

Labor Occupational Health Program MONITOR



In This Issue:

- **PLANT CLOSINGS AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH**



On the Cover:

4 p.m. at the U.S. Steel Homestead plant near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. These workers are leaving for the day; many others at this and other plants throughout the U.S. have recently been leaving for good. Plant closings and layoffs create new types of occupational health problems, as Monitor's article on p.4 explains.

(Photo: courtesy of LNS Women's Graphics.)

Labor Occupational Health Program MONITOR

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Staff: Robin Baker, LOHP Director; Paul Chown, Labor Center Chairman; Gene Darling, Monitor Editor; Anne Maramba-Ferrell; Lela Morris; Brenda Presley; Pat Quinlan; Susan Salisbury; Lula Simmons; Clarissa Yu.

LOHP's New Catalog



With this issue of **Monitor**, regular subscribers are also receiving the **LOHP Catalog**, a new, free publication describing the printed and audiovisual materials available from our program. In addition, the **Catalog** includes a brief description of LOHP's activities and services.

LOHP now has available for sale three 16mm films, seven slide/tape shows, and a wide range of books and pamphlets on various health and safety topics. We also offer information packets on certain subjects, sets of materials previously distributed at LOHP conferences, research papers, article reprints, and a health and safety poster. The **Catalog** provides details on all of these, together with an order form. Information on **Monitor** subscriptions and back issues is included, as is film rental information.

Additional copies of the **Catalog** are available free from: LOHP, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720. Phone: (415) 642-5507.

AROUND LOHP

LOHP Launches Continuing Education

LOHP's new Continuing Education component, begun in mid-1982 with a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), has conducted an ambitious series of conferences and training sessions in recent months. Designed primarily for health professionals but also attended by students, union and management representatives, and others, the sessions have been organized by LOHP Continuing Education Coordinator Lela Morris.

The year began with two short courses in January, co-sponsored by U.C.'s Northern California Occupational Health Center (with which LOHP is affiliated) and the University of Southern California, Institute of Safety and Systems Management. **Sampling Strategies**, a three-day course January 17-19, attracted nearly 20 participants to the Student Union Building on the Berkeley campus, and **Industrial Hygiene and Safety Applications of Microcomputers** on January 20-21 attracted approximately 25 to the U.C. Berkeley Faculty Club.

Cancer in the Black Community: Prevention, Treatment, and Followup: A Multidisciplinary Approach was offered to over 60 participants on January 28 at the West Berkeley Health Center. Co-sponsored by the Northern California Occupational Health Center, Bay Area Black Nurses Association, and the Alameda County Unit of the American Cancer Society, this symposium covered the epidemic of cancer in the black community, where both the cancer incidence rate and the cancer death rate are higher than among whites.

More than 30 attended **A Symposium on Occupational Lung Disease** at the U.C. Extension Center in San Francisco on February 9. Co-sponsored by the Northern California Occupational Health Center, the American Lung Association of San Francisco, and the Occupational Health Clinic at San Francisco General Hospital, the symposium considered occupational asthma, asbestos-related disease, and other lung ailments. Guest speakers discussed

prevention, diagnosis, and follow-up; demonstrations were also given of monitoring and diagnostic equipment.

Fundamentals of Industrial Hygiene for Non-Industrial Hygienists was a two-day course offered March 3-4 at the U.C. Extension Center in San Francisco. Co-sponsored by the Northern California Occupational Health Center and U.C. Berkeley Extension, this popular offering also attracted more than 30. Topics included toxicology, evaluation of the workplace environment, methods for controlling occupational hazards, evaluation of exposure data, and demonstrations of environmental testing and personal protective equipment.

All courses offered continuing education credit hours. LOHP is now planning its 1983-4 offerings in continuing education; for more information, write for a brochure and it will be sent when available.

New LOHP Staff



Lula Simmons

Lula Simmons joined the LOHP staff as Labor Intern in January. Her work will involve training, technical assistance, and liaison with Northern California unions.

Ms. Simmons received her B.A. degree in Sociology from the University of California, Berkeley, and an A.A. degree in Labor and Urban Studies from Merritt College in Oakland. She has also received certificates for occupational health and safety training from LOHP.

Ms. Simmons is a member of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 284. She has held a number of union positions, including Financial Secretary, Executive Board



Anne Maramba-Ferrell

member, Auditor, and District Delegate. She organized the Health and Safety Committee in her local and served as its Chairperson for three years. She was also an advisor and a participant in the LOHP film, "Working For Your Life."

Anne Maramba-Ferrell is the new Secretary in LOHP's main office. Her recent experience has been as an EKG Technician and Secretary for the Alameda County High Blood Pressure Control Program. A native of Chicago, Illinois, Anne has a degree in music. In the future, she hopes to pursue health education, particularly in high blood pressure control.

Plant Closings and Worker Health

by Steve Diamond

Center for Labor Research and Education

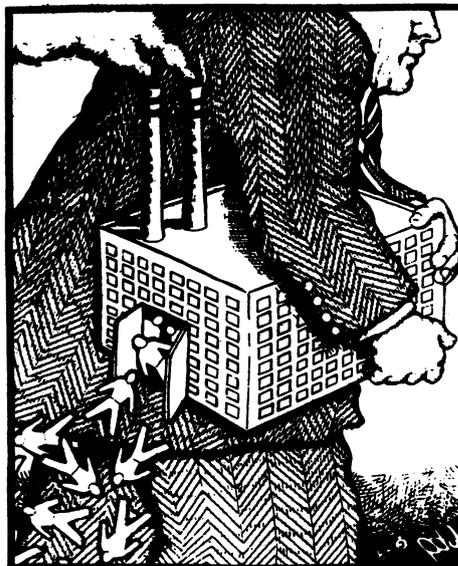
"Mrs. Farley recalled hearing a click, the sound of a small bore pistol. She rushed to the bedroom and pounded on the door. There was no response."

On January 29, 1974, Jim Farley, a 41-year-old father of three, took his own life rather than face the loss of the job he had held for twenty years at Detroit's Federal Mogul Corporation. Mogul had operated a profitable auto supply factory in the area for over thirty years. But there were more profits to be made in non-union Alabama. Two thousand men and women lost their jobs. Their average age was 51, average seniority 21 years. Seven more of Farley's coworkers committed suicide in the aftermath of the Mogul runaway.

The Mogul closing occurred in 1974. At that time it might have appeared unusual to some, the result of a temporary economic downturn. A decade later "temporary" has become "permanent," and plant closings are the norm rather than the exception. A number of studies confirm both the economic losses caused by closings and the devastating impact of job loss on the health of American workers.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

New research by Professors Bennett Harrison of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Barry Bluestone of Boston College, on the extent of the economic impact of closings in the past decade, is presented in their new book, **The Deindustrialization of America** (Basic Books, 1982.) They conclude that "between 30 and 50 million jobs were lost during the 1970's as the result of private disinvestment in American businesses." The flood of plant closings and runaway shops is led by America's largest corporations. Over the last ten years, General Electric added 5,000 jobs to its net payroll, but did so by cutting 25,000 U.S. jobs and adding 30,000 overseas. RCA slashed its U.S. workforce by 14,000 persons and added 19,000 foreign employees.



Rochester Patriot/cpf

California has been as hard hit by shutdowns as the rest of the nation. Of the 500 lumber mills in operation on the California North Coast in 1960, only 20 are still open. In 1978, the closing of eight Los Angeles firms threw nearly 18,000 people out of jobs. "From South Gate to Hayward to Sacramento, across the State as a whole," Bluestone and Harrison write, "in the single year 1980, at least 150 major plants closed their doors permanently, displacing more than 37,000 workers."

COMMON MYTHS

Bluestone and Harrison's work pulls together much of the most recently available research on plant closings. Their results poke big holes in the most common myths about shutdown and job loss. First, unemployment in one area does not necessarily lead to new employment elsewhere. Shutdowns happen everywhere. They find, for example, that "half of all jobs lost to plant closings (and relocations) occurred in the Sunbelt states of the South and West." Second, within a single geographical area, such as New England, net job loss is common. In that region's aircraft industry only one new job was created for every 3.6 jobs lost over the last decade.

Third, job and income loss is often permanent. Many workers never again find comparable employment. Auto workers, Bluestone and Harrison report, are often still working at jobs paying only half their original salaries two years after their layoff.

Finally, no occupation is secure against shutdowns. Long-term earnings loss is typical in steel, meat packing, oil, aircraft, glass, and clothing manufacturing. One survey of 4,000 men over the age of 45 (both blue collar and white collar workers) revealed that one out of twenty suffered long-term job loss at some time during the seven-year survey period.

HEALTH IMPACT

The impact of plant closings, however, only begins with job loss. A review of national data from 1940-1973 by Dr. M. Harvey Brenner of Johns Hopkins University reveals the traumatic social impact of unemployment. He concludes that a one percent increase in the aggregate unemployment rate sustained over a six year period is associated with:

- 36,887 total deaths (including 20,240 cardiovascular deaths);
- 920 suicides;

- 648 homicides;
- 495 deaths from cirrhosis of the liver;
- 4,227 state mental hospital admissions; and
- 3,340 state prison admissions.

Medical research backs up Brenner's statistical analysis. Dr. Sidney Cobb of Brown University and Dr. Stanislaw Kasl of Yale report that high or increased blood pressure (hypertension) and abnormally high cholesterol and blood sugar levels were found in a group of men who lost their jobs due to factory closures. High rates of heart disease are known to occur in persons with these symptoms. In addition, Bluestone and Harrison note, ulcers, respiratory disease, gout, diabetes, and hyperallergic reactions are related to the stress of job loss. Cobb and Kasl also found a suicide rate about 30 times the national average in their surveyed group.

All studies available concur in their findings of a serious psychological impact on those who lose their jobs. One study, by Richard Wilcock and W. H. Franke, reports: "Perhaps the most serious impact of shutdowns... was a loss of confidence and a feeling of uselessness... The unemployed worker loses his daily association with fellow workers. This loss means not only the disappearance of relationships built up over a period of years, but also the end of a meaningful institutional relationship. When he is severed from his job, he discovers that he has lost, in addition to income and security, his institutional base in the economic system."

The unemployed worker's family suffers as well. The testimony of United Auto Workers rank and file member Joe Willis, of Local 932 in Los Angeles, to a U.S. House of Representatives committee hearing on the National Employment Priorities Act (HR 5040), drew this link clearly:

"Many people don't relate being laid off or plant closures to child abuse... Here's the connection: An individual gets laid off. He's possibly the only breadwinner of the family. He goes home to his family [without a job]... The pressures faced by this man are tremendous... When he's no longer able to maintain the head of household status, his mental makeup changes. He now feels he's

degraded... Many, many times a man will become unstable, a little hot tempered, a little short tempered, and he will take it out on his children. It's a terrible situation, but it is a fact."

Statistical research by the National Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse backs up Willis' testimony. They found a clear rise in child abuse during the 1972-75 recession: in 1972, 208 cases of child abuse per one million in population were reported; in 1973, 348 cases per million population; and in 1974, 380 cases per million population.

Complicating the health problem is the fact that workers normally lose their health insurance when they lose their jobs. Don Stillman of the UAW writes that fewer than 30% of the unemployed have any health insurance at all. Those who do have it must spend 20 to 35% of their unemployment just to maintain their former coverage, in the rare cases where that is possible. Individual health insurance is twice the cost of a group plan and pays only an average of 31% of all medical costs.

"When the displaced worker has the greatest need for health insurance," Stillman writes, "coverage is most out of reach."

FIGHTBACK EFFORTS

The fight against plant closings is beginning to gather steam. More and more unions are negotiating protections against the impact of plant closings into new contracts. Earlier this year the United Rubber Workers won a two-year extension of medical benefits to employees terminated because of a plant closure. Coverage at the group rate may be continued for another six

months by individual employees. In addition to such contract protections, strikes, boycotts, and even occupations of corporate headquarters have taken place in attempts to preserve jobs.

In California, a major lobbying effort is underway by the labor movement to provide legislative protections for workers. Last year, Assembly Bill 2839 (Waters) got as far as the Assembly Ways and Means Committee. A similar bill is now being pushed in Sacramento by a broad coalition of labor and community groups. If passed, it would mandate the following:

- Advance notice of a plant closing;
- Continuation of health benefits;
- Retraining and relocation funding;
- Severance pay.

Even the strongest possible version of this bill would not stop plant closings. It would, however, provide both badly needed economic protections for workers and political support for other, more direct fightback against closings. Labor urges support of its passage.

For further information: see Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America* (New York, Basic Books, 1982); Don Stillman, "The Devastating Impact of Plant Relocations," *Working Papers*, July-August, 1978, p. 49; Dr. M. Harvey Brenner, *Achieving the Goals of the Employment Act of 1946: Estimating the Social Costs of National Economic Policy: Implications for Mental and Physical Health and Clinical Aggression*, A Report prepared for the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976); and Dr. Sidney Cobb and Dr. Stanislaw Kasl, *Termination: The Consequences of Job Loss* (NIOSH, available from National Technical Information Service, order #PB-282-991, June, 1977.)

Hartford Study on Job Loss and Health

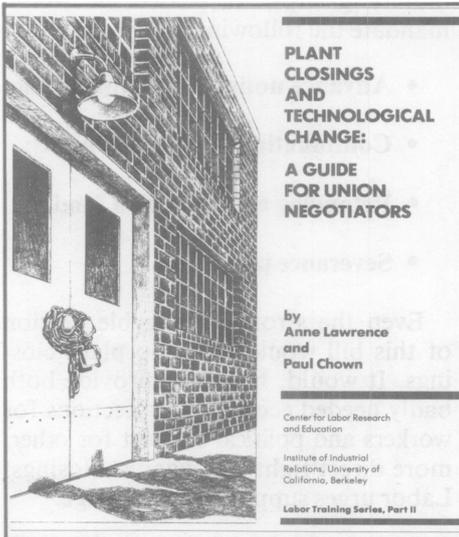
The October 13, 1982 issue of the journal *American Psychologist* reports on a new study of the effects of unemployment on former aircraft workers in the Hartford, Connecticut area and their families. Conducted by Ramsey Liem, Ph.D. of Boston College and Paula Rayman, Ph.D. of Brandeis University, the study warns that unemployment is not simply an economic problem, but a serious threat to personal health. The authors find that unemployment can aggravate chronic and latent disorders, change usual pat-

terns of behavior, and trigger other social and interpersonal costs.

Among the commonly reported symptoms were hypertension, alcoholism, increased smoking, insomnia, and nervous exhaustion. Middle-aged heads of household with dependents experienced more intense strain than younger, single workers. Unemployment was strongly associated with increased psychiatric symptoms such as anxiety, depression, hostility, paranoia, and psychomatic conditions.



New Union Guide to Plant Closings



Plant Closings and Technological Change: A Guide for Union Negotiators, by Anne Lawrence and Paul Chown, is a new paperback just issued by the Center for Labor Research and Education at the Institute of Industrial Relations. The manual is designed as a practical guide for union negotiators responsible for bargaining contract language on issues related to plant closures, transfers of operations, and technological change. Each section contains an introduction to a major bargaining issue (such as advance notice or severance pay) and a checklist of related items which negotiators may wish to cover. The manual then provides samples of actual contract clauses recently negotiated by unions in a variety of different industries. Model clauses, included for each topic, may be used by negotiators in framing their own bargaining proposals.

Bargaining issues covered include: advance notice, severance pay, restrictions on management's right to shut plants, extension of medical and other insurance benefits, improved pensions and early retirement, transfer rights and relocation allowances, wage rate retention after transfer, and retraining. Special sections are included on how to deal with demands for concessions, how to negotiate a termination agreement, and how to do further research on contract language.

Single copies are available for \$6.00 postpaid from: Center for Labor Research and Education, Institute of Industrial Relations, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720. Make checks payable to: The Regents of U.C. Special rates are offered for the unemployed and for bulk orders of 10 or more; call (415) 642-0323 for more information.

BOOKLET

Radiation on the Job: A Manual for Health Workers on Ionizing Radiation is an illustrated, 60-page paperback booklet written by and for health workers striving for a safer, healthier workplace. Approximately 700 million x-rays and 70 million nuclear medicine procedures are conducted each year in the U.S., accounting for more than 90% of all human-made ionizing radiation exposure. Thus radiation is a prominent, though insidious hazard in the health worker's environment.

Produced by the Low-Level Radiation Project of the Coalition for the Medical Rights of Women, the manual defines ionizing radiation and discusses its sources, health effects, dosage considerations, and exposure control methods. Useful appendices include: Physics of Ionizing Radiation, Radiation Monitoring Devices, California Radiation Control Regulations, Summary of Recent Studies, a set of rec-

ommendations by a health care workers' union, and a bibliography.

The manual is available for \$3.00 from: Coalition for the Medical Rights of Women, 1638B Haight St., San Francisco, CA 94117. Quantity discounts are offered. Phone (415) 621-8030 for further information.

A new booklet from the AFL-CIO Public Employee Department, **Hospital Workers: Who Cares About Your Health on the Job?** covers common hazards faced by America's four million hospital workers. Topics include infection, radiation, anesthetic gases, burns, chemical hazards, asbestos, patient violence, stress, and union solutions. Emphasizing what the AFL-CIO considers neglect by OSHA of hospital hazards, the booklet presents unionization as the best recourse. Copies are available for \$1.00 from: AFL-CIO Public Affairs Department, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

SLIDE SHOW

Fighting Workplace Cancer is a new slide/tape show from the United Auto Workers International Union. An overview of the causes of, and remedies for, occupational cancer, the show discusses industries and operations where excess cancer has been found. Chemicals which cause cancer are identified, and control methods are described. Policy issues relating to carcinogen regulation and obstacles to control are also explored.

The show includes 124 slides in a carousel and a 20-minute tape with inaudible pulsing. Also included are a keyed script and a copy of the companion booklet, **The Case of the Workplace Killers: A Manual for Cancer Detectives on the Job**.

The show can be obtained from the UAW Education Department, 8000 East Jefferson Ave., Detroit, MI 48214. Price is \$100 per copy; previews are offered for \$10. For more information, phone (313) 926-5474.



\$5 Million for Sterility

Workers Win DBCP Suit

A jury in Superior Court in San Francisco on April 14, 1983 awarded nearly \$5 million in damages to six Occidental Chemical Co. workers who claimed that their work with the pesticide DBCP had made them sterile.

The seven-woman, five-man jury found that Dow Chemical Co., which manufactured the DBCP used at Occidental's plant near Stockton, California, failed to provide Occidental workers with adequate warnings of the toxicity of DBCP. The workers' attorneys stressed that the DBCP label did not mention possible damage to testicles, despite animal tests in the 1950's that showed such damage. The jury did not award punitive damages, since it could not agree whether Dow acted with "conscious disregard" of others' safety.

The actual damages which were awarded cover medical bills, emotional stress, and suffering of the six male workers and three of their wives. A seventh worker's claim was rejected on the grounds that he had not proved a DBCP injury.

The case, heard by Superior Court Judge Daniel Weinstein, had been initiated in 1977, and the trial took several months. Defendants originally named along with Dow included Shell Oil (another DBCP manufacturer), Occidental, and the University of California, which the workers claimed did "secret" research for Shell on DBCP in the 1950's. Occidental and the University settled out of court, but details of the settlements were not released. The jury removed Shell from the case

because no evidence emerged that its DBCP was present at the Occidental plant when the workers were there, and it found no evidence that Dow and Shell conspired to cover up DBCP's toxicity.

Dozens of other Occidental workers have settled out of court with Dow, Shell, and Occidental for undisclosed amounts.

DBCP (dibromochloropropane) is used to kill nematodes (small worms.) It was banned in California in 1979 after it was tied to human sterility.

Dow is expected to appeal the award.

—Compiled from UPI, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Daily Californian*.

Judge Upholds 'Walkaround' Pay

In the first California case of its kind, Judge Marcus Tucker of the Long Beach Municipal Court found in October that Texaco, Inc. violated anti-retaliatory provisions of the California Occupational Safety and Health Act when the company refused to pay four of its employees for time spent participating in a Cal/OSHA "walkaround" inspection.

The State Division of Labor Standards Enforcement brought the case against Texaco with the assistance of Cal/OSHA.

Texaco did not deny that employee representatives must be allowed to participate, along with management, in a Cal/OSHA inspection, but claimed that the law does not expressly require pay for this time. Several decisions in federal courts, interpreting the federal OSH Act, have failed to find any right to "walkaround" pay. But DLSE, basing its argument on state law, successfully argued that withholding pay constitutes discrimination against a worker representative for exercise of health and safety rights.

Hazard Alert, Federal Suit on Ethylene Oxide

Cal/OSHA's Hazard Evaluation System and Information Service (HEIS) has issued a Hazard Alert warning that ethylene oxide (EtO) causes cancer and mutations in laboratory test animals, "raising the possibility that it may cause similar effects in humans."

EtO is used by hospitals, health facilities, pharmaceutical companies, and manufacturers of medical supplies to sterilize heat-sensitive materials that cannot be sterilized with steam. EtO is a gas at room temperature and becomes a liquid below 55° F. It can enter the body by inhalation of the gas or by direct skin contact with the liquid. It can cause irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat as well as damage the central nervous system.

On the federal level, a U.S. Court of Appeals in March, 1983 ordered federal OSHA to develop a new standard for EtO and to issue it as a proposal within 30 days. In 1982, the Public Citizens Health Research Group and several unions petitioned OSHA to lower the

permissible exposure limit for EtO to 1 part per million. When OSHA rejected the petition, the groups sued. The suit originally asked for an immediate temporary emergency standard, which was ordered by a district court, but the appellate court rejected that approach.

On March 30, OSHA proposed a new permanent standard of 1 ppm. on which the required public comment is now being solicited.

In California, the HESIS report also recommends that Cal/OSHA's PEL be reduced below the current standard of 50 ppm. Cal/OSHA is expected soon to reduce the PEL to 10 ppm in conformity to recommendations of the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH), and will appoint an EtO advisory committee to determine if a further reduction is warranted.

Copies of the Hazard Alert are available from HESIS at 2151 Berkeley Way, Room 504, Berkeley, CA 94704.

The LOHP Library

by Susan Salisbury
LOHP Librarian

LOHP's library continues to be an excellent resource center for information on occupational safety and health, and has expanded considerably this year. The collection is ever -growing, while maintaining a focus on worker education and assistance. All Bay Area **Monitor** readers and out-of-town visitors are encouraged to visit the library and take advantage of its services.

Patrons can find materials in every area of the field, including hazard identification, toxicology, industrial hygiene, standards and regulations, government policy, and health and safety organizing. Books, papers, pamphlets, fact sheets, and periodicals are available for use by the public in the library. Xerox services are nearby.

The toxicology section is one used frequently. This

features reference books and dictionaries listing chemical uses, hazards of exposure, symptoms, recommended levels and controls. In another section of the library, the 'paper and pamphlet' files, users can find appropriate fact sheets, pamphlets, and articles on nearly any subject.

In addition to our regular collection, the library now houses the VDT Coalition Resource Center. There are topical files available on various subjects related to video display terminals, including machine specifications, control recommendations, proposed legislation, and radiation effects.

The library is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:30-12 and 1-4:30. For further information, contact Susan Salisbury at (415) 642-5507. For information on the VDT Coalition Resource Center, contact either Susan Salisbury or Laura Stock at the same number.

CONFERENCE ON WORKERS' COMPENSATION

More than 75 trade unionists and others attended **Worker's Compensation in California**, a major conference on the Berkeley campus February 25 and 26. Co-sponsored by LOHP and the University's Center for Labor Research and Education, the conference featured several staff and guest speakers on the history, recent improvements, and operation of the workers' compensation system in California. Reform strategies were also explored, and a panel discussion was held on union approaches to the issue.

The next issue of **Monitor** will feature an examination of workers' compensation issues from a union perspective by LOHP staff member Lula Simmons, based on the conference.



*Over 30 labor and management representatives from the California petrochemical industry attended LOHP's week-long course, **Petroleum and Petrochemical Industry Hazards**, at the U.C. Berkeley Faculty Club from January 24-28, 1983. This advanced training is provided under terms of union contracts with several California petrochemical firms. Topics included refinery and petrochemical hazards, workplace monitoring, toxicology, epidemiology, hazard control, health and safety committees, legal rights, and equipment demonstrations.*

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