

Dock Strike Leader Blasts 'Let 'Em Starve' Editorial

SAN FRANCISCO — Should workers on strike be starved into submission? Apparently, the Hearst-owned San Francisco Examiner thinks they should. In a recent editorial, the pro-war, anti-everything-else afternoon sheet said that strikers should not be eligible for public aid, food stamps or any form of assistance.

In a biting reply to the editor, ILWU Northern California Area Strike Committee Chairman James Herman denounced the editorial, arguing that "this is about like the theory under which the slave owners gave their mules better treatment than they did the human beings they had enslaved—because mules were more valuable."

Herman, who is also president of clerks' Local 34, said in part:

"Nobody (unless they are cheating) gets public aid unless they are in desperate need of the basic necessities.

"Inasmuch as stockholders of the shipping companies feel little, if any deprivation of food and necessities during a strike—let alone any reduction in their usually affluent standard of living, it remains only to be said that the ships themselves and the machinery should have equal status, in a social sense, with the workers."

"Yes," Herman wrote, "strikers have contributed as taxpayers to welfare funds and are entitled to draw on those funds when in need. You keynote this issue when you mistakenly conclude that this argu-

ment ignores the fact that they are out of work by 'choice.'

"This is nonsense. They are out of work because of necessity. They have no funds to match the handsome subsidies which the ship owners have received from the government over God knows how many years.

"Those federal subsidies, paid for in large part out of workers' taxes, enabled the ship owners to belong to a different country club than does the longshoreman with five kids, a frightening mortgage, and a bundle of installment payments.

"You quote Herbert R. Northrup, Director of Industrial Research of the University of Pennsylvania, who says that feeding hungry strikers makes strikes longer and settlements higher. He says, 'I don't want anybody to starve, but I know collective bargaining can't work unless the strike hurts both sides.'

ONE HORSE, ONE RABBIT

"Mr. Northrup has a glib way of saying that he wants the employers to temporarily forego a little of their profit and that he wants the striker to stop eating. That's equality! Fifty-fifty—one horse and one rabbit! Don't feed the idle ships and don't feed the striker.

"On the other hand, we want to play fair. Our position is that ship owners who meet the same poverty standards as the agencies require our strikers to meet be allowed to apply for food stamps and the other accoutrements of welfare aid.

"Fair and square, we say."

Pickets Demand a Halt To Stall of Food Stamps...

OAKLAND—Local 10 strikers have a feeling that Alameda county welfare authorities are playing games.

Ronald Colthirst, Local 10 welfare director, says strikers thought two days of picketing of the county welfare offices (Aug. 2 and 3) brought an agreement with William Rainey, the county's assistant welfare director. But a few days later they weren't sure.

At issue is the stalling or denial of food stamps to strikers. As samples of what brought on the picket line Colthirst cited two incidents:

- One dock striker, who went to the appropriate office nearest his home, fulfilled all the requirements for getting stamps. He thought he was all set—only to be told he had

to produce Social Security cards for his minor children.

- Welfare officials told men that all who were processed by July 21 would get stamps for July. One man was processed by July 20—and then was told he would have to wait until August.

After the two days of picketing ILWU representatives met with Rainey on Aug. 4. He appeared to agree that such games were out, and pledged that if difficulties arose at lower levels he would work with the union to iron them out.

But as of Aug. 10 strikers were still complaining, and Colthirst was skeptical about Rainey's good faith in promising to expedite food stamps for eligible strikers.

... But Business Gets \$30 Billion Handouts Without Any Fuss

SAN FRANCISCO — If a striking longshoreman, bucking the red tape in registering for food stamps or welfare this week, picked up an old newspaper he could learn that things were not as bad as they seemed.

Not for the owners of the shipping industry. They get \$450 million a year in "welfare" payments from the federal government.

This was just one item in an Associated Press roundup story, which estimated that government handouts to "free enterprise" total \$30 billion a year.

"The \$30 billion is an estimate," the story explained. "No one, in the government or out of it, knows exactly what the figure is."

One reason no one knows is that much government aid to business is hidden. Or, as Prof. C. Lowell Harris of Columbia University put it, "There is strong preference for forms of

subsidies which help conceal the nature of the receipt."

Among the juicier plums were:

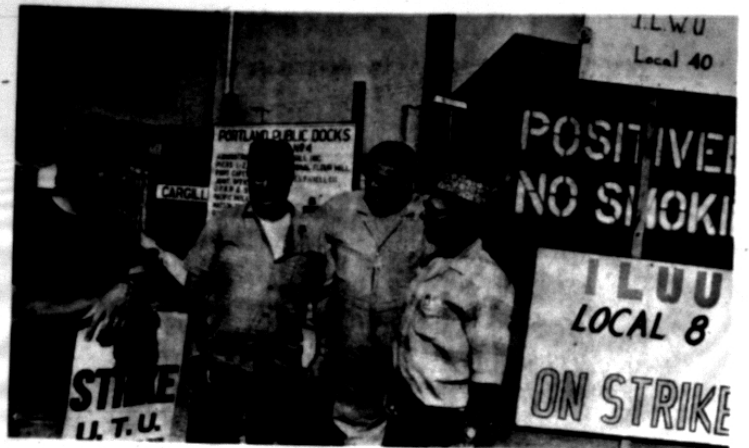
- "Backdoor subsidies... from tax breaks, incentives, allowances and exemptions" — between \$9.5 billion and \$15 billion a year.

- Subsidies to agribusiness (with small farmers getting a few crumbs) — between \$6 billion and \$9 billion a year.

- Loans and insurance to companies doing business overseas — last year the total face value of these was \$6.8 billion.

- Transportation subsidies — \$450 million to the maritime industry, \$63 million to airlines; \$172 million over five years to help commuter railroads buy 875 new passenger cars.

"Federal aid for private enterprise," said the AP story, "is more than twice what the government spends for all its welfare programs."



—Photo by Dick Phillips

PICKETS from United Transportation Union and ILWU Locals 8 and 40 rap about railroad and dock strikes at Terminal 4 in Portland. From left, Michael Hard, UTU; the Cavanaugh brothers, Pat and Hank, famed in Local 8 for brawn and good nature, and Jack Hammack, Local 40. Pickets had just put away a hefty lunch, compliments of the St. Johns Cafe. Picket shack (right), a former dock shelter, provided welcome shade from 96 degree heat. Rail strike has since been settled.

PICKETING can also be lonely, see below.



—Photo by Gean Battie

ILWU: Nix on Wage Lids

President Nixon's declaration last week that he has an "open mind" about establishing a wage-price review board touched off another flood of Congressional agitation for wage-price controls.

Nixon said Congressional hearings will help him make up his mind, and Congressmen of both major parties leaped into the breach to urge wage-price regulation.

Whatever the President's state of mind, that's one issue on which ILWU has firmly made up its mind for a long time.

ILWU's position was reiterated at the Nineteenth Biennial Convention last April:

"The ILWU is opposed to the imposition of wage-price controls," the convention declared. "Economic recovery is dependent on higher wages and full employment."

The officers' report to the convention blasted the argument that high wages cause inflation and must, therefore, be controlled. The officers countered with these points:

- "The primary cause for the present inflation in prices has been government spending for defense and the war in Vietnam."

- "In the present inflation prices were on the way up long before wage gains tried to keep pace."

- "As the Wall Street Journal noted late last year, 'Labor costs are not the Frankenstein monster they're often cracked up to be.' In

1970 labor costs per unit of output rose much less than they had in 1968 and 1969, but prices soared."

- "In such basic industries as steel, autos, and chemicals there are a limited number of sellers (three major auto makers, three or four major steel producers) and a large number of buyers. The sellers rig prices so they don't have to compete with one another price-wise."

Phrasing it another way two years earlier, the officers report to the Eighteenth Convention said:

"The fact of the matter is that all companies raise their prices whenever they can get away with it. The reason for this is the persistent drive for higher profits."

As against wage-price controls the officers' report this year proposed an economic program to improve the condition of workers and to increase mass purchasing power. Among the specific items were:

- Higher wages and job security.
- Higher social security payments.
- Improved workmen's compensation and unemployment insurance benefits.

- Welfare reform which will significantly improve the lots of the poor and the near poor.

- Higher minimum wages.
- Necessary steps to control the spread of monopolies in critical sectors of the economy and means to control collusive price arrangements