Walter Mondale received the overwhelming and enthusiastic support of the AFL-CIO convention in his bid for the Democratic Party nomination for President. It was the first time the labor federation formally endorsed a candidate before the state primaries and marked a new stage in labor's involvement in the presidential election process. Following a standing vote, the convention hall was rocked by clapping, foot stomping and chants of "We want Fritz." The convention endorsement, which threw organized labor's powerful organizational and financial resources behind the former Vice President, came following a recommendation by the AFL-CIO General Board. OPEIU's President John Kelly is a member of that board. At the General Board meeting, 90.7 percent of the

(Continued on page 6)

Canadians Launch Operation

OTEU Local 378 in Vancouver, B.C. joins fellow trade unionists to launch "Operation Solidarity" to protest the B.C. government's regressive legislative proposals.

At the same time the U.S. labor movement was celebrating Solidarity Day III, the Canadian labour movement had launched Operation Solidarity in British Columbia to protest a 26-piece reactionary, anti-people package of legislation introduced this past summer by the Social Credit government of Bill Bennett. According to an editorial in Canadian Labour, the publication of the Canadian Labour Congress, the shock and outrage expressed by citizens from all walks of life is taking the form of a political protest of a magnitude never before seen in the province.

Rallies have taken place since the summer in various parts of the province, frequently drawing as many as 50,000 people at a time. Addressing one of these rallies, Art Kobe, president of the B.C. Federation of Labour, made a direct

(Continued on page 5)
Solidarity Day
Letters of Appreciation

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

September 19, 1983

Mr. John Kelly, President
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
255 West 54th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019

Dear John: Kelly,

Congratulate, to all of us who did so much to makeYesterday's Day of Solidarity a success, the National Day of Solidarity. Your work and dedication are greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Labor
and Congress of Industrial Organizations

John Kelly, President

September 9, 1983

Mr. Jerry L. Doerr, President
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
255 West 54th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019

Dear Mr. Doerr,

I write to express our appreciation to you for the opportunity you gave the members of the local to participate in the successful Day of Solidarity. We are grateful for the support you gave to our efforts.

Sincerely,

United Steelworkers of America

Jerry L. Doerr, President

Editorial
How Others See the B.C. Budget

The following editorial first appeared in the Toronto Star, Canada's largest daily, on Saturday, July 9. It was submitted to this office by our OTEU Local 378 in British Columbia. It is interesting and important to note the threat the right-wing legislation in B.C. poses to the other Canadian provinces.

All of Canada is diminished when the level of compassion and caring falls below acceptable levels in any of its parts. That is why the brutal measures in the B.C. budget, even though they fell entirely within areas of provincial jurisdiction, are cause for concern for all Canadians. Different provinces will naturally have different programs and policies, but there are certain thresholds of civility, decency and compassion for the most vulnerable, below which none of our governments should fall.

The newly re-elected Social Credit government of Premier Bill Bennett is busily smashing through those thresholds with a package of harshly retrograde measures that will cause real human hardship.

In moving to abolish rent controls and the provincial rentboard's office, the human rights commission and the human rights branch of the labor ministry, and to cut the budget of the provincial ombudsman, Bennett is striking directly at the protection of low- and middle-income British Columbians. It is the relatively weak in society, those lacking in wealth and personal influence, who must rely most on the assistance of such institutions. Bennett proposes to leave them more vulnerable.

It is also the weakest who will suffer most from Bennett's incursions in already vulnerable hospital user fees, and from his curbs on welfare, legal aid and student loans.

A similar edge of brutality characterizes his approach to reducing the size of the provincial civil service. It is highly desirable for any government to trim out any fat it finds in its bureaucracy, but Bennett intends instead to back it with a chainsaw.

Instead of identifying unnecessary positions and gradually eliminating them through attrition and transfers, he has set the arbitrary goal of reducing the size of the 44,000-member public service by 25 percent in barely more than a year. To achieve this, he has abruptly stripped all public servants of their job security and given his government the right to fire its employees without cause.

It's hard to see how Bennett can attain those reductions without cutting back sharply on government services, and, given the overall tilt his government is demonstrating, there's every reason to fear that the hardest his services will be those that benefit the neediest. Moreover, at a time when some 185,000 British Columbians are already unemployed, to contemplate adding thousands of government workers to the ranks of the jobless is itself an act of social cruelty.

It's a nasty business, made all the worse by the fact that in his recent election campaign Bennett gave the voters little inkling of the extreme to which he has now gone. In any event, with only 50.1 percent of the popular vote, he can hardly claim overwhelming public support for a right-wing rampage that affirms Canadian traditions of social compassion and embarrasses us all.
Work and Health
by Press Associates, Inc.

Workplace Radiation—Dangers and Safeguards
by Phillip L. Polakoff, M.D.

Radiation is generally divided into two categories—ionizing and non-ionizing. This is about non-ionizing radiation. But first, what's the difference between the two?

Ionizing radiation is the kind whose rays pack so much energy that the atoms they strike split apart. In doing so, they remove electrons from them and cause them to develop an electric charge. A charged particle is called an ion, so the force behind this charge is called ionizing radiation.

Ionizing radiation is that part of the energy band, or spectrum, that corresponds to X-rays, alpha, beta and gamma rays, and neutrons. With their atom-smashing potential, when these rays come into contact with the body, they can damage them seriously, even fatally.

Non-ionizing radiation doesn’t have enough energy to ionize atoms, so it is called non-ionizing. But it can still cause painful reactions as anybody can tell you who ever got sunburned from the ultraviolet rays of the sun, or suffered eye damage from the infrared heat of a furnace or other industrial heat source. Micro- wave ovens, radar, some medical apparatus and laser beams also use this end of the radiation band.

Here are some industrial exposures to various kinds of non-ionizing radiation and their effects. This list is from “Work Is Dangerous to Your Health,” a handbook on health hazards in the workplace, by Jeanne M. Stellman, Ph.D., and Susan M. Daum, M.D. (Vintage Books)

ULTRAVIOLET. Ultraviolet light (all outdoor workers), electric-arc welding, germicidal lamps, “black light” used in blueprinting, laundry-mark identification, dial illumination. Ultraviolet radiation irritates and damages eye tissue; can cause painful sunburn and possibly skin cancer.

INFRARED. With workplace, infrared ovens, “black light” and “heat cataract.” Lasers are extremely hazardous if the beam is directed at the eyes. Never allow the beam to come into contact with the skin.

MICROWAVE. Found in military, radio navigation, radar communications, food ovens, certain drying processes, medical diathermy. Eyes and testicles are most susceptible to damage; genetic effects and effects from long-term low levels are unknown. Microwave radiation can also give off X-rays.

RADIOFREQUENCY WAVES (RF). Used in heating equipment and for hardening metals, soldering and brazing. RF can be used in woodworking for bonding, laminating and gluing. This form of radiation is also used for sterilizing containers, thermal sealing and curing plastics. Improper operation installation of equipment generating this form of radiation can lead to electrical shock and burns. If an operator has wet feet, he or she can be electrocuted.

The key words for protection against non-ionizing radiation—are radiation, for that matter—is “shielding.” Keep the rays from striking the body. This can mean anything from clothing to creams that screen out the sun, to reflective surfaces or the appropriate shade of the lens in welders’ goggles.

Over and other sources of infrared (heat) radiation can be shielded with shiny materials to reflect the heat back toward its source. Some installations use a water screen for the same purpose. Infrared radiation does not penetrate below the superficial layer of the skin. Its only effect is to heat the skin and the tissues immediately below it. The effects of ultraviolet waves is much more violent and a severe burn can be suffered, often before you know you have had too much exposure.

Microwaves penetrate deeply into the body and cause it’s temperature to rise. If the intensity of the microwaves is great enough, it can lead to permanent damage to the affected area. This deep heat penetrating ability is why the testicles are susceptible to damage. To function properly, the testicles have to maintain a temperature lower than the rest of the body. That’s why they are on the outside. If the temperature rises because of microwave radiation, for example, the cell lining of the testicles can degenerate.

Microwave sources can be effectively shielded by fine metal screens such as copper mesh, or thin steel plates. With lasers, enclosure of the beam and remote-control operation are probably wise precautions. If this cannot be done, there are other safety steps that should be followed. Never align the beam by eye, or focus it on a mirror or other highly reflective surface. When the beam is aligned, it should be focused on a dull, nonreflecting object. Goggles should be worn that are designed for the particular kind of laser being used. The laser should be fixed-mounted so that it cannot be swung around accidentally.

For additional information on radiation and its effects, contact the OPEIU Research Department.

Washington Window
Job Health Regulation: Burden or Benefit?

By Press Associates, Inc.

Sheila Bennett, a respiratory technician at the Medical College of Pennsylvania, is among 19 women who must use the hospital’s ethylene oxide (EtO) gas, in delicate medical equipment like pacemakers.

In the four years she has worked at the hospital, 12 of her co-workers have experienced miscarriages, premature births or infertility. Others have suffered severe rashes and eye irritations.

For a long time, the cause remained a mystery. Hospital management never informed Bennett or the other women of the danger of exposure to ethylene oxide (EtO).

“It was only after I found information on EtO in a garbage can that I began to question the safety of working with the gas,” Bennett told the House subcommittee at a recent hearing on proposed OSHA regulations on workplace exposure to EtO. Bennett, one of 100,000 workers in hospitals and in the medical products industry who work around EtO, “I exposure to the gas has been linked to reproductive and fetal defects and male sterility in studies going back to 1977.”

In recent years, unions have been working to educate their members about the hazards of EtO. But these efforts have met with very limited success when confronted with uncontrolled hospital management and the absence of strong federal and health regulations on EtO.

More than two years ago, unions and the public-interest Health Research Group petitioned OSHA to issue a temporary emergency standard for EtO.

Despite the hard evidence on its grave dangers and a recommendation from the agency’s own research arm, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), OSHA refused to act.

OSHA denied the petition for emergency regulations despite its own findings that from 450 to 643 excess cancer deaths per 10,000 exposed workers might result under the current fow standard. Instead, the agency set in motion its slowest regulatory procedure, putting off final rulemaking to late 1984.

Tearing into the court, the unions won a ruling which ordered OSHA to speed up rulemaking on EtO. Never before had a federal appeals court found it necessary to force OSHA to issue a standard.

Last April, OSHA proposed a standard which limits EtO exposure to fifty times less than the current limit. During hearings in July, union health experts testified that exposure should be limited to a level much lower than that proposed by OSHA and that a short-term exposure limit also is needed to protect workers.

At the hearing of the House labor standards panel, labor representatives expressed outrage over recent revelations that a high OSHA official tried to block the possibility of a tough EtO standard after meeting with the head of the Ethylene Oxide Industry Council in mid-June. The subcommittee is investigating whether OSHA’s rulemaking process was compromised.

Said one unionist, “OSHA’s handling of EtO is just becoming an outrage on the order of EPA’s handling of the superfund” to clean up toxic waste.

To illustrate the pressing need for strong EtO regulations, one union released a survey of hospitals and their employees. Among the findings:

• Workers in 16 of the 26 hospitals in the survey work with EtO at low occasionally. This indicates that these workers are exposed, at least briefly, to extremely high concentrations of the gas.

• In only 12 of the 25 hospitals has anyone ever monitored the level of workers’ exposure to EtO.

• In only 11 of 25 hospitals has management had a regular maintenance program to check the sterilizer for leaks.

At the same time, it was found that the union-proposed standard, 20 times stricter than the OSHA proposal, has been attained at several hospitals using existing technology.

As testified, “There is no doubt that the Administration has taken seriously as commitment to remove the regulatory burden from the backs of business, even if it means deliberately ignoring the expressed intent of Congress in passing the Occupational Safety and Health Act. But, the price of premature death, unborn children and ruined health is far too great for the working people of this country.”
Thousands of OPEIU members and millions of trade unionists and American workers rallied behind union banners to make Solidarity Day III the largest Labor Day turnout in the nation's history.

Carrying placards and banners reflecting the Solidarity Day theme, "Across America, We Will Be Heard," American workers turned out to demonstrate their solid support for the labor movement's political policies and their solid opposition to the onerous policies of the current Administration.

Parades, processions, demonstrations, marches, street fairs, picnics, breakfasts—in many different fashions in many different cities the Labor Day celebrants protested the country's economic policies, inhumane social program cuts and lengthening unemployment rolls.

The message heard across the nation was one of hope. As OPEIU International President John Kelly told a Minneapolis gathering, "This Labor Day is not just a celebration of our past achievements, it's a reaffirmation of all that is good and just, to progress. It is a day to reaffirm our belief in the struggle for equality and for a better way of life."

(President Kelly's Labor Day speech, as well as letters of appreciation, can be found throughout this issue.)
Canadians Launch Operation Solidarity

(Continued from page 1)

appeal to Premier Bill Bennett:

"Operation Solidarity is speaking for the unem-
ployed, the starving families, the poor, for the poverty, for the long line of children, women and men who are darkenes and despair have never received adequate assistance from your government."

"If you pass this legislation, your act will be ap-
plauded only by bigots, the narrow-minded and the powerful. But, every fair-minded person in this prov-

cence knows the vicious or political persuasion will condom you for trying to crush out the feeling of hope and any aspirations of the weakest in our society.

The worst of it

All B.C. public sector unions, including OTEU (OPPEU), face an immediate challenge to their col-
lective bargaining rights from the government which has introduced the Public Service Labour Relations Amendment Act (Bill 2). This bill is designed to leg-
islative large portions of the public sector agreements out of existence.

Clauses in collective agreements dealing with ap-
pointments, terminations and relocations are being wiped out and will in the future be determined solely at the discretion of the government.

The bill also forces the government from any pro-
curricular constraint in appointing government em-

ployees. It is a clear attack on the merit principle in government appointments and a move to restore patronage throughout the government service.

If passed, this particular bill will legislature out of existence any negotiated agreement regarding hours of work and work schedules, shift work, overtime, and vacation scheduling. All seniority, subsititution pay and protection against contracting out will also disappear.

Bill 3, Public Sector Restraint Act, is perhaps the most odious piece of legislation ever introduced by a provincial government in Canada.

In its original form, it stated that "notwithstanding the Labour Code and the Public Service Labour Relations Act, a public sector employer may terminate the employment of an employee without cause."

The government has been acting as if this bill were already law and has fired over 1,000 employees and cut vital programs in the human rights field.

Amendments have been introduced by Provincial Secretary Chabot merely changed the words, not the intent of, Bill 3 and failed to redy any of the discriminatory provisions. The amendment is:

- The sick people are being penalized by increased user fees and outofac services.
- Teachers face thousands of firings and students have seen their financial assistance slashed and their education devalued.
- Tenants are losing the protection of rent controls and the Rentakman's office.
- Minorities, as well as all other British Colum-

bians, have lost the protection of the Human Rights Commissions.
- The handicapped face a dismal winter of lower social assistance benefits and fewer services.
- Women face setbacks in equality rights as di-

crimation in job applications and other practices are no longer banned.
- Consumers have lost their consumer-help agen-
cies.
- Taxpayers are being charged higher sales and new restaurant taxes, and businesses will suffer the consequences.

In short, Bennett's insensitivity will hurt the major-
ity of the citizens of British Columbia.

The end result will of the government's massive legis-
lative attack on the people of British Columbia has been the creation of a breaded-bread protest coalition, spearheaded by the B.C. labour movement.

And in the face of the rallies and dem-

onstrations of the coalition, most political observers within the province believe that they should not and cannot be ignored. Some go so far as to predict that Bennett's right-wing rampage will inevitably lead to his own political demise. Canada's labour unions will have to make this sure that is so.

The Reagan Administration has seemingly set a cutoff rate that has hovered around 45 percent. And, they have maintained this rate although it has meant eliminating benefits for many pensioners whose afflic-
tions had worsened markedly.

The review has failed the homeless on mental pa-

tients, leading one Wisconsin State claim examiner to complain in an internal memo that he was allowed a pension, "a claimant has to be a catatonic stupor or to be a totally raving manicure."

The heartlessness of the was recognized by more than the labor movement, as 61.2 percent were ordered back on the rolls by law judges.

In December, deciding one of 95 class-action suits against social security that are making their way through the federal courts, a Minneapolis district judge ruled that guidelines used to judge mentally ill were "arbitrary, capricious, irrational and an abuse of dis-
cretion," as well as illegal. He ordered benefits re-

stored to an estimated 20,000 mentally ill who had been cut off in the six upper Midwest states.

We are faced with a president that promised us a better life than we had before. Remember his "are you better off today?"

He promised us trickle-
down economics—tax cuts and incentives for the wealthy and big business with the increased profits trickling down to the middle and lower classes. He promised us the end of the net of social programs to protect the poor and aged.

The administration took hard and won tax cuts and additional incentives for the rich and corporate community. But, nothing trickled down. Instead, the middle and lower classes—working America—got un-
employment. As they plummeted, they found no safety net to catch them. Reagan had ripped it out from under them with cuts in food stamps and welfare programs, cuts in training programs, cuts in disability insurance. And, the numbers below the poverty line grew and grew.

This Labor Day we enter another struggle—one for justice, dignity and decency. For those with the ability to work, it means jobs. Every American who wants a job should be able to have one. And, to cre-
ate employment requires a national industrial policy in which labor would join business and government in modernizing older basic industries, developing technologically advanced new industries and passing protective legislation like domestic content. In the meantime, it means training and extended em-

ployment programs.

For those unable to work, it means a sturdy and dependable safety net—restored child nutrition and food stamp programs, restored disability benefits.

It means electing an administration that cares for all of America's people—not just the wealthy.

This Labor Day is not just a celebration of our past achievements, it's a recognition of all that is good and just, to progress. It is a day to reaffirm our beliefs in the struggle for equality and for a better way of life.

This day—Solidarity Day III—trade unionists are marching under the banner "Across America. We Will Be There!"

But, where we will be heard best and loudest is in the polls November 4, 1984. And, today we make the commitment to be there. We will not be able to compete with the ultra-right and ultra-rich with money. But, we are made up of millions of working Americans—old and young, black and white, male and female—who are fed up and who want to return this nation to economic health and decency.

We face a formidable adversary in the same way as the Minneapolis strikers in 1934. But, like them, against incredible odds, we plan to win.

It is our—the American working people's—turn to be heard.
nearly 14.3 million votes represented were cast in favor of endorsing Mondale.

Following the board's action, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland said, "We have acted here as we were instructed by our membership."

In fact, said President John Kelly, OPEIU conducted a straw vote to determine the feelings of the local union militants favoring Mondale. Nearly 60 percent of the U.S. delegates endorsed Mondale for President. Seventeen percent supported John Glenn and only three percent endorsed Ronald Reagan.

In addition, President Kelly reported that Mondale had addressed the OPEIU executive board in June 1983. One reason he had given the board was that if elected he would press for labor law reform. He was warmly received by OPEIU officers at that time.

The AFL-CIO said that the primary endorsement, based on a consensus of affiliated national and international unions, AFL-CIO trade and industrial departments and state and local central bodies, will assure the solidarity that is essential for the labor movement to have an effective voice in the political process.

Among the friends of labor seeking the Democratic presidential nomination, "Walter F. Mondale has earned its special esteem," said a resolution adopted by the convention.

"He has been an ally of the trade union movement," said the resolution, in the struggle "for jobs at decent wages, for better public education and medical care, for equal rights and civil rights, and for decent housing."

AFL-CIO Convention

Mondale Outlines Platform; Kirkland Declares Injustice

Walter Mondale welcomed the endorsement of the AFL-CIO and asked for labor's help in this great national campaign to rebuild America.

Mondale, the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination, basked in the praises of 576 delegates and delegates at the AFL-CIO's biennial convention in Hollywood, Florida.

"I am ready and so are the American people," Mondale declared. "Americans want our edge back. We're ready to work for America.

"And, so today I'm asking for your help in this great national campaign to rebuild America. There is no reason on earth for America to fear the future. We have everything we need except a leader, and I will be that leader and, if you will help me, together we will help America.

The convention looked like a political rally. Mondale entered the hall and moved through a crowd of delegates up and down the aisles, shaking hands and greeting old friends. A band played "Happy Days Are Here Again" and "Solidarity Forever.

AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland was on the stage in his keynote address with a slashing attack on the Reagan Administration.

Kirkland alleged the consequences of the Reagan recession, which the AFL-CIO estimated at some 16 million people unemployed or forced on part-time.

Behind the statistics, Kirkland said, "This is a sick picture of broken lives, lopsided communities, ruined enterprises, shuttered hopes and lost opportunities, soaring among the length and breadth of this land.

"That is the debris of arrogance and indifference in high public office," Kirkland continued, "left unattended and untreated by any recovery we have seen so far.

"But this is the price of government by and for a narrow class, driven by an appetite for privilege and for tax avoidance."

Kirkland did not mention the President by name, but referred to "their chief spokesman and protector in the White House," and added "But, the most disarming manner, the most practical pity, and the most facile eunuchation cannot forever mask reality." Kirkland recalled that candidate Reagan three years ago promised to lead the way to "a shining city, high on a hill.

"Today," Kirkland said, "the streets of that shining city are riddled with potholes and its bridges are falling down. Its rotting water system threatens an epidemic and its waste pollutes its streams. Its steel plants and cotton mills stand dark and idle. The lines outside its unemployment offices are limited only by the ruthless curtailment of access to benefits."

Kirkland said popular support for the defense of the nation grows weaker "because its costs are extracted from the hides and sweat of the poor, while those who have fattened most greedily on the favors of liberty are exempted from its burdens."

The central question in the Reagan era, Kirkland said, is the proper role of government in human affairs. "Should government be regarded as the natural enemy of the poor, while government is, as an instrument of progress? That is the main question at issue in the elections of 1984."

Kirkland recalled how Social Security led to the disappearance of county poorhouses, how New Deal programs such as the Forest Service and Civilian Conservation Corps restored the parks, how rural electrification benefited farmers, how public health programs eradicated common diseases. "That government spending—on the retarded right calls it—paid for itself many times over," Kirkland said.

For its part, the labor movement brought millions of people into the middle class through its bargaining and legislative efforts, he said. "Democracy is the politics of optimism, Trade unionism is the economics of optimism," Kirkland declared. "Both breed confidence that the people bear their face in their own hands."

Together, in solidarity, Kirkland said, both those instruments can be blended into a great campaign to change course and build a more just, more tolerant and more-just society.

The endorsement of presidential candidate Mondale, he said, is part of the role played by working people in the process.

Mondale, after an enthusiastic welcome from the delegates, listed the chief elements of his program:

• "A sensible budget, with reduced deficits. A rebuilt revenue base and responsible fiscal policy;"

• "A strong new trade policy; I will match other countries' export subsidies product-for-product and dollar-for-dollar;"

• "Investment in the nation's future through a capital budget to rebuild highways, bridges, cities, ports and public facilities and strengthening of education standards; and"

• "Labor-business cooperation on industrial renewal, with management investing in people and plants while labor stresses quality and productivity."

Mondale said that, as president, he would enforce workers' rights "and fight for the adoption of the Labor Law Reform Act." He pledged to close tax loopholes "and make the wealthy pay their fair share of the taxes." He promised to "stop a lid on health costs" and "clamp down on utility bills."

He said he would "crack down on civil rights violators" and make sure race or sex had nothing to do with pay or success. He said he would "fight to get the drugs off the streets and put the crooks behind bars."

In-lining the contributors of labor, Mondale said that, "today every American who holds a safe job, works decent hours and earns decent pay is standing on your shoulders."

"I have a vision for our country," Mondale declared, "and I know how to lead us there. . . . I am ready to be President of the United States."
1964-A Time To Be Heard
By John Kelly
International President

On Solidarity Day III—Labor Day 1984—International President John Kelly addressed thousands of trade unionists at a breakfast meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He was received with enthusiastic applause, are reprinted here.

The labor movement has always been a force for all that is good and just in this nation—a force for American progress. American labor unions have played a central role in the elevation of the nation's standard of living. It is often hard for us to remember and to take for granted— decent wages, pensions, health and welfare protections, vacations with pay, holidays, grievance and arbitration machinery—all of which would never have existed to the degree they do today without the battles fought by unions for working people.

Just one such battle occurred in Minneapolis. In 1934 a strike against the trucking companies of Minneapolis began what was to become a general strike, closing down most of the city. That strike was galvanized by an intense solidarity among all of the city's unions and the farmer's organizations, by "roving pickets," and finally by a violence instigated by the city's police force siding with the employers and a vicious anti-union state government. But, against the incredible odds, the working people of Minneapolis were successful. Management capitulated, signed the contract and the trade unionists celebrated for a full 12 hours.

These battles were duplicated across America; and, in fact, are very often fought today—although without the violence. Of course, we do have the union-busting consultants—our own pinkeyes with briefcases.

Because of the battles on both the collective bargaining and legislative fronts, the labor movement virtually created the American middle class. But not for trade unions, there would be no public education, prohibitions of child labor, wage and hour legislation, legislated safety and health protections, medicare and social security, political organizations and politicians, the contract and the trade unionists celebrated for a full 12 hours.

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The labor movement has never forgotten those fights and has not always been able to defend themselves—the poor, disabled and elderly. Trade unions have been among the staunchest supporters of food stamps, aid to dependent children, disability insurance, and the like. Why? Because the labor movement has always believed that no U.S. worker should go hungry, homeless, or lack for adequate medical care.

Labor Day began as a celebration to commemorate the achievements of the labor movement, like the few I have mentioned.

In 1882 New York City held the first Labor Day parade. In 1897 Oregon established the first state holiday; and in 1894 federal legislation was passed making Labor Day a national holiday.

Through years of war, depression and violent labor struggle, the labor movement thrived. In spite of setbacks like the Taft-Hartley Act with its infamous Section 14(b)—allowing right-to-work-for-less legislation—we progressed, flourished and celebrated each Labor Day.

But, only because we were consistently willing to fight on all battle fronts, against all adversaries—big business, anti-union, U.S. administrations, ultra-right organizations, regressive congressional candidates.

Companies have come and gone, as have administrations and political parties. But, the labor movement lives on. And, not because it has become easier. We face the same adversaries today. And, like our fathers and their task of representing working people, the task of representing working people has become more difficult.

Because in the 1970's the corporate, union, ultra-right, regressive forces molded into a viable, well-organized, intensely destructive force. This anti-people, anti-union, pro-big business coalition took control of both the White House and the Senate.

And, they did it with our assistance.

Riding a tide of anti-federalism, the ultra-right and Ronald Reagan painted a picture of big government as the oppressor and promised to cut federal spending, stop this oppressor off our backs. Less government, according to Reagan, would mean a healthier economy. The American people—yes, even trade unionists—believed. And, Reagan rode the tide into office.

And, less government is exactly what we got. But, not in the way or with the results we expected.

Social programs were cut. Bankruptcies, the federal budget deficit and the unemployment rate soared. The United States entered the worst recession since the Great Depression. And, who suffered? Certainly not big business or the ultra-rich. Only the poor, the middle class, the working people of America.

And Reagan's Administration points with pride to the lowered inflation rate. Yes, but at what cost? We have long known that inflation could be lowered by lengthening our unemployment lines. This approach has been endorsed by every prior administration—Republican and Democrat—because it is both cruel and counter-productive.

Indeed, an August New York Times editorial, the costs of this anti-inflation policy have been staggering. An additional seven million Americans have slipped into poverty, and the poverty rate continues to rise. A record (official) 12 million workers were without jobs by the end of 1982, and the unemployment rate is expected to remain above 9 percent this year. More than $300 billion in national income has already been lost as a result of the deep and prolonged recession.

In the state of Minnesota, the unemployment rate—although below the national average—stood at 7.9 percent. When Reagan took office, the State averaged 4.2 percent unemployed (1979).

This current job deficit stems from the conscious decision to battle inflation with unemployment. And, it is this intentional increase in joblessness that demonstrates the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of the Reagan economic strategy.

At precisely the same time that the Reagan Administration began its callous job-cutting program, it began a campaign against federal food and nutrition programs. After all, it was promised to get government off our backs. And, federal funds for food assistance were among the major targets of the first Reagan budget.

Child nutrition programs were cut by $1.46 billion. Of the 26 million children getting free or subsidized school lunches before Mr. Reagan became President, 3.2 million dropped out of the program because of the change he put through. Last year 2,700 schools stopped participating altogether because the new Reagan rules made it impracticable for them.

Then there were food stamps. As candidate and president, Mr. Reagan has repeatedly mocked this single most important federal benefit for the poor, suggesting that it enabled cheaters to drink. He per¬suaded Congress to tighten eligibility standards in 1981 and 1982. This year he asked for more restrictions, one of which would cut food stamp benefits for 62 percent of families using them—mostly people below the poverty line, many of them forced out of work by public policies in the first place.

And, what of the poverty line? On August 2, 1983, the census bureau reported the U.S. poverty rate in recession-scared 1982 climbed to its highest level in 17 years. An incredible 15 percent of Americans, the bureau reported, fell below the poverty threshold in 1982. The number of people in pov¬erty increased from 35 million in 1980 to 41 million in 1982 for a family of four—increased by 3.6 million, or 8.1 percent, to 34.4 million.

34.4 million Americans living in poverty. This is unacceptable in the richest country in the world.

The President announced that he was "perplexed" and "deeply concerned" about reports of hunger in America.

But, we are not perplexed about the extent of hun¬ger and its causes, and neither should Reagan be, since he created most of it with the cutsbacks in the food stamp and nutritional programs while putting millions out of work. He created it with his vicious assault on the disabled American workers.

The lunacy of cuts from the disability rolls is now legendary. At least 250,000 have been ordered off the social security disability rolls in the past two years—permanentiy. Another 100,000 either have had their benefits restored, or will eventually by social security law judges who decided they shouldn't have been removed in the first place.

There have been cases like Lyle Ely and Kimberly Bailey.

Lyle Ely was blind in one eye and had tunnel vision in his other. He could not see far enough to make a living. He was laid off from his job as a window washer in 1981. He explained on one of the many forms he filled out in the last years of his life, see well enough to row, drive a car or watch television. His partial blindness, along with his convulsive seizures that also plagued him, was caused by a tumor that grew to the size of a large orange in the front part of his brain. But claim examiners and reviewing physicians who had never seen him found him well enough to work, cancelled his social security disability pension, and reaffirmed the cancellation when Ely applied for reconsideration. Ely, formerly a construction worker, died, in the end his benefits were restored by a law judge.

Kimberly Bailey worked as a flight instructor and chief pilot at a now-defunct flying school at La Guardia Airport before mental illness and other afflic¬tions rendered her unemployable. After she, too, was cut off social security, she was told to live in California on general relief of $210 a month, less than her pension. Too broke to buy the powerful medi¬cines that had tamed her psychosis, she also lacked money to buy the special diets needed because of her allergic reactions. In October, 1981, four months after her termination, she jumped off a cliff, suffering multiple fractures.

The extraordinary scope of the social security re¬view, ordered under Reagan, had made no direct attempt to find beneficiaries who actually recovered and are able to work. Instead, it defined permanent disability so narrowly that the number of pensioners subject to review soared. Prime targets were not those whose medical condition was likely to have improved, but those collecting the biggest pensions.

This is particularly outrageous since these workers have contributed into the social security fund and those are based on their payments into social security during the total work career. These are not "wel¬fare citizens."

(Continued on page 5)
To all members of the Office and Professional Employees International Union, we extend best wishes for a most joyous holiday season and a prosperous and Happy New Year. In a true sense of solidarity, may we draw closer together, as citizens of two great nations and as members of a great International Union, to work toward peace and security for all.

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