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We learned that Harriman and Crocker built the railroads, that Ford made the auto industry and that the Rockefellers developed the oil and fuel industry.

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Soldiers and Strikers

Counterinsurgency on the Labor Front, 1877-1970

by Vincent Pinto

Second Edition, February 1973
UNITED FRONT PRESS

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Cover picture: Bayonets against textile strikers in Lawrence, Mass., 1912.

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Our aim is to make available, and circulate widely, accurate information on the true history and current struggles of the American people.

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STRUGGLE AND INSURRECTION

In the history of this country and the common people who built it, there is a story of struggle and insurrection: slave against slave-owners, workers against employers, the poor against the rich.

And from the beginning, the U.S. Army and states' militia have been thrown against people struggling to protect their lives and families, people fighting for a decent way of life.

This pamphlet tells the story of these struggles in the labor movement, from the close of the Civil War to World War II.

The full story of the use of the military against the people of the U.S. is much more extensive. For years the Southern slave owners called out the states' militia to suppress slave rebellions. The great insurrections led by Denmark Vesey in 1822 and Nat Turner in 1831 were both bloodily put down by state militias and local nightriders working together.

In the West, big railroad men, ranchers and the U.S. Army teamed up to grab the Southwest from Mexico in 1848. And on the Great Plains the military was used to wage a war of extermination against the American Indians and steal their land.

* * *

With the great industrial expansion of the late 1800s, a new area of internal conflict opened up. The successive waves of immigrant workers from Europe filled the dirty factories and slums of the Eastern states. From 1865 up to the 1940s they locked in bitter battle with the robber barons and industrialists.

In 1877 the U.S. Army was called out to suppress a strike of many of the country's railroad workers. State police and militia were used in 1912 at Lawrence, Mass. in an effort to break the strike of 23,000 women textile workers. In 1914, Colorado troops opened fire on the tent homes of striking miners at Ludlow, killing over 30 women and children.

It wasn't until 1935 that the right of workers to organize was legally recognized. Up until that time the courts could, and frequently did, declare unions illegal conspiracies and jail every organizer they could get their hands on. The laws and power of the state were wholly on the side of the owners.

In spite of what some American history books say, our grandparents didn't accept poverty and repression lying down. They fought back, first in thousands and then in millions. And they did win victories--such as the great CIO unionization drives of the 1930s in the mass production industries. They left as their legacy the only lasting institution in the country created by the working class: the labor unions.

Today many high level union leaders consider themselves "labor statesmen," draw big salaries, and don't do much beyond calling monthly meetings and collecting dues. In exchange for "labor cooperation," these bureaucrats accept band-aid social legislation from Congress and wage increases which are taken right back from workers through war, taxes and inflation

But there was a time when a lot more was expected from unions, when the rank-and-file and many of its leaders were in a life and death struggle, and were of a mind to seize the means for a decent living.

The following pages recount briefly some of the most famous and inglorious battles in our country's history, instances in which uniformed U.S. troops were used to smash strikes and break up labor demonstrations. These examples show that the U.S. army exists for more than just fighting other armies.

VIETNAM

Looking at U.S. labor history also puts the Vietnam War in clearer perspective. Just as the U. S. Army historically has been called in by the industrialists and slave owners to break strikes and suppress minority nationalities in the U.S., the military has more recently been used to control Vietnam's working people and farmers.

The murderous use of U.S. military power in Vietnam has surpassed in degree anything reported in the following pages. But our history shows that Vietnam is not a new war, but one which the U.S. government and the people who control it have fought before--a war in which an insurgent civilian population is the target and the suppression of the people the only objective.

NOTES

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3. Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles* (New York, 1936), p. 92.
4. Ray Ginger, *The Bending Cross, A Biography of Eugene Victor Debs* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1949), p. 140.
5. Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais, *Labor's Untold Story* (New York, 1955), p. 152.
6. Katherine Mayo, *Justice for All--The Story of the Pennsylvania State Police* (New York, 1917), p. 278.
7. Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies: The Story of Syndicalism in the United States* (New York, 1968), p. 104.
8. Renshaw, p. 104.
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10. Graham Adams, Jr., *Age of Industrial Violence 1910-1915. The Activities and Findings of the United States Commission on Industrial Relations* (New York, 1966), p. 149.
11. Adams, p. 149.
12. Adams, p. 156.
13. Adams, pp. 158-9.
14. Adams, p. 159.
15. Boyer and Morais, p. 271.
16. Boyer and Morais, p. 190.
17. Joseph G. Rayback, *A History of American Labor* (New York, 1966), p. 373 ff.
18. Boyer and Morais, p. 348.

NOTES FOR MORE READING

One of the best general histories of the labor movement is Boyer and Morais' *Labor's Untold Story,* republished in paperback by the United Electrical Workers Union. Samuel Yellen's *American Labor Struggles* is full of original vivid material about individual strikes.

A little known book in labor's early history is Ray Ginger's *The Bending Cross* (about Eugene Debs). *The Autobiography of Big Bill Haywood* is carried by International Publishers in paperback. The Charles Kerr Company reissued *The Pullman Strike* by William Carwardine, originally published in 1894.

Two of the best books about the CIO drives of the 1930s are William Z. Foster's *American Trade Unionism* and *Organize!* by Wyndham Mortimer, one of the leaders of the 1936 Flint strike.

One of the most neglected areas of labor history has been the history of Black workers and other minority nationalities. Published in 1930, Spero and Abram's *The Black Worker* is an important source. United Front Press also carries *The Demand for Black Labor,* by Harold Baron. *North from Mexico* and *Factories in the Fields*, both by Carey McWilliams, are good books on the history of Chicano workers in the Southwest. United Front Press will be compiling more sources on U.S. working class history in the near future.

tary and business establishments are working closer than most people think: "The Brass has been working hand-in-glove with businessmen to keep us from getting jobs by putting secret codes on our military separation papers (such as 38A, 38B, 38C). In fact, they're using over 130 different such codes which allege that we used narcotics, went AWOL, were militantly opposed to their war and racist policies when we were in the military."

A similar secret device was used after the 1877 Railroad Strike by the companies to deny re-employment to railroad workers who were out on strike.

Why? The Brass and their Wall Street backers need a 100 percent "loyal" army they can use to protect their interests--overseas and at home.

But more and more GI's are feeling a more powerful loyalty--and are increasingly acting on it. During the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, 43 Black GI's refused to leave base at Fort Hood, Texas for "riot duty." Hundreds of GI's on base supported their stand.

Soldiers, sailors, and airmen stationed at U.S. bases around the world have boycotted non-union lettuce in their mess halls to support the organizing drives of the United Farmworkers' Union. Meanwhile, the Pentagon has showed who it supports by tripling its lettuce purchases from anti-union growers.

In addition, GI's are facing the same racial and class prejudice in the "new army" they face outside the army. The recent rebellions of Black sailors on the Constellation, the Kitty Hawk, and the rest of the Asia-based 7th Fleet--focused on discriminatory tests and job assignments, 12-16 work shifts for over a month straight, and less-than-honorable discharges for petty infractions--show what the "new look" armed forces will really look like for young working class recruits.

The thought of soldiers loyal to the interests of the working class--unwilling to break strikes or suppress the struggles of Black people and other minority nationalities, and unwilling to be used in future Vietnams--terrifies both the general and banker.

And as the mounting struggles of workers and GI's in the 1970s demonstrate, a political alliance between soldiers and strikers is a real and growing possibility.

THE RAILROAD STRIKE OF 1877

It began on the B&O line near Martinsburg, West Virginia, on July 16. The firemen and brakemen quit first. Of all the back-breaking jobs, theirs were the worst. The immediate cause was a pay cut, but another in a long series of pay cuts which workers all over the country had been suffering in the wake of a depression that began in 1873.

Business was bad so unemployment was high, and resentful people roamed around in gloom. The average weekly wage for up to eighty hours' work on the railroads was $5 to $10, and that was good money. Then the B&O and other major lines gave out the news: anybody making more than a dollar a day would take home 10 percent less from now on. Since labor was getting plentiful it was also getting cheaper, and railroad bosses together decided to adjust to the change in value.

The workers, of course, saw it differently, and they too combined for concerted action. On the morning of the 16th of July a force of 1,200 brakemen and firemen seized the depot at Martinsburg and stopped all freight traffic. That was the spark. With nothing but local leadership, a spontaneous workers' insurrection erupted during the rest of July in 14 of the 38 states. The cities of Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Chicago passed out from under the powers of government, and for a time were governed by tinsmiths and mill hands--until the soldiers came.

When news spread about what the railroaders had done at Martinsburg, miners came down from the hills and black workers off the farms to help out. The mayor tried to head things off by arresting what leaders he could find, but this only focused attention on the town jail. When the workers prepared to storm it, he ordered the prisoners released. Governor Matthews then decided to restore calm with a portion of the West Virginia state militia, but the troops only fraternized and joked with the workers. State power was slipping away as fast as the strike was growing, and the Governor telegraphed the President for federal troops.

In the following few days the strike spread to every major railroad center in the East and Midwest. Led by the railway workers, employees in other industries struck for higher pay, and the unemployed also joined the struggle.

In Baltimore, two regiments of troops were called out for use against strikers outside the city. A crowd of several thousand of the city's workers tried to prevent them from boarding trains, and twelve were killed.

In Pittsburgh, even some businessmen favored the strike. The Pennsylvania Railroad, they felt, had been charging them outrageous freight rates.

The sheriff of Pittsburgh lost control of the situation and the local militia were called out, but they, too, went over to the workers' side.

From all over the country, reports were telegraphed to Washington that the state militias were unreliable. President Hayes was kept informed by the Army's Signal Service.

The militia garrison at Philadelphia was called on to remedy the situation in Pittsburgh. When they arrived they found the city in the hands of the workers. The depot had been burned to the ground, and the freight yards were a shambles. Twenty-six workers were killed as the troops were driven into a roundhouse and held captive all night.

At Reading, Pennsylvania, the militia shot down more than a dozen strikers.

The Governor wired the President that Pennsylvania was in a state of "domestic insurrection" which he could not control, and warned that if action were not taken soon the whole country would be in "anarchy and revolution." Certainly the nervous clatter of telegraph keys all around the country made such doom-saying credible. Red flags were decorating the Bowery in New York City; in Kansas City there was a general strike; in St. Louis there were preparations for one. The atmosphere in Philadelphia, Buffalo, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis was described as "menacing." From far-off San Francisco came reports that the town was being run by workers. General Phil Sheridan had already been recalled from putting down Sioux Indians and his cavalry was thrown against workers in Chicago. In Indiana, future President Benjamin Harrison was leading the militia personally.

President Rutherford B. Hayes and his Administration have vanished from history almost without a trace. On this occasion, however, he and his cabinet were called upon to make their mark. On Tuesday, July 24, the cabinet met to consider the use of federal troops--the first time ever against strikers. The Secretary of the Navy wanted to send some gunboats to New York "to clear the streets around the Custom House," but the Secretary of the Treasury told him the streets were too crooked in that part of the city. (1)

The Navy stayed home, but the Army was called out. Sheridan was ordered to go to Chicago with his cavalry. On Wednesday federal troops were ordered to open up communication with Pittsburgh. Two-thirds of all United States troops in the Military District of the Atlantic were sent to Pennsylvania alone. Six companies of the 23rd U.S. Infantry arrived at Union Depot in St. Louis after being side-tracked for awhile by strikers at Sedalia, Mo., but their bayonets could not prevent a socialist-led general strike from developing. At Albany, New York, General Carr said he would, regardless of bloodshed, open the blockade on the New York Central; and the next day he did. Eventually, with the overwhelming force of the mili-

the top. Hundreds of ex-generals and colonels are now highly-paid executives at Lockheed, General Dynamics, Boeing, etc. In addition, the big corporations always fill the top spots in the Defense Department--like Ford's McNamara, David Packard of Hewlett Packard, and Charles Wilson of GM.

Also there is the possibility for unity at the bottom: an alliance between workers and soldiers.

Most U.S. soldiers come from the working class and will return to it. Hundreds of thousands of GI's now know they were sent to Vietnam to fight a rich man's war--a war to protect the corporations' investments throughout Asia.

GI's and workers both get the lowest-paying, dirtiest, most dangerous work. 15,000 workers are killed every year in industrial accidents--a higher casualty rate than at the peak of the fighting in Vietnam.

Like the Bonus Army veterans of the 1930s, today's veterans are going through an economic depression. Unemployment among veterans of the Vietnam era stands around 20 percent--nearly the same proportion of workers who were out of work during the 1930s.

Veterans unemployment is such an explosive issue that the government has been forced to initiate a national "Employ-the-Vet" campaign. Two recent "job fairs" in New York and Chicago were attended by thousands of vets. In New York several veterans were arrested after demanding that a list of the jobs actually available be posted for all to see.

The one in Chicago was nearly wrecked by the vets themselves when they learned that the corporations had very few jobs to offer in the first place. Only menial work was available, and unrealistic qualifications were demanded for most jobs. These companies were clearly only going through the motions for public relations purposes.

VOLUNTEER ARMY?

Faced with the refusal of the draftee army to fight in Vietnam (see UFP's pamphlet GI Revolts) and the active political role many Vietnam veterans have played at home, the military and business establishments have been forced to make some changes. Their plans call for the creation of a "Volunteer Army" by the mid-1970s, a "professional," economically-motivated army.

The Army will take GI's who were forced to join up out of economic necessity and try to tear them away from their people and their class. They will be pressured to identify totally with the "New Action Army."

An organizer for the American Servicemen's Union commented: "The only qualifications needed to fight for these corporations in Vietnam was a trigger finger. Now that these men have made it back alive, they find themselves in the front lines again--the front of the unemployment and welfare lines."

According to the ASU again, the mili-

Inflation and taxes are skyrocketing, while workers' wages are tightly regulated under Nixon's "New Economic Policy." Unemployment is far higher than the government's official figures of 6 percent, especially for Black, LaRaza, Asian, and women workers.

After each round of layoffs, after each new runaway shop to the South or other countries, the employers call for "higher labor productivity." In other words, speed-up to fatten corporate profits.

To round out this "package," the corporations and government are pushing a whole basket full of bills to take away workers' right to strike. These range from the "Crippling Strike Prevention Act" of 1971--which would impose compulsory arbitration on longshoremen, teamsters, and other transport workers--to laws taking away the United Farmworkers' Union right to strike and to wage boycott campaigns.

Faced with these conditions, workers across the country have more and more turned to strikes, demonstrations, and rank-and-file caucuses to defend themselves. Thousands of autoworkers at GM's Norwood and Lordstown, Ohio assembly plants hit the bricks during 1972 to stop the increasing speedup on the lines. In the fall of '71, 80,000 Mine Workers ignored the Pay Board's 5.5 percent "guidelines" and stayed out on strike until they got a 17 percent wage increase.

In August 1972, 500 Chicano furniture workers in Los Angeles held a one-day political strike, demanding the California AFL-CIO fight to abolish the Pay Board. And throughout many basic industries such as auto and steel, Black workers have led the way in organizing caucuses, demanding improved working conditions and an end to racist practices.

* * *

With the overall picture looking the way it does, the use of troops in the 1970 Postal Strike may not be just a throwback to an earlier period, but an example of things to come. However, workers in the 1970s will face a foe much more sophisticated than in times past.

The techniques the U.S. military has developed to put down popular revolts and national liberation struggles in Vietnam and other countries have already been adapted for use here. Domestic counterinsurgency weapons--ranging from tear gas to tanks--were used on the Black communities of Watts, Harlem, Detroit, and Newark during the summers of 1964 through 1967.

The 82nd Airborne Division stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina is on permanent call for "riot" duty. For instance, the 82nd was deployed in Washington, D.C. during the massive antiwar demonstrations after the 1970 invasion of Cambodia.

SOLDIERS IN THE 1970s

Between Wall Street bankers and the Pentagon brass there is a merging at

Seattle 1877: Federal troops confront railroad strikers

tary, local authorities were able to restore their control. The cost was high on human lives, but the established government, knocked off balance, had reasserted itself. By August all pockets of resistance had been cleared out.

In the wake of the insurrection, authorities had a new appreciation of the workers. They recruited larger numbers for the military, built fortress-like armories in the middle of large cities, and developed a service of secret detectives to spy on the activities of labor unions.

In the wake of the Railroad Strike of 1877 armories were built and troops were given special riot training. These are scenes from Chicago.

Many men lost their jobs as a result of that summer's strike; the railroads blacklisted anyone who had struck, and others were sent to jail. Whole families

migrated to places where chances for a new life seemed better.

During the next two decades the bitter struggles of the workers continued. In 1885, General Sherman, then head of the army, predicted that "There will soon come an armed contest between capital and labor. They will oppose each other not with words and arguments and ballots, but with shot and shell, gunpowder and cannon. The better classes are tired of the insane howlings of the lower strata, and they mean to stop them." (2)

HOMESTEAD--1892

When the iron and steelworkers' union began contract negotiations with the Carnegie Steel Corporation in February, 1892, nobody outside the union expected much trouble.

Andrew Carnegie himself seemed to favor trade unions in the steel industry. Three years earlier he had permitted his managers to negotiate a contract with the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steelworkers, an organization which grew to be the strongest union in the country. It seemed that Carnegie had first recognized the union in order to fix labor costs in the industry and gain competitive advantage over rivals by virtue of his superior location in Pittsburgh, and by other means. But now that the company had nothing to fear from its puny rivals, it no longer needed the union.

In 1892, Carnegie turned over management of the company to a known union-hater named Henry Frick and went to play with his castle in Scotland. In the first conference with the union, Frick announced that the workers would have to take a cut in wages.

By 1892 Carnegie Steel Corporation (now called United States Steel) controlled most of the market and was able to set prices for the entire industry. Its center of operations was Pittsburgh, where twelve of its plants were located. The Homestead works was a few miles east of Pittsburgh, on the bank of the Monongahela River. Here the heaviest products of heavy industry were made: boiler plate, armor for warships, structural iron and steel beams. Common labor was paid as little as 14 cents an hour. Skilled wage rates were based on the market value of the company's standard Bessemer plates.

In negotiations Frick would not budge, but he was active on other fronts as the conferences dragged on from winter to spring to summer. Around the plant he erected a fence fifteen feet high and topped with barbed wire. This three-mile-long fence had holes cut into it at regular intervals. Platforms with searchlights were set up behind the fences.

SOLDIERS AND STRIKERS IN THE 1970s

Jay Gould, the robber baron who made his fortune dealing in railroads, once said: "I can hire one half of the working class to kill the other half." But Gould didn't have to dip into his own bank account.

The long history of the labor movement shows that U.S. troops and police have always been used on the side of the employers. The Rockefellers, Fords, DuPonts, and Melons have had the armed forces at their beck and call whenever organized workers threatened the employers' power and pocketbooks.

The living standards of the working class are now facing the most sustained assault since the end of World War II. U.S. business is in hot water--bogged down in costly, unpopular conflicts in Asia on one front, and facing stronger foreign capitalist competition on the other.

As they did in the Depression of the 1870s and 1930s, the big industrialists and bankers are trying to unload the burden of their economic mess on the backs of working and poor people.

500 Chicano workers demonstrated against the Pay Board--Los Angeles, 1972.

Then the President went on a national television hookup and struck a law-and-order stance: "What is at issue," he said, "is the survival of a government based upon law." A national emergency existed by his own proclamation and, by further proclamation, certain National Guard and Reserve units of all services were mustered for duty in New York. "New York City is where the current illegal stoppages began. It is where the mail has been halted the longest." He might also have added that New York was the center of most of the resistance, also.

By nightfall, busses and truck loads of troops began arriving in the city from Fort Dix and McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey, and other locations. There was some grumbling among the soldiers about strikebreaking, but mostly there was indifference. The biggest concern was over possible violence, because they were unarmed.

"You've heard of the Boston massacre and the My Lai massacre," a 22-year-old soldier told a reporter as he bedded down at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, "tomorrow you're going to see the New York mail massacre. It's going to be a farce. I'm a medic. I don't know a thing about the Post Office Department. Nobody knows what they're supposed to do."

The Pentagon called it Operation Graphic Hand. What it came down to for the soldier was to sort each letter on the first three digits of the zip code. There were reports of sabotage, that some soldiers were deliberately tossing letters into the wrong slots, but this was never confirmed. The striking postal employees, many of them ex-servicemen, were not especially hostile to the troops, who were thought of as conscripted labor rather than willing strikebreakers.

But Washington's action did have its designed effect. Ever since the President's announcement morale among the strikers had been slipping fast. Though the workers in New York put up a brave front at first, there was the threat of still more troops and reports that strikers in other cities were returning to the job. Only a small proportion of the total volume of backed-up mail was moving, but every official was acting as if the strike were over.

By Wednesday, the strike everywhere had crumbled, though pockets of resistance continued in New York for the rest of the week. The last troops were withdrawn from the city on Monday, March 30.

Pinkerton guards in Homestead, PA, 1892

The workmen began to call the place "Fort Frick." The old contract hadn't even expired when Frick secretly contacted the Pinkerton Detective Agency for a supply of 300 armed men. (Pinkerton was a company formed in the late 1870's to provide an armed force exclusively loyal to employers.) Then he just padlocked the plant and sat tight.

A strike was coming anyway, so the union was prepared. It took control of the town of Homestead and threw up a guard all around the plant. Men were assigned to control the approaches to the town and report to the strike committee. A signal system was worked out, including rockets in the night, so that a thousand men could be gathered at any spot in five minutes. If Frick was going to try to open the plant again with strikebreakers, the workers were going to prevent it.

Meanwhile, the para-military force hired from Pinkerton at $5 per man per day was getting ready. As directed by Frick they gathered on the morning of July 5 at Ashtabula, Ohio, where a special train took them to Youngstown. From there they were to proceed at night up the Ohio River by barges, landing at Homestead before dawn.

A workers' patrol discovered the barges moving up the river at 4 a.m. and the alarm was sounded. Armed men, along with women and children, rushed to the river bank. The rented steamers unhooked the barges and fled, leaving the Pinkertons stranded. The battle lasted until five that afternoon, when Frick's hired gunmen surrendered. Seven workers and five of the Pinkertons were killed. The captured strike breakers were escorted out of town, and for a time it seemed as if the workers had won. The next day they re-

paired the damage done to company property and continued to stand guard.

On July 10 Frick sent a telegram to Governor Pattison in Harrisburg. Rumors spread that the state militia would be sent. The mayor of Homestead dispatched his own telegram to the Governor saying that the people were orderly and keeping the peace, that there was no need for troops. A special committee from Homestead went to Harrisburg and pointed out to the Governor that the steelworkers had only resisted an armed invasion of the town by hired guns and were prepared at any time to obey lawful authorities.

The contents of Frick's telegram have never been made public, but shortly after receiving it the Governor ordered Major General Snowden to assemble the militia and move on Homestead. A total of 8,000 troops were used against a town with a population of 10,000. Homestead's inhabitants, almost all workers, were dismayed and at first didn't know how to react. Finally they decided to welcome the troops as fellow workers, and prepared a reception complete with two brass bands and a speech by the mayor. But General Snowden kept his movements secret and took the town by surprise. On the 12th of July his force suddenly appeared and camped on hills overlooking the town. The officers turned up their noses at the striker's reception, and the General brushed off a friendly visit from a Union delegation. Snowden's opinion was that the town was now under military authority, and that spoke for itself.

"All attempts by the homestead people to approach the troops as friends were suppressed by the officers. Sentries were stationed, and no civilians were permitted through the lines. Because of this unsympathetic attitude, the cooks and servant girls declined to wait any longer upon the military command, which was quartered at a club house called the Frick Hotel; and the camp commissary had to be summoned to serve the officers." (3)

There were sympathy strikes in other Carnegie plants around Pittsburgh, but nothing much could be done. The militia was too large a force to be handled as easily as the Pinkertons.

Then the worst possible thing happened. On July 22 the company began to bring in small groups of strikebreakers, and production was gradually resumed under the comfortable protection of the state militia. That was it. Men stood outside the big plant and watched it come to life again without them. Their jobs were gone.

Officially, the strike continued until winter, but all had been lost in those few days in July. Old steelworkers gradually drifted out of Homestead to other places. The last units of the militia left in the winter, too, replaced by deputies. The union was wrecked; there was not another union in the steel industry until the 1930s.

By Wednesday night it was clear the strike was going to be a big one. Members of the Manhattan and Bronx Postal Union, representing25,000 clerks and handlers, held a stormy meeting in the Statler Hilton Hotel and demanded that their officials call a sympathy strike with the carriers. Amid shouts of "Strike! Strike! Strike!" union members took over the speaker's platform and forced the local's president to flee through the kitchen.

Most mail in New York City had come to a standstill earlier in the day, and the government put an embargo on letters and packages destined for the financial capital. Officials of the Stock Exchange, banks, insurance companies and department stores publicly wrung their hands over what a long strike would mean.

According to the United States Code, each striking worker could be fined up to a thousand dollars or sent to prison up to one year, or both, but it was not clear at this time how hard a line the government was going to take against the strike.

Over Wednesday night and into Thursday other cities began walking out, first in the suburbs of New York, then Akron, Ohio, St. Paul, Minnesota, Buffalo, Philadelphia, New Haven and others. It was a ragged action, not well coordinated or nationally led because the unions' top officers didn't want it. Three hundred local officials were summoned to union headquarters in Washington to attempt to get things back under control. They met privately on Thursday and on Friday negotiated a deal with the government: Union leaders would urge the men to go back to work armed with a promise from the government to take up their grievances "shortly." The rank and file met this with a chorus of boos, and promptly Chicago, Denver, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and every other major city outside the South walked out, too.

Saturday had the air of a crisis about it. Story after story filled the media about what hardship, real and imagined, the strike was causing. In Washington, there were some unusual Saturday comings and goings reported at the Pentagon involving the National Guard commander. When on the same day the President said, "On Monday, I will meet my obligation to see to it that the mails go through," rumors that troops would be used seemed confirmed.

By Sunday it was obvious the national union officials could not get the men back. James Rademacher, national president of the Letter Carriers, asked the Post Office Department to investigate his contention that radical agitators from SDS had infiltrated the union. Though this remark made headlines it did not strike a responsive chord in the rank and file, who continued to blast Rademacher from the steps of the General Post Office in New York City, and within range of TV network microphones.

Monday the strike reached full steam, with 300,000 estimated participants.

contribute to political campaigns. It abolished the closed shop (where all workers had to be in the union) ... It authorized employer interference in attempts of employees to join a trade union. It prohibited secondary boycotts. It authorized and encouraged the passage of state anti-union, "right to work" laws.

POSTAL STRIKE--1970

When the postal workers went on strike in 1970 they violated Taft-Hartley, which outlawed strikes by Federal employees.

It was the first postal strike in the history of the United States, and there was an air of insubordination about it. Not only was the law against it, but so was the opinion of most of the unions' national leadership. Nevertheless, the first picket line appeared shortly after midnight Tuesday morning, March 17, on the 45th Street side of the Grand Central Post Office in New York City.

The nation's 600,000 postal workers were divided into seven different unions, and Branch 36 of the Letter Carriers, which set up the first picket line, was one of the more militant locals among a group of unions not especially militant. The postal employees had been bargaining with the government since September, 1969, and now came word that the Nixon Administration wanted to postpone a pay raise another half-year, and make it conditional on Congressional approval of a semi-private postal corporation. The starting salary for a carrier was $6,100 a year and after 21 years of service rose to only $8,442. It was no wonder, said the union, that 7 percent of the postal workers in New York City were on welfare.

THE PULLMAN STRIKE--1894

The rest of the decade was no less grim for the workingman. For people with even small fortunes, or professionals earning a modest salary, life could be made comfortable with one or two servants because labor was so cheap, and these genteel folk passed easily through the decade historians later called the Gay Nineties. On the "wrong" side of the tracks, in the stinking city tenement districts, in the sweatshops of the garment industry, and in Chicago slaughterhouses, life was still one of backbreaking labor.

In 1892, almost the same time the militia was entering Homestead, President Harrison sent federal troops to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, to break the strike of the Western Federation of Miners. Now, in '94, there was another business depression, and a march of the unemployed on Washington--Coxey's Army as it was called--was turned back at the Capitol grounds by mounted police. That was in May.

Coxey's Army had almost been a lark, a springtime frolic, compared to events that followed a month later in Chicago and in the rest of the nation.

In the suburbs of Chicago was located Pullman town, a complete company town where George Pullman's famous railroad Palace Cars were made. Most of the company's revenue came from renting these cars under contract to the railroads. But in 1894 business was bad and orders for new cars from the roads were sparse. Pullman decided to cut wages thirty to forty percent and wait for better times. He did not, however, lower the rents on the company-owned houses in which his workers lived.

Pullman town had a population of 5,000 and was supposed to be a "model" company town. Workers paid rent to the Pullman Company for their shelter, their children went to the company school, on Sunday worshipped at the company church, and for entertainment went to the company theater. Liquor, unions and the eight-hour day were bad for George Pullman, so these were banned from his little city.

In spite of this, organizers for the American Railway Union had slipped into the town and signed up the workers.

Then the wage cuts were announced. According to T. H. Wicks, second vice-president of the company, in later testimony before the U.S. Strike Commission, typical wages for female employees before the wage cut were these: carpet, upholstery and linen department, 12.75 cents per hour; glass embossing department, 11 cents; laundry department, 11.5 cents. Men working in the company's boiler room as firemen 428 hours a month earned 50 dollars. Wicks said these low wages were offset by lower rents charged for Pullman's

houses, but other testimony contradicted this.

"We struck because we were without hope. We joined the American Railway Union because it gave us a glimmer of hope.... We will make you proud of us brothers, if you will give us the hand we need. Help us make our country better and more wholesome.... Teach arrogant grinders of the face of the poor that there is still a God in Israel, and if need be a Jehovah--a God of battles...."

The American Railway Union was holding its annual convention in Chicago when the wage cuts were announced, and a special delegation of Pullman employees went to appeal for the unionists' help.

They made an emotional plea that the railroad workers could not ignore. A delegate from the floor proposed that the A.R.U. immediately boycott the handling of Pullman's cars over the roads. Gene Debs, leader of the A.R.U., first wanted to send a union delegation to speak to Pullman, but this delegation was turned away by the company without being allowed to state its case. The A.R.U. was a young union which had taken Debs years to organize. Even though his men had just won recognition in a peaceful strike on the Great Northern, he felt the organization was too fragile to take on all the railroads in the country simultaneously. Then, too, the A.R.U. was an industrial union, which meant that any railroad worker in the country (except blacks) could join. This put it in direct conflict with the older, more exclusive Railroad Brotherhoods, which divided the men by crafts and frequently scabbed on one another during strikes. The craft unions were despised by many railroad workers.

The constitutional exclusion of blacks was a measure Debs fought against and almost defeated. Later he remarked that this discrimination had been a factor in the defeat of the A.R.U. and that many of the individuals who had led the fight against blacks later turned out to be company spies and hired agents.

Regardless of the drawbacks, the A.R.U. rank and file pressed for action, and not only for the sake of the Pullman workers. They themselves had been suffering from wage cuts, short hours and blacklists. On June 26, Debs ordered a boycott on all Western roads (where the A.R.U. was strongest), the Pullman cars to be cut out of regular trains and sidetracked. Within a matter of days almost 125,000 men joined the boycott, and traffic was at a standstill on all roads west of Chicago. Even Debs was surprised at the impact of the A.R.U.'s boycott order, and events from this point on were largely out of his hands as the strike assumed national proportions.

The issue at Pullman became only a minor sidelight in the struggle. The railroads put up a united front in the form of the General Managers Association, a group that represented the combined

Based on industrial workers in auto, steel, electrical, mining and longshore, the CIO grew from 1,000,000 members in 1936 to over 4,000,000 in 1940. The organized power of these workers and their new, militant unions forced the Roosevelt administration and much of Wall Street to recognize their unions for the first time in U.S. history.

During the Second World War organized labor rallied behind the effort to defeat fascism. It pledged itself to a "no strike" policy and voluntarily abandoned double pay for Sunday and holiday work, even though the war economy soon produced a 29 percent increase in the cost of living. In 1943 Congress limited union wage increases to 15 percent. Some small, short-lived local strikes broke out as a result, and the press treated them with extreme hostility. One large strike did take place, however. The United Mine Workers called a halt to work in April, 1943 under the leadership of John L. Lewis, who felt that Congressional wage controls required the working man to make sacrifices of a type not required of the businessman. The Federal Government seized the mines, and Lewis was forced to bargain a partial victory with the Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes. (17)

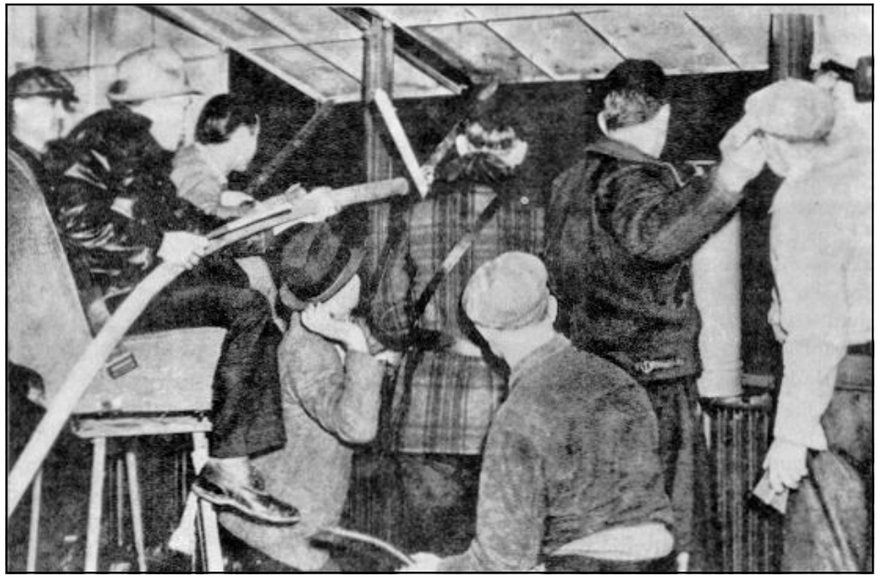
LABOR'S POST-WAR STRUGGLES

The specter of the military on the labor scene appeared again after 1945, when labor initiated a large number of strikes to regain the purchasing power lost during the war.

In 1946, during a national railroad strike, President Truman seized the affected lines. He went before Congress to ask for emergency powers to break strikes in any industry controlled by the Government. These powers included a provision to draft strikers into the Army and then put them back to work, and imprisonment of union officers. The rail strike was settled minutes before the President delivered his message, but the House passed the measure anyway. As the strike's effects faded, so did support for the bill, and it was allowed to die.

Repressive labor legislation did pass the Congress, however, in the form of the infamous Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. Although passed by Congress, this act was drawn up by the National Association of Manufacturers. It was business' gun to take back what labor had won in the past 30 years. Its intent was to cripple the growing power of working people and their unions.

Provisions of the Taft Hartley Act reinstituted injunctions, gave courts the power to fine for alleged violations. It established a sixty day cooling off period in which strikes could not be declared. It outlawed mass picketing ... denied trade unions the right to



Sit-down strikers in Flint, Michigan: Sit-downers aid pickets outside in a battle with police, by pelting the troopers with water and door hinges.

matter of weeks or days. The impossible was achieved daily. Of a sudden, or so it seemed, labor could not lose." (16)

Strikes, slow-downs, sabotage, and mass picketing were daily events as the CIO swept the country like a summer storm. Then a new tactic, the sit-down was used with success by the rubber workers of Akron, Ohio in January, 1936. But it was not until almost a year later, when national attention was focused on Flint, Michigan, that the sit-down strike became a fine-edged weapon in the hands of the United Automobile Workers. The National Guard was called out in this strike, too, but although there were Several pitched battles between strikers and troops, a Governor sympathetic to the workers held the troops In check. After occupying the plants for forty-five days the workers won recognition for their union from General Motors.

It was one of the first big breakthroughs in big industry. The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers swept through the General Electric, Westinghouse and Philco plants signing up workers for the CIO. In the summer of 1936 the UE won a hard-fought strike at the RCA plant in Camden, New Jersey. National Guard troops were used in 1938 against the UE employees in the Maytag plant at Newton, Iowa, where a ten percent wage cut was being resisted.

interests of the 24 lines that terminated or centered on Chicago. It put its combined capital of $818 million on the line to break the A.R.U.

The tactics employed by the Managers Association were designed to provoke an open conflict. The railroads deliberately disrupted their schedules in order to inconvenience the public, and attached Pullmans to trains that normally did not carry them--freights, commuters, and mail trains. The mail trains were especially important, because disruption of the mails was the pretext used to get the Federal Government to intervene. Debs had specifically ordered that mail trains were to be let alone to avoid this trap.

Troops were used for the first time on June 30 when the Illinois Central claimed its property at Cairo was in danger. Governor Altgeld sent three companies of the state's militia to the scene for protection. But the General Managers Association deeply distrusted the Governor, whom they considered too pro-labor. They worked closely instead with the Attorney-General of the United States, Richard Olney, who had been a railroad attorney and was still, while in office, on the board of the Burlington, one of the railroads involved in the dispute.

Olney immediately launched a series of maneuvers to get the Federal Government involved. He wired officials in Chicago to obtain a sweeping injunction in the Federal Courts. Olney instructed that the injunction was to be based on the premise that private railroads were in reality highways of interstate commerce and that any attempt to block them and slow the mails could be dealt with by the Federal Government as interference with interstate commerce.

The legal grounds were weak, but two Federal judges issued the writ after they and the District Attorney and a railroad lawyer conferred privately on its wording. On July 2 these same officials sent a highly misleading telegram to Olney to the effect that the court order was being widely flouted and that only the United States Army could get the mail through. At the same time the federal marshal in Chicago added 2,600 special deputies to his staff, armed and paid for by the railroads, a force which even the Chicago police later described as "thugs, thieves, and ex-convicts," who were responsible for much of the violence that occurred.

The President ordered the entire garrison at Fort Sheridan to Chicago, some 10,000 men, and they arrived in the city early on July 4th. Units of infantry, cavalry, and field artillery camped along the lakefront, and their commander, General Nelson Miles, made his headquarters in the Pullman building at Michigan Avenue and Adams Street.

Governor Altgeld protested the action in a sharply worded telegram to the President, which included the blunt statement: "Waiving all questions of courtesy, I will say that the State of Illi-

Federal troops at Pullman, 1894

nois is not only able to take care of itself, but stands ready today to furnish the Federal Government any assistance it may need elsewhere." Troops were also sent to Kansas, Colorado, Texas and Oregon, and their governors made similar protests.

The militia had been put under arms in twenty states, but Federal troops were used wherever the strike was the strongest. In a few western states the militia had refused to act against the strikers, but this was not true in Chicago.

Olney and Cleveland were convinced their course was right and would not budge an inch. "We have been brought to the ragged edge of anarchy," Olney told reporters in Washington, "and it is time to see whether the law is sufficiently strong to prevent this condition of affairs. If not, the sooner we know it the better, that it may be changed." Cleveland privately told a friend: "If it takes every dollar in the treasury and every soldier in the United States Army to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that postal card shall be delivered." (4)

Now there was no way out of defeat. Debs tried to get Samuel Gompers, the conservative leader of the A.F.L., to call a general strike in Chicago, but Gompers refused.

On July 17 Debs and others were arrested for violating the injunction.

The A.R.U. was effectively crippled, and industrial unionism never again seriously threatened the railroads.

It had been the intention of the General Managers Association from the start to break the A.R.U., and the obstruction of the mails was only a pretext to secure the cooperation of the United States Government. The role played by the Army was confirmed by General Miles at a banquet given in appreciation of his services: "I have broken the back of this strike," he said.

Even though the papers had cried about the mails and free trade and anarchy, they could not cover up the fact that a labor dispute was at the heart of the matter.

As in the aftermath of the great railroad strike of 1877, preparations for the future were taken. The regular Army was raised to 50,000 men, and more armories built in Chicago and elsewhere. Military journals printed articles on riot-duty tactics and troops were given special training.

Maryland hillside.

Joe Angelo, a marcher from Camden, New Jersey, watched Patton and his cavalry clear out the camp. Fourteen years before, in France, Angelo had saved Patton's life during a night patrol into No-Man's Land.

Many were wounded in the Anacostia operation, but the one fatality was an eleven-week-old infant, Bernard Meyers, who turned blue and died of tear gas poisoning in a Washington hospital.

"The mob was a bad-looking one," MacArthur told the press later. "It was marked by the signs of revolution." A reporter said he had seen a cavalryman use his saber to slash a veteran's ear. "You don't slash with a saber," the General said, "you lunge." Then he demonstrated the proper form. (15)

"A challenge to the authority of the United States has been met swiftly and firmly," said the President. "After months of patient indulgence, the government met overt lawlessness as it always must be met."

ACTION--REACTION

In the 1930's the labor movement in the United States made spectacular gains, advancing during a depression decade, when labor was cheap and plentiful, and working people felt even more the need to organize to survive. Not since 1910 and before had collective action of the workers been so persistent and widespread.

Though many of the nation's mines and railroads had been organized for years, and though much craft work was done under contract, most industrial production, especially in the giant basic industries of steel, auto, and rubber, was still on the so-called "American Plan," that is, not unionized. This was in part due to the single-minded life-long policy of the bureaucrats within the American Federation of Labor who stubbornly clung to "trade unionism, pure and simple," confining themselves to organizing only the better-paid craft workers. The rest, the, unskilled blanket stiffs and mill hands, were ignored.

Many, including Socialists and Communists, within the AFL agitated to include these workers within the ranks of organized labor, eventually forming, in late 1935, the independent CIO (Committee for Industrial Organization, later called the Congress of Industrial Organizations). One labor historian wrote of this event: "It was as if the entire history of the American labor movement had been only a mere introduction to the great crusade that was the CIO.... It was a revolutionary, apocalyptic time. What generations had battled in vain to accomplish was accomplished now in a

On orders from president Hoover, MacArthur's and Eisenhower's troops gassed and shot the veterans at the Battle of Anacostia Flats and burned their shacks to the ground.

der to mob pressure and it defeated the bill to give the bonus. Congress adjourned and its members scattered for home. The veterans received the news on the Capitol steps and sang "America."

The next day, July 18, two ex-soldiers were killed when police attempted to clear the buildings at Third and Pennsylvania. The word was spread to Anacostia and the veterans there prepared to make a stand.

Hoover called the Army to clear the veterans out of the city. General Douglas MacArthur took command of the operation as soon as his uniform arrived from a nearby fort. He was assisted by his aide, Major Dwight Eisenhower. Col. George Patton was in command of the cavalry detachment. MacArthur rode down Pennsylvania Avenue on his white horse, on his way to Anacostia.

At about four in the afternoon the camp was confronted with six troops of cavalry with drawn sabers, six tanks, and a column of infantry with fixed bayonets. The veterans and their families were ordered out within the hour. Then the Army attacked, tossing tear gas, prodding with bayonets, setting fire to the huts. The bonus seekers scattered, coughing and crying, into the

CRIPPLE CREEK--1903

When we look back on this era of labor history it is important to realize that strikers had no legal leg on which to stand. The law did not recognize a body of workingmen on strike as having any rights. A person could not legally be thrown in jail simply for refusing to work, but the law did allow the owner to use every means possible to get production going again, even if it had to be done behind a barricade of government bayonets.

If the state stood behind anything, it stood behind private property and the right of the owner to use it as he pleased. And most "respectable" opinion supported this view. Many officials therefore regarded strikes as a direct blow against legitimate authority, against the state, while they still might recognize the strikers' cause as just.

But the state was also supposed to stand behind the civil rights that all citizens were said to possess, on strike or not. In their zeal to enforce property rights even these rights of citizens were trampled on by the authorities.

In Cripple Creek, Colorado, in 1903, the miners and smelter men went on strike for a minimum wage of $3 for an eight-hour day. Even though there had been no violence, Governor Peabody sent a thousand state militiamen to Cripple Creek and the nearby town of Telluride almost immediately.

General Bell, who was in command of the troops, had been a Rough Rider with Teddy Roosevelt in Cuba and while on the payroll of the state of Colorado, "was also receiving, according to the Boston Transcript and a good many other papers, $3,200 additional a year from the mine owners." (5)

With the approval of the Governor, Bell declared martial law and began to treat the mining district around Cripple Creek like a conquered province. He took a private building for his headquarters, then marched his troops on the city hall, where he informed the Mayor and the Chief of Police that they would obey his orders now or go to jail. Then he forced the resignation of three elected officials who he believed were in sympathy with the strikers. He set up a military stockade and proceeded to lock up every union man he found in the district, 600 in all, and held them for weeks without charges or trial.

In the nearby town of Victor, one newspaper, the Victor Record, had the courage to criticize Bell's action. On orders of the general the paper was closed down and everyone connected with it--the editors, other staff, and printers--went to the stockade. The General's next order was that every gun in the district should be turned in to the military for registration.

When union lawyers went to court to seek habeas corpus for the imprisoned miners, and the judge ordered the prisoners released, the General declared that habeas corpus was suspended in Colorado and marched the prisoners right back to jail.

There is no record that General Bell was ever punished for his actions.

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE

Not all of the state militias were as efficient as those under Bell's command. Just the opposite was true. When a Governor committed his forces he could never be very certain how they would perform. We have seen several instances in which the soldiers went over to the side of the workers.

Moreover, in the first decade of the 1900's there was a lot of pressure from Washington to unify and standardize the militias nationally. The Federal Government felt that these state militias primary purpose should be as a back-up for the regular army, whose overseas activities were increasing. So, by act of Congress in 1916, all the state militias were unified into the National Guard. This move, of course, did away with private companies (units which purchased their own uniforms and equipment and recruited privately.)

These two factors--unreliability and the need to supplement the Army--which led to setting up the National Guard--also created a need for professional statewide police forces to take over the role until now played by the militias, especially in labor-capital disputes.

Military men approved of placing the responsibility of strike duty on a regular police force, professionally trained, and not troubled with working class sympathies that made the militias so ineffective at times. Besides, strike duty was bad for their troops' morale and brought no glory in the eyes of the general population.

"If we are ever going to build up the National Guard to make it a national force, it must be kept free from being pushed into the maelstrom of disputes between capital and labor; and a State Police such as ours is the one and only means to achieve this end. During the twenty years preceding the formation of the State Police, the National Guard of this State was frequently called upon to suppress riotous disturbances in different parts of the State. Since the organization of the State Police this has been entirely avoided excepting upon one recent occasion." (6)

The first state police force in the country was formed in Pennsylvania in 1905. Many people saw the Pennsylvania State Police as a direct replacement for the Old Coal and Iron Police, a disorderly private force paid for by those two

War veterans arriving in Washington for the bonus protest. Sympathetic train crews helped them along the way, sometimes billing the ex-soldiers as "livestock."

sprang up in and around large towns were named for him.

The veterans had a bonus coming to them in 1945 according to an act of Congress passed in 1923. Some ex-soldiers in Portland, Oregon decided that now was as good a time as any to collect it, since the way things were going, there might not be a 1945. They organized themselves pretty strictly and set out under the command of a former sergeant named Walter W. Walters. No one knew this group existed until it reached East St. Louis, Illinois, where the ex-soldiers attempted to commandeer a freight train and were driven off by the National Guard. Reading about it on the front page of their hometown newspapers, veterans all over the country decided it was a good idea to go to Washington and demand the bonus now.

Thousands used any means they could to get to the Capital, and many brought their wives and children. Some came in broken-down jalopies, others hitched or rode "blind baggage" on the trains. Sympathetic folks along the way helped them with food or a night's lodging. The Portland group started in May. By June there were at least 20,000 ex-soldiers, their wives and children in Washington.

Even though the men were careful to avoid all appearances of radicalism, the press and the establishment were not sympathetic. "Respectable" opinion held that this was a revolutionary strike against the government. Such opinion was represented by the National Economy League, a blue-nosed group that informed the Congress the bonus should not be granted.

The first veterans to arrive took shelter in some half-demolished government buildings at Third and Pennsylvania, about a block from the Capitol and very close to where the veterans of 1971 camped to protest the Vietnam war. When this small area filled up, others moved across the Potomac River to Anacostia Flats and there built shelters from whatever material came to hand. By June 15 the population at Anacostia Flats was; about 25,000.

Congress debated whether to grant the bonus. The House gave in and passed the matter to the Senate. There were charges of "Red Terror." The Senate, it was said, would not knuckle un-

Carved in stone are the figures of a miner and his wife, their dead children at their feet. The inscription reads: "Erected by the United Mine Workers of America, to the memory of the men, women, and little children who died in freedom's cause, April 20, 1914."

LABOR STRUGGLES ON MANY FRONTS

Not all working class struggles took the form of strikes. Agitation for social reforms, for free public education, for social security, unemployment compensation, minimum wage, hour, and safety laws, were steps toward greater social justice. Unions encouraged progressive political candidates and issues. The fight to prevent the deportation of radical immigrants and the defense of political prisoners was another important form of struggle. When harder times came, the Unemployed Councils prevented evictions and organized welfare demonstrations. Farmers withheld their products from the market to obtain a fair price and banded together against mortgage agents. The struggle took many different forms.

THE BONUS ARMY MARCH--1932

The veterans' march on Washington in 1932, the heart of the Depression, was one of the most outstanding examples of the new forms of labor struggle.

The period of the so-called Roaring Twenties came to a resounding end in October, 1929, when the stock market crashed. Twenty-six billion dollars in paper value disappeared into thin air. Industrial activity slackened to half what it had been, and millions were put out of work. Others suffered pay cuts or worked only a few days a week. Mortgages were soon foreclosed and homes were lost. Banks failed and savings were wiped out. Farm prices dropped so low that corn was used for fuel rather than food. The disaster was general.

A total of twenty million men were out of work and desperate. Many of these were veterans who had fought for their government in World War I and who now felt that that same government was leaving them in the lurch. Herbert Hoover, a Quaker who had made a reputation feeding European war victims, was President, and he staunchly believed that it would violate the principles of "free enterprise" to use government money to relieve personal suffering. The shanty towns of the destitute that

industries and operating in the state as far back as 1875.

The Pennsylvania State Police soon established a reputation, and between 1906 and 1910 they were used in twelve major labor disputes. In the press they were called "the Constabulary." Some called them the "Black Hussars" because their uniforms were black, and they always appeared on the scene on horseback. The workers called them "Cossacks."

The name seems to have originated with the Russian workers involved in the McKees Rocks strike of 1909. The work force at the Pressed Steel Car Company (owned by United States Steel) was made up almost entirely of immigrants. These workers became confused when the company suddenly switched over to a wage rate based on piecework. Then they became angry when a delegation they sent to seek an explanation from the management was promptly fired. The strike began immediately, in July, and lasted for two months.

State Police were sent to the scene and minor clashes occurred. In one of these a Czech-born worker was killed, and his funeral turned into a mass political demonstration, with graveside eulogies delivered in fourteen languages.

Members of the radical Industrial Workers of the World arrived on the scene to help out. "A week later the conflict reached a new peak of intensity in which eleven people were killed. An added touch of barbarity came when arrested strikers were dragged down the streets behind the troopers' horses. Not surprisingly, the Russian born workers dubbed the police 'Cossacks'--a name that stuck to them afterwards in much IWW propaganda." (7)

After this incident, public opinion in Pittsburgh swung around in favor of the strikers, and the company soon made a favorable settlement.

With the example of Pennsylvania to follow, Massachusetts and other states soon established their own police forces. The establishment of these paramilitary forces did not put an end to the role of the National Guard in labor disputes. What it did, though, was to give governors a more flexible way to respond to labor crises. The state police could be used before a situation met the legal conditions of an insurrection, and the spectacle of forcing men back to work at bayonet point could be avoided. By having on hand this extra force of trained men, the states also avoided the practice of deputizing large numbers of questionable "volunteers," whose behavior, as in the Pullman strike, was sometimes just as much a problem for the authorities as that of the workers.

McKees Rocks, PA, 1909--Stockade and armed guards at Pressed Steel Car Co. plant during strike.

THE LAWRENCE STRIKE--1912

In the Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile strike of 1912, both the state police and the militia were used.

The majority of the strikers were women. These workers were mostly immigrants, with Italians comprising the largest number, but also including Germans, French-Canadians, Poles, Lithuanian, Franco-Belgians, Russians, Greeks, Letts, and Turks. The Irish, who arrived much earlier, were in control of the city government.

Lawrence's population was 86,000, of which 60,000 depended directly on the earnings of the 25,000 employed in the mills. During a week of full employment the average millworker's wage was $8.76. More than half of the children in Lawrence between 14 and 18 years of age worked in the mills.

The textile industry at this time was under the general guidance of a Woolen Trust represented chiefly by the American Woolen Company, which operated four big mills in Lawrence alone. The Woolen Trust had secured protection for itself in the Payne-Aldrich tariff act, which served to keep out lower-priced textiles from abroad. But the Trust was unable to block passage of a law in the Massachusetts legislature which cut the number of hours women and children could work from 56 to 54 hours a week. The mill owners evened things up by making a corresponding reduction in pay.

The strike began when the pay envelopes were distributed at the Everett Mill on Thursday afternoon, January 11, the first payday under the new arrangement.

"Short pay! Short pay!" the women shouted and started streaming out of the mill. It was a small cut--about 30 cents on the average--but as the workers said, that was five loaves of bread, a serious matter if you lived from hand to mouth.

Groups of workers went to other mills and called out their comrades to see if their pay had been cut too. When this was confirmed the workers agreed that the time for a strike was at hand. "Better to starve fighting them than to starve working!" was their cry.

A strike committee representing all the nationalities was set up. The first few days saw the normal kind of mass picketing, but on Monday, when strikers marched down Canal Street to the Atlantic and Pacific mills, police turned fire hoses on them. The workers responded by throwing back pieces of ice and snowballs. Mayor Scanlon's small police force could not handle the situation, and the local militia was called out.

In one of the clashes with the police, a woman striker named Annie Lo Pizzo was killed.

There was no union to fall back on in this strike; no treasury from which payments for food and coal could be made.

not declare martial law, placed the whole strike district under the authority of the militia commander, General Chase.

The troops controlled all movement in the district, and civil liberties were subject to their command. They even allowed the companies imported strike breakers and gunmen to wear National Guard uniforms. The behavior of the troops got worse as time went on. Many robberies, lootings, and holdups were charged to Guardsmen, and later confirmed before hearings held by the Federal Government. (12)

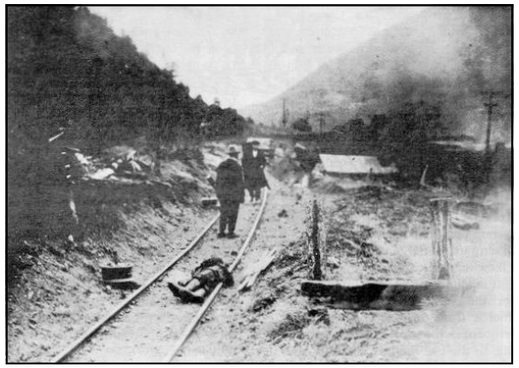
The pent-up tension broke loose on Easter Sunday, April 20, 1914, five months after the strike began. On the morning of the 20th, Major Edward Boughton ordered a detachment of soldiers with a machine gun up onto Water Tank Hill, which overlooked the entire colony. After the militia exploded two dynamite bombs, a battle broke out that lasted twelve hours. Some women and children managed to flee, but others crawled into the holes dug under the tents. The bullets whistled back and forth. This account was taken from later testimony:

"A twelve-year-old boy turned his back to the firing and endeavored to caress his little sister. Suddenly, according to a witness, the top of his head was blown off, and his brains were spattered over all the little children in front of him. His frantic mother rushed out of her tent. 'For God's sake, come and help me,' she screamed, 'I have a dead boy in here.' An affidavit presented to the Commission by Judge Ben Lindsey affirmed that a National Guardsmen retorted, 'It is a damned pity that all you damned red-necked bitches were not killed.'" (13)

The tents caught fire, and the workers' families were trapped in the pits below them. The troops continued to fire. A woman trying to remove her children from a burning tent was shot at. She passed out from the smoke. All three of her children burned to death. The New York Times April 21st edition reported: "The Ludlow Camp is a mass of charred debris and buried beneath is a story of horror unparalleled in the history of industrial warfare. In holes that had been dug for their protection against the rifle fire, the women and children died like rats when the flames swept over them. One pit uncovered this afternoon disclosed the bodies of ten children and two women."

In all, 33 people, half of them women and children, were shot or burned to death. A report by a special military commission that investigated the disaster blamed the troops for spreading the blaze. The same commission disclosed that company "men and soldiers seized and took from the tents whatever appealed to their fancy... clothes, bedding, articles of jewelry, bicycles, tools and utensils." (14)

A monument was later erected by the United Mine Workers of America.



An armed striker stands near the slain body of a fellow miner gunned down by company goons in Forbes, Colo. during the Ludlow Strike.

by each worker. Colorado law guaranteed all these items, but the law was not enforced. In addition, the miners wanted a 10 percent wage increase and recognition of their union, the United Mine Workers of America.

The management was stubborn and would not even meet with the union delegation, claiming that if they did anarchists and socialists would take over the company.

The strike began in September, 1913. Immediately, workers and their families had to move out of their homes, since strikers could not remain on company property. About 10,000 men, women, and children gathered in a tent colony in Ludlow and prepared to pass the winter that way.

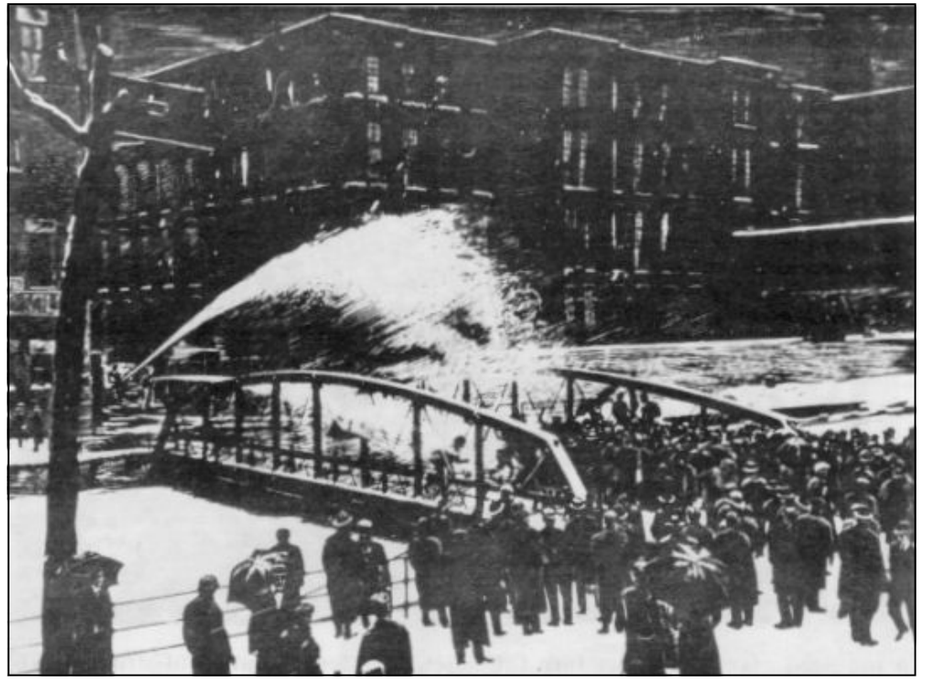
The company deployed its guards in trenches around its property and equipped them with searchlights and machine guns. Detectives hired from the Baldwin-Felts Agency sped around in an armored car which the strikers called the "Death Special." From this vehicle the hired police took pot shots at likely targets. Over the past two years the company had stocked $30,000 worth of arms, and now it put them to use.

The state militia was sent in and quartered on company property, even though no major incidents had occurred.

The miners, many of whom were Italian and Greek immigrants, began to arm themselves. They dug trenches around the colony and holes inside the tents into which women and children could crawl in case of attack.

The troops of the State of Colorado occupied a line 120 miles long through Las Animas and Huerfano counties. They were greeted by the strikers with brass bands and cheers, because Governor Ammons had made it known that the soldiers were not to be used to introduce strikebreakers into the mines. Ludlow, though troubled, remained peaceful so long as the troops did not directly aid the company.

Then there was a sudden turnabout after some quiet political pressure was brought to bear. The Governor announced that in not allowing the soldiers to protect strikebreakers he was going beyond the law because that interfered with production. He withdrew his original orders, and, although he did



In the dead of winter, police turn fire hoses on a demonstration of striking textile workers in Lawrence, Mass., 1912.

There was no welfare system, and groups like the Red Cross and the Salvation Army refused to serve strikers. The workers requested and received the immediate help of the militant I.W.W.

On the 29th of January, the day following the shooting of Anna Lo Pizzo, strict martial law was declared in Lawrence, and the city came under the command of a Colonel Sweetzer. At the request of Mayor Scanlon, 12 companies of infantry, two troops of cavalry, and 50 officers of the Metropolitan Park Police were sent by Governor Foss. There were now twenty-two companies of militia in the city.

Citizens could not form groups, nor stop on the street to talk without being prodded on by the soldiers. The strikers who gathered at the funeral home from which Anna Lo Pizzo was to be buried were scattered by cavalry. The next day a Syrian worker received a fatal bayonet wound.

Despite the soldiers, the spirit of the workers was high. The rivalry between nationalities, which had served to de-

feat strikes in the past, was not present here. From donations collected around the country, the strikers were able to set up their own food stations and distribute small allowances for fuel and clothing. Ray Stannard Baker, writing in *The American Magazine*, said,

"It is the first strike I ever saw which sang. I shall not soon forget the curious lift, the strange sudden fire of the mingled nationalities at the strike meetings when they broke into the universal language of song. And not only at the meetings did they sing, but in the soup houses and in the streets. I saw one group of women strikers who were peeling potatoes at a relief station suddenly break into the swing of the 'Internationale.'"

But it soon proved impossible to care for the feeding of some 50,000 persons adequately. The Italian Socialist Federation proposed to relieve the situation by evacuating the strikers' children and placing them with sympathetic families in New York, Philadelphia, and Barre, Vermont. This was done under the direction of Margaret Sanger.

The first group of children arrived in New York City amid a great deal of newspaper publicity. From that point on the strike received national attention, and a great deal of unfavorable publicity was focused on the authorities in Lawrence. These officials decided no more children would be allowed to leave the city, and Colonel Sweetzer backed them up. The strikers pressed ahead, however, and when a second group of 40 children arrived at the station in Lawrence they found it blocked by 200 policemen. They were separated from their parents by the police, and some clubbing took place. Their mothers were arrested and charged with "neglect" and "improper guardianship."

This outraged public opinion even more, and the city's authorities were forced to back off.

The whole plight of the workers came under examination in a Congressional investigation a year later. The behavior of the militia was criticized. Colonel Sweetzer was quoted as telling his men, "Shoot to kill. We are not looking for peace now." He instructed his men not to salute the Stars and Stripes when carried by the I.W.W. His militiamen, mostly native-born business and professional people, or young bloods out for a bit of excitement, were very like the vigilantes who broke up I.W.W. free speech fights in the West. They were not averse to riding into picket lines on horseback, swinging clubs and lunging with bayonets at the crowds, which often included women and children. Moreover, the attitude of the militia was often recklessly irresponsible, to judge from one of their officers, who recalled: "Our company of militia went down to Lawrence during the first days of the strike. Most of them had to leave Harvard to do it, but they rather enjoyed going down there to have a fling at these people." (8)

But the strikers held. When two of their leaders, Ettor and Giovannitti, were imprisoned, they were promptly replaced by Big Bill Haywood and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (the "Rebel Girl").
The women of Lawrence won that strike. Their banners had said "Give us Bread, and Roses too." There were no roses, but on March 12, ten weeks after it began, the strike was settled on terms favorable to the workers. And it was as Ettor had said: Bayonets could not weave cloth.

THE LUDLOW MASSACRE--1914

The strike's leaders had insisted on a non-violent method of struggle, yet two lives had been lost in Lawrence. Strikers could gingerly avoid the militia's bayonets, but against the fully unleashed fury of the state they felt there was no defense except force.

"In the entire death-ridden history of the struggle between the miners and operators, the Ludlow Massacre will always be remembered as one of the few upheavals in our history when class war broke out in full violence in the United States." (9)

The Rockefeller family owned the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, which held a commanding position over other firms in the state and owned about 300,000 acres of mineral-rich territory concentrated chiefly in two southern counties. It was here that Ludlow was located, in a county that was just a little bigger than the state of Connecticut. "Geographical isolation had allowed the CFI and its associated firms to impose medieval feudalism over some 30,000 workers." (10) The "company town" system prevailed and wages were paid in scrip useful only in company stores. Likewise, the company was the biggest landlord in the area, and the rent for the workers' dwellings was deducted from their pay. Typhoid was frequent in the small towns and camps due to the bad sanitary conditions. In evidence gathered by the United States Commission on Industrial Relations it was established that the company also selected teachers and ministers and censored movies, books and magazines. (11)

The southern part of Colorado had been the scene of bloody labor war for years, and the Ludlow strike was only one phase of a struggle a generation old. The immediate circumstances surrounding the situation in 1913 was a demand by the miners for an eight-hour day, enforcement of safety regulations, removal of armed guards, abolition of company scrip, the right to select their own boarding houses, and the right to elect their own check-weighmen to supervise the weighing of coal produced