

A word to the wise...

Organizing a sit-down strike is no easy task. It takes lots of groundwork. The success of sit-downs depends on backing from the surrounding community as well as from the workplace being struck. Strikers need supporters who can do legal defense work. Organizers must have the ability to keep sit-downers well-fed and united.

Sit-downs often divide people at first. Not everyone immediately goes along with such strong tactics. But, solidarity will be stronger if sit-downers have previously stuck together while confronting those who have power over them: their bosses; their conservative union officials; the banks behind the company. Struggles that inspire a large following are creative in their choice of targets and use of tactics.

Company agents may try to provoke sit-downers into wrecking the workplace. Such actions always lose community support. Instead, the sit-down should be a festive occasion -- the sit-downs of the 1930's were often filled with singing, dancing, and "kangaroo courts" which were a type of workplace theater. All decisions must be made in democratic strike meetings. Organizers should bring books from their labor libraries so that, between meetings and other activities, sit-downers can educate themselves about their own history. But, most important, sit-down strikers must make sure that their supporters are educating the community about what they are doing and why.

Help get WHAT IS A SIT-DOWN STRIKE? into the hands of other working people. Write for copies at

WD Press
P.O. Box 24115
St. Louis MO 63130

We will mail a single copy free if you send us an addressed, STAMPED envelope. The cost of multiple copies is

\$1 for 3 copies
\$3 for 10 copies
\$5 for 20 copies
\$10 for 50 copies

WHAT IS A SIT-DOWN STRIKE?



Lock Out the Boss: It Makes More Sense

SOLIDAROS!

Sit Down
by Maurice Sugar, attorney, Detroit

When they try to can a union man
Sit down, sit down.
If they give him the sack,
They'll take him back,
Sit down, sit down.

Chorus:

Sit down, just take a seat.
Sit down and rest your feet.
Sit down, you've got 'em beat.
Sit down, sit down!

When they smile and say,
"No raise in pay,"
Sit down, sit down.
When you want the boss
to come across,
Sit down, sit down.

When the speedup comes
Just twiddle your
Sit down, sit down.
When you...

Copyright 1987, by WD Press.
A WORKERS' DEMOCRACY pamphlet
Don Fitz, *Editor*.

If you would like to receive the addresses for obtaining the articles and books mentioned in this pamphlet, write WD Press at the address below.

Sit Down

by Maurice Sugar, attorney
Detroit, 1937

When they try to can a union man
Sit down, sit down.

If they give him the sack,
They'll take him back,
Sit down, sit down.

Chorus:

Sit down, just take a seat.
Sit down and rest your feet.
Sit down, you've got 'em beat.
Sit down, sit down!

When they smile and say,
"No raise in pay,"
Sit down, sit down.

When you want the boss
to come across,
Sit down, sit down.

When the speedup comes
Just twiddle your thumbs,
Sit down, sit down.
When you want them to know
That they'd better go slow,
Sit down, sit down.

When the boss won't talk,
Don't take a walk;
Sit down, sit down.

When the boss sees that,
He'll want a little chat.
Sit down, sit down.

This pamphlet is a rewritten version of the editorial printed in *Workers' Democracy*, Number 20, Summer, 1986, pp. 1-5. It is distributed to commemorate the golden anniversary of the Great American Sit-down Strike Wave of 1937.

Published by WD Press, P.O. Box 24115, St. Louis MO 63130

The social system we work for is not a "utopian fantasy." There have been many instances of the initial stages of socialist reorganization of society, of workers' self-emancipation. For example, the Paris Commune of 1871, the role of workers' councils in Russia in 1917, Spain in 1936, Hungary in 1956, and in the beginnings of workers' councils in Chile and Portugal in the early 1970s, and in Poland in 1980-81. These beginnings did not disintegrate because workers were "unable to run the economy;" they have collapsed due to counterrevolutions or threats of invasions.

Unfortunately, many who call themselves "socialist" accept the present limitations of the working class as unchangeable, and paint totally confusing pictures of what constitutes socialism. Socialism is not nationalization, labor-management boards, or workers in one factory buying the factory from the boss and exploiting themselves within capitalist society. Socialism is not bureaucratic oppression such as exists in the USSR.

Although WORKERS' DEMOCRACY believes that no party has a "birthright" to run society, we think it is vitally necessary to build a political organization dedicated to explaining and agitating for the need for socialism. Confronting and exposing the bourgeois parties in the electoral arena is an indispensable part of this educational process. Were socialists to be elected to office, it would be their duty to work to dismantle the bourgeois state.

While the creative role in a new society rests with workers' councils (or socialist industrial unions), many of the politically experienced council members may be members of revolutionary organizations. The attitudes that they bring from their organizations will inevitably serve as models for the workers' council movement. Therefore, the question of the internal organization of a revolutionary party is a critical political question. No party which maintains authoritarian relationships and prevents internal democracy can possibly play a progressive role during a socialist revolution. Our emancipation can only be furthered by openly explaining the need for socialism, for the working class to determine its own fate by restructuring social relationships.

Subscribe to WORKERS' DEMOCRACY. \$6 a year (4 issues)

Name _____

Street _____

City & Zip _____

Send this coupon with \$6 to:

WORKERS' DEMOCRACY
P.O. Box 24115
St. Louis, MO 63130

WHAT IS WORKERS' DEMOCRACY?

We live in a society headed toward suicide. If nuclear war does not destroy life on this planet, the production of poisonous and cancer-producing chemicals probably will.

Everywhere we look, we see a society whose institutions are dehumanizing and oppressive, a society characterized by superficiality and massive waste of human and natural resources. Most of us are forced to take jobs which are routine, boring, insecure, and often dangerous.

Workers and peasants in countries dominated by U.S. imperialism typically do not even share our "luxury" of being able to feed and clothe our families. We are divided from those with whom we should be struggling in solidarity. Sexism divides female and male workers; racism encourages workers to distrust each other; nationalism prevents us from uniting with workers in other countries.

WORKERS' DEMOCRACY believes that these problems are not unsolvable. Society's inability to solve these problems is a direct result of production for profit, that is, of the capitalist system. The *only* way humanity has any hope of continuing to exist is for us to create a socialist society.

By socialism, we mean ending exploitation in all social relationships. We want to create a society where people's work is socially important and personally meaningful, where people experience a community in their neighborhoods, and where people's relationships to each other as friends, lovers and parents are not distorted by nationalism, racism, sexism, and homophobia (fear of homosexuality). Although these prejudices predate capitalism, the ruling class cultivates them to divide us from one another. Workers riddled with self-doubts, fears and bigotries cannot develop the collective self-confidence to create a new society.

The capitalist class controls us fundamentally through their control of the means of production; therefore, ending exploitation and building new social relationships requires the collective ownership by the working class of industry, schools, hospitals, and all other means of producing social wealth. Socialism is the direct control of society by those who produce goods and services, through their economic and political organizations. Such a system would end production for sale and profit and would begin production for human need. Labor power would cease to be a commodity bought and sold.

Socialism must be based on the rank and file of each shop or office directly formulating and implementing their plans for rational production. We must elect work-place councils, which will coordinate production and distribution throughout society.

We believe that workers' democracy, and therefore, socialism, will not be preserved unless representatives and technicians are under our direct control. This requires frequent rotation of duties, so that no new group of sophisticated manipulators arises.

WHAT IS A SIT-DOWN STRIKE?

Throughout the year 1937, sit-down strikes ripped across the U.S. When General Motors signed its first contract with the United Auto Workers, nearly 50,000 workers had just been involved in strikes *inside* their plants. There were 60 sit-down strikes in Chicago during the month of March. The 1800 blue collar and white collar workers who sat down together at the Chicago Mail Order Co. won a 10% pay increase. And, the 450 waitresses and other employees who sat at the tables of Chicago's three large de Met's Tea Room won a 25% wage hike. When the mayor of Amsterdam, New York tried to hire a private firm to replace garbage men who were sitting at their trucks, the strikers convinced their "replacements" not to scab. Women at a Philadelphia hosiery mill halted the movement of machinery by sitting down.

In Milwaukee, the manager of Yahr Lange Drug Co. had the nasty habit of firing workers when their seniority earned them a raise. So, they sat down and radioed salesmen who pulled their cars over and sat in them until the manager had been removed. There were thousands of strikes varying from a handful of workers to massive organizing efforts. Altogether these strikes involved close to half a million Americans sitting down at their jobs.

How did the sit-downs begin?

These waves of sit-downs are best known for their success in organizing workers in the rubber and auto industries. The tactic had a modest beginning. Sometime in the early 1930's, two factory baseball teams in Akron, Ohio objected to the umpire because he was not in the union. They stopped playing and sat on the field until a new umpire was found. A few days later, a supervisor at a rubber factory insulted them. Remembering the game, they turned off their machines and sat at their work benches. The work stoppage spread

throughout the plant, and, in less than an hour, the company had given in. Between 1933 and 1936, the tradition of sit-downs grew among Akron rubber workers.

In January, 1936, Firestone announced a rate reduction and fired a union committeeman. Workers in one area after another halted production and sat down. The company gave in on both issues. The Great Goodyear Strike began in February, 1936, when 700 workers were laid off. Though hundreds of workers held a sit-down, officials from the United Rubber Workers (URW) persuaded them to leave. Goodyear, President Roosevelt, and URW bureaucrats all tried to convince them to return to work and submit their grievances to arbitration. But the Goodyear workers held out for a month and won. Since union recognition had not been established, the rubber workers union enforced the agreement by dozens of sit-downs during the rest of 1936.

During the early 1930's, resentment over speed-up and lack of freedom at work was rampant among auto workers. Union bureaucrats were whispering to each other that they needed a strike so that workers would think they were doing something. Sit-downs at Fisher Body Plants in Cleveland and Detroit in late 1936 caught the bosses totally unprepared. When two welders were laid off at a Flint plant, the sit-downers were so unified that Fisher management persuaded cops to drive all over town to find the two welders so production could start up again.

On December 30, 1936, workers at Fisher Body No. 1 in Flint discovered that the company was stockpiling dies and occupied the plant. For several weeks, they governed themselves in their own committee/work structure that was a model of democracy unknown to union officialdom. When cops tried to stop supporters from bringing food into the occupied plant, a fight of several hours resulted in the strikers' chasing them off. This was immortalized in labor history as the "Battle of the Running Bulls" of January 11, 1937. The liberal New Deal Governor Murphy ordered the National Guard into Flint. Thousands of unionists poured into Flint to protect the sit-downers by preventing the "friend of labor" politician from using the Guard.

The auto workers diverted attention to Fisher Plant No. 9 by letting a company spy think they were going to occupy it. When the company sent guards to protect No. 9, the workers moved into Plant No. 4. Having outwitted the company, the

Most of the historical information is from Jeremy Brecher's Strike! (Boston: South End Press, 1977). Other material was obtained from the following useful sources:

Anderson, J. Fifty Years of the UAW: From Sit-Downs to Concessions. Chicago: Bookmarks, 1985.

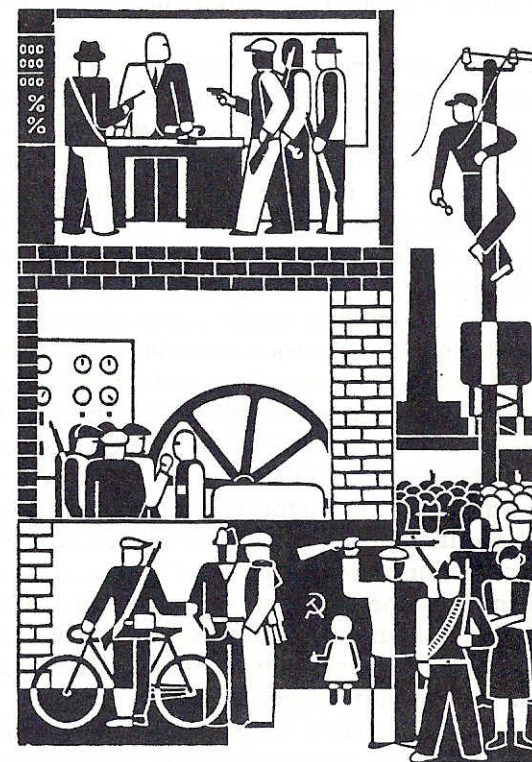
Bird, S., Georgakas, D., & Shaffer, D. Solidarity Forever: An Oral History of the IWW. Chicago: Lake View Press, 1985.

DeLeon, D. Socialist Reconstruction of Society. New York: New York Labor News, 1968.

Slaughter, J. Steelworkers Locked Out at USX. Labor Notes. September, 1986, No. 91. 1, 14-15.

Speech of Lucy E. Parsons. Proceedings of the First Annual Convention of the IWW. New York: New York Labor News Company, 1905, p. 170.

The 1936 Goodyear sit-down strike. The People. February 15, 1986, p. 7.



Gerd Arntz
Fabrikbesetzung
1931

Non-union industrial workers can sit-down in their factories to stop wage-cuts and speed-ups. Restaurant workers can block the kitchens and dining rooms to get higher pay and better working conditions. Office workers can take and hold their offices to halt dehumanizing automations and the use of unsafe VDTs.

Workers in unions can decide that they do not want to cave in when their backward leaders whine about how much money the company is losing. When plants are scheduled to be closed, workers can sit-down and develop plans for alternative production. And union workers can sit-down rather than let their officers make wage concessions to the employer.

Just as any group of people who are unified can sit-down at their jobs for wages and benefits, they can sit-down over the quality of their work life. They can sit-down because some jobs have a "men only" or "whites only" sign on them. They can sit-down because, like longshoremen, they want to be the ones to select which new workers will be hired. Chemical workers can sit-down because they want their plant to quit producing hazardous substances. Medical workers can sit-down because they want the freedom to give their patients good care.

We do not have to accept the idea that owners have some sort of "divine right" to be our masters on the job. Our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents formed unions like the Industrial Workers of the World and sat-down during the 1930's because they dreamed of something more than a big porkchop. Labor inspired other social movements because unions had a vision of a new society where workers collectively ran things themselves. In that vision, we would make products for human needs rather than work to help owners pack their wallets. As American society degenerates into violence at home and increasing wars abroad, as our air becomes unbreathable and our land poisonous, as our jobs become unbearable and our labor "leaders" totally useless, now, more than ever, we need that vision of a new society. When we sit-down on our jobs, we realize what tremendous collective power we have -- the power to turn our visions into reality.

strike had such momentum that GM was forced to sign an agreement. Leading sit-downers out of the factories, UAW bureaucrats rejoiced over union recognition. But they failed to point out that the agreement with GM ignored speed-up.

Why did sit-downs spread so fast?

Hundreds of thousands of American workers used the tactic made famous by the actions in rubber and auto. It was especially popular in Detroit: employees at the Newton Packing Co. and Durable Laundry occupied their workplaces; clerks sat down at Crowley-Milner and Frand & Cedar Dept. Stores; and, there were sit-downs at hotels, lumberyards, tobacco plants, and electrical factories. Motormen on Chicago freight subways sat down when their employer announced layoffs. Sit-down strikes included furniture workers in St. Louis, shirt company employees in Pulaski, Tennessee, leather workers in Girard, Ohio, broom manufacturing workers in Pueblo, Colorado, and oil workers in Seminole, Oklahoma. Department stores were particularly prone to sit-downs because employees could be replaced so easily in regular strikes. In Pittsburgh, C.G. Murphy store employees had a "folded arms strike" when they found no chairs available for a sit-down.

Sit-downs were successful even though unions had just been decimated by the Great Depression. Sit-downs often occurred in shops where unions were weak. Workers at Yahr Lange Drug Co. had rejected unionization shortly before their sit-down. In 1934, union membership among Flint auto workers was only 528. A union organizing drive at Detroit's Fleetwood Fisher Body Plant in late 1936 only attracted 10 people. Though the Fleetwood sit-down only involved 50 of 1700 employees, it quickly served as a model for thousands of Detroit auto workers. The 137 tirebuilders who began the Great Goodyear Strike of 1936 with their sit-down included hardly any members of the rubber workers union.

Why did sit-downs work?

In fact, sit-downs often occurred *because* people distrusted union officials. Workers were frequently angry at delays in grievance procedures and the lack of attention to workplace demands. Since sit-downs directly involve the people who see the injustice which leads to the strike, there is no one who can sell out the agreement. With a sit-down, you simply do not start working again until people are rehired, your workload is

reduced to a human pace, dangerous chemicals are removed, a racist supervisor is canned, sexual discrimination is abolished, or decent wages are restored. "Normal" strikes involve unions' giving management weeks or months of advance notice, which allows the employer time to stockpile goods or otherwise prepare to defeat the strike. But, union leaders and management alike are caught unprepared for sit-downs. Management must respond quickly because a sit-down brings production to a grinding halt. This gives workers tremendous leverage. Since they are occupying their place of work, it is extremely difficult for management to find scabs to replace sit-downers.

No workplace can run without the people who do the day-to-day labor. When sit-downs prevent others from taking workers' places, small shops must make concessions immediately if they want to stay in business. Large corporations will back down on a proposed speed-up just to get going again. Workers with the same employer may be strangers until they realize their tremendous power of acting in unison. In 1937, one group of workers after another began to understand what "collective strength" means.

By World War II, many employers were so terrified of the sit-down that they voluntarily signed union agreements if the union would only promise to keep production going. The best-known example is the steel industry, which had viciously fought unions for decades, but suddenly did an about-face following America's first wave of sit-downs.

Why did the sit-downs come to a halt?

If you ask a union officer why they never lead sit-downs, you're likely to get the answer that "They're illegal." Of course, that's true. But, for centuries, *any* strike was illegal. Just belonging to a union was (and, in some places, still is) illegal. Every right which trade unions have today exists because workers had the backbone to stand up and fight for it at the time it was illegal.

The truth is that even the most militant union bureaucrats have always hated sit-downs. The UAW's Walter Reuther was fond of getting himself photographed walking with sit-downers *out* of a plant when he negotiated a settlement; but, you can look for a long time trying to find a picture of Walter Reuther leading anyone *into* a plant takeover. The United Mine Workers' John L. Lewis was supposedly a great

The first recorded sit-down in the U.S. was in 1906 among General Electric workers of Schenectady, New York, who were led by Wobbly organizers. Though the IWW had passed its heyday by 1936, several of the sit-downers in auto were still Wobblies. Many had never become members, but had participated in IWW-led strikes years before. Other sit-downers who were too young to have been in Wobbly strikes had grown up singing its songs of direct union democracy.

Can there ever be sit-downs again?

The IWW flourished during a time when the word "union" stood not merely for higher wages, but for the hope of a world where people would live as brothers and sisters without anyone exploiting anyone else. Today, the American trade union movement has thoroughly degenerated. Union officials have told their members to grub for as many material goods as they can without giving a thought to any other group of workers. They treat the idea of a "sympathy strike" as a dirty word. The "me first" mentality has even led many bureaucrats to support CIA anti-union campaigns in Latin America. Abandoning the sit-down strike was one of the many ways that the American labor movement lost the respect of people struggling for a new society.

Yet the idea of sit-downs never died in America. Beginning in the late 1950's, civil rights marchers remembered the old labor tactic when they held sit-ins against racism at lunch counters throughout the South. During the height of U.S. attacks on Vietnam in the late 1960's, hundreds of thousands of students sat-in at administration offices to protest their complicity with militarism. By the late 1970's, hardly a month went by without a sit-in to call attention to the destructive effects of nuclear power or other ecological catastrophes. **In fact, by the 1980's, the workplace may have become the only place of importance where Americans fail to sit-in or sit-down to protest the actions of big business.** This lack of employer worry over sit-downs probably goes a long way in explaining the abysmal decline in the quality of our lives.

It's easy to give up and feel that union bureaucracies will always be able to prevent sit-downs. But, just because they have dominated and decimated the labor movement throughout our lifetime does not mean that they will always be able to do so.

positions of power within unions often use their power to their own advantage. During the witch-hunt atmosphere of the 1950's, union bureaucrats relentlessly drove out the very socialists and other radicals who had led the sit-downs responsible for union growth. As they betrayed traditions of struggling for a just and decent world, union officials pocketed the 30 pieces of silver tossed to them as the crumbs of big business.

Who were the Wobblies?

In these days of concessions and givebacks, most Americans have never heard of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which was a powerful union from 1905 until World War I. The IWW inspired tens of thousands of workers because they foresaw building a new society "in the shell of the old." They envisioned a day when workers of each industry would elect their representatives to form a government of industrial unions.

The "Wobblies," as they were called, were famous for *direct action*. When working conditions were oppressive, direct action meant people deciding to slow down work themselves, rather than waiting for a union official to give them permission. Wobbly "leaders" were respected according to how many strike pickets they could organize, regardless of whether the law granted them permission for mass picketing. If IWW speakers were arrested for advocating unions, supporters would come into town and one Wobbly after another directly asserted the right of free speech, until he or she was dragged off to jail also.

The idea of a *general strike*, or workers in all industries walking out at once, was popular in Europe at the turn of the century. Daniel DeLeon, one of the founders of the IWW, explained that it made more sense to strike inside of the workplace and have a "general lockout of the capitalist class." The Wobblies argued that if people would "take and hold" their workplaces, they could form the basis for a new industrial union government. At the founding convention of the IWW, Lucy Parsons suggested the tactic that would spread across the U.S. three decades later:

My conception of the strike of the future is not to strike and go out and starve, but to strike and remain in and take possession of the necessary property of production.

labor "radical." But he hated sit-downs so much that he offered to march miners into Flint to force sit-downers back to work. Sit-down strikes earn such venomous hatred from union officials for one reason: the rank and file is in direct control. Union bureaucrats go off the deep end when it becomes clear that workers can do a *better* job of striking without them.

So, when General Motors offered to "recognize" the UAW if it would help stop sit-downs, the union tsars jumped at the chance. In 1937, the average auto worker felt that joining the Congress of Industrial Organizations would end speed-up, guarantee a living wage, and keep the foreman from breathing down his neck all day. Instead, he found that the UAW had bargained away every important shop-floor right for the sole gain of a "contract." UAW officials even promised to do their part in stopping sit-downs whenever they popped up.

And they fulfilled their promise with a vengeance. One month after the 1937 agreement was signed, 200 women sat down in a sewing room in Flint and the UAW rushed in officials to badger them back to work. The scene was repeated in plant after plant throughout the year. In November, 1937, the entire workforce at one GM plant sat down when four workers were sacked. Immediately, UAW cronies came in and talked the strikers into occupying the plant in different shifts. The union bureaucrats manipulated the assignments so that the most timid workers were concentrated in one shift and then browbeat them when it was their turn. When the militant shift showed up, they found that the plant had been turned back over to management.

Within a few years, the UAW officials had worked out a pattern which other unions would model. Whenever there was a sit-down, paid union bureaucrats would run in to tell people that they had to get back to work. All union organizers were very clearly told that they would be fired if they authorized any work stoppage without permission from on high. The union made sure that all shop stewards were "educated" about grievance procedures. This boils down to training shop stewards to do nothing for months after filing a grievance. Finally, union organizers who didn't go along with the plan to eliminate sit-downs were canned.

Most workers realize that they are much better off with a union than without one. But, those who have grabbed
(continued on p. 8)

FROM THE IWW TO SIT-DOWNS --

In 1933, workers in the Austin, Minnesota Hormel plant had many complaints against the company: raises habitually went to foremen's friends; workers were fired and then rehired in other departments at lower pay; before election day, foremen would threaten layoffs if Farmer-Labor candidates won; and, employees who challenged these practices were told they could quit. The final straw came when Jay Hormel, who fancied himself to be a "benevolent dictator," attempted to impose a weekly paycheck deduction for an insurance plan. When a man in Hog Kill was pressured to sign up, other workers shut down the floor for 10 minutes, until his insurance card was torn up. News of the brief sit-down spread throughout the plant. That July night, workers met at Austin's Sutton Park to form a union.

One of the main speakers was Frank Ellis. Ellis had joined in the nationwide Packinghouse Strike of 1904 and was later jailed many times as an organizer for the IWW. Because of his experience, Hormel made him a supervisor in the Casing Room. From there, he placed union supporters throughout the plant. When Ellis spoke on the night of July 13, he explained that organizing the unemployed as well as the employed was an act of solidarity that would combat strikebreaking. The union charter written the next day followed the IWW pattern of grouping all workers into one big union regardless of craft. It invited membership from laborers throughout Austin and the surrounding area. They named themselves the Independent Union of All Workers (IUAW).

Ten weeks later, Jay Hormel locked workers out of the plant when he heard the IUAW was planning a strike. Negotiations resulted in Hormel's verbally promising to recognize the union, grant seniority rights, and arbitrate grievances. But, for six weeks, Hormel refused to put anything in writing, and, on Friday, November 10, workers voted to strike and set up pickets. The next day, strikers realized that non-union workers were still slaughtering sheep. "Four hundred men, many of them armed with clubs, sticks, and rocks, crashed through the plant entrance, shattering the glass doors and sweeping the plant guards before them." (1, p. 497) Running through the plant to chase out non-union workers, strikers stumbled across a meeting of Jay Hormel with his company executives and declared, "We're taking possession here. SO MOVE OUT!" One foreman was so terrified that he tried to escape across the Red Cedar River; but his rowboat sank midstream and he entertained the strikers by swimming to the other side. When the sheriff arrived, strikers picked his car up off the ground, turned it to the opposite

THE GREAT HORMEL STRIKE OF 1933

direction, and told him to "get the hell out of here."

The union intended to put pressure on Jay Hormel by letting him believe that 20 million pounds of meat could spoil and his refrigeration system could burst. Farmer-Laborite Congressman Shoemaker, who had come to hog in on the action, overheard strike leader Ellis discussing refrigeration with an engineer. The Congressman immediately informed Hormel that his meat was safe, leaving the owner more reluctant to negotiate. Another Farmer-Laborite politician, Governor Olson, made public speeches backing the strikers while he secretly mobilized 300 national guards 30 miles from Austin.

But, support for the strike was overwhelming. Since the IUAW had previously endorsed farmers' efforts to raise their prices, the Farmers' Holiday Association patrolled roads leading into Austin to halt livestock and scabs. As strikers occupied the plant,

Food, bedding, cigarettes, reading materials and playing cards were brought to them by family and friends. They came out of the plant several days later with one of the first industrial union contracts in mass production industry. (4, p. 1)

During the next few years, the IUAW spread to many towns surrounding Austin. Ellis led repeated sit-down strikes to settle grievances, stop harassment of strike leaders, and win the closed shop.

When the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) formed outside the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in 1937, the Independent Union of All Workers was one of the first to affiliate. CIO head John L. Lewis immediately split the union into separate occupational segments and affiliated them into several international unions. Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCWU) is a direct descendant of the truly industrial union . . . (4, p. 2)

For more information about the Hormel Strike of 1933, see:

- (1) Englemann, Larry D. We Were the Poor People - The Hormel Strike of 1933. Labor History. Fall, 1974, 15(4), 483-510.
- (2) Horowitz, R. Behind the Hormel Strike: The Fifty Year of Local P-9. Against the Current. March-April, 1986, 1(2), 13-18.
- (3) Slaughterhouse Five: A Look at the Hormel Strike. ideas & action. Summer, 1986, No. 7, 4-5, 10-12.
- (4) Weir, S. Hormel Strike Reveal Two Kinds of Unionism. Workers' Democracy. Fall, 1986, No. 21, 1-7.