bell companies and the CWA International officers are not the only ones who are eager for the company to retain this "right." At the May membership meeting the Executive Board of Local 4001 urged the members to rescind the motion and mobilized enough of their supporters to win.

DEFENDS LAYOFFS

The Executive Board claimed the motion was directed not against Michigan Bell but against the American form of government! They defended both the "concept" of layoffs and the company's claim that "economic factors" gave it no choice but to lay off.

They were against a strike, they said, because it would "reap a bonanza for AT&T in wages saved."

In fact, Michigan Bell is already decreasing its work force without layoffs—through a campaign of firings and harassment.



THE OPERATOR
YOU ARE
REACHING
HAS BEEN
RIPPED OFF

CWA officials had said that this would be "the year of traffic" in bargaining. Rank and filers hoped that meant something would be done about the poverty-level pay and intolerable working conditions that operators face.

Once the details of the agreement were announced, it was clear Watt's "outstanding settlement" had done nothing about these crucial traffic issues:

Harassment: The constant monitoring, no talking rules, and regular suspension for trivial errors will continue. Strong contract language preventing these things and the right to strike over grievances to back it up was needed. Not a word about any of this in Watts' agreement.

Hours: The hours which totally dominate the operator's life—split tours and late shifts—are a big concern. Six hour tours was the kind of solution that was

popular across the country. Watt's solution was to knock half hour off the eight hour day shifts—the premium hours on a few get.

Pay: Top traffic pay is as much as \$80 a week below to plant pay. The training required for most traffic jobs is now as long as that required for many plant jobs, destroying the myth that the pay difference is due to skill.

A \$50 a week increase if everyone was needed to be closing the gap. Watts got percentage increase that further widens the difference between plant and traffic.

As it usually does, job harassment had let up in the week before the contract expired. It began again immediately after the tentative agreement was announced—a cruel indication that this wasn't going to last traffic's year after all.

Ed Kearns

Louisville CWA

"Two Can Play At This Harassment Game"

LOUISVILLE—South Central Bell is taking advantage of the recession to step up harassment here. Forced overtime, insane rules on hair length and speed-up have all begun in the last few weeks.

The company is counting on the union to take its usual do-nothing stance. And the local leaders haven't let them down.

United Action, a rank and file opposition group in the local, proposed at the last local meeting that the local leaders organize a grievance dumping to put some pressure on the company. But the local executive board's version of fighting back is to file a couple of grievances that in six months will be sold out by Nel Horlander, the CWA International Rep.

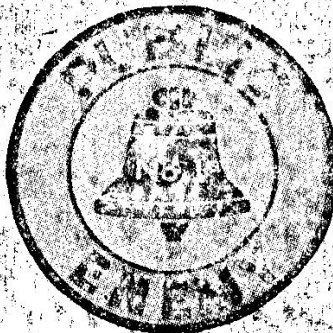
The only way to beat the company harassment is to fight it in

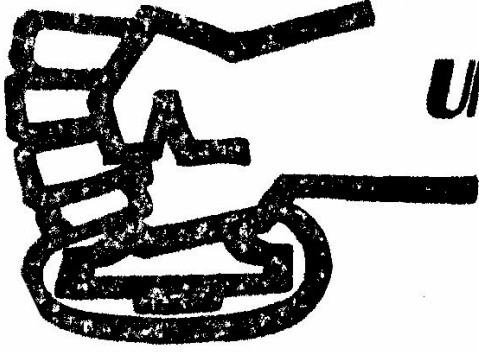
a way that will hurt the company. United Action is circulating a petition asking for a special meeting to discuss and come up with some action on forced overtime.

A steward and United Action

member told Workers' Power the company wants us to follow these crazy new rules, they should follow every rule in the books. Every truck and pole should be inspected in detail before work is done. Every instant trouble an operator encounters should be reported—no matter how much time it takes. Two can play this harassment game."

The company's desire to control the work force and the refusal to fight back means the membership has to organize. United Action is running a slate in the delegate elections on the condition that the union should be to members, not the company. A response to the election campaign makes it clear that win or lose ideas of United Action are getting support.





UNITED ACTION

June 30, 1976

Convention Report

United Action was able to send George Feldman, Steward at 2nd Ave., to the CWA convention which took place on June 21-25. This is his preliminary report. We will have more details later.

The convention accomplished very little this year - so little in fact that they actually adjourned one day early. Yet none of the major problems we face - layoffs, forced downgrades, discrimination, automation, etc. - was even discussed let alone acted upon.

These issues could have been taken up if there had been an organized movement prepared to fight for them. In the one case where this was true, the International leadership was actually defeated.

WATTS DEFEATED

Last year delegates from District 10 proposed four resolutions to make our contract bargaining more effective and democratic. Included in their motions was a ban on all news blackouts, and a no contract/no work policy. By a narrow margin all four motions were sent to committees for further study.

The District 10 delegates did not give up. They returned this year determined to fight for passage of their motions. Two were accepted by the leadership. But on the question of news blackouts, the International officers were defeated. It is now official policy of the CWA that there will be no blackout on contract negotiations. The other motion, on no contract/no work, was unfortunately tabled again and was not voted upon.

DEFENSE FUND LOOTED

The worst decision taken by the convention concerned the Defense Fund. For the next six months the union will be diverting all contributions for the Defense Fund to the unions general finances. The Defense Fund is used to pay strike benefits and is an important weapon in our fight against AT&T. The decision to loot this fund in the year before our contract expires can only mean that Watts has no intention of putting up a real fight for a new contract. Worse still, it tells the Bell System the same thing, allowing them to take a harder line in the negotiations. What looks like a bookkeeping arrangement can really hurt us in the future.

The convention also agreed to increase the per capita dues that each local sends to the International. The increase will be 50¢ in July, 25¢ in one year, and another 25¢ in two years. This does not automatically mean a dues increase for us in NY, but don't be surprised if that is what Dempsey proposes in the future.

At least some of this money is going right into the pockets of the union officers. The salaries of all International officers were increased, with Watts now receiving \$52,000 a year.

Finally, the CWA has endorsed Jimmy Carter for President.

We hope the next issue of the Generator will include a full report on the convention, including how our delegates voted. United Action believes that the members have a right to this information.

UNITED ACTION UNDER ATTACK

The Dempsey machine is making another move to crush democracy in Local 1101. Four members of United Action are being brought up on phony charges and may be expelled from the Local -- solely because we refuse to play by Dempsey's rules of "make a deal" and "don't rock the boat". This is an attack on every member of the Local.

HERE ARE THE FACTS

When the Local held elections for convention delegate recently, United Action ran a slate of four candidates. We got about 30% of the vote -- and the Executive Board apparently got worried. After the election, we held a raffle to raise money to send a United Action member to the CWA convention. Now four UA members are being charged with fraudulently using the name of Local 1101 to sell raffle tickets for "personal purposes".

There was no fraud. Our raffle tickets clearly said "United Action of Local 1101, CWA", which is what we have called ourselves for over 5 years. The leaflets we handed out during the raffle made it clear to everyone that the money was going to United Action in order to build an alternative to the sellout policies of the Dempsey machine.

United Action has never pretended to be anything except what we are -- a group of rank and file telephone workers who believe that we need a strong, democratic, well-organized union that is ready and willing to fight for its members' jobs.

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON

Charges have been brought against us by Tom Sites, 2nd Ave. Chief Steward, Tom Guccino, 42nd St. Chief Steward, and David Liu, a steward at 36th St, and Bob Barbarelli, V.P. of the Local.

But it's clear that the charges weren't their idea alone, because they weren't misled by what we were doing. The charges are part of an organized attack on United Action by the officers of our Local, and probably by the International as well.

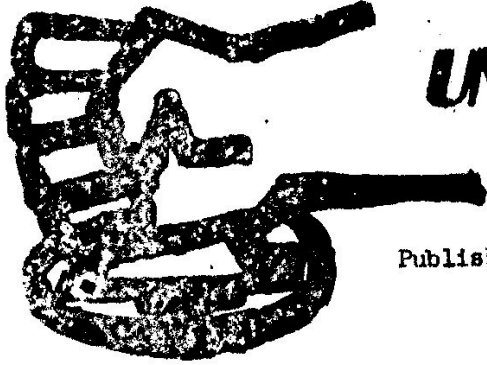
The bureaucrats in CWA don't like the idea of UA members going to the CWA convention. They don't want the members of our local to get a full report of what our delegates do there. They don't want members of Local 1101 working with members of other locals to fight the sellout policies of Watts and the International. They are embarrassed by the fact that UA is building a national challenge to them, with groups in Seattle and Louisville as well as New York.

There was no fraud. Our raffle tickets were clear. Our leaflets were clear. The members of this Local are clear on who and what United Action is, and so is the Executive Board. We have done no damage to the reputation of Local 1101.

The truth is that the Local leadership isn't trying to protect the good name of the Local by this move -- they are just out to protect their own positions by stamping out any opposition to them. Once again they are showing that they are more interested in fighting the members that in fighting the company.

DEMAND THAT THE CHARGES BE DROPPED!!!

For more information or to help hand out this leaflet call George at 724-3247



UNITED ACTION

Published by rank and file members of Local 1101, CWA
AUGUST, 1977

COMPANY DEMANDS LEAK OUT

OUT FOR BLOOD

The Broad Street News reported last month that the union has seen some of the company's proposals for "improvements" in the local '77 contract. These include:

1. Make separate grade and pay levels within installation and repair, including a separate disconnect force.
2. DTA on permanent transfers reduced from 30 to 14 days.
3. Combine various districts to eliminate DTA.
4. Increased company control over transfers.
5. Increased company control over vacation choice.
6. Require a doctor's note after the second day of absence.
7. End automatic raises. Instead have "merit" raises based on recommendation of foremen.
8. End multiple grievances and increase company control over grievance procedure.

Obviously some of this is just company scare tactics. But the company is making it clear that it has its own ideas about the next contract. If we do nothing, this nonsense may become reality.

Defend United Action

Four members of United Action have been brought up on charges for calling ourselves "United Action of Local 1101" on raffle tickets last month. This may sound like nonsense, but it's not. The Executive Board of this Local is trying to wipe out anyone who dares to stand up to them or to the company.

We believe they are going after us right now because we ran against them for CWA convention delegates and got 30% of the vote. We held the raffle to raise money to send a UA member, George Feldman, to the CWA convention, and George is the only person so far who has reported back

to the membership of this local about what happened at the convention.

And at the same time as they were cooking up these phony charges against us, the officers of our local were trying to sneak five of their cronies into the convention as illegal alternates, paid for by local funds! Who's really guilty of fraud and discrediting the local - us or Dempsey?

Our trial is set for August 18 at the local office. Whether or not you agree with everything we say, it's important to stand up for free speech and the right of opposition in this local. Let Dempsey know what you think of this move, and get in touch with us to help our defense.

cwa convention- full report p.4

From the Horse's Mouth

Free Gary Tyler

2

The following statement from Mr. Lee Vogel, General Personnel Supervisor of N.Y.Tel., appeared in the Daily News June 30th in an article called "Goofing Off".

"The surest way a worker can screw up an organization is to do exactly and precisely what he's supposed to do and not exceed that boundary, ever. Don't use any judgment. Don't raise a question. If you ever want to kill a supervisor you don't like, do exactly what he tells you."

We couldn't have put it better ourselves.

United Action is supporting the Committee to Free Gary Tyler, and we are asking interested telephone workers to help his defense.

Gary Tyler is a 17 year old black man who was framed in Louisiana for the murder of a 13 year old white youth. Gary is innocent - the only thing he is guilty of is being young, black, and in the wrong place at the wrong time. The white boy was murdered during an attack by whites on a school bus filled with black kids; a black had to be blamed, so Gary was singled out. It is clearly a case of "racist justice".

Gary was sentenced to death by an all white jury and has been on death row since December. Now he may get a new trial because the Supreme Court has thrown out Louisiana's death penalty. But massive national support must be built to make sure this young man does not spend the rest of his life in jail for a crime he did not commit.

Giving your support to Gary means a lot more than saving one life in Louisiana. Gary Tyler could be any of us - anyone who dares to stand up against racism and injustice.

To help in Gary's defense or for more information, ask a UA member or call the Committee to Free Gary Tyler, 473-6845 between 6-8 p.m.

GUIDE TO
WORKPLACE
SURVIVAL
Number 9

ALWAYS LISTEN CAREFULLY TO
MANAGEMENT'S POINT OF VIEW...



disco ripoff

Strange things are happening in disconnects. The company wants to create a separate disconnect force after the 1977 contract and pay them less than installers' pay. In fact the company is creating a disconnect force right now, and the way they are doing it raises serious questions about what's going to happen to our jobs.

First: why are there so many women in disconnects? Many women installers are being pushed into disconnects and denied the installation training they should be getting. The women are convinced the company is trying to get rid of women from regular installation crews. What is the local doing to stop this?

Second: why is disconnect work being

given to part-time (28 hour week) summer employees who are being paid by the government and making less money than installers? There are at least 44 such people working in Manhattan/Bronx. If there is disconnect work available, why isn't it being paid at the proper rate? And why aren't upgrades being made available to the many women and men waiting for installation jobs? We think it's fine that the company give people summer jobs, but not by having regular work done at lower pay, while we have framemen and splicers' helpers downgraded and operator on a four-day week. We understand the local agrees with this and is "negotiating" to have the summer employees put in helper jobs instead. But when are we going to get some results? Labor Day?

coin repairman fired

OHIO WILDCAT

Phil Brown, a Coin Repairman from W. 50th Street, was fired in May. The third step of his grievance procedure was just denied, despite overwhelming indications that Phil was really fired because he could not get along with a racist foreman. We asked him if we could tell his story.

"I've been in the company since October of 1969 - almost seven years. I've been in coin repair all that time, on the East Side, and then after they broke up that gang, I came here. Generally I've been treated pretty good by management until they changed foremen a few months ago. Then they got this new foreman, McDermott. He treated me pretty rough. Before he got to be foreman here, I met this guy at a Christmas Party. He told me there were three guys he wouldn't want in his gang. They were me, and two other guys, and we were all black. McDermott isn't straight with you. He tells you something, and writes it down in his book instead of sitting down and trying to work it out. Once he went to the second liner to try ~~to get me on warning for something that~~ wasn't true, and he called me a liar, but the second liner turned him down.

"I don't really understand the firing myself, man. I have to see what they wrote down.

"After my vacation, they called me down to the second liner. He said they hadn't seen my truck any place in the area where it was supposed to be one day before my vacation. I told him I was at the locker waiting for another repairman to get some keys. He ignored what I said, he didn't even check it out. He sent me out for a few minutes, than called me in and told me I was suspended for ten days pending dismissal.

"I haven't really had a chance to present my case. From what I get from the union, every step the company brings up something else from the past. At the third step they brought up a story about five years ago that wasn't even true, but the union didn't know that.

"Anybody who gets fired should sit in on all their steps. They should see what the story is because management keeps changing it. They should speak up and say what really went on, and say was it fair. Because nobody could express themselves like you. And nobody knows the facts like you.

A wildcat strike in Northern Ohio won a partial victory last month, and showed again that direct action can force the Bell System to back down.

Ohio Bell has started to open "phone stores", where customers can pick up plug-in phones to use with pre-installed jacks. Ohio Bell also created a new job classification, "Phone Center Representative", for persons who assemble phones and run these stores. The phone center rep. was paid \$58 less than installers.

The union contended that the job was installer work and should be paid at installation rates.

The Ohio CWA contract doesn't have a "no strike" clause, so when the ranks walked out, the local leaders were forced to go along.

After two weeks, Ohio Bell backed down. They agreed to have phones assembled at locations other than the phone stores by ~~installers, and to eliminate the new job~~ classification. However, the people in the phone store would still receive the lower rate.

The whole credit for this partial victory belongs to the ranks. If the local leaders were reluctant partners, the International was no help at all. They refused to authorize the strike so no strike fund money or other aid was available.

Glen Watts did make a speech in Los Angeles praising the fighting spirit of the strikers. But that was a week after the strike was over.

HELP DISTRIBUTE

UNITED ACTION

Contact George, 7243247

Convention Report

By George Feldman

The CWA Convention in Los Angeles proved several things: when the opposition is organized, Watts can be beaten. And it proved that unless the membership makes its voice heard, our interests will be forgotten.

JOB SECURITY

The Convention never dealt with the most serious issue facing CWA members: jobs, layoffs, automation, got plenty of talk, but not a single serious action was proposed on the floor.

The shorter work week came up only as a legislative goal. In other words: we'll lobby Congress. Don't hold your breath! No bargaining demands were discussed, even though the next Convention will take place long after negotiations have begun.

BARGAINING

The membership won a major victory on bargaining procedures.

Last year a set of four proposals from District 10 (South Central Bell) narrowly missed being passed. They were instead sent to a special committee for action this year.

~~The committee accepted two of the proposals - to take a strike vote before contract expiration, and that no national agreement include threats to local contracts (like loss of retroactive pay was threatened in '74).~~

That left two proposals opposed by the International. The first was for a ban on news blackouts during bargaining. With support from around the country, the District 10 delegates defeated the Watts "machine". The reason for this gain was stated over and over by delegates: the heat from the membership was too hot on this issue. Many local presidents said they feared they would be thrown out of office if they had to go through another contract like the last one. Even 1101's delegates voted right on this one!

The last District 10 proposal was for no contract/no work (if a strike vote had passed). There was strong support here also, but Watts ruled it a constitutional question and was able to avoid a vote on this crucial issue. The District 10 delegates and their supporters - more a loose group than an organized opposition - failed to follow through and Watts got away with it. It didn't have to be that way.

DUES AND SALARIES

The amount of dues going to the International was increased. In many locals

(though probably not 1101, with our fault in ones hikes) this will mean an increase in members' dues. In addition, the money that goes to the defense fund (50c per member, per month) will be diverted to the general fund for at least six months - in a contract year! And the salaries of the International top officers were raised - Watts will get \$1,000 a week. 1101 delegates voted for all of this.

The dues increase was clearly Watts' top priority this year. The International lobbied hard for it, and won easily, except for the looting of the Defense Fund which just narrowly passed.

Why does the International need this new money? They've lost thousands in dues because so many of our members have lost their jobs! Watts' solution to layoffs to increase the dues of those who remain. Maybe laying off Glenn and his supporters like Ed Dempsey would clear their heads a little.

ARBITRATION

Locals already have the right to go to arbitration without International approval if they pay for it themselves. There was a proposal to repay locals when they did this, but only if they won. Joe Connally, Executive V.P. of 1101 addressed the Convention ~~against this motion, saying the International alone should have the right to decide when to arbitrate.~~ Remember that the next time you get a song and dance about how we're trying to convince the International to approve arbitration. The motion was defeated.

LOCAL FUN AND GAMES

Local 1101 is entitled to some 25 delegates. We sent only 13. The only excuse for this is to save money. So the Local proceeds to send 5 people as "guests". The guests were: Howie Banker, Angel Feliciano, John Kelly, Hans Lippe, and Tom Munnally. Ask them about it sometime.

But the Local didn't stop there. It tried to palm off these guests as Alternates, in violation of the CWA Constitution - which states that all delegates and alternates must be elected by secret ballot. These people didn't even run. But two observers from Local 1101, Dennis Serrette and Ed Davis, saw credentials for these five "alternates" signed by Dempsey and Tubby. The credentials were withdrawn only after they protested. Maybe we should skip elections altogether, Eddy? Things would run even smoother. You could pick whoever you wanted and tell them how to vote. Hell, that's not so different from the way things are now, is it?

Our long term strategy now is to build a national opposition in CWA out of a broad coalition and movement around the '77 contract. Hence our local work in the next months will focus on laying the basis for linking up with the contract campaign that we build and organize nationally. To do this we will be involved in two important projects:

- (1) Building a real fraction with heavy emphasis on political education, including political training such as "how-to" sessions on filing charges with NLRB, using our contract, winning grievances, etc.

We want the fraction to do three jobs for us:

- (a) plan and organize our intervention in the local and in our work groups;
- (b) develop ourselves (and our contacts) as real leaders -- class fighters, union activists, and experts in the union and the company; and
- (c) win our contacts to revolutionary socialism and convince them to join the I.S.

The fraction is composed of 3 phone workers (H, M, & S) and one exec member (D) with a great deal of valuable experience in rank and file organizing. We will meet regularly -- biweekly; M will convene and organize the meetings. In addition to the educational sessions, we will discuss WP sales and coverage at each meeting, along with some aspect of "What is the I.S." (for example, a short report on an I.S. 'current event' like a demo and why we organized it). We want to plan and organize these meetings in advance -- with agenda items that really attract our contacts, speak to something they really need as well as something they just might be interested in or curious about.

August 21 (Sat. 10AM): Next fraction meeting, at which time we will plan the agenda/topics for the next 3-4 fraction meetings. We will also assess the possibilities for recruitment and set specific targets ~~(to be reached by the end of October)~~.

- (2) Building a new periphery around us in the local, conceived not as a real organized 'group' at this point but rather as a network of people across as many work groups and departments as possible. These are people in our own work groups (DA, TSPS, and SOT) as well as other union activists (former UAers and others who may not have identified with UA before) willing to begin informal discussion and activity around the contract, issues to be raised locally via H on the Executive Board, etc.

In order to do this we will:

- (a) hold social gatherings; and
- (b) begin putting out a UA newsletter again, at this point counting on our friends mainly to report stuff to us, contribute a little \$\$ and distribute.

Week of August 23rd: weeknight social at H's place, called by him.
1st newsletter ready to distribute.

The Newsletter

Basically the newsletter will be put out by us, H being the main 'name' along with anyone else we can get to sign reports we write. The emphasis will be 3-fold and mainly propagandistic for the first issue or two.

- (a) The company: briefs on harrasment -- many forms in many different departments and work groups; articles on the employers offensive specifically as 'played' by AT&T and the 'One Bell System'.

- (b) Fighting back: reports on grievances, other shop floor tactics that have taught the lesson of sticking together & standing up for your rights; reports on union activity (eg. CWA convention, Local 10310 E Board discussions, etc.) as well as demands we (representing the rank and file) bring to the union to make it represent us better and fight harder.
- (c) Contract fight: maybe pick one issue or contract 'section' each newsletter. Hopefully it won't be long before these articles can be agitational, calling for petition drives, people to come out to local meetings to fight for motions, etc. For example, we can begin now to raise motions and activity around building a local strike fund.

This newsletter will be quite modest at this point -- but we will still try to involve our friends in helping at whatever level: helping layout and headlines; typing; pitching in 50¢ or \$1.00; passing it out, etc. We should get out at least two issues by the end of October.

We decided to 'low-profile' the UA aspect of the newsletter. That is, we will not 'come back fighting' and raising old issues (the history of attacks and counterattacks between Dearing and UA leaders during the local and delegate election campaigns). Rather we will project the forward looking thrust of a group of union activists pushing the local to fight harder, and more and more the stress will be on the contract fight -- locally and nationally. One of the things we failed to do in the past is to point clearly to the 'enemy' -- to focus and organize the real wrath of phone company employees which is directed first and foremost at the company, the Boss. Understanding how this monster operates is the basis for mobilizing broadly for a real fight -- a fight to make the union fight for a better contract in '77.

Workers' Power:

As far as coverage is concerned, we feel there should be a clear lead from the Center -- the S.C. should organize politically the kind of articles we should send in (and get contacts to write) and when. Some good exposes on the nature of the company right now would be good -- especially given the national coverage on Bell's rate increase drives. A letter to the editor in the Louisville CWA today (5/10) for example said that ~~operators are not~~ overpaid, but telephone operators are, because otherwise Bell wouldn't be asking for such exorbitant rate increases.

SK is in charge of overseeing sales. We will begin selling again at night traffic. Each fraction member at this point will either see or contact by phone from 1 to 4 friends who will get the paper. Mail subs is the only way for some people due to scheduling problems. The contacts are to occur weekly -- even if they have to be phone conversations on each issue (preferably one or two key articles).