

Labor Occupational Health Program MONITOR



INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL
RELATIONS LIBRARY
SEP 05 1985
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
BERKELEY

In This Issue:

- DISABLED WORKERS MEET
- MEXICO RADIATION ACCIDENT



On the Cover:

140 injured workers, union activists, and professionals gathered in April for LOHP's conference on workers' compensation reform. See the story on page 4. In the photo: participant Jane Jackson. (Photo by Alyce Sheehan.)

Labor Occupational Health Program MONITOR

Vol. 13 No. 3, May-June, 1985

Published monthly except July-August; five issues per year. **Monitor** is a publication of the Labor Occupational Health Program, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, California 94720. Phone: (415) 642-5507.

LOHP is a labor education project of the Institute of Industrial Relations which produces a variety of printed and audiovisual materials on occupational health, and conducts workshops, conferences, and training sessions for California workers and unions. A catalog of available materials and a brochure which describes training services are available upon request.

The opinions expressed in **Monitor** represent the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Institute of Industrial Relations. All materials may be reprinted without permission. Please credit "LOHP **Monitor**" and send a copy of the reprint to the address above.

Subscriptions: \$10.00 per year. When available, single copies of back or current issues are \$2.00 each. Quantity shipments are also available to union locals or other groups at a cost of \$1.00 per year for each extra copy, with an annual subscription at the regular price. Thus a subscription for two copies per issue to the same address is \$11 per year, etc. Please prepay; make checks payable to: The Regents of U.C.

Staff: Robin Baker, LOHP Director; Paul Chown, Labor Center Chairman; Gene Darling, **Monitor** Editor; Darryl Alexander; Stephanie Cannizzo; Anne Maramba-Ferrell; Lela Morris; Patricia Quinlan; Susan Salisbury; Laura Stock.

Darryl Alexander Joins LOHP Staff

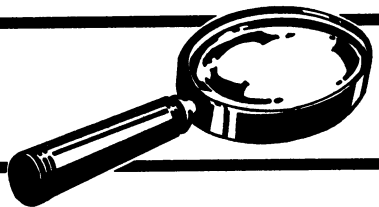
Darryl Alexander will join the LOHP staff as full-time Labor Outreach Coordinator on July 1, 1985.

Ms. Alexander will be responsible for promoting and organizing LOHP's services to the Northern California labor community, particularly union training sessions and conferences. In addition, she will work with a new LOHP project designed to offer occupational health training to minority and unorganized workers through community clinics in the Bay Area.

Holder of a B.S. in Biology from the University of Cincinnati, Ms. Alexander has also done graduate work in industrial hygiene and toxicology at the Kettering Institute, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. She has held health and safety positions with the Service Employees International Union Headquarters, the Food and Allied Service Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, and the Urban Environment Conference. A resident of Washington, D.C. for several years, she has been active there in efforts to form a "COSH" group, to establish a labor-based occupational health clinic, and to pass "right to know" legislation. Other areas in which she is experienced include groundwater contamination, toxic waste, and the occupational health problems of Black and Latino workers.

LOHP welcomes Ms. Alexander to the staff.





Beyond the "Right to Know"

by Robin Baker

LOHP Director

"Right to Know" has become the cornerstone of occupational safety and health reform efforts in the '80s. In addition to the recent "Hazard Communication" standard issued by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), some 17 states and dozens of local governments have passed their own "right to know" laws. These new regulations require employers to inform workers (and in some cases, the community at large) what toxic substances are used in the workplace and what potential hazards they pose. (*See Monitor, March-April, 1985, page 3, for more details.*)

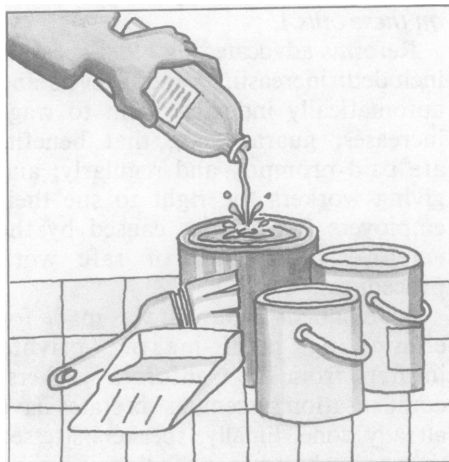
Progress in this arena has been impressive, to say the least. Yet everyone who has been involved in achieving these important gains is aware that the "right to know" has its limitations.

First, most of these laws rely on Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs), filled out by the product manufacturer and kept on file by employers who use the product, to communicate chemical hazard information to workers and the community. But MSDSs are often incomplete or inaccurate. They may also withhold information on the grounds that it is a "trade secret."

Second, many of the "right to know" laws lack effective training requirements to ensure that workers understand the information they receive. Third, the laws sometimes have limited jurisdiction—for example, the new federal Hazard Communication standard applies only to the manufacturing sector. Fourth, there is often a lack of adequate enforcement of these laws.

But by far the most important limitation of "right to know" laws is the fact that knowing what the hazards are is not the same as eliminating them. So we are left with the burning question, "Now that we know, what are we going to do about it?"

Ironically, just as workers are gaining the "right to know," their rights to do



Oruc Cakmakli

anything about dangers on the job are being dismantled. OSHA regulations are being weakened and enforcement is down. Job protection for workers who use their health and safety rights is being eroded as state OSHA, federal OSHA, and NLRB anti-discrimination programs become increasingly ineffective.

A CALL FOR WORKER EDUCATION

In this anti-regulatory era, prevention of occupational illness and injury must be pursued in the workplace, with little if any assistance from government. This requires a knowledgeable workforce that can tackle health and safety problems effectively. Workers and their representatives must have training in more than just how to read an MSDS, if they are to participate in recognizing and controlling hazards. They require a grounding in technical knowledge ranging from toxicology to industrial hygiene, from OSHA regulations to control technologies.

This type of education should not substitute for the training that each employer is required to supply, regarding how to perform a specific job safely. Rather, it should supplement the required basic training. It should prepare

workers to participate fully and effectively with management in health and safety programs. It should make workers aware of resources at their disposal.

Sadly, programs designed to provide this type of worker education have been taking a beating lately. While the federal OSH Act mandates worker education, the "New Directions" program through which OSHA funds training activities is being phased out. At its height in 1981, "New Directions" funded 142 labor, management, university, and private non-profit organization programs around the country to provide occupational safety and health training and assistance. That year, nearly \$20 million was allocated to the "New Directions" program. By 1983, the program had been reduced to only \$4 million for 52 grantees. There is now talk of eliminating the "New Directions" program altogether.

Thus, federal OSHA has not only sent workers up a creek by reducing regulatory protections, but has also taken away their paddle. Without training and education, workers have little hope left for making the workplace safe.

STATE INITIATIVES: CREATING PREVENTION FUNDS

Some states have undertaken initiatives to help fill the worker training and information gap. By allocating a fixed percentage of workers' compensation premiums or benefits (usually a fraction of 1%), several states have been able to fund a variety of research and training activities in occupational safety and health. Ohio, Washington, Michigan, and Connecticut all now "tax" workers' compensation insurance carriers to finance such prevention efforts. The New York legislature is considering a bill this year to create such a fund as well.

Michigan's program, for example,

continued on p. 11

140 Attend Workers' Comp Conference

140 injured workers, union members, attorneys, and health professionals gathered in Berkeley on April 19, 1985 for LOHP's conference, **Workers' Compensation in California: A New Fight For Justice**. The conference was organized to allow a forum to explore a variety of proposals currently under consideration which would reform the California compensation system.

Co-sponsoring the event with LOHP were the California Workers' Compensation Reform Coalition, the U.C. Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education, several injured workers' organizations, and local Committees on Occupational Safety and Health ("COSH" groups).

Most of the speakers documented failures of California's present system to provide injured workers with fair compensation, paid quickly and efficiently. Several also pointed out that the present system not only fails workers, but likewise fails to provide a financial incentive to management to reduce the large number of disabling occupational injuries and illnesses (at least 350,000 per year in California alone). Speakers emphasized that the "fight for justice" has to take place at work, in the workers' compensation courts, and in the legislature.

State Senator Nicholas Petris (D.-Oakland), the luncheon speaker, called for grassroots organizing to inform legislators from around the state of the need for reform of a system that is supposed to protect workers, not companies. He urged support for the bills

he has introduced this year, creating a State Office of Occupational Disease Compensation (SB 370) and establishing an occupational disease prevention program (SB 495). (*See the accompanying Legislative Update for information on these bills.*)

Reforms advocated by other speakers included: increasing benefit levels and automatically indexing them to wage increases; guaranteeing that benefits are paid promptly and regularly; and giving workers the right to sue their employers for injuries caused by the employer's disregard of safe work procedures.

An eloquent argument was made for eliminating profit-making private insurers from the California workers' compensation system, as six states have already done. Finally, speakers stressed the need to be wary of solutions advocating so-called "wage loss" or "wage replacement" systems without a clear understanding of who gains and who loses in such a system.

Many of the reforms discussed (originating with the California Workers' Compensation Reform Coalition) are now official positions of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO. The Federation's executive secretary-treasurer, John F. Henning, brought to the conference his encouragement and support.

(*See Monitor, January-February, 1985, page 3, for more details of reforms proposed by the California Workers' Compensation Reform Coalition and the California Labor Federation.*)

Additional legislation based on some of these reform ideas has now been introduced. The accompanying **Legislative Update** reports on its progress.

The California Workers' Compensation Reform Coalition will continue to meet throughout the year. Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month in Oakland. Those interested in working on research, education, and reform efforts can reach the Coalition at (415) 482-1095.

CONFERENCE MATERIALS AVAILABLE

All participants in the April 19 conference on workers' compensation received a comprehensive packet of information. These packets are now available from LOHP. They include materials on the basics of the California system and comparisons with other states; copies of reform legislation and arguments for and against it; analysis of the current politics of workers' compensation; and suggestions for union action.

Packets are \$5.00 (including postage and handling). Send prepaid orders to: LOHP, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720. Make checks payable to: The Regents of U.C.



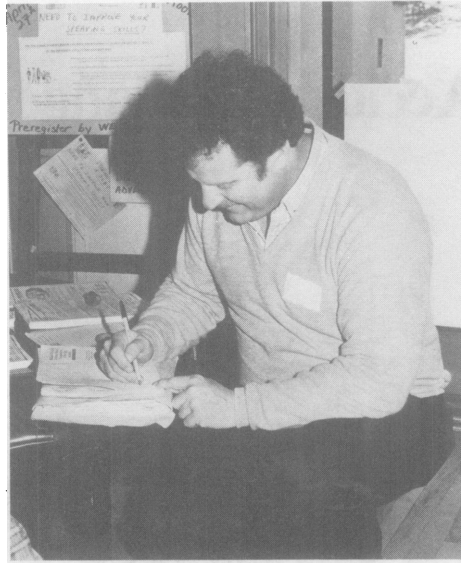
John F. Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, spoke about labor's strategy at the conference. Seated at his left is Tom Rankin, the Federation's research director. (Photo: Alyce Sheehan.)



Kim Mueller, health and safety director of the Federated Firefighters of California, gave a presentation on compensation for occupational disease. (Photo: Alyce Sheehan.)



Linda Rudolph, M.D., also addressed the group. (Photo: Alyce Sheehan.)



Bob Anderson of Disabled Workers United was among the morning panelists who discussed personal experiences with the workers' comp system. (Photo: Alyce Sheehan.)



State Senator Nicholas Petris (D.-Oakland) was the luncheon speaker. Petris has introduced two of this year's major compensation reform bills. (Photo: Alyce Sheehan.)

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

At press time, two bills on occupational disease had cleared all State Senate committees and were awaiting a Senate vote (expected in late June). Both bills were authored by Senator Nicholas Petris (D.-Oakland) with input from the California Workers' Compensation Reform Coalition. SB 370 would establish an Office of Occupational Disease Compensation in the Dept. of Industrial Relations, and make DIR responsible for recommending to the Legislature new "presumptive" standards for compensating occupational disease. SB 495 would mandate that the State Dept. of Health Services establish a program on prevention of occupational disease by January 1, 1987.

In the Assembly, no action was scheduled on AB 1898, authored by Workers' Compensation Subcommittee chairman Steve Peace (D.-Chula Vista.) This legislation, which contains many of the reforms proposed by the Coalition, has been made a two-year bill.

Action on various other bills, which set increases in workers' compensation benefit levels, was unclear.

'HUMAN DEBRIS' AVAILABLE FROM LOHP

Human Debris: The Injured Worker in America, by attorney Lawrence White, may now be ordered at a discount from LOHP.

This 191-page, hardcover book, used at LOHP'S April conference on workers' compensation, is a critical appraisal of the history and current inadequacies of the U.S. workers' comp system. White's thesis is that the real beneficiaries of the comp system have become doctors, lawyers, and insurance companies rather than injured workers. Studs Terkel has called the book an "explosive exposé" which "astonishes and infuriates."

Published by Seaview/Putnam books at \$14.95, **Human Debris** is available from LOHP at the special price of \$10.00 (postage and handling included.) Send prepaid orders to: LOHP, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720. Make checks payable to: The Regents of U.C.

Mexico Radiation Accident Endangers Workers, Public

by Patricia Coyle
and Laurie Coyle

While the current heated debate over the use of nuclear power and its possible adverse effects on public health continues, another threat to the health of the community is often overlooked. It stems from the control and management of low-level sources of radiation, which today are used in medical equipment, industrial inspection apparatus, and many other devices. (*See Monitor, January-February, 1981, page 7, for a discussion of the health effects of low-level radiation.*)

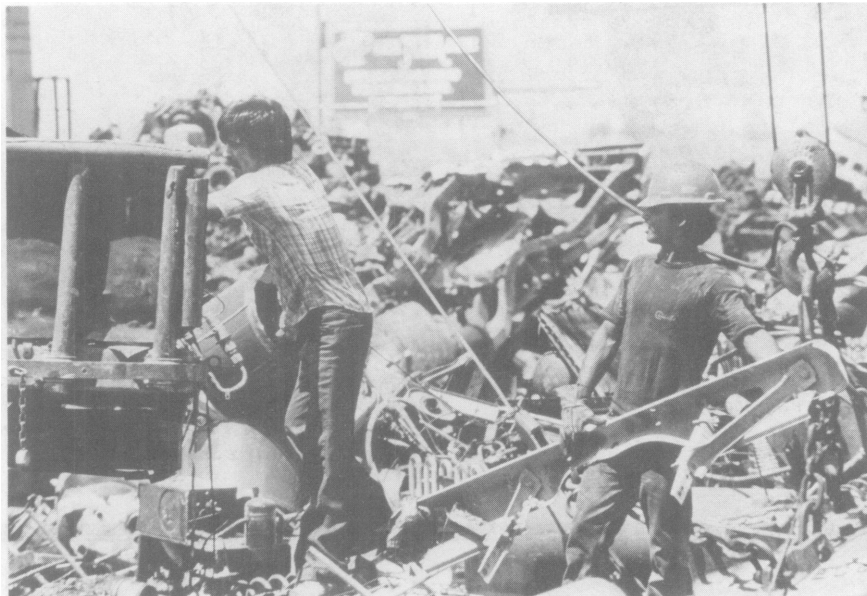
The problems associated with storage and disposal of low-level radioactive materials are not confined to any particular industry, community, state, or country; they are global.

Nowhere is the problem more apparent than in the accident which occurred in December, 1983 in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, in which two hundred people were exposed to significant levels of radiation. Some U.S. experts believe it was the worst nuclear accident ever in North America.

An electrician at a private hospital, the Centro Medico de Especialidades, removed a steel cylinder from the hospital's warehouse and sold it to the local Yonke Fenix junkyard as scrap metal. The electrician was unaware that the cylinder (which was part of an old, inoperative cancer treatment machine stored in the warehouse for years) contained six thousand tiny pellets of radioactive cobalt-60.

In the process of transporting the cylinder to the junkyard it broke open, spilling cobalt-60 pellets all over the truck which carried it and the junkyard where it was dumped. An electromagnet used to move scrap metal picked up some of the pellets and spread them throughout the yard, exposing over fifty workers there to high levels of radiation.

The cancer treatment machine had been sold by Methodist Hospital of Lubbock, Texas to a used equipment dealer in Fort Worth after it developed mechanical problems. The dealer in turn had sold it to the Ciudad Juarez hospital. Not having the expertise to run the machine nor the funds to hire a technician, the Mexican hospital had



Workers at the Yonke Fenix scrap metal yard in Ciudad Juarez. (Photo: Laurie Coyle, 1984.)

stored it in its warehouse for seven years until the electrician sold the cylinder.

The contaminated scrap and pellets from the Yonke Fenix junkyard (the hazard still undetected) were shipped to two Mexican foundries which melted the material down and made it into reconstruction bar ("rebar") and restaurant table bases. The rebar was primarily used on construction sites in fourteen states of Mexico, and most of the table bases were shipped to various parts of the U.S. (*See map.*)

The accident was not discovered for six weeks. That it was discovered at all was really a stroke of luck. A truck carrying contaminated rebar from Mexico took a wrong turn and entered Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, tripping a radiation-sensitive alarm. From photos taken automatically when the alarm sounded, Los Alamos authorities tracked down the truck and traced it to one of the foundries. From there the trail led to the junkyard and finally to the source of the contamination, the cancer treatment machine.

(Virtually all the contaminated rebar and table bases have now successfully been recalled. Authorities were able to trace the products through foundry

purchase order records.)

WORKERS' EXPOSURE

For six weeks over two hundred people, including junkyard workers and nearby residents, were exposed to significant amounts of radiation. While it is difficult to determine precise doses in this type of accident, doctors estimate that 50 to 70 workers at Yonke Fenix received doses of 30-50 rems, and that a few received very high doses of 350-400 rems. The severity of this exposure can be appreciated when one contrasts it with the allowable exposure levels by U.S. standards: 5 rems/year for nuclear workers and 0.5 rems/year for non-nuclear workers.

Many workers subsequently developed symptoms of acute radiation exposure, such as blacked fingernails and toenails, nausea, gastrointestinal discomfort, nosebleeds, and anemia. Apparently as a result of the accident, two workers, Agustin Villanueva and Pedro Torres, are now sterile. Workers with low red blood cell counts were given vitamins. Blood samples were taken from the six who showed the worst effects and were analyzed by Oak Ridge Laboratories in Tennessee. Chromosome damage was found in all

six workers. Based on current knowledge of the long-term effects of radiation, it is almost certain that some of those exposed will develop cancer as a result of the accident.

Many workers are afraid of being exposed again in the junkyard. One worker complains that his neighbors avoid him since the accident, fearful that they could be exposed to radiation by contact with him. Others express fears of having children who might be born with birth defects, and worry about the well-being of their families should they themselves become disabled.

Their anxieties are exacerbated by unstable work conditions and by built-in weaknesses of the Mexican government's disability programs. Junkyard workers are not unionized, and the majority at Yonke Fenix earn the minimum wage, approximately \$25./week in Mexico. With the cost of living skyrocketing in Mexico, these workers need a safety net in the event of illness or disability.

Unfortunately, work accidents are categorized according to occupation. Since it was not foreseen that junkyard workers would be exposed to a radiation hazard on the job, their radiation injuries do not fall within the guidelines for work-related disability. Consequently their disability has been categorized as a general illness and they receive compensation at 50% of their salary rather than the 100% compensation paid for work accidents. After widely-publicized efforts by the workers to change their classification, the government's Social Security (Instituto

Mexicano de Seguro Social) has agreed to review their claims on an individual basis. As a result, some of the workers have now been made eligible for full compensation, and special health care programs are planned for victims of the accident.

In the meantime, as many as twenty workers have left Yonke Fenix. Those who remain are pressuring the Mexican government to include their families (as well as former Yonke Fenix workers) in the special health care programs.

IMPLICATIONS

The accident at Yonke Fenix has broad implications for the regulation, sale, and transport of radioactive materials. Efforts to prevent a similar disaster from occurring must grow out of a clear understanding of where responsibility lies.

In taking the cancer treatment machine's cylinder to the junkyard, the hospital electrician shares some responsibility for the accident. However, since he was unaware of the hazard, his role was a limited one. A much larger share of the responsibility must be borne by the equipment dealer, hospital management, and both U.S. and Mexican government agencies.

According to U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission officials, the necessary export papers were in order and the sale was legal, even though the hospital was not licensed to receive the machine. Current NRC regulations cover only the packing and labeling of such materials for export, but do not prohibit their sale to unlicensed parties

outside the U.S. The NRC has consistently denied responsibility in the matter since the exportation of the machine was legal according to the letter of the law.

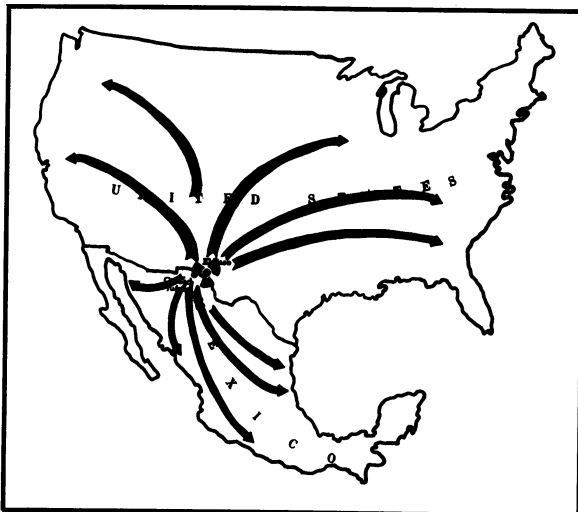
The cobalt-60 accident demonstrates the need for stronger regulation of private sales of hazardous materials leaving the country. In order for those regulations to be effective, there must be close coordination of enforcement activities on both sides of the border, and reciprocity between U.S. and Mexican agencies.

The accident at Yonke Fenix has destroyed forever the boundaries separating our developed environment in the north from the impoverished, vulnerable, and developing countries to the south.

Initial filming of *Fenix Rising*, a color documentary film about the accident at Yonke Fenix, has been completed. The filmmakers are currently seeking funding to finish the film, and all contributions are gratefully accepted. Contributions, which are fully tax-deductible, may be made to: Cine Accion, Fenix Rising Film Project, 122 Valley St., San Francisco, CA 94131. More information about the film is available on request.

Patricia Coyle is a graduate student in the School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley.

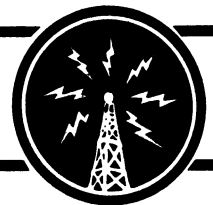
Laurie Coyle is a filmmaker currently producing a documentary about the Yonke Fenix radiation accident.



Rebar and restaurant table bases contaminated by cobalt-60 were shipped throughout the U.S. and Mexico.



The Yonke Fenix junkyard site has now been marked with radiation warning signs. (Photo: Laurie Coyle, 1984.)



Briefs and Updates

MURDER CONVICTIONS IN CYANIDE CASE

The March-April, 1985 issue of *Monitor* (page 8) reported on murder charges recently brought by Cook County in Illinois against officials of a firm which used cyanide to recover silver from used x-ray and photographic film. A worker in the firm's plant died of cyanide poisoning in 1983.

On June 14, 1985, Cook County Circuit Court Judge Ronald Banks found three of the company's officials guilty of murder after a non-jury trial. The president, plant supervisor, and foreman at Film Recovery Systems, Inc. in Elk Grove Village were convicted of murdering the worker, Stefan Golab, a 61-year-old Polish immigrant. Banks said in his decision that plant working conditions were "totally unsafe" and that the officials were "totally knowledgeable" of the hazards.

The three officials were also found guilty of 14 counts of reckless conduct, a misdemeanor. They face prison sentences ranging from 20 to 40 years. The company itself was convicted of involuntary manslaughter.

An appeal is expected. Legal experts said that the decision will encourage more prosecutors to bring homicide charges when employees die on the job.

NEW CALIFORNIA VDT PURCHASE GUIDELINES

The March-April, 1985 issue of *Monitor* (page 10) reported that two California Assembly bills on video display terminals were sent to "interim study" by the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee earlier this spring. The move effectively killed the bills for this year. One of the bills (AB 687) would have directed the state to set up specifications for its own purchases of VDTs.

Labor observers were surprised when on May 2 the State Office of Information Technology issued its own guidelines for the purchase and leasing of VDTs and related furnishings. The new state guidelines are quite similar to the provisions of AB 687. The guidelines follow the recommendations of a Joint

Labor/Management VDT Committee which was set up through contracts covering state employees represented by the California State Employees Association (an affiliate of SEIU).

Among the new requirements are that furniture be adjustable; that screens be free of flicker and glare; and that VDTs have detached keyboards, tiltable platforms, and adjustable brightness and contrast.

ROWLAND RESIGNS

Robert A. Rowland will resign effective July 1, 1985 as Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health (head of federal OSHA).

Rowland, a former Texas attorney, will return to private life. As OSHA head since July, 1984, he has frequently been criticized by labor and Congress for his regulatory philosophy. He has also been investigated (and vindicated) by the Office of Government Ethics because of his reported financial interests in chemical companies which OSHA regulates. The investigation found that Rowland had obtained a waiver from former Labor Secretary Raymond Donovan, allowing him to engage in policy setting despite his financial holdings.

Rowland was never confirmed by the Senate as OSHA head. He was selected by the administration as a "recess" appointment (while the Senate was out of session), and his nomination for a permanent appointment was never acted upon by the Senate.

New Labor Secretary William E. Brock said in May that no decision had been made on a new OSHA head, and that he did not expect Rowland's successor to take office until at least October. Brock has a more cordial relationship with organized labor than did Donovan, and the AFL-CIO expressed its hope that Brock will "appoint a competent safety and health professional to put the agency back on track to protect workers."



NOISE RULES IN EFFECT AGAIN

The March-April, 1985 issue of *Monitor* (page 12) carried a story describing the November U.S. Court of Appeals ruling which struck down new OSHA noise regulations. The story reported that federal OSHA filed a motion for rehearing in December.

On April 3, 1985, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Richmond, Virginia granted OSHA's petition for rehearing. While the rehearing is pending, the "hearing conservation amendment" which is at issue in the case will go back into effect. The amendment had been stayed by the previous court decision. Now OSHA has instructed its field offices to "resume full enforcement" of the amendment.

The hearing conservation amendment requires hearing tests for employees exposed to noise levels over 85 dB, and special followup measures such as hearing protectors and training for employees whose testing detects a hearing loss of 10 dB or more.

OSHA DROPS FIELD SANITATION STANDARD

A report in the January-February, 1984 issue of *Monitor* (page 6) describes federal OSHA's proposal for a new standard to improve sanitation in agricultural work. OSHA's "field sanitation" standard was to require that agricultural employers provide potable water, toilets, and handwashing facilities for farm field laborers. OSHA agreed to propose the standard after several years of litigation by groups representing migrant farmworkers, who sought to compel such rules. During 1984, OSHA held hearings on the proposal around the U.S.

On April 12, 1985, Assistant Secretary of Labor Robert Rowland announced that OSHA is dropping the proposal and will not issue rules on field sanitation. Rowland said that such matters are "traditionally and properly" subjects for state regulation and that OSHA's resources are best utilized in dealing with high-hazard industries like chemical plants. Agricul-

tural sanitation does not involve "lethal" hazards, he said.

OSHA's decision was denounced by organized labor and by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Further litigation is likely.

FIGHTING BACK REDUCES STRESS, STUDY FINDS

A three-year, \$600,000 research study by the Institute for Labor and Mental Health in Oakland, California, has

found that job stress can be reduced when workers stop blaming themselves for problems and direct their energies toward changing workplace conditions.

Dr. Michael Lerner authored the study, which was funded by the National Institute for Mental Health. It involved 450 Bay Area workers, including telephone operators, postal workers, auto workers, secretaries, and security guards.

The study's conclusions contradict traditional theories which consider

stress a personal problem that should be treated by changing the individual's attitudes to encourage acceptance of surrounding conditions. Workers who understand that stress is caused by poor working conditions and who direct their energies toward changing conditions, the study found, have fewer ulcers and lower blood pressure, drink less, and feel healthier.



Lawrence Livermore

High Melanoma Rate at Weapons Lab

A new study reported in the *Western Journal of Medicine* confirms earlier suspicions that workers at the University of California's Lawrence Livermore Laboratory suffer skin cancer rates higher than those found among the general population.

The Laboratory, which has 8500 employees, conducts nuclear weapons research and development for the federal government. In the study, records of all workers at the facility between 1969 and 1980 were examined by epidemiologists Dr. Donald Austin and Peggy Reynolds of the California Department of Health Services. They found that skin cancer, called malignant melanoma, is 5.2 times more common among the Laboratory's female workers than other women in the Bay Area, and 3.3 times more common among male workers than other Bay Area men. There was no evidence, however, of higher rates of other types of cancer.

Austin said that the evidence is strong that radiation has played a major role in the cancer cases. He added that radiation doses could have been received either at the worksite or in nuclear weapons tests in the South Pacific in the 1950s, in which many Livermore workers were involved.

When Austin issued an earlier report in 1981, describing 31 cases of malignant melanoma found among Laboratory employees, officials at the facility suggested that the skin cancer rate there could result from heredity or overexposure to sunlight. Austin said that these possibilities were ruled out by the new study. Laboratory officials have retained their own epidemiologist to review Austin's new findings.

Datebook



CLASSES

The Labor Studies Program of San Francisco Community College will offer two series of classes on **Workplace Health and Safety** in the fall of 1985. The instructor for both is Dr. Leo Seidlitz.

The first series is a 17-week course on Thursday evenings from 7-10 p.m., beginning August 22. The course is a systematic introduction to occupational health and safety for workers. It offers 3 units of Community College credit, or may be taken on a non-credit basis. Location is the Downtown College Center, 4th and Mission Sts. in San Francisco. Fee for the course is \$15.00.

The second series consists of seven individual mini-courses on specific health and safety topics, also designed for workers. These are offered without credit; there is also no fee. They may be taken separately. Topics include: Asbestos; Computers and VDTs; Job Stress; Noise; Manufacturing/Warehouse Industry Hazards; Chemical Hazards; and Strategies for Worker Control Over Workplace Hazards. Each mini-course begins on a Saturday from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., and continues the next Tuesday evening from 7-10 p.m. The first mini-course begins on Sept. 14 and others follow at two-week intervals. All are held at 33 Gough St., San Francisco (between Market and Mission).

For more information, phone (415) 239-3090 or go to the first session of either series.

CONFERENCES

The **1985 Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Conference (POSH)** will be held Thursday, Sept. 26 through Saturday, Sept. 28, 1985, at the Le Baron Hotel, 1350 North First St., San Jose, California.

POSH is co-sponsored by local chapters of several professional societies, including the American Industrial Hygiene Association, the American Society of Safety Engineers, the Western Association of Occupational Health Nurses, and the Health Physics Society. This year's theme is "Industrial Accidents: Are We Prepared?" and topics will include preparing for a possible accident, the toxic effects of recent industrial disasters, impact of the workplace on pregnancy and genetics, and mental and physical job stress. One of the six workshops will be devoted to the radioactive contamination problem in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, which is covered in this issue of *Monitor*. (See page 6.)

Registration fees vary depending upon membership in the sponsoring organizations and upon number of workshops attended. There is a reduced rate of \$35. for students in related fields. Continuing Education credit, reduced hotel room rates, and discount airfares are available. For more information, please contact Duke Hughes, POSH '85, P.O. Box 4420, Santa Clara, CA 95054 or call (408) 988-1111.

WHAT'S NEW FROM LOHP? Health and Safety Videotapes!

LOHP now offers four of our most popular health and safety audiovisual productions on videotape. Videotapes are available in VHS, Beta and U-matic formats. Prices are considerably below those charged for the original versions of these shows, which were 16 mm. color sound films or 35 mm. synchronized color slide/audiotape modules. However, the original versions are also still available. Ordering information is at the bottom of the page. LOHP, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720.



Working For Your Life (\$100.)

This film is a tribute to today's 43 million American working women, many of whom are actively fighting to improve conditions on their jobs. Their occupations may not appear hazardous, but beauticians use hair dyes that may cause cancer; clericals suffer from job stress; and operating room workers exposed to anesthetic gases have unusually high rates of miscarriages and stillbirths. Women also work in agriculture, in fields sprayed with pesticides, and in smelters, where lead poisoning can be a threat to reproductive health.

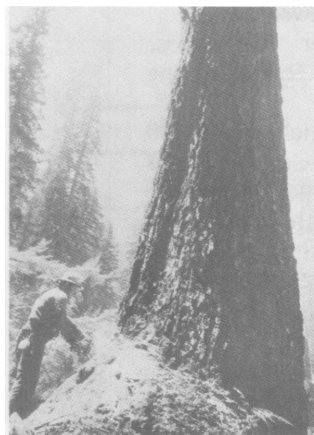
Directed by Andrea Hricko and Ken Light for LOHP in 1979. 57 minute color videotape. Available in VHS, Beta, or U-matic format; please specify. Each tape: \$100. including postage and handling. Mail check to address above. (Also available as a 16 mm. color film at \$600. each; save \$500. by ordering a videotape!)

Another Day's Living (\$100.)

The hazards of life in the old logging camps are just a bitter memory. Gone are the killer river drives and log jams that swept whole crews to their death.

But today's loggers and millworkers are still faced with health and safety hazards. *Another Day's Living* details the dangers of the forest products industry (logging, sawmills, and plywood mills.) The film looks at the life of the woodworker both yesterday and today.

Co-produced by LOHP, the International Woodworkers of America, and filmmaker Charles West in 1980. 30 minute color videotape. Available in VHS, Beta, or U-matic format; please specify. Each tape: \$100. including postage and handling. Mail check to address above. (Also available as a 16 mm. color film at \$400. each; save \$300. by ordering a videotape!)



Pink Collar (\$75.)

LOHP's popular slide/tape show on office work is now available on videotape. The clean, bright, modern office, with its video display terminals and climate-controlled environment can conceal a host of occupational hazards. The growing numbers of office workers, most of them women and many of them minorities, suffer chemical exposures, hazards associated with VDTs, eye and back strain, and the stress that accompanies rapid, routine work with little chance for advancement.

Produced by LOHP in 1983. Color videotape from original slide/audiotape module. Approximate running time: 20 minutes. Available in VHS, Beta, or U-matic format; please specify. Each tape: \$75. including postage and handling. Mail check to address above. (Also available as 90-slide set with synchronized audiotape at \$100.; save \$25. by ordering a videotape!)

Danger: PCB's! (\$75.)

PCBs or polychlorinated biphenyls, are insulating fluids found in electrical equipment such as line transformers. Most electrical workers have some contact with them, and PCB spills and accidents have made headlines. PCBs can damage the liver and the skin. Some research also suggests that they may cause cancer.

LOHP's slide/tape show *Danger: PCB's!*, which explores the hazards of these dangerous chemicals, is now available on videotape. The show features interviews with electrical workers who often understand better than management that careless attitudes toward PCBs must change.

Produced by LOHP and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1245 in 1983. Color videotape from original slide/audiotape module. Approximate running time: 15 minutes. Available in VHS, Beta, or U-matic format; please specify. Each tape: \$75. including postage and handling. Mail check to address above. (Also available as a 74-slide set with synchronized audiotape at \$100.; save \$25. by ordering a videotape!)

Order from: LOHP, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720.

Please enclose prepayment. Make checks payable to: The Regents of U.C. Allow 60 days.

Write for a free catalog of all LOHP publications and audiovisual materials.

BEYOND THE "RIGHT TO KNOW"

continued from p. 3

places an assessment on each workers' compensation insurance carrier in the state, on the state's own Compensation Fund, and on self-insured employers. This "tax" is equal to 0.5% of the total income benefits paid out by the insurer to workers each year. The money is paid into a fund which finances the Safety and Training Division of the state's Bureau of Safety and Regulation. The Division, in turn, has a grants program to fund labor, employer, and other organizations to encourage development of alternative assistance and training strategies. The system works much like the OSHA "New Directions" program has worked in the past.

This type of approach has much appeal since it requires no added cost to government. It should prove to be

cost-effective for insurance carriers who are footing the bill, as well, since prevention activities are designed to reduce injuries and illnesses (and therefore should also reduce compensation claims.)

In California, the state legislature has taken an interest recently in occupational health education activities. Just like federal OSHA, Cal/OSHA's mandate requires that it "maintain an education and research program to provide safety education for employees and employers." Cal/OSHA has recently been instructed by the state legislature to submit an educational outreach plan that will "address the needs of workers, management, health care professionals, the public, and other interested parties."

Not only is Cal/OSHA having a difficult time meeting its education mandate, but California has also lost most of its OSHA "New Directions" grant funds over the past few years. It would

appear that the time is ripe for California to look toward the "prevention fund" model which is being adopted by other states.

THE RIGHT TO KNOW AND THE ABILITY TO ACT

If the "right to know" is to succeed, we must ensure that workers are not only provided with information about hazards, but are also afforded the means to change dangerous conditions. Worker education is a critical step in this direction. Only an educated workforce will be able to act effectively, whether serving on a workplace safety committee or participating in creating new, stronger health and safety policies in the state or nation.

While we are working to support and implement the "right to know" laws we have gained, let's remember to look beyond the "right to know" as well.

Robot Kills Worker in Michigan

The nation's first fatal workplace accident resulting from the use of an industrial robot took the life of a Michigan worker in July, 1984.

The 34-year-old worker was killed while operating an automated die-casting system, which used a robot working in a small, enclosed work cell. When the man entered the cell, he was apparently caught and squeezed between the back of the robot and a vertical backstop installed in the cell. The company involved stated that all workers had received training from the robot's manufacturer, and that this included instructions not to enter the cell while the robot was working. An interlocked gate at the entrance to the cell would have stopped the robot when anyone entered, but the worker is believed to have climbed over the gate rather than opening it.

The federal Centers for Disease Control issued a report on the accident in early 1985, suggesting that the death indicates a lack of employee awareness that robots can be dangerous.

Responding to the widespread introduction of robots into U.S. workplaces, the Robotic Industries Association has drafted proposed national robot safety standards.

Subscribe to Monitor

Please enter a subscription to the
Labor Occupational Health Program **MONITOR**.

- ☐ Please enter a subscription for _____ year(s). (\$10.00 per year.)
- ☐ Also, please send a quantity shipment of _____ extra copies of each issue. (\$1.00 per year for each copy with a regular annual subscription.)

Total Enclosed: _____.

Name _____
Organization (if any) _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please prepay. Make checks payable to: The Regents of U.C.
Mail to: LOHP, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720.



PUBLICATIONS

Health Letter is a new newsletter, published bimonthly by Public Citizen's Health Research Group. Each issue covers important topics in the areas of health regulation, health policy, workplace hazards, and personal health. The first issue (March-April, 1985), for example, includes articles on food dyes, aspirin, smokeless tobacco, and the federal government's refusal to notify workers when government studies find chemical hazards in particular workplaces. The newsletter's editor is Dr. Sidney M. Wolfe of HRG.

Subscriptions are available for \$9.00 per year from: Health Research Group, 2000 P St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Ventilation: A Practical Guide, by Nancy Clark, Thomas Cutter, and Jean-Ann McGrane, is a 128-page paperback book recently published by the Center for Occupational Hazards. The book explains the principles of ventilation systems in non-technical terms, focusing on ventilation for art materials and processes. It is particularly designed for those concerned with ventilation in art studios, schools, museums, theaters, and small crafts workshops, but contains information which would be of value in any type of small workplace where ventilation is needed. Information is included on choosing the right type of ventilation system, typical design specifications, necessary calcul-

ations, codes and regulations, and suppliers of equipment.

The book is available for \$7.50 (plus \$2.00 postage and handling) from: Center for Occupational Hazards, 5 Beekman St., New York, N.Y. 10038. Bulk discounts are available; write for information.

The American Survival Guide: How to Survive in Your Toxic Environment, by Edward J. Bergin and Ronald E. Grandon, is a 1984 Avon paperback available in bookstores for \$11.95. The book tells the story of how industry has developed hundreds of new chemical products (many of them highly toxic) over the past 25 years. According to the authors, "Americans are living in a chemical nightmare [and] the time to wake up is now."

The theme of the book is that, in developing new chemicals, manufacturers "keep all the profits and we pay all the costs...with our money, our health, and our lives." While this analysis is interesting and persuasive, the most valuable aspect of the book is its wealth of practical information about "how to protect yourself, avoid risks, and make the companies pay if they've harmed you." Included are a reference guide to common toxic chemicals as well as information on signs and symptoms of chemical exposure, legal rights, workers' compensation for diseases caused by toxic substances, and resource agencies to contact for help.

CAMPAIGN

Several environmental organizations have launched a united international campaign to curtail pesticide abuse. The National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides, the Pesticide Action Network, the Pesticide Education and Action Project and other groups call the effort the **Dirty Dozen Campaign**.

The "dirty dozen" are twelve pesticides which have proved particularly harmful around the world, including DBCP, Lindane, Parathion, EDB, DDT, Paraquat and others. A particular focus of the campaign is the "double standard" which allows pesticides banned or restricted in the United States to be exported and used with little regulation in developing countries. The danger is not only to workers and the public in the developing countries, but also to U.S. consumers themselves since the pesticides often reenter the U.S. as residues on imported food products.

The campaign will distribute materials around the world in various languages; promote legislative reforms; and sponsor forums, rallies, and other events. For more information, contact the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides, 530 7th St. SE, Washington, D.C. 20003, or the Pesticide Education and Action Project, 1045 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94111.

Labor Occupational Health Program
Institute of Industrial Relations
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720

Address Correction Requested

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Berkeley, Calif.
Permit No. 1

LR 0309191 A1
INST OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
LIBRARY
2521 CHANNING WAY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
BERKELEY CAMPUS D09