

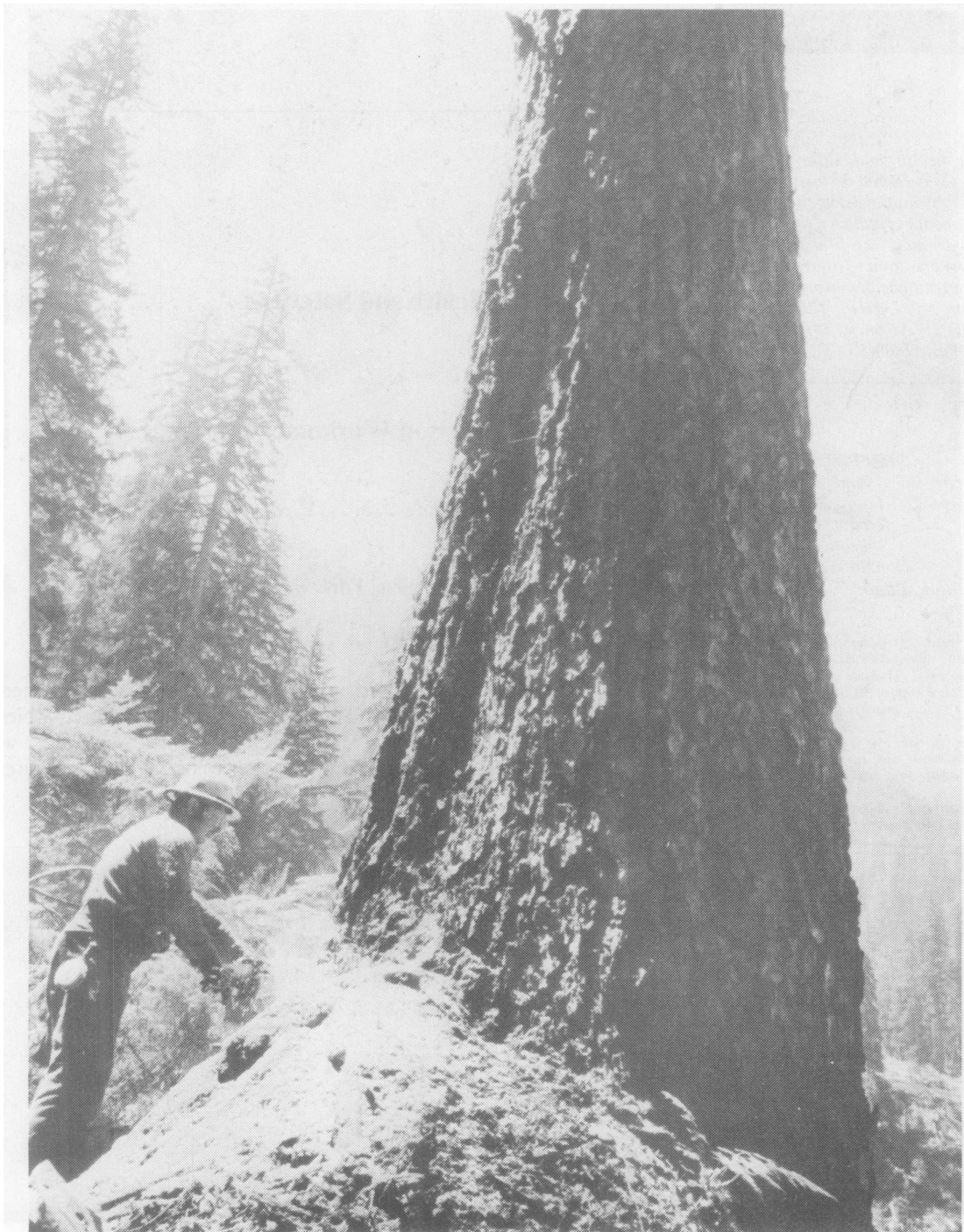
Labor Occupational Health Program

MONITOR

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Labor Occupational Health Program MONITOR

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On the Cover:

A new occupational health and safety film, *Another Day's Living*, was filmed on location in Washington and British Columbia. Detailing the hazards of the forest products industry (logging, sawmills, and plywood mills), the film features interviews with workers and International Woodworkers of America officials. More on the film, a co-production of LOHP, filmmaker Charles West, and the IWA, on p. 14. (Photo copyright ©Charles West, 1980.)

STAFF

Pat Ayers	Janet Bertinuson
Kate Caldwell	Paul Chown
Morris Davis	Laura Fenster
Ken Light	Joanne Molloy
Susan Salisbury	Sharon Samek
Sidney Weinstein	Donald Whorton
Gene Darling, Editor	

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MOVING?

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The new OSHA standard guaranteeing worker access to medical records and exposure data is supplemented by new California and New York laws which broaden workers' "rights to know." In these states, workers must now be given information on the toxic substances present in the workplace.

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LOHP Union Reps' Conference Discusses Organizing, Discrimination

More than 60 Northern California union representatives attended LOHP's one-day conference, **"Getting Organized: Making It Work"** on September 30, 1980, on the University of California, Berkeley campus.

Designed to assist unions and their organizers to pinpoint and integrate relevant health and safety issues into their regular union activities, the conference was co-sponsored by LOHP, the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education, East Bay and San Francisco chapters of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and the Electronics Committee on Occupational Safety and Health.

Opening remarks were by Ed Collins, AFL-CIO Field Representative, Region 6, followed by a panel on "Integrating Health and Safety Into Union Activities," led by LOHP's Paul Chown and Janet Bertinuson with Joyce Spencer from the UCLA Labor Center. Larry Drapkin of LOHP, Leo Seidlitz of San Francisco City College, and Ignacio de la Fuente of Molders Local 164 then conducted a panel on "Protecting the Worker: Using OSHA and the

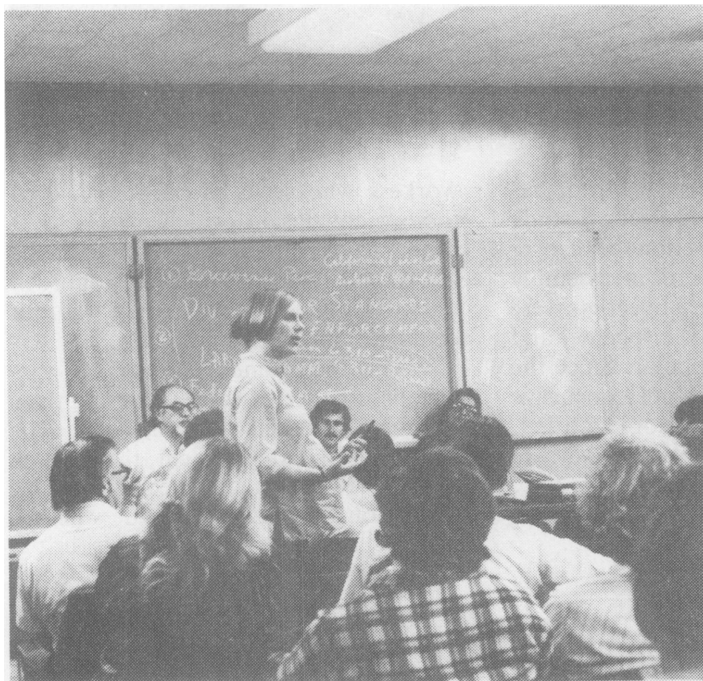


(Photo: Kate Caldwell.)

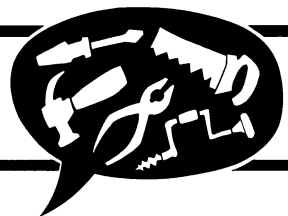
NLRA." Two workshops in the afternoon, "Building Internal Support/Coalition Building" and "Developing a Strategy," rounded out the day.

Resource persons for the afternoon workshops were: Joanne Molloy,

LOHP; Bob Williams, UCLA Labor Center; Bob Scott, UAW #1364; Jenny McClure, Bay Area Typographical Union #21; and Pat Lamborn, Electronics Committee on Occupational Safety and Health.



(Left) Lois Kugelmass of the United Electrical Workers makes a point at one of the conference workshops. (Right) Ignacio de la Fuente, Business Agent, International Molders Local 164, gives advice about discrimination complaints under OSHA and the NLRA. (Photos: Kate Caldwell.)



Auto Workers Open War on Workplace Cancer

(From UAW Solidarity, May 16-31, 1980)

United Auto Workers President Douglas A. Fraser has announced that the union is launching an ambitious new program, aimed at investigating cancer deaths among UAW members and rooting out cancer-causing chemicals and processes at all UAW workplaces.

"In the past four months," Fraser told the American Occupational Health Conference meeting in Detroit last April, "a steady series of reports has pointed to possible excesses of cancer in various segments of the automobile industry and related metalworking operations. Some situations involve relatively small numbers of exposed workers; for example, workers manufacturing asbestos brake linings or those making models and patterns from wood and metal. But the issue is very much larger."

Fraser identified four problem areas:

- Foundries.** Studies by Finnish researchers and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) show that foundry workers die from lung cancer more than average for their sex, age-group, and race.

- Metal parts die-casting, chrome-plating, buffing, and polishing.** At a General Motors Fisher Body plant in Flint, Michigan, where the main operations are die-casting and plating, UAW Local 326 President Michael Bennett undertook a preliminary study which indicated that the percentage of deaths from cancer, especially lung cancer, was above average during 1974-78.

- Machining and grinding.** Recent studies have shown that exposure to the fine mists from coolants, cutting oils, and metal dust may be causing unusually high rates of stomach, intestinal, and lung cancers.



Foundries are one of the most dangerous parts of the auto industry. Lung cancer is a prominent hazard. (Photo: LOHP Photo File.)

- Auto assembly.** A recent Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association study found an elevated fraction of cancer deaths among all workers in assembly plants. Potential excess deaths were found for all cancers taken together and for lung cancer in particular. Since the statistical methods were not conclusive and specific cancers were not identified, the findings remain a puzzle. They are significant enough, however, to require a vigorous follow-up.

PROGRAM STRATEGY

According to Fraser, the UAW's new cancer program will not only continue to press for long-range studies of cancers that may arise from the job, but it will also take timely steps to protect

workers who seem to be at risk even though conclusive evidence is not yet available. At all times, Fraser said, the UAW will continue to keep the burden of providing a safe workplace where it belongs—on the companies.

When local unions report a suspicious number of cancers among their members to their regional office or UAW national department, they will be told how to collect and check out the information they need to decide whether there is a cancer hazard. This information includes lists of workers in certain job classifications, job histories, and death certificates. The employer's help in generating this information will be sought, but much of the data can be obtained by the local union itself.

A health professional from the UAW Social Security Department will visit the

plant. If the data and first-hand observations show the likelihood of a cancer hazard, the UAW will undertake a full industrial hygiene inspection of the plant. Its aim will be to get the company to improve the relevant engineering controls. The UAW may at this point seek the company's help in mounting a cancer detection program with medical exams for all exposed workers.

The Social Security Dept. and the Michigan Health and Social Security Research Institute may decide to carry out a detailed "first-phase" study of cancer and other specific causes of death at the plant.

Depending upon the results of the foregoing exams and studies, further action may be taken to remove the cancer hazards and protect the health of the workers.

ONGOING RESEARCH

During the 1979 auto and agricultural-implement negotiations, the UAW won agreements from the companies to investigate cancer hazards associated with assembly-line work and with coolant mists in machining operations. University and government scientists are carrying out several other studies at the union's request.

In coming months, the UAW will take several steps to coordinate this research, make it more comprehensive, define hazard areas not yet being studied, and win greater cooperation from NIOSH and from companies that employ UAW members.

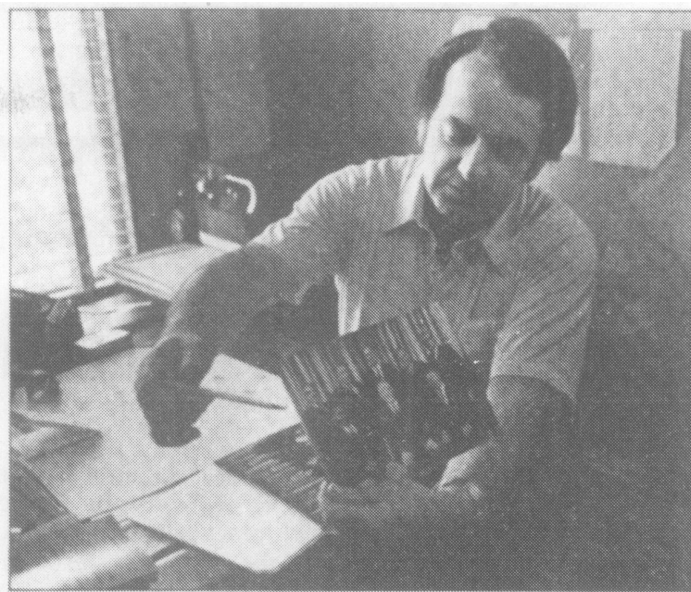
"The significance of the new program," says UAW Social Security Dept. Assistant Director and occupational health specialist Dr. Frank Mirer, who helped plan it, "is that we aren't just calling for epidemiological studies or farming them out. We're going to evaluate mortality patterns ourselves. The potential here is tremendous. For the first time we'll be able to go to companies not just with case histories from other places or cancer studies of laboratory animals, but with the data from their own plants. That's a critical difference."

The new program is a major step forward for the UAW or for any union, says Melvin A. Glasser, Director of the UAW Social Security Dept. The UAW's approaches, Glasser says, are critical to achieving a healthy work environment.

According to UAW President Fraser, "We have grown up believing that 'in-

nocent until proven guilty' is the essence of justice. But the workplace is not a courtroom and chemicals have no constitutional rights. Giving a carcinogen freedom to roam through the plant during its lengthy trial is far more dangerous than letting an accused burglar free on bail."

For this reason, Fraser emphasizes that the new UAW approach will stress "presumptive action." "If we wait for the final reports before deciding to warn workers of the possible risks, and before taking protective actions, we will lose years of opportunity and sacrifice dozens or hundreds of lives," he said.



UAW Local 133 President Bernie McKinnon at Fafnir Bearing Company in New Britain, Connecticut, points to a group photo of Local 133 members taken in the early 1960's. Several of these members have since died of cancer. (Photo: UAW Solidarity.)

Petrochemical Industry

Texas Plants Implicated in Brain Cancer

Petrochemical workers in some Texas plants have an incidence of brain cancer twice the normal level in the population, according to Dr. Richard Waxweiler of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH.)

NIOSH has been studying two plants in the Houston-Galveston area, and has found 25 brain tumor cases at a Dow Chemical plant in Freeport, Texas and another 18 at a Union Carbide plant in Texas City. All but one of the cases found to date have been fatal.

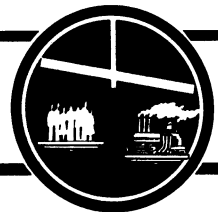
The brain cancers found, a type termed glioblastoma multiform, were first suspected to be related to vinyl chloride exposure. But some of the victims had no exposure to vinyl chloride, NIOSH researchers said.

NIOSH and investigators from federal OSHA have not been able to pinpoint a chemical, group of chemicals, or

process which is associated with the cancers.

NIOSH said that it has reports of similar brain cancer concentrations in plants at Beaumont and Port Arthur, Texas; Charleston, W. Va.; Louisville; and the San Francisco Bay Area. "There's no reason to suspect all petrochemical plants," Waxweiler said. However, J. William Lloyd, OSHA epidemiologist, said, "There may be any number of chemical plants involved."

Tony Mazzocchi of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union said that preliminary reports from other studies found higher rates of brain and stomach cancers among petrochemical workers on the Texas Gulf Coast. As a result, he said, the union and the National Cancer Institute are studying the entire industry. 60,000 workers will be checked.



D.C. Hearing Reopens Record

Court Upholds Lead Standard for Most Industries

Federal OSHA's inorganic lead standard, originally issued in November, 1978, has been completely upheld in most major industries which use lead by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia in an August 15, 1980 decision.

The standard was challenged in court by the lead industry and the United Steelworkers of America. The court completely upheld the standard in ten industries: primary and secondary smelting, printing, can manufacturing, battery manufacturing, paint and coatings manufacturing, ink manufacturing, wallpaper manufacturing, electronics manufacturing, and gray-iron foundries. The standard remains in effect for these industries, said Dr. Eula Bingham, Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA, who termed the decision a "major victory" for OSHA.

However, OSHA was directed to re-

open its rulemaking record on the question of feasibility of engineering and work practice controls as means to attain the permissible exposure limit in certain other industries. Accordingly, Dr. Bingham announced that OSHA will hold a public hearing on this question on November 5, 6, and 7 in Washington, D.C.

"The only requirement stayed for some industries is the exclusive reliance on engineering and work practice controls," said Dr. Bingham. "Firms affected by the Court's decision must comply with all other provisions of the rule and provide respirators where necessary to protect workers until this matter is resolved."

To reassess the feasibility of the lead standard in industries other than the ten, OSHA will solicit data at the hearing on a number of issues, including: identification of industries, number of

plants, number of exposed workers; present airborne concentrations of lead in these industries, duration, and frequency of exposures; blood lead levels of exposed workers; extent of noncompliance with the exposure standard; what engineering and work practice controls are available; problems in implementing them; and extent to which personal protective equipment should be required.

OSHA has suggested that benefits that accompany the implementation of engineering and work practice controls, such as increased productivity or reduced absenteeism, should also be described.

Since the Court directed OSHA to complete its re-examination of the feasibility issue within six months, requests for extensions of the comment period cannot be granted. Written comments should be submitted to OSHA by October 27.

OSHA Announces Special Emphasis Program for Cadmium

As a result of new information on the hazards of cadmium, federal OSHA has launched a new program of inspections to determine whether there is general compliance with the present standard, and to develop a new comprehensive standard for occupational exposure to cadmium.

50 firms involved in the manufacture and use of cadmium will be inspected, in the following industries: (1) primary smelting and refining of both nonferrous metals and zinc; (2) alloy manufacture, rolling, drawing, and extruding of nonferrous metals; (3) electroplating and coating; (4) storage batteries; (5) in-

organic pigments; and (6) industrial inorganic and organic chemicals including plastics stabilizers and colorants.

At the same time, OSHA compliance officers will request employers to complete a voluntary questionnaire covering cadmium exposure levels, hygiene facilities, work practices and administrative controls, medical monitoring, education and training, technological controls, the population at risk, the financial condition of firms, and economic conditions in affected industries.

The Cadmium Council in New York City is cooperating with OSHA in en-

couraging members to participate in the survey.

Exposure to cadmium can result in kidney and pulmonary disease, hypertension, and liver abnormalities. Cadmium is also suspected of causing chromosomal aberrations, teratogenic effects, and cancer. The current OSHA standard limits exposure to cadmium fumes to 0.1 milligrams per cubic meter of air over an eight-hour day, with an acceptable ceiling concentration of 0.3 milligrams per cubic meter. Exposure to cadmium dust is limited to 0.2 mg/M³, with a ceiling of 0.6 mg/M³.

NIOSH has already recommended much lower limits.

Push Toward New, Stricter Asbestos Standard

At a Washington, D.C. press conference on April 17, 1980, Dr. Anthony Robbins, Director of NIOSH, announced the findings of a joint NIOSH/OSHA work group which has reviewed recent scientific information about the health effects of asbestos. The group made recommendations for a new, safer federal OSHA standard for occupational exposure to asbestos based on its findings that (1) there is no safe exposure limit for asbestos, and (2) all commercial and several non-commercial forms of asbestos cause disease.

The recommendations are aimed toward eliminating from the workplace all exposure from new non-essential uses of asbestos.

The group recommends that a new standard be issued, setting a maximum workplace exposure of 100,000 fibers per cubic meter of air, the lowest level

which can be accurately measured. The present level, set in 1979, is two million fibers per cubic meter of air.

According to Robbins, "Asbestos poses a grave danger in the workplace. At least 1.4 million workers are exposed to asbestos in the United States. In conducting a National Occupational Hazard Survey from 1972-74, NIOSH found that 45 percent of the occupations observed involve exposure to the substance. Nearly three-quarters of a million tons are used annually in this country in a wide range of products including floor tiles, cements, acoustical products, brake linings, and roof coatings. Between 8 and 11 million workers have been exposed to asbestos since World War II." Asbestos causes a form of lung fibrosis called asbestosis, lung cancer, and mesothelioma, a cancer of the membrane that lines the

chest and abdominal cavities. It has also been linked to increases in lung, laryngeal, and gastrointestinal cancers.

At the April 17 press conference, Dr. Eula Bingham, head of federal OSHA, said that the report is a "cause for concern." She added that the present OSHA asbestos standard is "based on data that was assembled and analyzed during the mid-sixties, if not the infancy certainly the childhood of occupational health. OSHA's current standard needs major improvements...the agency's regulations are not carved in stone... The report we are issuing today demands corrective action. We will begin immediately."

Bingham said that it was not yet known what permissible exposure level would be proposed, or whether the agency would issue an emergency temporary standard or propose a new permanent standard.

Courts Uphold NIOSH Warrants

Two recent court decisions have upheld the validity of warrants obtained by NIOSH to enter workplaces to conduct research investigations and health hazard evaluations. In both cases, companies had contested the warrants on grounds that there was not probable cause for an inspection and that the warrants were overly broad.

On June 4, the Eastern District Court of Wisconsin upheld a NIOSH warrant to inspect the Pfister and Vogel Tanning Company in Milwaukee to determine whether to include the company in a study of the leather tanning and finishing industry. This was the first judicial decision on the validity of a warrant obtained for NIOSH-initiated research.

On June 3, the Southern District Court of Iowa upheld a NIOSH warrant to conduct a health hazard evaluation at Keokuk Steel Castings in Keokuk, Iowa. This was the first written judicial decision involving a NIOSH warrant to conduct a health hazard evaluation. The company is appealing the decision and has moved for a stay of the investigation pending the appeal. NIOSH is opposing the stay.

Cal/OSHA Will Enforce Inspection Warrants

Art Carter, Chief of Cal/OSHA's Division of Occupational Safety and Health, has announced that Cal/OSHA will take strong action to enforce warrants its inspectors obtain when denied entry to employers' premises.

In June, in response to a worker complaint alleging unsafe scaffolding at an Affordable Housing Corporation construction site in Panorama City, California, a Cal/OSHA compliance engineer went to the site to make an inspection. When the employer refused to allow the inspector on the premises, the inspector observed the site from a public area outside and could readily see that violations of State scaffolding safety orders did exist. A warrant was obtained, but the employer continued to refuse entry.

According to Carter, "The judge

who granted the warrant not only granted an extension but also authorized Cal/OSHA to use force to gain entry to the worksite. This required Cal/OSHA to enter the site with the assistance of the State Police."

Affordable Housing Corporation was subsequently issued nine citations and penalties totaling over \$11,000. According to Carter, DOSH may also refer the employer's failure to comply with the warrant to the local prosecuting authority for criminal action. According to the Code of Civil Procedure, it is a misdemeanor for a person to refuse to obey a warrant.

"In any situation where we are obligated to obtain a warrant," Carter said, "we will do whatever is necessary to make sure that the inspection authorized by that warrant is carried out as is our lawful and mandated responsibility."

California Advances Workers' "Right to Know"

On September 10, 1980 Governor Brown signed new California legislation which guarantees the right of workers to be told the names and health effects of dangerous chemical substances with which they work.

In the past year, two other states—New York and Maine—have passed similar laws. Although federal OSHA recently adopted a comprehensive standard allowing worker access to employer-maintained toxic exposure and medical records (see **Monitor**, May-June 1980, p. 11), there is presently no federal OSHA standard which requires employers to list chemical substances present in the workplace and their effects. Only in a few federal OSHA standards, relating to specific chemicals (such as lead), is there a requirement that workers be told that a dangerous substance is present where they work.

The new California law is SB 1874, the Hazardous Substances Information and Training Act, originally introduced by Senator John Nejedly (R.-Walnut Creek). It requires that:

- The Director of Industrial Relations establish a list of hazardous substances, and periodically update it, subject to the approval of the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board;
- Any manufacturer of a hazardous substance, or mixture containing a hazardous substance as an ingredient or an impurity, used in California, provide purchasers with a Material Safety Data Sheet on the substance;
- All sellers of hazardous substances for use in California provide direct purchasers with a Material Safety Data Sheet, or equivalent information, at the time of sale;
- Material Safety Data Sheets must include: chemical name; common names; fire, explosion, and reactivity hazards; acute and chronic health effects or risks; symptoms; precautions; and

emergency procedures for the substance;

- Material Safety Data Sheets may take the form of labels on containers;
- Material Safety Data Sheets must be provided by the preparer to the Department of Industrial Relations;
- Under some circumstances, a mixture which includes hazardous substances may have a single Material Safety Data Sheet prepared which does not identify the individual hazardous substances, to protect trade secrets; and
- The Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board shall adopt a standard by July 1, 1981, to require employers to inform their employees of the presence and health effects of hazardous substances.

WORKER INFORMATION

Details of the process by which information will be given to workers thus will be contained in the new standard, now being drafted by the Division of Occupational Safety and Health's Advisory Committee on Material Safety Data Sheets. The DOSH committee's current draft standard would require that employers request from the manufacturers, and maintain a file of, Material Safety Data Sheets for each hazardous substance used. Employers would have to notify employees of the availability of the MSDS for each substance, and allow employees, their representatives, their physicians, and DOSH personnel timely access to them. Employers would also be required to request any MSDS not on hand, or updates of an original MSDS, from the manufacturer when an employee, representative, or physician requests the employer to do so. The employer would refer the matter to DOSH if a satisfac-

tory response if not received from the manufacturer.

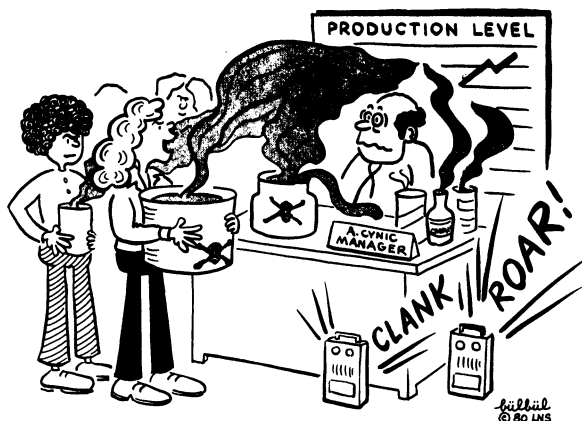
One point of contention during the DOSH committee's deliberations has been the means of notifying employees of the availability of the MSDS file. Originally, the draft standard was to require only that an employer maintain the MSDS file in a "central location." Critics of the proposal, such as the Center for Law in the Public Interest in Los Angeles, which has played an active role in the committee's work, pointed out that for a large company a "central" location could be an office miles from a particular workplace. The committee is now proposing that a list of all MSDS's for substances used in a work area be posted in that work area, although it does not specify the actual location of the MSDS file itself.

TRAINING

The new law requires that employers provide employees with "information on the contents of the MSDS...or equivalent information, either in written form or through training programs, which may be generic to the extent appropriate and related to the job." Employees are also to be given information on their rights under the law: to have access to MSDS's the employer has; to request other or updated MSDS's from the employer; and the rights of their representatives or physicians to have access to MSDS's.

The DOSH committee, in drafting the standard, has set time limits for this information and training to be given: by July 1, 1981; no later than 30 days after the employer's receipt of a new MSDS; and prior to assignment of an employee to an area containing a hazardous substance for which previous training has not been received.

There has been some discussion within the DOSH committee about the lack of guidance in early drafts of the standard as to what constitutes an adequate written or verbal training program. The Center for Law in the Public Interest emphasized the need for information and training to be in lay terms, and in a language understandable to the workers



WE WANT YOU TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY
TO EXPERIENCE OUR WORKING CONDITIONS!

Bulbul/LNS.

where they are non-English speaking. The most recent draft of the standard produced by the committee accordingly requires information and training which is "understandable to the workers."

EXCLUSIONS AND REPRISAL

Certain California workplaces are exempted from the law, and consequently from the new standard. Certain substances are also exempted.

A laboratory "under the direct supervision of a technically qualified individual" is exempted unless the laboratory produces hazardous substances commercially, or provides quality control for a production process. Retail food establishments and all other retail trade establishments are also exempted, except for processing and repair work areas.

Substances exempted include any products which are for personal consumption by employees or which are normally sold as consumer products; substances regulated by the Food and

Agriculture Code (primarily pesticides in their application, but not in their manufacture or transportation); and any pesticide which is labelled pursuant to federal law.

Otherwise, any hazardous substance in any workplace is covered when employees may be exposed to it "under normal conditions of work or in a reasonably foreseeable emergency."

SB 1874 also contains a provision that no employee shall be subject to discrimination because the employee has utilized rights provided by the law. Such cases are to be treated as violations of Labor Code section 6310, which prohibits reprisal for health and safety activity of various kinds.

The new "Right to Know" laws in Maine and New York are substantially similar in their intent to the California law, but both will require detailed implementing regulations which have not yet been issued.

—Gene Darling

Bertinuson Appointed to Standards Board

Janet Bertinuson, Associate Director of the Labor Occupational Health Program, has been appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. to the California Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board. The Board, composed of seven members appointed by the

Governor, drafts and adopts Cal/OSHA standards and orders.

Bertinuson, an Industrial Hygienist, has been a LOHP staff member since 1977. Previously, she was employed by the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union.

Superior Court Decision

Cal/OSHA Jurisdiction Over Airport Upheld

On September 11, the San Francisco Superior Court upheld Cal/OSHA's jurisdiction over worker safety at San Francisco International Airport by denying a petition by United Air Lines.

The case, *United Air Lines, Inc. v. The Occupational Safety and Health Appeals Board and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health*, arose from an inspection conducted by Cal/OSHA at United's maintenance facility at San Francisco International Airport in 1976. As a result of that inspection, Cal/OSHA cited United for failure to provide guardrails to protect employees who were performing maintenance on a DC-10 engine, which required them to work on platforms at heights up to 26 feet.

United appealed the citation to the Cal/OSHA Appeals Board, and then to the Superior Court, arguing that Cal/OSHA's action should be held invalid because the Federal Aviation Administration, not Cal/OSHA, had jurisdiction over airport worker safety.

Judge Ira Brown's decision has the effect of resolving this issue and reaffirming Cal/OSHA jurisdiction.

At recent congressional subcommittee hearings in San Francisco, the San Francisco-Oakland Airport Labor Coalition charged the FAA with supporting United's efforts to resist Cal/OSHA jurisdiction even though the FAA had no effective worker health and safety program of its own. The coalition, composed of about a dozen, mostly AFL-CIO organizations, charged that the FAA's assertion of jurisdiction served only to protect private airlines, particularly United, from being required to comply with effective standards. As an upshot of the hearings, the FAA agreed to disavow attempts by airlines to assert FAA jurisdiction as a way of circumventing either Cal/OSHA or federal OSHA inspections and orders. In a related area, the FAA also agreed to work with OSHA to develop safety and health standards for flight controllers and to increase its inspections of the packing, labeling, and handling of hazardous materials shipped by air.

6 PG&E Workers Win Discrimination Case

(In a decision issued August 19, 1980, California Deputy Labor Commissioner Ray E. Bredy overturned the suspensions of six Pacific Gas and Electric Co. workers in June for refusal to work with dangerous PCB's.

Six PG&E linemen and ground crew, all members of Local 1245 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, refused to clean up PCB fluid that blew out of an exploding capacitor on a utility pole on U.S. 101 near the Lawrence Expressway in San Jose on June 20. The six, Dan Neale, Paul Quilici, William Fimbres, John Hernandez, Richard Ortiz, and Douglas Stowell, refused the job on grounds that adequate protective clothing and gear was not available for them at the spill site and that none of them had been properly trained to handle the toxic chemical.

In addition to the suspensions, PG&E placed a letter of reprimand in each worker's file warning that they would be subject to discharge for further refusal to work.

IBEW filed an internal grievance on the suspensions, but the six workers also elected to take their case directly to the State Labor Commissioner's office. Retaliation for refusal to perform unsafe work is a violation of Section 6311 of the California Labor Code. (See Monitor, July-August, 1980, p. 3.)

Bredy ordered the letters of reprimand removed from the worker's files, and directed PG&E to give them back pay not only for the days suspended but also for the time they spent at five days of hearings in July. PG&E had refused to pay them for the hearing time.

Bredy's decision pointedly noted that when the workers asked their superintendent for training in handling PCB spills, the superintendent said, "Don't you know how to use a shovel?"

PG&E still uses PCB fluid to insulate 120,000 of its pole-mounted capacitors, and the fluid is also used in some transformers. However, the firm announced recently that it will replace all PCB capacitors within the next three years, and will install fuses on PCB capacitors



"One day, all of this will be yours, my son."
(West Germany/CPF.)

during the phaseout to help prevent blowouts. Currently, PG&E's PCB capacitors rupture at the rate of about three per week.

At the hearing before Bredy, Dr. Leo

Seidlitz, occupational health instructor and consultant to local unions, represented the six PG&E workers. Monitor interviewed Dr. Seidlitz about the implications of the case.

Monitor: Does this case have implications that go beyond the six workers who were immediately involved?

Seidlitz: Yes, definitely. There are between 4,000 and 5,000 PG&E employees who could potentially come into contact with PCB's, since exploding capacitors and transformers are so common. They will all be the beneficiaries of this decision in that they will be more protected from retaliation if they refuse work which is unsafe or unhealthful, and in that PG&E work practices are now definitely improving. There have been at least four other cases of PG&E employees refusing to work with PCB's in the Bay Area just within the last year. This trend has led to a great deal of newspaper and TV publicity, and brought the issue of PCB's to public attention. This public scrutiny in turn has forced PG&E to change. PG&E's decision to phase out the capacitors and to install fuses in the meantime would never have come about if it weren't for this publicity and the growing worker refusals.

I think that another important implication of this case relates to the wide variety of workers who are beginning to think about health and safety, and act

on their beliefs. The six men in our case ranged in age from 29 to 60, and they ranged in PG&E seniority from nine months to 38 years. A common concern of all of them was not just PCB's per se, but achieving some control over job conditions that affect their health and safety.

Monitor: Couldn't the installation of fuses, at least, have happened a long time ago?

Seidlitz: Yes. In fact, IBEW has been pushing for fuses on the capacitors for about two years. PG&E always refused. In effect, they have a deliberate policy of expecting and tolerating a certain rate of blowouts. Some workers have even been drenched with the hot fluid when a capacitor blew near them.

Monitor: You mentioned that PG&E work practices are improving. What is happening?

Seidlitz: The six men in San Jose objected mainly to the lack of training and the lack of protective gear and clothing. They learned about some of the hazards, on their own and through the union. Several of them had pregnant wives or small children at home. Previously, it was common for there to be no protective clothing provided at all,

no respirators, nothing. Men would wear their clothes home after cleaning up spills in them, a violation of EPA regulations, by the way. Sometimes they would have to eat lunch at the spill site in the same clothes. Although there was safety training given linemen and ground crew about the hazards of high voltage—even about the hazards of poison oak—there wasn't a word said about PCB's or PCB work practices. A lineman in PG&E's Oakland Division, Kenneth Grimes, testified for us at the hearings that he first learned about the PCB danger when he was on a pole and noticed a warning sticker on a capacitor which had ruptured. He was in his regular work clothing, had gotten his face and clothing wet, had no respirator, and had eaten in the area. Later, he asked his foreman about the sticker he had seen, and the foreman finally found some regulations about protective gear in a company manual—but he hadn't known about this before.

I'd say that the situation has improved a lot since the refusals and the publicity began—at least in the greater Bay Area, with which I'm familiar. Disposable, impermeable protective clothing is now supplied by the company. It is almost always readily available at spill sites. Today the company provides a powered, air-supplied respirator if that is necessary—although there are still very few of those available. A slide show has been produced by PG&E on PCB hazards, and it is now being shown to all the linemen and ground crew members, at least. Whether it's being shown to all employees who should see it—for example, electricians and maintenance workers who may encounter transformers in underground vaults—I'm not sure. Another problem is that, in my opinion, the slide show tends to "play down" the hazards of PCB's, although it does emphasize protective steps.

Monitor: Isn't it unusual that both a grievance and a complaint with the Labor Commissioner were filed in this case?

Seidlitz: Actually, four separate avenues were used, a practice which I generally recommend. Besides the grievance and the Labor Commissioner complaint, one of the six men filed a charge with the National Labor Relations Board, claiming that disciplining him for refusal to perform unsafe work violated Section 502 of the National Labor Relations Act. A lot of workers don't

realize that this option is available. The NLRB investigator added the other five men into the case when he found that they were all in the same position. Another complaint was made to federal OSHA, charging a violation of section 11(c) of the OSHA Act, which also prohibits retaliation. The advantage of these other avenues is that the Labor Commissioner's decision didn't end the case by any means—it will still be necessary to force PG&E to comply with the decision, and many employers don't. Pressure from these other avenues may help. Pressure from other PG&E workers may help, too—while

our case was going on, 37 PG&E workers in Santa Cruz signed a petition which stated that they would refuse to work with PCB's under any circumstances, and demanded reinstatement of the six suspended workers.

Monitor: Is there anything you'd like to say about the Labor Commissioner hearing itself?

Seidlitz: I strongly believe that workers who are bringing claims of this type should actively participate in their own defense, and not leave the case up to "experts." In this case, the six workers helped plan the case, they all

continued on p. 16

PCB's—Some Facts

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) are synthetic compounds formed by the chemical bonding of two benzene molecules into a biphenyl molecule, to which varying numbers of chlorine atoms are attached.

PCB's are among the most stable of organic compounds. They do not conduct electricity, they transfer heat well, and they are non-flammable. They are oily, and have a strong odor somewhat like mothballs.

Since the introduction of PCB's into industry about 1929, they have had numerous uses as plasticizers, hydraulic fluids, pump oils, in water-proof adhesives, in carbonless copy paper, and in electrical circuitry and components. PCB's may be found in microwave ovens, TV sets, air conditioners, and in the ballasts of fluorescent light fixtures, normally enclosed inside sealed components.

Probably the most significant and extensive use of PCB's has been, and is, as a dielectric fluid and coolant in electrical transformers and capacitors. In use in sealed, enclosed systems within these components, PCB's are commonly known as "askarels." Large transformers may contain several hundreds of gallons of askarels, and capacitors may contain from a fraction of a cupful to several gallons.

Manufacture of PCB's is now banned by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

HEALTH EFFECTS

PCB's are chemically very stable, which means that they are virtually non-degradable in the environment and persist and concentrate in the food chain. They can readily enter the human body through the intact skin as well as through cuts and abrasions, by the inhalation of vapors, and by ingestion.

Irritation to skin, eyes, nose, and throat have been experienced by workers. If doses are high enough, chloracne, a painful and disfiguring skin condition, may develop, along with darkening of the skin, nails, and mucous membranes.

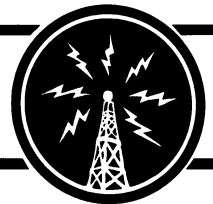
Liver injury is also known to be caused by exposure to PCB's. Signs and symptoms of liver injury include swelling of body tissues, yellowing of skin and eyes, vomiting, weight loss, nausea, abdominal pains, and fatigue.

PCB's can be transmitted from mothers to their unborn children, and from mothers to nursing infants.

Animal studies indicate that PCB's have the potential to cause teratogenic effects (birth defects) and reproductive problems in humans. Some studies indicate that they may lower the sperm count in human males.

There is some evidence from animal experiments that PCB's can cause cancer.

—From *Saskatchewan Labour*
and IBEW Local 1245



ASARCO Plant

OSHA Cites Medical Experimentation on Lead Workers

An experiment conducted by a U.C. San Francisco physician on behalf of a Montana lead company has led to a federal OSHA citation for a "willful" violation of health and safety standards, and an \$8000. fine.

Federal OSHA, after an investigation which began in April, cited the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) in East Helena, Montana, on September 3, 1980 for 48 alleged violations of federal standards. One of the citations, categorized as "willful," charged that ASARCO had violated the federal lead standard by failing to remove employees from the workplace when the airborne concentration of lead equalled or exceeded 100 micrograms per cubic meter and their blood lead levels were at or above 80 micrograms of lead per 100 grams of blood. Twenty employees suffering excessive lead exposure were named in the citation.

A unique aspect of the citation was that the workers involved had been given drugs by the company in an experiment developed and administered by Dr. Charles Hine, who until recently was co-director of the Medical Residency Program at the Northern California Occupational Health Center's component on the University of California, San Francisco campus. In the experiment, about 100 lead workers at three ASARCO plants were asked to take calcium tablets in an attempt to reduce blood lead levels. In the citation, OSHA charged that blood sampling test results were "rendered uncertain" by "the administration of experimental dosages of calcium lactate, Dolomite and/or other calcium/calcium-magnesium compounds."

Many physicians believe that calcium has the effect of a chelator, an agent which removes metals such as lead from the bloodstream. According to David DiTomasso, the acting OSHA area director and head of the ASARCO investigation, physicians disagree as to where

calcium carries the lead—into the bone or out of the body. Critics of calcium use have charged that since at least some lead goes to the bones, workers' bodies are being used as depositories for toxic substances. For example, Dr. Gideon Letz of the State Health Department's Hazard Evaluation System and Information Services has said that lead in a worker's bones can seep into the bloodstream in unusual circumstances, such as serious illness. He cited cases of former lead workers who developed serious cases of lead poisoning after long illnesses. Letz also said that lead probably has a damaging effect as it passes through the body into the bones.

Dr. Molly Coye, a medical officer for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, said that broken bones, kidney disease, and simple aging could also cause lead in bones to leech out into the bloodstream.

ETHICAL QUESTIONS

Dr. James Melius, a NIOSH official in Cincinnati who conducted an evaluation of Hine's experiment, said that NIOSH "has never previously run into a case of a company testing a drug on its workers, and it raises some serious ethical questions."

Other critics of Hine's experiment have said that they believe it was a conscious effort to help ASARCO avoid OSHA's strict new standards for lead levels in the bloodstream. The new standards are being phased in over a five-year period which began in early 1979. A section of Hine's research protocol for the experiment details that the expected benefits to ASARCO will include reducing the frequency of legally-required blood lead monitoring and reducing legally-required administrative controls in regulated work areas. More frequent monitoring and more stringent administrative controls are required by the OSHA lead standard as observed

blood lead levels increase.

HINE REPLACED

In late August, Hine and Dr. Charles Becker, interim co-directors of the U.C. San Francisco Occupational Health Center Medical Residency Program, were replaced by Dr. James Hughes, medical director of Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation.

Pressure for Hine's removal had come from a number of sources. After Hine had been criticized in 1977 for his role in allegedly suppressing evidence of harmful human effects of a pesticide, DBCP, while he was a consultant for Shell Oil Company several years before, a coalition of Northern California labor and environmental groups and individuals was formed which made his removal a primary demand. Termed the Coalition for a Responsible Occupational Health Center (CROHC), this organization alleged "pro-industry bias" of the University and of the Occupational Health Center in its appointment of Hine. In addition, CROHC saw the bias as the most obvious manifestation of the lack of a worker-oriented component within the professional health training sections of the Occupational Health Center. CROHC intensified its efforts when the ASARCO revelations came to light this spring.

CROHC representatives, however, also criticized the appointment of Hughes as interim director, on the basis that Hughes is a "company doctor" who also serves as an industry representative to the Occupational Health Center advisory board. CROHC also opposed the process by which Hughes was selected, claiming that there was no labor or community input into the decision.

—Compiled from Pacific News Service; CROHC; and John Westcott, *Berkeley Independent-Gazette*.

'Song of the Canary' to Air on PBS

On Wednesday, November 5, 1980, at 9 pm in most cities, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) television stations will air the well-known occupational health documentary film, **Song of the Canary**.

The hour-long film will be introduced by author Studs Terkel ("*Working*") and will be followed by a 25-minute studio discussion. Panelists commenting on the film will include: Dr. Eula Bingham, head of federal OSHA; Anthony Mazzocchi, Vice President of the

Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union; Dr. Sidney Wolfe of the Nader Health Research Group; and Dr. Sydney Shindell, Medical College of Wisconsin.

Song of the Canary tours a California chemical plant where workers were found to have become sterile from handling a powerful farm pesticide, DBCP, and then follows cotton mill workers in the Carolinas as they battle companies and the government for safer working conditions and for compensa-

tion for the "brown lung" disease many have contracted. Through these personal stories, the film examines a problem that confronts millions of Americans each day.

The film is also available through New Day Films, 1454 6th St., Berkeley, CA 94710; and Global Village, 454 Broome St., New York, N.Y. 10013.

Broadcast times may vary, so check your local listings for exact date and time.

2-Nitropropane Hazards

Dr. Eula Bingham, head of federal OSHA, has issued a Health Hazard Alert for 2-nitropropane, a chemical found in coatings such as vinyl, epoxy paints, nitrocellulose, and chlorinated rubber, as well as in printing inks and adhesives.

"New evidence recently has been brought to our attention which reinforces earlier suggestive data showing 2-nitropropane to be a potential human carcinogen. The data also indicate other adverse health effects from human exposure," Dr. Bingham said.

OSHA will continue to enforce its current standard of 25 parts per million averaged over an 8-hour work day. This value was set before the cancer-causing potential of the chemical was known. However, after reviewing recent studies, OSHA and NIOSH have concluded that since 2-nitropropane is a potential human carcinogen, employers should be made aware of the new evidence and of the advisability of limiting worker exposure to the lowest feasible levels, an OSHA representative said.

Single copies of the Health Hazard Alert are available at no charge from the OSHA Office of Information and Consumer Affairs, Room N3637, Frances Perkins Building, 3rd St. and Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.

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"Another Day's Living"

Woodworkers Film Released

Filmed in color and on location in the forests and sawmills of Washington and British Columbia, a new occupational safety and health film made its debut recently.

Co-produced by the Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP), filmmaker Charles West, and the International Woodworkers of America (IWA), the film, **Another Day's Living**, is a 30-minute examination of both historical and present-day hazards in the forest products industry, including logging, sawmills, and plywood mills. The documentary features IWA International President Keith Johnson, IWA Region 1 Safety Director Verna Ledger, and rank-and-file IWA members in British Columbia and Washington. Workers, old and young, recount fatal and near-fatal accidents they have witnessed or in which they have been involved.

Recording stars Johnny Cash and



Sam Shore (left), LOHP's Ken Light (camera), and filmmaker Charles West interview workers in British Columbia for IWA film made in cooperation with LOHP. (Photo: IWA Local 1-80.)

Mel Tillis provide the music, singing "Oregon Timber" and "Lumbermill Slave."

The film's World Premiere was held in Portland, Oregon on August 28 before an invited audience of union and industry figures.

Executive Producer of the film was

LOHP's Morris Davis, and Producer was Charles West. Funding was provided by IWA, LOHP, federal OSHA, and the University of Oregon's Labor Education and Research Center. Copyright is held by the IWA.

Prints of the film should be available soon for purchase or rental. Check the next **Monitor** for details.

PAMPHLETS

Not Even Your Hairdresser Knows for Sure: Health and Safety Hazards for Beauticians and Hairdressers is a new, 20-page pamphlet from the Labor Occupational Health Program. Written by LOHP Intern Gail Grynbaum, the pamphlet describes common toxic materials encountered by hairdressers, ranging from asbestos in hair dryers to carcinogens in hair dyes. Constant standing, stress, and noise are also covered as hazards of the industry. Special attention is paid to problems of women workers, such as mutagenic and teratogenic chemicals found in beauty shops.

The pamphlet, an expanded version of a feature article which appeared in the November-December, 1979 **Monitor**, is available from LOHP for \$1.00.

Quantity discounts are offered: 10% reduction on orders of 25-49 copies; 15% on orders of 50-99; and 20% on orders of 100 or more. Prepaid orders are preferred; make checks payable to: The Regents of U.C.

State TCE Report Available

The Hazard Evaluation System and Information Service (HES) within the California Dept. of Health Services has prepared an extensive evaluation of the potential toxic effects, including carcinogenicity, of trichloroethylene (TCE).

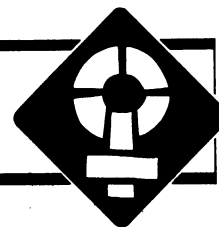
TCE is a solvent used in degreasing operations by the electronics, metal fabrication, dry cleaning, printing, and mechanical maintenance industries. Cal/OSHA adopted an emergency stan-

dard reducing the time-weighted exposure limit from 100 parts per million to 25 ppm earlier this year. (See **Monitor**, May-June, 1980, p. 3.)

Some groups, such as the Electronics Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (ECOSH) in the Bay Area, have called for an outright ban on TCE. (See **Monitor**, May-June, 1980.)

The HES report, which formed the scientific basis for the new emergency standard, recommends a 25 ppm exposure limit, and notes that a further reduction may be warranted depending upon the results of a cancer bioassay now being conducted by the National Cancer Institute.

The HES report is available to the public at no charge from: Hazard Evaluation System and Information Service, 2151 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94704.



West Virginia Case

Cyanamid Sterilization Citations Reversed

In August, OSHA Administrative Law Judge William Brennan vacated an OSHA citation against American Cyanamid's Willow Island, West Virginia plant in a landmark case involving five women workers who claimed they were forced to have themselves sterilized to keep their jobs.

However, the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission has called up Brennan's decision for full commission review.

The citation was issued by federal OSHA after a March, 1979 inspection of the Willow Island Plant, where some workers are exposed to high lead levels. The citation alleged a willful violation of Section 5 (a) (1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act in that the company allegedly adopted and implemented a policy requiring female employees to be sterilized in order to be eligible for work in areas of the plant where lead exposure is high.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, composed of Judges Tim Cleary, Bert Cottine, and Frank Barnako, the record in the case established that the employer prohibited female employees of presumed childbearing capacity from being assigned to, bidding into, or holding production jobs in plant areas where they would be exposed to lead, unless the employees presented evidence showing that they had been sterilized.

After the citation was issued, Cyanamid sought summary judgment on an appeal to Brennan on grounds that (1) the statute of limitations requires that citations be issued no more than six months after the violation, and 14 months had passed between the sterilization and the OSHA citation; (2) OSHA lacks jurisdiction in the case; and (3) no employee was required to elect sterilization as a condition of employment. Brennan granted the summary judgment.

Since the case began, Cyanamid's lead pigments department at the plant

has been closed for what the company said are "economic reasons." Lead has been found to be a mutagen, causing basic genetic changes in both male and female reproductive cells.

According to the women, the alternative which Cyanamid offered to sterilization was retention of their old pay rate in pigment jobs of \$225 per week

for 90 days, followed by transfer to utility jobs at \$175 per week. The pigment jobs also involved substantial overtime, while the utility jobs did not.

Cyanamid plant manager Jack E. White said of the ruling, "We feel pretty happy about it. I think we won about 97 percent of it."

'Working Women's Platform' Unveiled

Leaders of the U.S. working women's movement unveiled a new 'Working Women's Platform' which has been drafted by four national working women's organizations at a press conference in Washington, D.C. on September 1, 1980 (Labor Day.)

The platform, consisting of 15 "planks," was the product of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), Displaced Homemakers Network, National Commission on Working Women, and Wider Opportunities for Women. Concerns expressed in the platform range from wages and benefits to sexual harassment. According to organizers of the event, the purpose of the platform is to focus public attention on the status and concerns of working women, and to send a message to the Presidential candidates.

At the Washington press conference, women carpenters built an actual platform of lumber planks labelled for each

of their concerns.

One "plank" of the platform, entitled "Health and Safety," advocates "promoting healthy and safe working conditions." Specifically, the platform says, "Workers in clerical occupations rank second-highest as victims of stress-related diseases, including coronary heart diseases." It adds that "The Department of Labor estimates that as many as 20 million jobs may involve exposure in the workplace to alleged reproductive hazards. When working conditions involve exposure to reproductive hazards for both women and men, women workers have been forced to choose between sterilization and job loss."

Copies of the 1980 Working Women's Platform are available free from: National Commission on Working Women, Center for Women and Work, 1211 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20036.

PCB'S

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testified, and they all attended the whole hearing. We also want to thank the IBEW people who testified—Julianne Sum, IBEW 1245's Industrial Hygienist; Bob Thompson, at that time Vice President and head of the Health and Safety Committee; and Percy Rome, a Steward. Wayne Greer, a Business Agent, also helped in the case.

Monitor: Haven't environmentalists had a lot to do with the public attention now focused on PCB's?

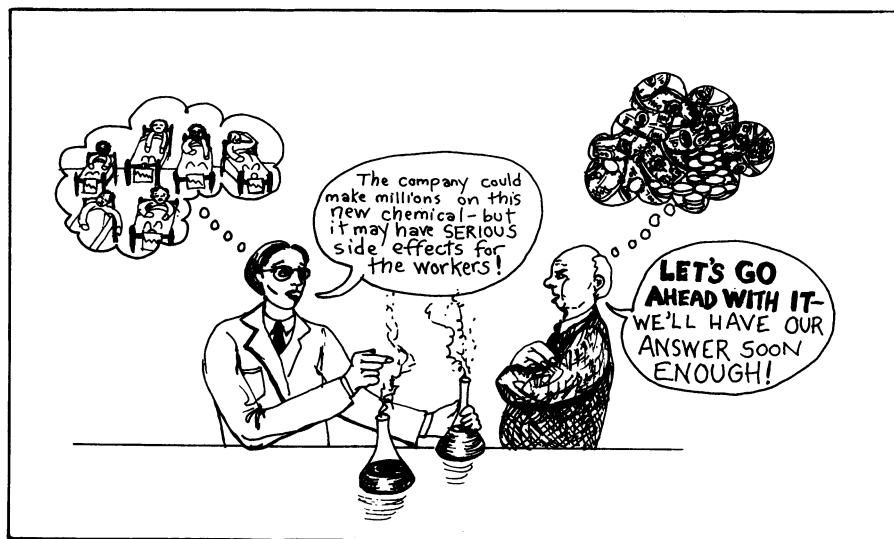
Seidlitz: Of course. The PCB developments are a very good example of environmental and occupational

health concerns working hand in hand. There have been well-publicized cases in the Bay Area for example, of capacitor blowouts contaminating the surrounding neighborhoods with PCB's. And, of course, on a national level, the environmental movement was a major force pushing EPA to adopt its ban on PCB manufacture in 1979. The widespread media attention paid to these developments helped the San Jose workers develop the knowledge and confidence they needed to realize something was wrong, and to refuse to work under the conditions PG&E demanded. PG&E workers have begun to realize that they are as much "experts" on the hazards as those company officials who tell them it's safe.

Monitor: You mentioned EPA.

Haven't they investigated PG&E recently?

Seidlitz: Actually, that's quite interesting. EPA filed a civil complaint against PG&E in May, 1980, under the Toxic Substances Control Act, charging that cleanup practices for PCB wastes were inadequate. Negotiations for a consent agreement to settle the case were actually underway as our hearing was going on, although we didn't know that EPA had filed a complaint. Meanwhile, at our hearings, PG&E officials, in their defense, kept referring to their compliance with all EPA regulations. Just after the hearing, we learned that PG&E had agreed to pay civil penalties of \$12,000 and to tighten its procedures for dealing with PCB spills, in order to settle the EPA complaint.



Original cartoon contributed by Ron Richardson. Fazekas/Richardson.

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