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Media portrayals of organized labor: The limits of American liberalism

Puette, William J., Ph.D.

University of Hawai'i, 1989

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MEDIA PORTRAYALS
OF ORGANIZED LABOR:
THE LIMITS OF AMERICAN LIBERALISM

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN AMERICAN STUDIES

December 1989

by

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ABSTRACT

It has long been held by leaders of the labor movement in this country that the media in America have regularly and consistently portrayed unions in a negative light. Yet, in recent years, other critics have complained that the media at the same time project an overall liberal bias in their reporting and portrayal of most political and social issues. This study analyzes the portrayal of labor unions commonly encountered in the movies, on television and in the press in the context of the media's reputed liberal bias. The study further offers a framework for understanding and interpreting typical media treatment of organized labor, including a case study of the extended coverage surrounding a local labor dispute and a review of labor's current efforts to form a viable response to this treatment.

Methodology. In an attempt to achieve a satisfactorily representative sampling of the three most influential of the mass media, this analysis considers both local and national sources as appropriate to each medium. A survey of the portrayal of unions in the movies traces the images of organized labor primarily in Hollywood and major studio films from the thirties to the present. Television images of labor unions are considered in terms of nationally produced dramatic series, national/network news and
local/affiliate news. The analysis of press coverage of unions is focused on local (city) newspapers, with the exception of such syndicated columns and cartoons as are regularly featured in the local press. In each case, where local media are considered, the study uses Honolulu, Hawaii as the sample metropolitan area for its analysis.

Conclusions. Neo-liberalism in the United States, as it is championed by the media, has excluded the promotion of organized labor from its agenda. Media sympathy for the working class in the United States is reserved almost exclusively to the powerless and egregiously victimized. To the extent that organized labor is successful at developing bargaining power in any sector of the work force, it is vilified and attacked.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: LABOR AND THE LIBERAL PRESS

For most of its history the American labor movement has taken adverse media coverage for granted. In 1977 Albert Zack, Director of the AFL-CIO Department of Public Relations, delivered one of the few official complaints of the labor movement in protest of media treatment.¹ His article in the union's national newsletter described the outline of what most unionists had long understood as the prevailing "Press Bias on Labor." Zack's article focused on examples gleaned primarily from recent coverage, though the history of the labor movement is replete with similar examples. In 1922 an article in the International Molders' Journal decried the unsympathetic press treatment of early strikes: "Grasping this fine opportunity for news the big dailies get busy and start to lash the strikers through the blatant columns of their unreliable news sheets for the

inconvenience and suffering they have brought upon the public." Indeed, labor's perception of the treatment it has been accorded over the years by the media is uniformly negative. Labor historians Bok and Dunlop, as well, have noted the pervasiveness with which the communications media have tended to project an unfavorable image of organized labor.

And, though this negative media portrayal has dogged the labor movement nearly since its inception, its effect has not been so grievous until the last few decades as the impact and influence of the media have grown to exceed practically any other source of public opinion. According to John Tebbel's history of the media in America, by the mid 1970s, 95 per cent of American homes had televisions, while only about eleven per cent of the population over twenty-five had graduated from college and better than two-thirds had not completed high school. In earlier times people were likely to form their values and opinions as well as class and party allegiances under the influence of family, neighbor, teacher, preacher and co-worker, but the educational role of such divers influences

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over the past two decades has been increasingly co-opted by
the media. From 1950 to 1988 the number of hours the
average American spends just watching television increased
from four and a half hours daily to seven hours forty-eight
minutes.\(^5\)

It would, of course, be an exaggeration to say that
public opinion is now entirely the product of media images,
yet as V. O Key has shown, "The media may be especially
influential in the formation of opinion ... about
substantive issues and events which are remote from the
experience of people and to the appraisal of which they can
bring no applicable general convictions."\(^6\) With only about
seventeen per cent of the nation's work force unionized,
organized labor is a remote experience to the vast majority
of Americans, while the presence of the media has become an
even more immediate part of our lives. The impact,
therefore, of even a slightly biased portrayal of labor, or
any other component of our national make-up, is more apt to
control the prevailing public opinion.

\(^5\) Richard Gertner, ed., *International Television Almanac*. 33rd

\(^6\) V. O. Key, Jr. *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New
Labor's Public Image

Public opinion has not always been antagonistic to organized labor. In Robert and Helen Merrell Lynds' classic study of a mid-western town at the turn of the century, in the last decades of the nineteenth century the town's lawyer and superintendent of schools happily addressed an open meeting of the Knights of Labor, and Samuel Gompers was dined in the mayor's home, while the local press was "agitating for stricter local enforcement of the weekly pay law." 7 By 1920, though, that attitude had changed with the advent of the town's industrial economy. The Lynds suggest this change of opinion as well as of labor's media treatment was part of a growing class schism affecting Middletown, like much of America at the same time. Craft unionism that limited its reach to tradesmen who were perceived more as local artisans than laborers in America's largely rural nineteenth century economy was not so easily vilified as its twentieth century industrial counterpart.

Even so, according to the Gallup Report, public approval of labor unions in this century since the 30s when Gallup first began to ask about it, has hovered generally between 55 percent and 75 percent with the lowest ebb

reached in 1981. 8 Seymour Martin Lipset observed in his analysis of this record that the approval of unions was high during the New Deal then declined moderately during the War years. Strangely, according to these data, union approval peaked during the supposedly conservative Eisenhower administration. 9 The reason for this, Lipset finds, is that these fluctuations in the Gallup polls tend to follow the confidence of the public in national institutions in general. But he notes another significant pattern that may be even more germane: "What is important about the public's sentiments toward organized labor is that they have moved virtually in tandem with changes in union strength."10 As public approval shifts away from unions, the labor movement falls in size and success in winning representation elections. Lipset also shows, through other polls and surveys, that the decline in union approval can be attributed to a well-defined set of impressions that have emerged and constitute the negative public image of organized labor.

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10 Lipset 52-54.
Coincidentally, roughly the same images emerged in a sampling of high school and community college students in Honolulu that was collected for this study in 1989. When asked to describe their basic impressions of labor unions, students responding to this survey raised the following ten recurrent themes:

- Unions are always going on strike.
- Unions are too powerful.
- Unions are corrupt.
- Unions are greedy/selfish.
- Unions are ruining the country.
- Union leaders (bosses) are over-paid.
- Union dues are too high.
- Unions are not democratic/unAmerican.
- Unions protect bad workers.
- Unions are not needed anymore.

More disturbing yet was the parallel finding from the same survey that basic information about the history, comparable size, and purpose of the American labor movement was inaccurate or unknown (Appendix A). The overwhelming majority of the respondents (70 percent) believed that the United States, as compared to other industrialized countries, had a greater part of its work-force unionized, when, in fact, unionization in the U.S. is comparatively

---

11 Results obtained from seniors and juniors in three different High Schools, 462 respondents; see Appendix A.
low. Similarly, 83 percent of those surveyed estimated a much higher annual average of strike activity than the two-per cent or less that is statistically the case in an average year.

Since only a small percentage of these students had any formal instruction in labor relations, and since their responses correspond so well with Lipset's analysis of public opinion polls, these responses, it may be assumed, reflect the currently accepted image of labor unions common to the general public as communicated through the popular media. And the problem is not only that this public opinion of organized labor is so negative, but that it appears to be premised to such a large extent on incorrect information.

The serious question raised by this study is the extent to which the negative portrayal of organized labor may be considered intentional bias. Given the express ethical purpose of journalists to value accuracy above all else, and given the media's much vaunted ability for broadcasting information far and wide, it is hard to understand how labor's image can be so consistently distorted unintentionally. Indeed, as the following chapters shall reveal, often enough there is evidence of deliberate "union animus" or conscious anti-union sentiment, but, more often,
the negative portrayal appears to be representative of an institutional bias, built into the various media's systems and structures for gathering, producing and disseminating news or entertainment.

Theoretical Context: Liberal or Conservative?

The pattern of the portrayal of organized labor by the American media is related to the larger question of the media's alleged liberal bias. As Robert Cirino noted in his 1971 study of media bias, the allegation of a liberal press bias can be traced to Spiro Agnew's speech in Des Moines, Iowa on November 13, 1969 before the Mid-West Regional Republican Committee. For at least thirty years prior to then, the media had been accustomed to criticism from liberals and progressives for presenting news or censoring it to favor wealthy advertisers and media moguls. In one speech, with no supporting research or documentation, the Vice-President turned the tables on the news media, not only diverting attention from the Nixon Administration's support of the Viet Nam war, but permanently shifting fronts in the growing popular notion of media-bias from a liberal to a conservative perspective. While skillfully avoiding use of

12 Robert Cirino, Don't Blame the People (Los Angeles, California: Diversity Press, 1971) 43.
the label "liberal," Agnew left no doubt as to the target of his tirade:

We do know that to a man these commentators and producers live and work in the geographical and intellectual confines of Washington D.C., the latter of which James Reston terms the most unrepresentative community in the entire United States. Both communities bask in their own provincialism, their own parochialism. 13

A few years later, Joseph Keeley applied Agnew's critique specifically to television in his book, The Left-Leaning Antenna (1971). Pointing particularly to CBS and NBC news specials, Keeley employed the word "liberal" to identify a clearly defined political agenda, directly and deliberately opposed to the Nixon administration.

Statistical support for Agnew's charge was soon sought out by a variety of media critics. Edith Efron found that network coverage of Viet Nam, Civil Rights, and the Humphry-Nixon campaigns was "biased in favor of the liberal, Democratic, left axis of opinion." 14 And, finally, what appeared to be the most damning evidence came a decade later when a team of social scientists at George Washington University surveyed journalists in 1980. 15 The Rothman-

13 The text of Vice-President Agnew's speech was reprinted in the New York Times 14 Nov. 1969: 24.


Lichters surveys, as they are known, revealed that many journalists called themselves liberal and that most voted Democratic in presidential elections. But media analyst, Herbert Gans argued that their analyses and conclusions were more influenced by their own political agenda than the data collected. He describes, for instance, how the Rothman and Lichters' report at one point makes conclusions regarding the correspondence of the surveyed journalists' opinions of a Marxian doctrine despite the fact that the interviews they conducted included no question about Marx's doctrine.\(^{16}\) And must telling of all, is Gans' observation that the entire premise of the Rothman-Lichters study is based on an analysis of the journalists' attitudes as compared to a base line of responses obtained from a similar survey of corporate managers, who were somehow alleged to represent mainstream American values. Nevertheless, in 1986, the initial Rothman-Lichters analysis was expanded and popularized in their book, *The Media Elite*. The original data-base, however, was essentially the same: interviews with about 240 journalists from the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *U.S. News and World Report*, and members of the news departments of ABC, CBS, NBC and PBS. Though the Rothman-Lichters surveys were limited to journalists, conservative

\(^{16}\) Gans 31.
critics wasted no time applying their findings to the rest of the media as well.

More recently, William A. Rusher, publisher of The National Review, has described what he maintains is a pervasive liberal bias that includes all of the "media elite."\(^{17}\) It is interesting to note that one of Rusher's arguments for asserting this bias is his observation that liberals are the one political group that almost never protests unfair treatment of the media. "On the contrary," he writes, "liberals are usually quick to praise the media, deny that the media are biased, and defend the media's claimed prerogatives against all challengers."\(^{18}\)

It is not, however, the purpose of this study to support either side in the ongoing debate over the question of the media's alleged liberal or conservative bias. Rather, it is the intent here to analyze and understand the nature of the media portrayal of organized labor as it can be seen in a cross section of the most influential of the media, including the movies, television, and the press. This portrayal will be considered in the context of the media's reputed liberal bias in order to determine the extent to which the labor movement is or is not a part of

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\(^{18}\) Rusher 88.
"liberal" values and policies. The study further proffers a framework for understanding and interpreting typical media treatment of organized labor, including a case study of the extended coverage surrounding a local labor dispute and a review of labor's current efforts to form a viable response to this treatment.

C. Wright Mills observed, back in 1945, that the so-called liberal left in America was often as unsympathetic to organized labor as were the country's business interests. The opening sentence of his essay on trade union leaders noted:

Leftwing intellectuals and business executives have often thumbed the same dictionaries of abuse trying to find suitable language with which to characterize the trade union leader. 19

Forty-five years later the situation appears to be essentially the same. And Mills's thesis comes closest to the probable underlying cause, power. The "left-wing intellectual" of Mills's description is comfortable enough crusading for the down trodden and aggrieved worker, but he is uncomfortable relating to the working-class union leader and the well paid union worker. There may well be a deep-seated class antipathy at the bottom of this long-standing, intellectual disdain for unions that has colored media portrayal of labor for over fifty years.

This class-antipathy thesis is supported, significantly, by the absence of any references, in either the Rothman-Lichters work or William Rusher's study of supposed liberal bias, to the media's treatment of labor unions or labor leaders. Certainly that glaring absence suggests that the pattern of labor coverage in the media does not support their thesis. On the other hand, Cirino's Don't Blame the People (1971) and Michael Parenti's Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media (1986) both of which find evidence of a conservative media bias, likewise devote entire chapters to the anti-labor images typical of media portrayal in support of their thesis. That no conservative media critic even broaches the subject of the media treatment of labor is a good indication that labor's premise of an overall negative media bias is valid.

Review of the Literature

Previous studies of media portrayal of organized labor are relatively few and tend to be limited to case studies and focused upon one medium at a time. Often the word "media" is used when the intent is actually just news media, or just television or the daily press.

One of the earliest newspaper studies was undertaken by Illinois journalist and professor, B. S. Dickinson. His
doctoral dissertation, The Newspaper and Labor in 1930 provides an interesting historical perspective on pre-Roosevelt coverage. The ten categories of his content analysis are so dated they would be unusable today, but they still document the first record of conflict emphasis and inaccuracy attributable to publishers' viewpoints and reporters' incompetence. Not surprisingly, Dickinson is nevertheless able to discern patterns of coverage that have endured to the present: "The public attitude toward unions," he concludes, "is influenced unfavorably by news of violence, racketeering, and restrictive or craft-conscious unionism ..."20

Fourteen years later, Leila Sussman, a media analyst for the Commission on Freedom of the Press, made a similar content analysis of radio news at the behest of the CIO Political Action Committee (PAC). For seven weeks they monitored more than six hundred broadcasts on the four major networks, and concluded that labor was "nearly always portrayed as] morally wrong." The recurrent themes of labor's public image then were its alleged communist

ideology and politics and its perceived use of coercive tactics. 21

Outside of these short, little-publicized studies, academic or even union interest in the subject remained insufficient to generate further consideration until the 70s. Robert Cirino's *Don't Blame the People* (1971) was a landmark study of news media bias in several respects. Not himself a journalist or media insider, Cirino pointed to an array of issues and subjects ignored or suppressed by journalists with a thoroughness and freshness that was hard to dismiss. In spite of his lack of background or research experience (he taught high school in California), he carefully enumerated a "catalogue of hidden bias" tactics that provides a useful framework for content-analysis studies, and which have guided the consideration of news as well as entertainment media in the following chapters:

Bias in the Source of News
Bias Through Selection of News
Bias Through Omission of News
The Art of Interviewing
Bias Through Placement
Bias Through "Coincidental" Placement
Bias in the Headlines
Bias in Words
Bias in News Images
Bias in Photographic Selection

Bias in Captions
The Use of Editorials to Distort Facts
The Hidden Editorial^2

Cirino devotes his ninth chapter to the news bias against labor. Entitled, "The Boss is Sure to Have His Say," it focuses on the "management bias" of editorials and commentaries. While his attention to coverage of organized labor disputes is diluted somewhat by his primary concern with the ramifications of Viet Nam War coverage, Cirino's study opened the door on media labor coverage and focused attention for the first time on the problems created by the profit structure of the communications system, in which accuracy and variety of perspective are systematically sacrificed to the media's corporate goals.

Most American studies of media portrayal of organized labor have been limited to chapters or pieces of larger analyses. The first dedicated studies of labor's treatment in the media were done in Great Britain by the Glasgow University Media Group. Their study of the historical and social factors behind televised news reports of labor resulted in three books, Bad News (1976), More Bad News (1980), and Really Bad News (1982). Using a series of case studies, the authors demonstrate how British television manipulates the news and displays considerable bias in

---

^2 Cirino 134-179.
^3 Cirino 72-90.
reporting labor news. A series of books came out of the Glasgow research throughout the 80s, almost all of them concentrated on television. Trade Unions and the Media edited by Peter Beharrell and Greg Philo (1977), published some of the expanded case studies of newspaper as well as television reports. John Downing's research emphasized the power of the British media corporations in his The Media Machine (London, 1980), and Martin Harrison's TV News: Whose Bias?: A Casebook Analysis of Strikes, Television and Media Studies (London, 1985) focused particularly on the television coverage of labor disputes. Clearly all these British studies made apparent the research vacuum on the subject which characterized the relative lack of interest in the United States.

In the same year that Beharrell and Philo published their first book on British labor-media relations, David Ignatius, then a Wall Street Journal reporter wrote disparagingly of the press coverage in the United States of a Steelworkers' election. His article confessed his and the rest of the press' blatant promotion of the young, union dissident, Sadlowski, over the "colorless" incumbent, Lloyd McBride, simply because Sadlowski better fit their stereotype of the rabble-rousing labor militant.24 A few months later the AFL-CIO's Albert Zack cited Ignatius in his

paper delivered to a symposium on business and the media at Georgia State University. As noted at the start of this chapter, Zack's paper signaled the beginning of a new labor involvement in media criticism and monitoring.

No doubt influenced by the Glasgow Group studies in Great Britain, the International Association of Machinists undertook a content analysis of television portrayal of labor in the late 70s. Not surprisingly their findings, which involved 1,500 trained workers in 43 states and covered two years of local and national broadcasts, showed a similarly negative impact as reported in the British studies. Though limited to television, their study was the first to incorporate entertainment programing as well as news reports.

The one influential medium that has been given the least attention over the years is cinema. Perhaps for the same reason that entertainment programing on television was ignored until the IAM study, films about labor have not been given serious consideration in the shaping of public opinion about organized labor. As noted earlier, many media analysts and critics over the years seemed to assume that by "media" they meant only news media. One can hardly expect journalistic ethics to govern dramatic writing, but, as black and feminist critics have demonstrated, entertainment media do have social responsibilities not to indulge in discriminatory stereotypes or biased imagery.
The first careful analysis of the portrayal of organized labor in motion pictures can be found in chapter seven of Roffman and Purdy's book *The Hollywood Social Problem Film* (1981). Concentrating on the "golden era" of the Hollywood studio film from 1930 to the mid 50s, Purdy and Roffman provide a detailed historical sketch of Hollywood's image of labor and labor unions. In the same year Ken Margolis, writing in an actors' trade journal, described the negative image of unions seen in the films of the 70s. And in 1982, the two labor historians, Gay and R. H. Zieger, reviewed the three biggest films on labor in the 70s, *F.I.S.T.*, *Blue Collar*, and *Norma Rae*, arriving at much the same conclusion as Margolis.

Fifty years after B. S. Dickinson's dissertation on newspaper coverage of labor, another scholar at the University of Illinois began a study of the relationship between labor and media. Sara Douglas's dissertation, though, was aimed primarily at the public relations efforts employed by unions in response to the mass media portrayals. Her study originally entitled, *Organized Labor and the Mass Media* (1983), was published in 1986 under the title *Labor's New Voice: Unions and the Mass Media*. It focuses on a case study of the confrontation between the J.P. Stevens Company and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union in which the union made extensive use of a media campaign in its effort to organize that company's workers. To some
extent, in fact, the premise of the Douglas study is that labor is responsible for its own poor image when it fails to make such use of the media.

Outside of Douglas's book, which --as noted-- was more about labor's response to media images, there has been no full length study of media portrayal. Vincent Mosco and Janet Wasko, professors of Communications at Temple University, edited the collection of essays, Labor, the Working Class, and the Media published in 1983 as the first volume in the series The Critical Communications Review. With the expressed goal of changing established media perspectives, the Wasko and Mosco volume presents a variety of short studies from a history of unionization in broadcast media to the attitudes of the media toward labor in the Federal Republic of Germany. While each of the essays is interesting in its own right, the volume lacks the unity and cohesion necessary to develop their thesis.

Since 1984 a veritable volley of articles on different media has been released throughout the country. Coinciding with the lowest levels of union membership the country had seen in decades, most of the interest reflects a concern for the role of the media in that demise. Experienced labor reporter, Michael Hoyt, wrote in the Columbia Journalism Review one of the most scathing critiques of news media
coverage of labor. From the NBC Nightly News to the Los Angeles Times, Hoyt revealed the basic ignorance of the press corps in labor relations reporting. He documented a catalogue of errors which are practiced systematically. Another sign of the growing interest and awareness in the topic could be seen later that year in an article by Teamster President Jackie Presser in the April edition of The Ohio Teamster. Following Zack's example and Hoyt's argument, Presser complains of the news media's lack of understanding of the labor movement.

Looking at the cinema, for a change, labor historian, Francis R. Walsh, probes the union-animus prevailing in Hollywood that prevented films like How Green Was My Valley from focusing on the original labor-relations' themes of the screen plays. Sadly, the publication of this startling research in such a low-profile academic journal has severely limited the range of its impact.

Much more influential was Michael Parenti's recent book, Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media (1986). Based largely on a variety of research by other scholars and media monitors, Parenti persuasively argues

25 Michael Hoyt, "Downtime for Labor: Are working people less equal than others -- or is labor just a dead beat?" Columbia Journalism Review March/April (1984): 36-40.

that the popular charge of a liberal bias in the media is actually a smokescreen for a deep-seated and historic conservativism. Chapter 5, "Giving Labor the Business," considers the Machinists 1980 studies of television and an analysis of the news coverage of the 77-78 coal strike by Mine-worker historian, Curtis Seltzer. From these two cases Parenti formulates seven basic "generalizations" typifying media treatment of labor struggles. Echoing the themes developed by almost all of the previous analysts, Parenti's generalizations nonetheless are a valuable synthesis and convenient matrix for future content analysis. Briefly summarized, they are:

1. Portrayal of labor struggles as senseless, avoidable contests created by unions' unwillingness to negotiate in good faith.

2. Focus on company wage "offers" omitting or underplaying reference to takebacks and employee grievances, making the workers appear irrational, greedy and self destructive.

3. No coverage given to management salaries, bonuses or compensation and how they are inconsistent with concessions demanded of the workers.

4. Emphasis on the impact rather than the causes of strikes, laying the blame for the strike totally on the union and detailing the damage the strike does to the economy and the public weal.
5. Failure to consider the harm caused to the workers interests if they were to give up their strike.

6. Union solidarity and mutual support stories are seldom if ever reported.

7. Government (including the courts and the police) is portrayed as a neutral arbiter upholding the public interest when it is rather protecting corporate properties and bodyguarding strike-breakers.\(^{27}\)

While Parenti limited himself to media portrayal of labor disputes, most of his generalizations in fact apply equally as well to reporting of such other union activities as organizing, electioneering, and political action.

As far as academic scholarship is concerned, the recent work of Maureen Williams in Massachusetts and Paul Clark in Pennsylvania is most promising. Williams, a PhD candidate at Amherst is involved in an on-going study of press relations to the labor movement. Her articles, "The House of Labor & The Fourth Estate: Where the Middle Ground Is" (*Labor Center Review*, 1986) and "From Incendiary to Invisible: A Print-News Content Analysis of the Labor Movement." (*Labor Center Review*, 1988), though focused, like

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Parenti, on news media, have updated and expanded the data for that argument.

Similarly, Paul F. Clark, of Pennsylvania State University's Department of Labor Studies, after a review of that state's labor coverage in the news media, produced in 1987 *Changing Labor's Image*, a video instructional program. A forthcoming issue of *The Labor Studies Journal* will carry his article, "Union Image-Building at the Local Level: Labor Education Techniques and Materials," describing the impact of that program on public opinion.

Clearly the basic trend of the research and analysis of the media portrayal of organized labor is weighted on behalf of television news. The advantage of that trend is the continuing accumulation of evidence from across the country substantiating each of the various monitor's studies. The Machinists' study in 1980 was the single broadest collection, covering the majority of the country. No parallel study has been coordinated of newspaper coverage, but the many abbreviated case studies that have been made independently, largely by disenchanted journalists themselves, suggest in their similarity the reasonableness of Parenti's conclusions. But to appreciate the full scope of the media's impact on labor it is crucial that entertainment as well as news media be analyzed in the same contexts.
Analytical Framework

For decades, commercial advertisers have been aware of the essentially non-logical nature of persuasion. Relying on techniques little different from those of the ill-reputed propagandists of the war years, the strategies of "public relations" for the advertiser or the propagandist, when all is stripped away, are essentially the same. Jacques Ellul correctly noted that "Propaganda must be total. The propagandist must utilize all of the technical means at his disposal --the press, radio, TV, movies, posters, meetings, door-to-door canvassing. ... Each usable medium has its own particular way of penetration --specific, but at the same time localized and limited."28 Indeed, any one of the media, confronted with evidence of its bias, will defend itself by comparing similar treatment accorded by the other media. Such diversion may be an effective way to deal with critics, but it only points to the larger, institutional bias at the heart of the problem.

In a recent article weighing the arguments in the on-going debate over the liberal-conservative bias of the national media, Aaron Wildavsky applies Webster's definition of bias: "Systematic error ... encouraging one outcome or

answer over others."  

Avoiding the issue entirely of malicious intent, this study considers the adverse impact of such systematic error in order to establish the existence of bias.

To do justice to the true, systematic scope of the media portrayal of organized labor, this study shall attempt to achieve a satisfactorily representative sampling of the three most influential of the mass media. Both local and national sources as appropriate to each medium shall be considered. Furthermore, this analysis will concentrate on the more subtle forms of bias. As Harold Laski wrote in *The American Democracy*, "The real power of the press comes from its continuous repetition of an attitude reflected in facts which its readers have no chance to check, or by its ability to surround those facts by an environment of suggestion which, often half-consciously, seeps its way into the mind of the reader and forms his premises..."  

Research by Doris Graber in *Processing the News* (1988) substantiates Laski's proposition and identifies "schemata" or stereotypes that become a framework by which the average person is able to arrange and understand the onslaught of contemporary media information.

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Since it is the purpose of this study to reveal and analyze the portrayal of labor unions commonly encountered in American media, the framework for this analysis must include representative samples of both news and entertainment media and shall focus on the most popular, current, and, therefore, influential media.

While the contributions of each of the previous writers and commentators described above will be applied as relevant to this analysis, particular application shall be made of Cirino's thirteen forms of hidden bias and Parenti's seven generalizations of the media's treatment of labor disputes. Taken together, their conclusions form the most viable model for understanding and interpreting typical media treatment of organized labor.

In the next chapter, a survey of the portrayal of unions in the movies traces the images of organized labor primarily in Hollywood and major studio films from the thirties to the present. Chapter three examines television images of labor unions in terms of nationally produced dramatic series, national/network news and local/affiliate news. The analysis of press coverage of unions, in chapter four, is focused on local (city) newspapers, using the two Honolulu dailies, the Honolulu Advertiser and the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, as representatives of average American metropolitan publications whose portrayal may be regarded as indicative. Chapter five will analyze the image of organized
labor most often portrayed in the newspaper syndicated and editorial cartoons. And, as noted above, chapter six will analyze a case study of the extended coverage surrounding a local labor dispute, covered by those Honolulu dailies.

The final two chapters will conclude the study with a consideration of labor's response to its negative media images (Chapter VII) and a return to the questions raised above regarding the relationship between liberalism, neoliberalism and the relative effect of these political/social belief systems in the American media.
CHAPTER II

THE MOVIES: "Labor Framed"

Leland: As long as I can remember, you've talked about giving the people their rights; as if you could make them a present of liberty... as a reward for services rendered.

Kane: Jed

Leland: Remember the working man?

Kane: I'll get drunk too, Jedidiah, if it'll do any good.

Leland: Aw, it won't do any good. Besides, you never get drunk. You used to write an awful lot about the working man. But he's turning into something called organized labor. You're not going to like that one little bit when you find out it means that your working man expects something as his right, not as your gift. When your precious underprivileged really get together... Oh boy! That's going to add up to something bigger than your privilege; then I don't know what you'll do. Sail away to a desert island, probably, and lord it over the monkeys.

These remarks of the character Jedidiah Leland from Citizen Kane (1941), were spoken to the fictitious press mogul, patterned after the real life William Randolph Hearst. They capture the essential principle behind the American media bias against labor unions that has colored the Hollywood depiction of unions since the 30s. So long as
labor represented an underprivileged, generally helpless and
disenfranchised object of pity, the media were glad to take
up its banner. But, as Jed Leland astutely remarks, the
motive was always self-serving and turned around completely
as soon as these same workers' unions were organized enough
to begin exerting the very power the media had advocated.

One aspect of the media portrayal of organized labor
that is rarely considered is the cinema. There are really
two major categories of films about labor that have emerged
in America: the down scale, usually 16mm, educational film
about labor history or union profile; and the Hollywood
entertainment-type, feature-length film.

The former were usually produced by unions or sym­
pathetic agencies to be used as training or public relations
materials and tend to follow the basic documentary style.
Many are of a very high quality, but they do not,
unfortunately, enjoy a wide release. Though such films as
the ILGWU's The Inheritance (1964), Babes and Banners
(1975), Harlan County, U.S.A. (1976), The Wobblies (1979),
Rosie the Riveter (1980) and others present mostly
inspirational accounts of the early history of the American
labor movement, in view of these films' limited availability
to the public at large, they cannot be seriously considered
as "media".

The media are most effective, most convincing, and --
therefore-- most powerful when they reach deepest into the
culture and when they are least obvious. And so it is, when Hollywood is attempting to be its most entertaining and least pedagogic, that it is capable of having the most profound effect on public values and attitudes. In looking at the portrayal of unions in the movies, it is important to distinguish those films that deal most directly or overtly with organized labor as part of their basic plot from those movies which refer only in a peripheral, tangential way to unions.

While the list of movies that deal directly and primarily with labor unions is not particularly extensive, the number of films is legion in which some casual, even flippant, remark reflecting upon unions is made. And, in many respects, the cumulative impact of such peripheral commentary has done much more to mold the public's, particularly the young, movie-going audience's, feelings about the worth and function of labor unions.

The history of organized labor in America actually goes back to the eighteenth century with the emergence of craft unions based loosely on the old European guild system. But the distinctly American trade union, organized to protect workers from the more conventional employer abuses such as unsafe working conditions and sub-standard wages really grew up in the post-bellum period as the country began to industrialize. Yet laws were not passed to recognize workers' rights until Roosevelt's "New Deal" in the 30s.
The very earliest films about labor, though, date back to the open-shop drive in the first decade of the twentieth century. As Philip Foner has discovered, scores of anti-labor films were produced from 1907 to 1911 allegedly with the support of the National Association of Manufacturers.¹ With titles such as Lulu's Anarchists, Gus --The Anarchist, Lazy Bill and the Strikers, The Long Strike, The Riot and Good Boss, these early silent films were blatant anti-union propaganda. They made heroes out of scabs and depicted union leaders as self-serving, foreign agitators who deserted the workers after a strike and cared nothing for the havoc they caused in the lives of the native populace. Not until D. W. Griffith's Intolerance (1916) do we see anything of the spirit of Progressivism in the cinematic treatment of labor unions.

The four plots of Intolerance were each strongly influenced by the growing Progressive Movement, particularly the plot of "The Modern Story," with which the film begins and ends. It is the story of a strike by millworkers, protesting a cut in wages, which the owner of the mill, Jenkins, has made ironically in order to finance his charitable activities. The father of the hero is killed when Jenkins calls on the state militia to break the strike,

and "the Boy," as he is called in the subtitles, is forced into a life of crime when he is unable to find work. The hero and his wife, "the Dear One", are depicted as pitiful victims of the tyranny of the powerful capitalist, Jenkins. And the three other plots of Intolerance provide historical analogies to the Modern Story in the depictions they present of other infamous tyrants who held the same life and death power over their laborers.²

But Griffith's sympathetic portrayal was far from the ordinary treatment accorded labor organizing in the early cinema. A decade later, even Walt Disney would be attacking the Wobbly organizers in his Alice in Cartoonland series. In an animated short entitled Alice's Egg Plant (1925), the character "little Red Henski" is depicted leading a hen strike at Alice's Egg Factory.³ Perfecting the stereotype of the foreign, communist agitator, Disney loaded this caricature with all the sinister images that had emerged since the films of the open-shop drive that had begun twenty years earlier.⁴


⁴ A good review of these early short films from 1910 to 1929 can be found in Ken Margolis's "Silver Screen Tarnishes Unions," Screen Actor 23.1 (Summer 1981): 43-52.
Nor would the movie-makers' image of labor organizers improve much until the Depression and the re-emergence of a long suppressed labor movement. Only after decades of labor strife did the U. S. Congress in 1935 pass the Wagner Act which finally required private sector employers to recognize and bargain with their workers. That year, consequently, with the New Deal securely in place, Hollywood produced a variety of films looking at the plight of the industrial worker. Certainly the most famous and best remembered film was Charlie Chaplin's Modern Times. Originally to be called The Masses, Chaplin's film, featuring the pathetic image of the Tramp being run through the cogs of a gigantic machine, had to be retitled to pass the censors. Not particularly a union film, it does convey a sympathetic attitude toward factory workers. The strike scenes in Modern Times, not unlike those in Intolerance, though they criticize the power of capitalism, portray the hero and heroine as hapless victims unable to control the force of the employer or the direction of the strike. This theme, that the average worker is victimized as much by the strike as by the employers' abuses, was to dominate American films about organized labor into the 1980s.

The first major film to deal directly with labor unions is the 1935 Warner Brothers production of Black Fury. Starring Paul Muni as the immigrant coal miner, Joe Radek, the film describes a sympathetic character caught up in a
hopelessly failed strike. As a reviewer at the time described the plot,

Mr. Muni is the ignorant and jovial Hunky miner, Joe Radek, whose popularity with his comrades causes him to be singled out as the dupe of the strike-breaking gangsters. Joe is an innocent among the wolves. Having lost his girl, he drowns his sorrow in the whiskey bottle. Without understanding the issues involved, he makes a drunken appearance at a union meeting at the psychological moment to cause a split between the conservative and radical factions. During the subsequent strike, Joe's best friend is brutally murdered by the coal and iron police, and the poor fellow suddenly understands the enormity of his sin. The helpless miners are anxious to return to work on the company's terms, which means that they have lost the Shalerville agreement that the union leaders have struggled so hard to win for them. Joe thereupon barricades himself in the mine and conducts a one-man strike, insisting that he will destroy himself and the entire property unless the company restores the agreement. After a protracted siege, during which the police are unable to dislodge him, the operators give in, allowing the miners to go back to work with all the privileges which they enjoyed before the strike.5

Here we begin to see Hollywood's apparent ambivalence toward the labor movement. Just after the film's release, Albert Maltz, author of a play entitled Black Pit about the plight of similar coal miners, bitterly denounced the movie as anti-union propaganda for connecting the workers' drinking to their decision to picket and for showing mine shafts and tunnels that didn't come close to resembling the grimness of

the real thing.⁶ And yet, one could also point to the scene at the end when government officials lay the blame for the incident on the mine owners and the strike-busters they hired, as evidence of the film's pro-union stance. But, in view of Jedidiah Leland's reproach, the truer conclusion would be that the film attempts overtly to be pro-worker while subtly suggesting that the union effort was misguided and futile; in other words "all for the working man, but against organized labor."

The seeming ambivalence of the film toward labor unions, as it turns out, was no accident. As Francis R. Walsh discovered in 1986, the script of the film was drastically revised from the original story written by Pennsylvania Judge M. A. Musmano.⁷ Entitled Black Hell, that script described a plot by mine owners to infiltrate the union, force a strike and use hired goons and scabs to break the union entirely. But, as Walsh revealed, the Musmano script was completed on the eve of the establishment of the Production Code Administration Office under Joseph I. Breen. Acting on a complaint from the National Coal Association, Breen wrote to Hal Wallis at Warner Brothers, who subsequently ordered the rewrite with the specific

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direction, "we should bend over backwards to eliminate anything unfavorable to the coal mining industry." Not only was the resulting script an example of what Cirino called "Bias by Omission," but the Radek "bohunk" characterization is arguably an example of a larger class bias against unskilled blue-collar workers. Commonly, in the media, this class-bias operates in harmony with the anti-union bias, and, in this case, both were being enforced by the Production Code Administration and the studios as well. Unfortunately, this watered-down labor plot would become the stereotype of organized labor movie portrayals for the next twenty years and more.

In what might be considered a spin-off of Black Fury later that year, MGM produced a comedy entitled Riffraff, which tells the story of an arrogant fisherman, played by Spencer Tracy, who celebrates his marriage to the fair Hattie (played by Jean Harlow) by calling his fellow workers out on strike. Like Black Fury, the battle is lost; the hero discredited and forced to save face somehow. And like Black Fury, Riffraff popularizes the notion that Parenti observed: that labor struggles are senseless, avoidable contests generally caused for the personal gratification of

8 Walsh 567; citing Hal Wallis, "inter-office memo," 13 Sep. 1934, University of Southern California, Special Collections (USCSC).
ignorant and incapable union leadership. Riffraff, however, is even more biased than its predecessor, since, as a comedy, it trivializes the workers' plight as well as demeaning it.

A film that comes as close to a pro-union message as was likely to be found at that time is William Wyler's Dead End (1937). Drina, the film's unionist, is portrayed heroically and sympathetically as she demands better wages and a better way of life. But the labor dispute is a secondary plot and Drina's efforts are admired because they reflect her desire to escape the slums into which fate had cruelly consigned her. Not unlike Sam Wood's The Devil and Miss Jones the following year, Dead End shows Hollywood's soft spot for labor organizing undertaken by women and minorities. And, as we shall continue to see into the 1980s, the ordinarily bad portrayal accorded labor is not infrequently offset by a sympathetic depiction of women or egregiously abused minorities generally martyred or overcome by superior force in a doomed attempt to organize themselves. This sympathy is not extended to the efforts of white, blue-collar males nor to impoverished workers as a class, but is meted out selectively to groups which, because they are unrepresentative of the majority, permit us to

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9 Parenti 84-85.
believe that the majority of the work force is not being abused.

By the end of the decade, on the other hand, the dominant motif in the depiction of ordinary labor unions was revealed in Warner Brothers' Racket Busters (1938). Humphrey Bogart plays a mobster infiltrating the trucking and produce industry in New York. Of course it looks at his assault on business as well as labor, but the majority of the story is focused on the take over of the truckers' association. George Brent as the scrappy trucker who is the unofficial leader of the other truckers is much like Muni's Joe Radek and Tracy's fisherman, the charismatic leader who is basically unworthy of trust and unequal to the task.

But Racket Busters goes beyond its predecessors by drawing out the mob connection. While at first the union truckers are portrayed sympathetically as victims of mob terror and intimidation, Brent's "Denny Jordan" gives in soon enough, and the city-wide strike that ensues is totally a manifestation of the mob's plan to compound its extortionate demands upon the innocent denizens of the city. The real hero of the film is the special prosecuting attorney who persuades the courts to force frightened witnesses and suspected mob figures alike to testify or be held in contempt of the Grand Jury.

Proclaiming in the credits its debt to actual court records and testimony taken in rackets' investigations,
Racket Busters is the first film to demonstrate what would become Hollywood's fixation on the theme of union corruption and organized crime. In many ways this film prefigures the films of the 50s and 70s that would likewise assert their fidelity to government investigations or well-known and seamy, though essentially unrepresentative, accounts of labor corruption.

After this initial burst of concern, occasioned by the passage of the Wagner Act, cinematic interest in the labor movement declined. World War II put a stop to all thoughts of social reform for the next decade, though Twentieth Century Fox's Grapes of Wrath hinted at what might have been. In John Ford's epic production of Steinbeck's novel, the attention falls on America's poor farmers and agricultural workers. Treated only as a sub-plot, the labor movement again seems to be portrayed sympathetically. Casy (John Carradine) a former preacher who has lost his faith, becomes a labor organizer, and is murdered for his efforts. But many Americans no doubt perceived his labor activities as a fall from grace, and his murder as a just reward.

In Meet John Doe (1941), the same year as Welles' Citizen Kane, the bias Leland reproached first expresses itself as such. The John Doe Clubs depicted were, in many respects, a loose kind of 'non-labor' union; large, but free of corruption, as they were free of specific leadership or class consciousness. Real unions were, in Capra's view, now
so powerful as to constitute a working part of the system itself. In the film, Mr. Kinnell (played by James Gleason) tells the title character that the country's labor leaders were joining the political bosses to pervert the John Doe Convention and elect an "iron hand" to lead the country.

Indeed, even before the War, it seemed that Hollywood had only two images of the labor leader: the misguided dupe or martyr; and the power-corrupted union boss. The Hollywood concern for social reform did not long consider the labor movement as worthy of representation. In a film adaptation of Wessel Smitter's novel, F.O.B. Detroit, Paramount director William Wellman turned that grim social depiction of the plight of automotive workers into a boisterous romantic comedy. As Bosley Crowther of the New York Times noted in his review, the film Reaching For the Sun (1941) "managed to smear a thick coat of goo over what was originally a harsh and decidedly unsweetened industrial story. All suggestion of Labor conflict has been carefully left out."¹⁰ The attitudes of the workers toward their employers and effect of the numbing assembly line on their lives which gave the novel depth of theme and purpose were deliberately excised.

The development of another 1941 film establishes the intentionality of this bias conclusively. Darryl Zanuck,

the head of Twentieth Century-Fox, after paying a record $300,000 for the film rights to Richard Llewellyn's *How Green Was My Valley*, required a series of five rewrites of that script before he was satisfied that the labor struggles inherent to the original plot had been sufficiently excised. 11

Zanuck complained to his script writers that the mine owners were portrayed as villains and that the "English capitalist class" was being criticized at a time when they were already under attack by the German Nazis. As a result, by the time the final script was approved, all the violent clashes between the strikers and the army had been dropped; the minister's stirring defense of the right to strike had been deleted; and the original suggestion that the two Morgan brothers had been fired because of their union activities had been changed to blame their discharge on a surplus of labor in the coal fields. 12 Virtually all criticism of the mine owners and any approbation of the union organizers had been systematically eliminated.

During the war, of course, attention was focused on victory. Workers were admonished to serve unselfishly and tirelessly (as if they had been particularly selfish and lazy before). And unions, in the main, accepted the new

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11 Walsh 570-573.

12 Walsh 572.
regimentation in the spirit of patriotism. Near the end of the war, MGM released *An American Romance* (1944) directed by King Vidor. Though its primary purpose was to glorify the traditional "boot-strap" myth that an immigrant worker, industrious and ambitious enough, could still reach the top of the economic system, the story actually portrays the auto workers' union as a reasonable development of modern labor management relations. Quite incredibly, however, the union spokesman is the owner's son, played by Horace McNally, and the most extraordinary lengths appear to have been used in order to avoid the actual words "union" and "strike." The last 30 minutes of the film devolve into a thinly veiled government training film plugging the New Deal labor law to both unions and employers so more planes and war supplies could pour off the nation's assembly lines. The ideal of labor and management as one happy family was always the theme wherever labor's rights were portrayed at all.

In the 50s, though, the theme was destined to change. The early part of the decade did see one interesting drama that attempted to describe the problem of automation in labor-management relations. *The Whistle at Eaton Falls* released by Columbia in 1951 pits a young, newly-elected labor leader (played by Lloyd Bridges) in the dilemma of labor-saving machinery versus his fellow workers' jobs. Off-setting the decent and upright figure that Bridges portrays is the antagonistic union agitator (Murray
Hamilton), and the moral of the story is clearly that non-confrontation is the truer, more courageous path. The mill owner is also an object of sympathy and admiration, a sensible widow played by Dorothy Gish. Though the plight of the laid off workers is also depicted empathetically, the film is almost preachy about its theme.

For the most part, though, after the war, the long years of the McCarthy era's red-baiting kept Hollywood safely away from labor films entirely. What had been admired as social liberalism in the 30s, after the war was abhorred as bolshevik communism. In Congress the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), went full-bore after Hollywood directors and writers, blacklisting any who stood in its way.

HUAC's rampage through Hollywood in the 50s caused a set of most unusual cinematic duels that resulted in two of the most outstanding films about unions ever produced. In 1954 Elia Kazan, together with screenwriter Budd Schulberg, both of whom had appeared before the Committee as "friendly witnesses," wrote and produced the Academy Award winning On the Waterfront. In the same year, blacklisted director Herbert Biberman, with the help of other banished movie-makers, struggled to produce Salt of the Earth against nearly overwhelming opposition that delayed and finally crippled its release and distribution.
In *Salt of the Earth*, Biberman tells the true story of a strike that had been conducted against New Jersey Zinc in Bayard, New Mexico, by Local 890 of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, a militant union which had been expelled from the C.I.O. for alleged Communist influence. As described in Bosley Crowther's *New York Times* review from its nine weeks of release in New York in 1954,

...a strong pro-labor film with a particularly sympathetic interest in the Mexican-Americans with whom it deals. True, it frankly implies that the mine operators have taken advantage of the Mexican-born or descended laborers, have forced a "speed up" in their mining techniques and given them less respectable homes than provided the so-called "Anglo" laborers. It slaps at brutal police tactics in dealing with the strikers and it gets in some rough, sarcastic digs at the attitude of "the bosses" and the working of the Taft-Hartley Law.\(^\text{13}\)

Crowther's attitude here is itself indicative of mainstream studio establishment. Not only is the implication of his opening remark that pro-labor films are inherently not strong cinematically, but his next sentence, by opening with the qualifying "True," suggests that there is something wrong with the catalog that follows of the abuses the film presents. And finally Crowther turns his sympathy away from the film by describing the way it "gets in some rough, sarcastic digs" at the employers and federal labor law. Considering the rugged treatment the film, its cast and

directors received at the time, it is ironic that Crowther should have faulted the film for roughness.

One of the few clearly "pro-labor" films ever made, Salt of the Earth has to this day been seen by precious few Americans. Most of the film production unions themselves, trying to be ultra-patriotic through this period, were led by Roy Brewer, president of the stage employees union -- I.A.T.S.E., to withhold a majority of the union labor available. And on the floor of Congress, Rep. Donald Jackson of California attacked the film, while it was still being filmed on location, as a new weapon for Russia ... deliberately designed to inflame racial hatreds and to depict the United States as the enemy of all colored peoples. 14

In many respects, the filming of this movie was as heroic a struggle as the strike it depicted. After its abbreviated release in 1954, the film was effectively suppressed for over ten years. 15

In stark contrast to the suppression of Biberman's Salt of the Earth, the Kazan-Schulberg production of On the Waterfront has enjoyed an incredibly wide release and frequent broadcast on network and cable television.

Originally a conception of Kazan and Arthur Miller, the idea for the film changed drastically after Kazan's co-

14 Herbert Biberman, Salt of the Earth: The Story of a Film (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965) 86.

15 Biberman.
operation with HUAC. Miller was incensed and went off to compose his play, The Crucible. Kazan then teamed up with fellow HUAC witness, Budd Schulberg, to answer in cinema to the charge of witch-hunting that Miller accused them of theatrically in The Crucible.

The film tells the story of a young longshoreman named Terry Malloy (played by Marlon Brando) who begins as an ignorant dupe for a corrupt gang that controls the local union. As he falls in love with the beautiful Edie (played by Eva Marie Saint), he is slowly persuaded by her and the local Catholic priest to testify before the Waterfront Crime Commission against the corrupt leaders of the union: a variation on Black Fury with the addition of the mob-control theme.

It is no accident that the film revolves around testimony presented before a congressional committee. Certainly Kazan's and Schulberg's own experiences before HUAC formed the model for Terry Malloy's brave betrayal. It could be argued that throughout the screenplay of On the Waterfront the longshoremen and the priest are not anti-union, for they only want to clean the union up and give it back to the longshoremen. But the fact remains that the one film that portrayed a clean, worker inspired union, Salt of the Earth, was viciously attacked, while a film that chose to look at the seamy side of the labor movement was given awards and the widest possible release.
Over the years, *On the Waterfront* would be copied and imitated in all manner of re-makes, changing places, names and industries, but always shining the light on "union corruption," as if it were a new idea and as if it were endemic. The theme even lay on the edges of popular comedy routines. A Bud Abbott and Lou Costello routine in which Abbott tells Costello he is "loafing" because he got a job at the bakery makes a joke out of the fact that Abbott needs a union card to "loaf."

A more obvious heir to *On the Waterfront* was the 1957 MGM production, *Edge of the City*, whose very title reveals the debt to Kazan and Schulberg. Director Martin Ritt created virtually the same plot backdrop as in *On the Waterfront* with the added dimension of racial tension between a black and a white longshoreman, portrayed by Sidney Poitier and John Cassavetes.

Also in 1957, Columbia released the Harry Kleiner production of *The Garment Jungle*. Starring Lee J. Cobb as a militantly non-union garment manufacturer, this film depicts the brutal beating and murder of a fiery union organizer. As sympathetic as that scenario seems, like *On the Waterfront* the film focuses on the mob infiltration of the industry, and, like the 30s film *Racket Busters*, it is sympathetic to the martyred unionists, but leaves the impression that these heroes are the exceptions while the mob represents the rule.
Yet another 1957 film, *The Pajama Game*, though avoiding the popular corruption theme, so subordinates the labor management plot that it trivializes the workers' grievances. Based on the play, "7½ Cents," originally produced by the Garment Workers' union (ILGWU), *The Pajama Game* stars Doris Day as a union steward in a pajama factory. But the screen version of the drama shifts its sympathy to the manager. The average film goer was likely to see the union more as a nuisance than as an advocate of the oppressed workers as was evident in the review of the *New York Times* critic, Bosley Crowther, who summarized the plot thus: "The new superintendent still has his troubles getting a unionized plant to work and getting Babe, of the grievance committee, to abandon her grievances." 16 No doubt, many viewers of this film, like Crowther, came away from this portrayal with the feeling that unions simply encourage unproductive and unnecessary conflict.

Similarly by the end of the decade, the Waterfront corruption plot was so entrenched in Hollywood film idiom that Universal could actually produce a musical comedy about it as well. *Never Steal Anything Small* (1959) stars James Cagney as a stevedore who extorts money to run for the presidency of the longshoremen's union, merrily singing of

his avarice, as the title suggests, and of his delight in subversive machinations.

The film begins with the prologue:

This picture is sympathetically dedicated to labor and its problems in coping with a new and merry type of public enemy, the charming, well-dressed gentleman who cons his way to a union throne, and never needs to blow a safe again.

But the expression of sympathy is dubious in view of the connection portrayed between criminality and accepted union activity. Cagney as Jake MacIllaney cheerfully admits that he is a gangster and racketeer as if that were the expected credentials of a union leader. The underlying assumption of the film and its portrayal of unions is that a union is a criminal syndicate, albeit a more benign criminality than the mafia, but it is a racket even at its best whose elections are shams and whose funds are at the free and easy disposal of the leadership for their personal pleasure and aggrandizement.

As we saw before, the film industry's interest in labor came in spurts with little happening between the mid-thirties and the mid-fifties. This was again to be the case through the sixties. World War Two and its consequent boom economy may explain the long break from Black Fury to On the Waterfront. Similarly, the absence of film-makers' interest in labor in the sixties may be explained by competing national issues.
On the one hand, the primary social movement dominating American liberalism in the sixties was the battle for civil rights. Labor issues, largely due to an expanding economy, were eclipsed in the eyes of the media. Even though the unions were at the time involved in their busiest and most productive period of organizing - peaking in the early seventies, it was not news or drama since the contract negotiations of the period were, in the main, smoothly and peacefully conducted.

Only as the economy began to bog down did the old class-consciousness at the heart of labor activism again emerge. In the first of a new series of labor films, director Martin Ritt, whose *Edge of the City* drew the last wave of films to a close in 1957, began --paradoxically-- with a look back at one of the earliest labor struggles in the history of the country. His 1970 production of *The Molly Maguires*, starring Sean Connery and Richard Harris, recalled the failed efforts of the immigrant Irish coal miners in Pennsylvania a hundred years earlier. Their struggle to organize was a violent and bloody one in which the miners engaged in guerrilla warfare with the company's hired goons and Pinkertons.

While this film might be considered pro-union on its face, it paints such a violent picture of the union that most Americans are more apt to associate the Maguires with middle-East terrorists than to see the other themes of
betrayal or the inhuman treatment of the miners. Ultimately, the film only reinforces the old message of *On the Waterfront* that organized labor generally means organized violence. But Ritt had come a long way in his consciousness of the value of the labor movement, and by the end of the decade would come to produce the country's second (after *Salt of the Earth*) pro-labor film, and the first unambiguously pro-union film to have a significant impact on public opinion.

One film that almost was a pro-union film, but stopped short of exploring the issue, was Hal Ashby's *Bound for Glory* (1976). Resembling Ford's *Grapes of Wrath*, the film is based on the autobiography of Woody Guthrie, the great American folk singer and composer of the depression era, who wrote many of the most beloved union songs during his early years as a union organizer. Starring David Carradine, this film cannot help but remind us of the union role John Carradine played in *Grapes of Wrath*. But like its famous predecessor, *Bound for Glory* focuses more on the depression itself than on the role of the union in helping to get people back on their feet.

Unfortunately, before Ritt had a chance to release his long overdue homage to the union organizer, *Norma Rae*, two of the most scathing attacks on the union movement ever filmed came out in 1978: Paul Schrader's *Blue Collar* and Norman Jewison's *F.I.S.T.*.
Schrader's *Blue Collar* stars Richard Pryor, who with Yaphet Kotto and Harvey Keitel, play Detroit auto workers scrapping along through the hard times of the mid-seventies. As we saw in the 30s film *Riffraff*, it starts as a breezy comedy. It is about three friends --one white, two black-- who decide to rob the local union headquarters with laughable incompetence. But the plot quickly gets away from its humor as their friendships are tested by a power play between the union leadership and the investigators from the crime commission. By the end of the film it has become another *On the Waterfront*. Yaphet Kotto has been murdered and Harvey Keitel's character has decided to testify against the union. The movie leaves us with a grim picture of the auto workers, their union and the deep division between white and black workers.

A few months later, Jewison's *F.I.S.T.* went after the teamsters with the same basic message: unions are by nature and by birth violent and mired in corruption. In some respects Jewison was trying to do for the teamsters what Mario Puzzo and Francis Ford Coppola did for the mafia in *The Godfather* (1972): show the human side of villainy in a non-judgmental portrait. With Sylvester Stallone starring as "the union boss," and using material freely drawn from the Jimmy Hoffa story and the history of the United Mine Workers of America, the film portrays 30 years in the life of the fictitious "Federation of Inter-State Truckers," from
its feeble beginnings to its emergence as an organization as powerful and corrupt as any of the industries it does business with.

As in *The Godfather*, F.I.S.T.'s screenwriters Eszterhas and Stallone tried to portray the main character sympathetically. The first half of the film shows the fierce struggle the union had just to survive, and clearly shows that the violence and criminality were all started by the employers. It then puts the union organizer into the dilemma of losing the strike or working with the mob. After Stallone's character makes that hard choice the movie follows the dark consequences.

One could view the movie as a lesson in the importance of insuring labor's protection from employer harassment (to keep its leaders from needing to turn to the mob), but most people, seeing *F.I.S.T.* come away with no more than they did from *Blue Collar* and *On the Waterfront*, the notion that there is no real difference between organized labor and organized crime.

*On the Waterfront* took on the International Longshore Workers; *Blue Collar* attacked the United Auto Workers; and *F.I.S.T.* went after the Teamsters. These were the principal non-AFL-CIO unions that had seen the greatest growth and, therefore, managed to develop the most effective bargaining power in America since the 30s.
Finally, though, in 1979 Martin Ritt, at the age of 65, directed a story that told of a union's efforts to organize workers in a small Southern town, completely dominated by and dependent upon a cotton mill. Based on the true story of Crystal Lee Jordan who struggled to organize the workers at a J.P. Stevens mill, this film is refreshingly devoid of the corrupt or power-mad labor "bosses;" the workers who are just ignorant dupes satisfying their need for recognition; and --thankfully-- the intrepid investigators from the crime commission that had come to be cliches of labor movies over the past twenty-five years.

Instead, Norma Rae describes the personal commitment involved in union organizing. The two stars, Sally Field (in the title role) and Ron Leibman (as Reuben Marshasky), the young organizer sent from the international, struggle with the company and with their own mutual attraction. Though he's the pro, a glib, fast-talking Jew from New York, he is powerless to help them without Norma's local respect and identity.

Sadly, it stands nearly alone (excepting the renegade Salt of the Earth) as Hollywood's token film.

In the eighties, only one film so far has picked up where Norma Rae left off. Mike Nichols' Silkwood (1983), like Norma Rae, features the story of an heroic woman struggling against a powerful industry, to assert her rights. Starring Meryl Streep in the title character as
Karen Silkwood, the film follows her career and personal life from the time, working at a plutonium plant, that she grows suspicious of policies and practices that may be cutting corners dangerously. On the sly she snoops through company files looking for evidence. Publicly she joins the labor front, lobbying for safeguards. In the end she meets with a suspicious accident, which points to the probable guilt of her employers.

But Silkwood is not so much about the protagonist's union activity, as it is about her fears (and those of the audience) of the inherent dangers of nuclear energy. Some may even consider that Karen Silkwood was being used by the union officials, then left to the mercies of her employers. The union becomes just one more thing Karen Silkwood has to deal with in her attempts to hold the company accountable for the health and safety of herself and her friends.

All the movies with pro-union sentiments share this pattern. Each deals with helpless workers who as yet do not have the power to demand by right the justice they seek. In fact each of the pro-labor films we've seen feature women, rather than men, for women traditionally are stereotyped as helpless and powerless. A union of women is not seen as the threat to national or economic security that any union of men might be. Film makers even in their rare effort to create a pro-union portrayal are instead falling back on and, therefore, reinforcing classic sexual stereotypes.
without challenging the fundamental portrayal of organized labor that has dominated the screen since Black Fury.

Where unions of men are depicted, even in the 1980s, the theme is either union-corruption or union irrelevance. In 1982, for instance, a made-for-television adaptation of Mark Twain's irreverent Mysterious Stranger completely deleted Twain's attack on religion (the paramount theme of his classic novella) and refocused the plot onto a heavenly crusade led by an angel of God against the medieval guild that was about to go on what was made to appear as a foolish strike against a benevolent employer. Similarly, Ron Howard's Gung Ho (1986) glorifies the industrious auto worker, played by Michael Keaton, who leads his fellow workers to shed their union representation and work till they drop for their new and benevolent Japanese employers.

As influential as films like On the Waterfront, Blue Collar, and F.I.S.T. have been in portraying the American union movement as corrupt and violent, greater impact by far is made by the much larger number of films that, though not primarily about labor or unions, contain passing or peripheral reference to unions or unionization.

In the early 80s, for instance, the popular film My Favorite Year (1982) jokes about a corrupt "labor boss" whom the entire cast gallantly battles in the stirring conclusion. In The River (1984), Mel Gibson and Sissy Spacek, as the young farmers, Tom and Mae Garvey, are beset
with a series of tragic catastrophes, so Tom --without a second thought-- becomes a scab laborer at a steel mill to pay off his debts.

Over and over again the heroes of movies, in some way or another, are set against the unions they encounter. In *Teachers* (1984) Nick Nolte, as Alex Jurel, a popular public high school social studies teacher, tries to help his students despite the workings of a deeply entrenched "system." The teachers' union steward is portrayed as petty and out of touch, trying to make a big issue out of the union's negotiations for an extra three minutes off their starting time. In the end, when Alex is being fired under false charges, the steward --Larry Malloy (an echo of *On the Waterfront*'s Terry Malloy) cuts a deal with the school superintendent trading Alex's job for the three minutes.

The portrayal in these movies is almost always negative and constant, if not by conspiracy then just as effectively by an institutional bias infecting directors and producers who are themselves, after all, employers or managers of union labor. Union bashing has, by now, become a cinema cliche. Writers seem to go out of their way to include some insulting remark. Danny DeVito, directing and starring in his 1984 made-for-cable movie *The Ratings Game*, includes a swipe at unions as part of a scene of small talk on his first date with Rhea Perlman. In the movie *Innerspace* (1987), the major villain, who is actually a trader in
stolen corporate technology, is made to appear more villainous by the addition to his resume of the information that he is the administrator of the Teamsters Pension fund.

Another example of the "sideswipe" at labor in an otherwise unrelated production appears near the end of the film *Blazing Saddles* (1974) when the erratic Governor Lepetomane, played by Brooks, asks if he can fire a man, and is told no because of "Local 32." He curses "Damn unions!" and then has to catch the reporters before they write down the epithet, saying "Are you crazy! I'll lose the blue-collar vote!" Certainly the politician's hypocrisy is the primary target of Brooks' barb here, but underlying that obvious joke are the presumptions that unions protect bad workers and that union labor is unproductive.

Again we see the sideswipe in Twentieth Century Fox's *Mannequin* (1987). And like the swipe in *Blazing Saddles*, in *Mannequin* the inference is that unions protect bad workers. Here the fumbling store security guard Felix (G. W. Bailey) boldly threatens to call "the union" after being summarily fired. And, though he is promptly reminded that there is no union representing him, the plot sympathy, being against him, is also subtly against unions or the possibility that a union would protect someone as egregiously incompetent as Felix. We are all, therefore, made to breathe a collective sigh of relief that there is no union defending his villainy.
Even the film *Breaking Away* (1979), which takes a much more sober look at the condition of working-class Americans, takes its swipe at unions. As Ken Margolis observed, there is a scene outside the Indiana quarry in which two old timers watch a man drive up in a Cadillac and comment, "It must be a safety inspector... Or a union Organizer," working the image of the corrupt union organizer for a bitter laugh.  

Indeed, the most insistent incidence of this sideswipe attack is seen in the modern gangster movies, in Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972) Robert Duvall plays the mob counsel who attempts to extort a Hollywood producer with the veiled threat of aggravating his union workers. A few years later a series of films about Al Capone not only continued that side-swipe but expanded the charge. Ben Gazarra playing the lead in the 1975 *Capone* (Twentieth Century Fox) brags to his lieutenants that he's going to infiltrate and take over "the unions," and the same year Tony Curtis depicted gangster Louis Buchalter in the film *Lepke* (Warner Brothers) using unions in the 20s to extort protection money from a poor garment manufacturer who is brutally murdered in the bargain. Similarly, and with even more detail, the new breed of made for television feature-length films, seem to go out of their way to embed a union attack. In 1988, an

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17 Margolis, "Silver Screen Tarnishes Union" 43.
ABC Sunday Night Movie, Frank Nitti: The Enforcer portrays Capone's successor in the 30s muscling in on "the stagehands union" (IATSE), controlling its president, George Brown, and using him to extort pay-offs from theater owners. Similar control is intimated over "the bartenders union." A year later Ray Sharkey, as Capone in The Revenge of Al Capone (1989), gleefully lists "the Milkman's Union" and "the Hod Carriers Union" (Laborers International) as being in his pocket.

Commonly these scripts refer to "the union" being controlled by their mobster-stars, rather than a local of the union, so the impression created is that the entire national or international union is corrupt. Considering how all but one of the side-swipes above were about a Chicago, North-side mob, whatever control the Capone gang may have had over those early unions could hardly have been more extensive than that city's local, but such a clarification is not considered necessary by the film-writers.

But the real problem with the Hollywood portrayal of unions is its blatant inaccuracy. To judge by Hollywood's depiction, one would assume that most unions, particularly the well-established ones, are connected in some way to organized crime. In fact, the recent President's Commission on Organized Crime found that fewer than 400 of the country's 70,000 locals had been suspected of such
influence.\textsuperscript{18} That works out to less than 1%. There is likely a parallel if not considerably higher incidence of crooked bankers, lawyers, doctors and politicians as well. Yet no media portrayals of these professions would ever suggest corruption was endemic.

Ron Howard's production of \textit{Gung Ho} (Paramount, 1986), in which Japanese car-makers are invited by the American workers of a small Pennsylvania town to reopen their auto plant and put them all back to work, is based on the notion that the Japanese are successful because their workers are not unionized. In fact, according to statistics from the Japanese Government, nearly 30 per cent of the Japanese workforce is organized,\textsuperscript{19} while that is true of less than 17\% of American workers.

To some extent the late 1980s (from 1987) began to see Hollywood easing up somewhat on labor unions. On the one hand \textit{Robocop} lionized Corporate America's creation of a high-tech scab, designed specifically to break the impending police union strike, but on the other, the final moral seems rather to underscore the cyborg's innate sense of solidarity with his fellow officers. Still, it is the gruff duty


\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Japan Statistical Yearbook}, 1982.
sergeant that reminds the officers, "We're not plumbers. Police officers don't strike!"

The same year, John Sayles's epic film, Matewan and Oliver Stone's Wall Street both described the villainy of corporate America as it was opposed by its unions. In the former, Sayles pits an old-time pacifist, wobbly organizer against a West Virginia Coal Company. After the Company fails to break the strike by bringing in Blacks from the South and Italian immigrants from the East, a full scale war erupts when the company finally sends its own private army in to quell the miners uprising. As positive as that film is for labor (and it was based closely on historic data) the fact that it ends in a gruesome blood-bath of a shoot-out tends only to re-enforce the image of labor violence so much a part of the stereotype of union disputes. Furthermore, in a manner reminiscent of the release of Salt of the Earth, Matewan suffered a very poor distribution. In Hawaii, for example, the film was shown only one week at the theatre next to the state university. And that was only after it showed to overflow crowds in the premises as part of the famed "East-West Center Film Festival." Whether this poor release pattern was due, as in the case of Salt of the Earth, to deliberate suppression or to the independent nature of Sayles's production, the fact is that this rare, but high-quality production of a pro-union film was never, in fact accorded the same access to American audiences as
the many other studio films by-and-large less flattering to unionization.

The most outstanding exception to the average cinematic portrayal of unions is seen in the film, Wall Street. Bearing an uncanny resemblance to the real life drama of Eastern Airlines and the International Association of Machinists, this film takes a much more realistic and, therefore, atypical view of unions. The Machinists union of a small airline, that has been made the pawn in a stock war between two investors, is itself small like the large majority of American unions. Instead of "Big Labor" pushing the workers around, we see "Big Wall Street Insiders" playing with people's lives and jobs as if they were just so much pork-belly on the commodities exchange. The three union negotiators are sincerely, even desperately trying to save their members' jobs. In all, the film is a refreshing change from the ordinary treatment organized labor has come to expect at the hands of the movie-makers.

Jeremiah McGuire noted in his study, *Cinema and Value Philosophy*, that,

...the film — as an arena of persuasion and felt-value experience, plus value ascription — is uniquely persuasive, primarily because of its ability to create an aura of impressions that easily create felt-value responses, plus the cinema's dependency in all its forms upon some type of value ascription for the film ever to be made.... They do not supply the audience with
thoughts, as novels have always done; rather, they present man's conduct or behavior.\textsuperscript{20}

As any union organizer knows, people's values are shaped mostly by experience and emotion, and only a little by logical thought. For this reason the portrayal of unions in the media, particularly in movies, accounts in no small way for the prevailing attitudes of Americans toward labor unions. With precious few exceptions that portrayal has been both unrepresentative and virulently negative.

CHAPTER III

TELEVISION: "Anchors Aweigh"

Compared to the other popular media, television is most generally presumed to offer the most objective and unbiased approach to controversial or partisan topics. Like radio, its technological parent, television is supposedly held to higher standards of presentation and content since it operates on a limited frequency band. Radio and television, therefore, are federally regulated and statutorily expected to honor a "public trust." Newspapers and films have been much freer to express single-mindedly their producers' opinions, where television and radio are expected to refrain from selling anything but consumer goods in clearly defined commercial segments while the rest of their programming should only entertain comfortably and inform objectively.

Where partisanship and controversy are permitted expression, the Federal Communications Commission, at least until 1987, required broadcasters to provide equal access to opposing viewpoints. Even when it was required, though, equal access applied only to the most overt expressions of opinion and only to specific representatives of clearly defined and outspoken interest groups. Values and opinions
expressed incidentally as part of non-editorial news or entertainment programing, being much harder to identify, generally escaped fair access regulation.

For this very reason television programming carries enormous potential for implanting and enforcing stereotypes and ideological agendas. Persuasion in a form and structure that we are prepared for can be met fairly and filtered through our conscious defenses. Persuasion cloaked in entertainment or news broadcasts enjoys a much greater potential for success.

Though the impact of television as a mass medium of communication and entertainment has been of major significance since the 1950s throughout the United States, its portrayal of labor did not come under scrutiny until the mid 1970s. Perhaps the best reason for labor's lack of attention to its broadcast coverage was expressed in Leila Sussman's concluding remarks to her 1945 study, "Labor in the Radio News." After finding a marked bias against organized labor in the radio reports of her day, she concluded with a prediction that,

The presentation of labor in such an unfavorable way in the radio news can have two effects. It can foster an anti-labor psychology in the listening audience; and it can create a feeling in the ranks of labor that they simply do not have a chance for a fair hearing in the channels of mass communication.1

Indeed, for these reasons, and probably for the additional reason that labor did not generally distinguish broadcast media from the print media, in which it was accustomed to even more blatant bias, the labor movement continued to ignore radio and television treatment until the 1970s. And then the focus of attention was primarily directed at television news reporting, with little consideration attached to the significance of labor's portrayal in televised entertainment programing. Both TV news and its dramatic series, however, regularly refer to organized labor or describe it to such an extent that each must be studied and critiqued separately.
The News

In 1975 a British team conducted the first detailed analysis of the television portrayal of labor such as it was in Great Britain. The Glasgow University Media Group was an eight-person research team, mostly sociologists, funded by Britain's Social Science Research Council and based at the University of Glasgow. John Eldrige, Professor of Sociology, was its senior member, though Greg Philo became the group's most active public spokesperson. Their initial analysis of the way television was reported in the first five months of 1975 led the way to a series of studies that were able to demonstrate that the television portrayal of trade unions was colored by the networks. Reporting continually laid the blame for national industrial and economic problems on unions, despite ample evidence to the contrary which was either ignored, smothered or perverted.²

The Glasgow Group also found that television news consistently failed to provide viewers with the most basic and elementary information about labor disputes. They found that the unions involved in disputes were often not identified; that routine facts as to whether the disputes were official or not were not given; that little or no effort was made to clarify the issues of their disputes; and

that the workers' view of a dispute was rarely if ever portrayed. 3

As in Great Britain, American TV newscasters may be less likely to use overtly prejudicial labels in covering their stories than the other news media. With the notable exception of the 1988 episode of The Reporters (FOX) entitled "Dying Teamster Boss," newscasters rarely express their personal views so forthrightly. Instead, as seen in the Glasgow studies, labor is more likely to be the victim of what Cirino described as "bias through omission of news" and "the hidden editorial." 4

A good example of these tactics was described by Klaus Bruhn Jensen in his detailed analysis of one week of American network news in September of 1981. 5 Of the eleven national stories he followed that week, one was the Solidarity March in Washington, D.C., organized by the AFL-CIO and the other was a story about some North Carolina workers' attempt to attract industry into their area. In the case of the Solidarity March, Jensen discovered that the basic pattern of the coverage served to "neutralize the


4 Cirino, 141-146; 174-178.

protest." He quotes the following CBS summation of the Solidarity March as indicative of the pattern:

> If size and sound are the measures of success, the AFL-CIO can say tonight that it does represent the hearts and minds of American workers, and with that careful organization it may be able to re-cement the old Democratic civil rights-labor coalition into a strong anti-Reagan force. 6

As Jensen notes, the above report reveals a conception of the labor movement which focuses strictly on labor as a political force, omitting a social or economic significance. That omission, he remarks, is followed by an even greater one: "It is perhaps symptomatic of the news ideology that what is labeled 'the loudest, most organized opposition to Reagan's economic policies to date' is not covered again during the following week." The quote, though, also reveals a "hidden editorial" in the way it hangs on the phrase "if size and sound are the measures of success." Whether or not the audience ever recognized the allusion to the Shakespearean tale of an idiot... "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," common sense would tell almost anyone that "size and sound" are not, in fact, valid measures of success. And finally, the quote also implies that the network's interest in labor may well be limited to the extent to which it is connected to the civil rights movement, a more clearly defined item on the liberal agenda.

6 Jensen 15.
Herbert Gans found almost half of the television stories in the category of "protestors and rioters" in 1967 were about strikers. Gans also noted the basic reverence television journalists bear for our economic system. "Strikes," he found, "are frequently judged negatively, especially if they inconvenience 'the public,' contribute to inflation, or involve violence." 

Thirteen years later, the International Association of Machinists (IAM) conducted a similar national survey of news coverage that revealed little change. Their first study, which covered news reports and aired in February of 1980, concluded that corporate versus worker or union viewpoints were favored on all three networks: CBS three to one; NBC by five to one; and on ABC by as much as seven to one.

But the most dramatic finding of the Machinists' study was revealed in the frequency they observed of network reports on various union news subjects.

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8 Gans 46.

The following table of this data reveals a clear pattern:

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Reports of Union News</th>
<th>CBS</th>
<th>ABC</th>
<th>NBC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strike</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiations</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting/Speech</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Support</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Member</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though the annual data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics has consistently revealed a strike-incidence rate per contract negotiation of less than 2%, the media attention has just as consistently weighted its union news reports on strike coverage, suggesting that strikes are, in fact, a union's primary and ordinary activity, and that negotiations are normally rather than exceptionally followed by strikes.

This error is perpetuated in a variety of ways. In a fairly typical example of what Cirino referred to as "bias in news images" and "bias in photographic selection," a Honolulu station (KITV, 5 Feb. 1989, 10pm), reported a contract ratification vote for nurses at Wilcox Hospital.¹¹ Though the contract was settled without a strike, as visual background to its report, the station showed footage of nurses on a picket line originally filmed 6 Sept. 1987, two

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¹⁰ Rollings 144.

¹¹ Cirino 166-168.
years earlier, instead of a current film of the negotiators actually hammering out a settlement at the bargaining table. Even though the footage was identified and accurately dated, it inaccurately implied that the current contract was also the result of a strike and reinforced the misconception that strikes are common.

Nor is this only observable at the local level. According to the CBS News Index for 1986, for instance, while that network broadcast forty stories throughout the year on "union contracts," it cataloged 184 stories about "strikes." 12

And, conversely, the scant attention paid to union community service projects (bias by omission) as well as failing to encourage further union services, rather encourages the general impression created by the focus on strikes that unions are public nuisances. In June of 1988, for instance, the Maritime Trades Department of Honolulu's Port Council offered a special scholarship to a local boy scout, funding his travel and tuition for a two-week course in seamanship at the Lundeburg School in Piney Point, Maryland. Though all the media were alerted and invited to

the presentation luncheon hosted by the Maritime unions, not one reporter accepted the invitation or covered the story.\textsuperscript{13}  

An example of what Cirino called "Bias Through Placement" as may be practiced in broadcast media was seen in Honolulu (KITV, 14 Oct. 1986, 6pm), when the local station was covering the first day of a strike by housekeepers, clerical and maintenance workers, and licensed practical nurses at Kaiser Hospital.\textsuperscript{14} Generally, the first day of picketing in a strike finds the employees in high spirits and unusually jubilant, mostly because the protracted period of unsuccessful negotiations has finally stopped and a considerable amount of worker stress and anxiety has finally been released in an unambiguous, clear action. As a result, first day pickets, with no prior experience to guide them, tend to be loud and joyful, with an almost picnic-like atmosphere, that settles in to more determined demeanor after a week or so.\textsuperscript{15} The news report broadcast by KITV after the first day of picketing, first featured the jubilant pickets dancing and singing on the line in front of the hospital, then switched to the reporter

\textsuperscript{13} Clyde Hayashi, former President of the Federal Employees' Metal Trades Council at Pearl Harbor, personal interview, 14 Apr. 1989.

\textsuperscript{14} Cirino 152-153.

\textsuperscript{15} William J. Puette, \textit{Labor Dispute Picketing: Organizing a Legal Picket in Hawaii} (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii, Center for Labor Education and Research, 1984) 9.
inside the hospital interviewing an elderly and infirm patient about the effect of the strikers' absence on their medical care. No additional commentary was needed in condemnation of the strike. And, as usual, no coverage was allotted to the grievances of the workers that prompted the strike in the first place.

But probably the most common technique used against labor is what Cirino called "bias in the source of news."16

Look, for instance at this report on November 15, 1988 (KHON-NBC, Channel 2 Hawaii): 10pm news:

Joe Moore, news anchorman:
The state's public workers have high expectations for next year and the price could be high. Bruce Voss reports.

Bruce Voss, news reporter:
The four week old strike at Molokai's Kaluakoi Resort is one of four walkouts that have marred an otherwise quiet year on the labor front. Employers' most costly battleground was at the hospitals where contracts covering registered nurses were reopened and substantially sweetened to attract more nurses. Elsewhere employers are warily watching wages creep up.

Al Fraga, president of the Hawaii Employers' Council:
Without the health care settlements the average wage the council negotiated this year is 4%. The first time since 1982 that settlements surpassed 3.5%.

Voss:
In his annual state of labor speech Hawaii Employers' Council president, Al Fraga said that 1989 will be another light year for negotiations although there could be some tough contract talks at the bus company, newspapers, T.V. stations, supermarkets and auto dealers.

16 Cirino 136.
Fraga: We believe, however, that wage increases will remain below the inflation level.

Voss: But the wild card private employers fear is next year's reopening of contracts covering some 45,000 employees in 6 state and county public workers' unions. In 1987, most settled for wage increases totaling 12%. With the state's economy booming and tax collections up, several public union negotiators have indicated that they'll be pushing for even higher wage increases next year.

Fraga: Obviously the level of public sector settlements raises expectations of private employees. The politics of public sector bargaining must be balanced with economic realities in fairness to the taxpayers who foot the bill.

This report from start to finish was by, for and to the state's employers. At no point in the report was there even an attempt at portraying the workers' perspective. From the opening remark of the reporter that "employers are warily watching wages creep up" it is clear that the reporter's sympathy is exclusively with the plight of the businessmen and women, and that wage increases are portrayed as threatening. Where the employer was required to give some increase to health-care workers, the action was portrayed as a unilateral "sweetening" in which the union role was ignored.

But the real purpose of the entire report was clearly to prepare the public to be opposed to increases in wages for state and county workers, despite the well-publicized fact that there was a surplus of state tax revenues. It may
be understandable that the Employers' Council would want to take such a stand, but for the television reporters to accept and propagate the same agenda means that the local channel has essentially taken an anti-labor, anti-union position in the up-coming bargaining.

These examples, it must be noted, are not unusual or extraordinarily offensive. They represent business as usual in local coverage of labor news. But it is not just local news reporting that suffers such a systematic bias.

Michael Robinson and Maura Clancey found in a 1985 study of Network news for the Media Analysis Project at George Washington University that the liberalism of the "media elites" so adamantly decried by the Lichters and Roffman in the 1970s was not apparent fifteen years later. Their conclusion was rather that, "Network newsfolk may talk liberal, but that reflects an easy-listening liberalism that's far less leftist than surveys indicate." In no place is this more apparent than in the network coverage of labor.

Yet another measure of network attention reveals the dominance of CBS in news and documentary programs featuring organized labor. A review of the programs described in Daniel Einstein's guide to network news and documentaries reveals a record of thirty-six news specials broadcast on

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American television from the 1950s through the 1970s (see Appendix C)\textsuperscript{18}. Of that number, eighteen were aired on CBS, ten on NBC, and only eight on ABC. Also noteworthy is the fact that exactly one quarter of the total programs in Einstein's guide that had anything to do with labor at all were programs on and about the Teamsters and their leaders, either Dave Beck or Jimmy Hoffa. Indeed, as Roberta Lynch observed in her article on media distortion, the Teamster's notoriety "is such that for many people in this country the Teamsters Union is the labor movement."\textsuperscript{19}

Even limiting examples primarily to CBS, the most generous of the three networks to labor as measured by the Machinists' survey entailed above as well as my analysis of Einstein's guide, the same patterns described in Britain by the Glasgow group emerge in American television treatment of labor themes.

Looking, for example, at the CBS Evening News for March 1, 1989, on the eve of the Eastern Airlines strike, the theme of corporate sympathy is immediately sounded in the opening remarks by describing, "... a strike by the airline's 9300 machinists, set for midnight Friday, which could ground the financially hobbled carrier forever." The


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theme is emphasized by the next speaker, Jordan Greene, identified as an Airline Analyst, who warns:

It's a battle to the end of Eastern. They won't yield, the company won't yield. The union says I'm going to take you and half of America down with me.

This "Airline Analyst" is clearly invested by the reporter with the status of expert, but his last remark is nothing more than a sweeping generalization. Instead of an insightful economic analysis, we are served an exaggerated and blatantly anti-union condemnation. And the technique of calling on an "industry expert" who is in fact someone whose interest and sympathies by training and by personal investment are with the industrial management is not uncommon. The worst damage of such reporting is that it wears the cloak of neutrality to conceal its true colors.

To measure the context of these remarks more fairly, though, let us look at the complete report:

Peter Van Sant:
Eastern is demanding the powerful machinist union which includes the airlines mechanics accept $150 million in wage and benefit cuts. The machinists have refused to yield a dime.

Charles Bryan, Machinist Union leader:
Our position right now is 100%. Absolutely 100% we will be striking at midnight Friday.

Van Sant:
Eastern's losses have been staggering. More than half a billion dollars in just the last two years. The airline has responded by shrinking, laying off thousands of employees and cutting back hundreds of daily flights. Today Eastern employees begin receiving this videotape warning that support of a machinists strike could put them all on the unemployment line.
Frank Lorenzo, Texas Air chairman:
If the pilots, flight attendants, non-contract employees support the picket line and don't come up or show up for work, Eastern cannot survive.

Van Sant:
The machinists argue that Lorenzo, chairman of Eastern's parent company, has purposely wrecked Eastern's profits by selling off valuable assets. They claim Eastern wants a strike to destroy the machinist union.

Karen Ceremsak, Eastern spokeswoman:
We need a swift resolution to the difficulties to stop the financial hemorrhaging, plain and simple.

Dail Dulamage, Travel agent:
Has he thought about what he's going to do if they go on strike?

Van Sant:
Travel agencies report that Eastern's problems are scaring away passengers by the thousands.

Dail Dulamage, Travel Agent:
Even if they don't strike they have been tremendously damaged by the possibility of a strike.

Van Sant:
Some machinist have already begun removing their tools from Eastern's maintenance hangers.

David Wackerling, Eastern machinist:
People are ready to strike, that's all. They've had enough of it.

Van Sant:
Special security guards have been brought in to protect against employee vandalism or sabotage. Eastern says it will try to fly through a strike hiring mechanics with little or no experience.

Rep. James Oberstar, House aviation subcommittee:
The FAA has the principle responsibility for assuring that the airlines live up to their obligation to the traveling public to maintain safe airlines and FAA is going to do that.
Van Sant:
Machinist union leaders said today that if they strike other unions will help them disrupt air, ground and sea transportation nationwide. But analysts say that the key to a successful machinist strike will be if Eastern's pilots honor the picket lines. That decision hasn't been made yet leaving the airline's future up in the air.
Peter Van Sant, CBS News, Atlanta.

Dan Rather:
Late today, Texas Air chairman, Frank Lorenzo offered Eastern pilots a new contract in what's called "job security guarantees" in hopes they will cross machinist picket lines should a strike develop.

The report contains 450 words spoken by nine different people in 17 exchanges. Two are identified as management representatives, Lorenzo and Ceremsak; and two are union representatives: Bryan and Wackerling. But this apparent balance hides the underlying bias in viewpoint as reflected in the remarks of the reporter and the remaining "neutrals."

As already noted, industry analyst Jordan Greene, speaks unmistakably from the employer's perspective, and to a less blatant degree so does Dail Dulmage, the travel agent. Her remark, in particular, that "they have been tremendously damaged by the possibility of a strike" is focused, as indeed the whole report is, on the economic harm to the employer rather than on the issues of the labor dispute. Viewer sympathy, therefore, is directed entirely at the victimization of the employer by the union.

In his opening remark, Peter Van Sant, elects to label the union rather than Lorenzo as "powerful," subtly cuing
the viewers right at the start as to who is wrong. And the sentence, "The machinists have refused to yield a dime," leaves no doubt as to the reporter's opinion of the unreasonableness of the union's position. Lorenzo's power in this conflict or his refusal to concede are not reported as such. The only mention made of the union's viewpoint is given short shrift by comparison (31 words total) and prefaced by the disclaimer "the machinists argue...." No disclaimer, on the other hand, is attached to the airline's prediction of "employee vandalism or sabotage." Van Sant reports on the airline's preparation for this non-event in such a way as to impress upon the viewers the presumption that vandalism and sabotage are expected. The union is thus convicted of a crime not committed, and the theme that the employer is being victimized is again reinforced.

The role of the news reporter and anchor in this report cannot be underestimated. As Mark Crispin Miller noted in his analysis of prime time television, "However trivial his questions, then, the newsman, just by virtue of his looks and placement, always comes across as the heroic representative of a rising generation." 20 By the time Dan Rather "wraps up" the story describing how the airline "hopes they [pilots] will cross the machinists picket

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lines," the average viewer has completely crossed over and identified with the same "hopes" that this "powerful" union will be properly humbled.

In all this the union perspective was hardly mentioned and, to the extent it was mentioned, it was portrayed as petty and unreasonable. And the fault was not just with CBS. The other network coverage was no better. And yet just a few weeks earlier, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting had produced a very careful analysis of the Lorenzo/IAM dispute. 21 Among others, Judy Woodruff interviewed not just a generic "industry analyst" but Farrell Kupersmith, current attorney for the pilots, who had before represented Lorenzo in Continental's bankruptcy proceedings to void its former union contracts.

Kupersmith, of the firm, Touche-Ross & Co., which could hardly be described as a union advocate, spoke, therefore, with considerable credibility:

Recognizing that we had been on the other side in the Continental matter, also recognizing that my firm, I would say proudly, is pro-business. We represent corporate America. I don't think we switched sides, 'cause I think we're still on the side of the system. And I think it's in the system's best interest to not allow it to be abused and used as a weapon, which is what we think is happening here at Eastern. It's a very clever corporate raid where the unionized airline is being dismantled for the benefit of the non-unionized carrier and for the interest of the holding company.

The *Frontline* episode described also in some detail the ups and downs of the Machinists' relationship with Eastern's previous owners and revealed a pattern of union responsiveness to concessions where corresponding concessions were made to joint decision making.

Regrettably, the *Frontline* special, with its limited access through the Public Broadcasting System, had no effect on the quality of the network coverage of the dispute that followed. While it may be argued that the network news didn't have the luxury of time to treat the subject as thoroughly as the PBS special, the comparison is not unreasonable since, on the one hand, the Eastern/IAM conflict was no sudden crisis that took reporters by surprise. The reason *Frontline* did the story in January was that the imminence of that labor-management dispute was apparent months earlier. And, on the other hand, even if the networks were caught ill prepared, the comparison fairly shows how readily reporters accept the employers' premises and values, and how pervasively these attitudes then imbue their coverage.

This penchant for the management view is not limited only to the networks' harried coverage of fast-breaking stories. As CBS's *60 Minutes* demonstrated in its 1982 segment on the Coors Boycott, muckraking, the traditional tool of progressivism can be turned just as easily to the advantage of the big corporation.
In a fifteen minute report aired first in September of 1982, Mike Wallace portrayed Coors Brewery as an all-American company, the victim of an unfair boycott by organized labor and misinformed minorities of Hispanics and homosexuals.²² The program began with scenes of Burt Reynolds excerpted from the film, Smokey and the Bandit and the cute alien from E.T., and referred to Paul Newman and Gerald Ford as the beer's "devotees." And if those four associations weren't enough commercial advertising for the quality of the product, they included an inspiring account of the founding of the company by the owners' grandfather, a German immigrant who built the company up from nothing. By contrast, the proponents of the boycott were shown to be homosexuals and labor unionists.

Most significantly, though, Wallace and the 60 Minutes writers gave virtually no coverage to the background and issues of the labor dispute that prompted the boycott five years earlier. As a subsequent analysis of the segment by a student reporter at Drake Law School revealed, Coors had forced a strike at the brewery not over wages but over its pre-employment polygraph testing and its insistence on an open-shop clause, which would have allowed non-union

²² "Trouble Brewing," 60 Minutes, Vol. XV, No. 38; Reporter, Mike Wallace; Producer, Allan Marayanes, CBS, 26 Sep. 1982 (rebroadcast 5 June 1983).
employees to participate in union benefits without needing to pay dues or service fees.23

The issue of polygraph (lie detector) testing was, at least, considered in the program, but the history of union-busting was dismissed with the note that the workers had voted the union out "by a margin of 2-to-1" in 1978. No attempt was made to explain the importance of the open-shop issue and no mention was made of the fact that the strikers in 1978 were not permitted to vote in the election that expelled the union. Instead, Mike Wallace began his interview with Bill and Joe Coors, after listing some of the charges against them, with the sympathetic and encouraging question: "What lies are they telling, Joe Coors?"24

But the most damaging form of bias characterizing Wallace's report is once again "bias through omission of news." A. David Sickler, former employee of Coors and the AFL-CIO Boycott coordinator at the time, felt impelled to issue a five page memo to the boycotters after the program first aired to outline the substantial evidence he had provided Wallace and Marayanes that had never made it into the program.

The twenty-three items on Sickler's list included: the names of seven former employees who offered to substantiate

24 "Trouble Brewing," 12.
the labor practice allegations of the boycotters; a list of
nine community and coalition leaders involved in the boycott
who were willing to explain their allegations of employment
discrimination; an Unfair Labor Practice charge upheld by
the NLRB against the brewery in 1980; and information that
the chapter president of the one Hispanic organization,
LULAC (cited on the program as praising Coors' employment
practices) was initially hired by Coors in 1975 to change
the company's image, and that the local chapter's award to
Coors was opposed by the National LULAC. 25

The coup de grace of the 60 Minutes report, however,
was the sequence filmed at the brewery where Mike Wallace
spoke with what was described as a random selection of
employees at their lunch break. According to Wallace,

We wanted to know what Coors employees thought of all
the accusations being leveled against their employers.
Coors invited its employees to meet with us during
their lunch hour, and we were surprised to find that
hundreds of them were waiting to tell us a different
story from the one we'd been hearing. 26

Indeed, as the cameras revealed, the room was packed, and
three different people, an Hispanic and two women, each
stood up to praise the company unequivocally to the
unrestrained cheers and applause of the rest. This sequence
was clearly the most convincing part of the report, and it

25 A. David Sickler, Coors Boycott National Coordinator, AFL-
CIO, "Memorandum To: Coors Boycotters," (8 Oct. 1982) Re:

26 Sickler 13.
is likely that few viewers paid much attention to the fact that each speaker also identified him/herself as a supervisor. What, as Sickler's memo reveals, it was impossible to note is that the entire assembly was not a random selection of employees, but the management and supervisory staff of the brewery assembled by Coors for a party in honor of Wallace and 60 Minutes; a party which, according to Sickler, the producer, Alan Marayanes, said would not be filmed. 27

And finally, the most destructive omission of this report was the failure of Wallace to consider the positive effect this boycott has had on Coors and even the supervisors who testified on Coors' behalf. This omission is all too common throughout the news media in its treatment of labor campaigns. Wallace, for instance, clearly separated the 1977 allegations against the brewery from Coors' current reputation, but no recognition was given to the effect of the boycott in achieving these very improvements. Continuously, the report described the harm the boycott was doing to Coors, while the victimization of the workers, particularly the 1977 workers who sacrificed their jobs for improvements in working conditions enjoyed by Coors 1982 workers, was not considered relevant.

27 Sickler 5.
Similarly the struggles of labor unions striking to raise their wages and improve their working conditions is always approached by the media as both selfish in its motivation and inflationary in its effect. What is generally ignored is any consideration of the positive effects that strikes, boycotts and even failed organizing campaigns ordinarily have on industry standards that ultimately benefit the non-union work force as well.

This blind-spot reflects a narrowness of focus in ordinary news coverage that concerns itself with the immediate at the expense of the longterm interpretation, and reveals an economic perspective that is class-biased on behalf of the manager and the entrepreneur and at the expense of the wage-employee.

This detailed critique of a single segment of the 60 Minutes series would itself be unfair were it not, in fact, representative of that program's portrayal of organized labor. According to the summaries in Daniel Einstein's network news guide, of the five other 60 Minutes segments focused on the labor movement all appear to be supportive of the classic anti-union stereotypes noted above:

3/19/71 Report on George Meany and President Nixon
4/11/76 "Hoffa": Discussion with Mrs. Jimmy Hoffa and with former Hoffa associates regarding the former Teamster official's disappearance.
10/3/76 "Unions, Money and Politics": Examination of the influence and power of US labor unions.
Power and corruption are the themes most commonly influencing the television medium's portrayal of organized labor, and the record of 60 Minutes as well as the lion's share of overall network news attention has been to enforce and propound these stereotypes at every opportunity. Even when labor's foes are vastly more powerful or corrupt, the media's heavy thumb of denunciation almost always turns labor down.

Harvey Molotch, Sociology Professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara, concluded (in a somewhat amusingly phrased metaphor) that "The reporter's 'nose for news' ... includes as a critical component the sustenance of the ruling class."29 As unpalatable as that conclusion might be to the news media, it is not unsupported. No less a figure than Walter Cronkite himself, confessed to as much in his own 60 Minutes interview:

What is objective reporting? ...Well, we have our prejudices, we all have our biases, we have a structural problem in writing a news story and presenting it on television as to time and length, position in the paper, position on the news broadcast.

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28 Einstein 512-547.

These things are all going to be affected by our own beliefs; of course they are.  

The question seems to be not whether a bias exists, but what is the nature of the bias? If the bias is indeed a liberal one, then what justifies the exclusion of organized labor from the liberal agenda? It is no coincidence that a 1989 report prepared by William Hoynes and David Croteau of Boston College revealed that viewpoints of labor leaders, next to "radical/ethnic leaders", were the least likely to be heard or seen on ABC's Nightline. Not only did they find that labor representatives appeared only 1% of the time, they also found that when a labor leader was featured on the program, he or she was likely to be allotted a comparably lower number of lines as measured in the transcripts. The network agenda clearly has relegated labor to a position it considers non-representative of the public, as seen in the Hoynes-Croteau study and was evident in the 1984 and 1988 presidential election campaigns, when labor was regularly labeled a "special interest" outside the majority interests of the country.


32 Irving Howe and Michael Kinsley, "'Special Interests' & American Politics" Dissent 31 (Summer 1984): 270-274.
Dramatic Series

As Ralph Arthur Johnson correctly noted in his 1981 article, dramas and situation comedies such as are regularly aired on prime-time, network television have an even greater ability to influence viewer beliefs and values than direct news programs or documentaries because they are "integrated less consciously, and thus engender little conscious refutation."33

Using the data base of scripts held at the Television Script Archive at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications in Philadelphia, together with reviews of other published indices of nationally produced prime-time TV dramas and situation comedies (sitcoms), I have surveyed the content of sixty-two televised episodes portraying labor unions or labor-management relations shown in the United States between 1974 and 1989 (see Appendix D). While this list may not be definitive, it is certainly extensive enough of a catalog to reveal the main themes of this medium's portrayal of labor over the past two decades.

For the most part, it has only been since the early 1970s that television series have dealt openly with labor unions as a possible subject of their plot or subplot development. A review of the plot synopses in Joel Eisner

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and David Krinsky's guide to TV sitcoms in syndication, reveals virtually no presence of labor unions in any of the popular programs of the 1950s or 1960s. The Life of Riley, for example, which aired on NBC between October of 1949 and August of 1958 with 238 episodes syndicated, depicted the blue-collar existence of the character Chester A. Riley, played in the first season by Jackie Gleason and after that by William Bendix. And though several episodes were set in the aircraft plant where he and his friend, Gillis, worked, the plots seemed to go out of their way to avoid a union reference or entanglement. Even in episodes in which he tried to raise his pay, or help a friend who'd been fired, where the presence of a union would be most likely to assert itself, the plot synopses imply the labor-management relationship was non-union, despite the fact the such plants in that decade were largely unionized shops.

With the possible exception of a lone episode of The Untouchables, which showed the mob infiltrating an honest local of a truckers' union, not until the landmark broadcast of the series All in the Family starring Carroll O'Connor as the infamous, blue-collar bigot, Archie Bunker, did network dramas or sitcoms dare to take up questions of labor-


35 Eisner and Krinsky 459-460.
relations in a dramatic or comedic plot outside the traditional news or documentary framework. But ever since the third season of All in the Family and the four episodes that first aired between September 17th and October 5th of 1974 (Appendix D, nos.1-4), the network attention to the labor movement as a plot device for dramatic series has been constant and continuous. We may well wonder whether it is only a coincidence that according to the statistics of union membership in the United States, 1975 also represents the end of a thirty year golden-age of organized labor throughout which American unions maintained close to an average of 30% of the nation's workforce unionized. After 1975, the union share of the workforce began slipping steadily to its current position of close to 17% of nonfarm labor.36 Whether this medium in particular has functioned as a contributing cause to that decline or, as I'm sure it's defenders would maintain, as a candid reflector of the social forces responsible, may never be decided with any certainty. But a careful analysis of the themes common to television's fictional depictions of the labor movement will provide an important guide to this discussion.

Of the sixty-two programs considered in this analysis, all were produced for the three major networks, and all were

aired in prime-time viewing spots, where they enjoyed the widest possible audience exposure.

While one might expect that these program episodes would be spread by chance evenly over the three major networks, in fact, there is a surprising difference in network attention to labor relations. Of the total, the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) had aired almost half of the episodes, followed by the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), with the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) a distant third.

Table 2

A Survey of Network Dramatic Programs
Dealing with Labor Relations Between 1974-1989

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<tr>
<th>Network</th>
<th>Episodes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBS</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBC</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Similar to the pattern noted above with respect to the network news and documentary coverage, this uneven ratio of network attention reveals a probable purposefulness in the consideration or lack of consideration given to labor themes. For instance, when the surveyed episodes are classified by season as well as network, over half of the sample (33) were presented in the first five seasons from the fall of 1974 through the spring of 1979. And ABC's overall distant third became even more distant in the 80s,
representing only four of its total twelve in the last ten of the fifteen seasons surveyed, while the other two networks reduced their coverage proportionately.

The quantity of coverage must, of course, be considered in relationship to an evaluation of the content of the coverage as well. In most cases it was relatively easy to determine whether the episode was making a positive or negative statement about the efficacy or general worth of labor unions. Having classified, therefore, each of the surveyed episodes as either positive, negative or neutral in its portrayal of organized labor, I discovered that there was a clear difference between the first five seasons from the 1970s and the following ten seasons of the 1980s by portrayal as well as by quantity of coverage.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Portrayal of Organized Labor in Surveyed Episodes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974-1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While it is clear that in any given period of time, the overall portrayal of labor unions is likely to be negative, it is interesting to note that the severity of that bias was at its peak at the same time that the labor movement in the
country was at its peak in power and influence. Two sociological developments of that time period might explain this phenomenon. On the one hand, the period of the mid to late 1970s saw the demise of Jimmy Hoffa with a considerable amount of other media attention to the Teamsters and the long history of federal investigations that had started with Robert Kennedy's probes in the late 50s. On the other hand, this period also saw the growth of an economic conservatism that, at least in the area of labor relations, appears to have been championed and encouraged by these television portrayals.

Over and over again we see the twin themes of power and corruption characterizing the depiction of organized labor in televised dramas. Serpico (Appendix D, no. 5), for instance, the first serious treatment of labor outside of the sitcom format since The Untouchables, established the most popular formula for depiction of organized labor. Set in Brooklyn, it shows the character, John Maloney, a rough but big-hearted Irishman, running for President of his local Truckers' union (BTC) against Jock Powell. As the script instructs, Powell (a subliminal abbreviation of "powerful") is cast in his "forties, a Jimmy Hoffa type, tough, rough, king of his mountain and not about to be dethroned." 37 The episode opens with Maloney's campaign worker and close

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37 "Every Man Must Pay His Dues" by Brad Radnitz, Serpico (Annenberg Script SERPIC002) 11.
friend, Ed Demarest, killed in a car bomb explosion. This car-bomb sequence, over the years becomes a TV cliche of labor union activity. No less than seven episodes of the total survey sample, or more than 10% of that sample, depict an election contest that involves a car-bombing murder or attempted murder of the young, reform candidate (Appendix D, Nos. 5, 11, 21, 25, 27, 29, 56). These episodes, in fact represent all the sample programs that depict a union election of officers, outside of one or two sitcoms in which a union representative is hastily delegated spokesperson, usually against their will or better judgment. The theme that union politics are undemocratic occasions for terrorism and bullying is, therefore, unrelenting in television depictions, and is quite unfair to the labor movement at large where clearly the vast majority of union elections are conducted freely and democratically.

Another curious anomaly of the television picture of these union election campaigns is the continuous use of the reform candidate's accusation of "sweetheart deals." As Serpico's Maloney protests, "Do you want to go on putting up with violence and the sweetheart deals that Powell's been negotiating with management for six years." Similar allegations were voiced in at least three other scripts (Appendix D, Nos. 12, 31, 60). A "sweetheart deals" is the

38 Serpico 5.
older, critical term for what in more recent times have been called --less critically-- "concessions." While the standard criticism of the labor movement has been its power and resulting inflationary impact on the economy, the sweetheart-deal critique implies that labor leaders have not been vigorous enough in their negotiations. Generally, though, this dichotomy is not worked out in the plots other than to malign the motives of the existing union leadership. Significantly, for instance, the *Serpico* episode ends with Powell going to jail, but Maloney losing the election anyway. Thus it is, as TV would have us believe, that our justice system is vindicated, but unions remain mired institutionally in their own corruption.

In a 1977 episode of *Quincy* (Appendix D, No. 21) we see another veiled portrayal of the Hoffa-look-alike being used to express the theme of bad union leadership in a form similar to that observed as typical of the feature-length films described in the previous chapter. Here it is the character of Tony Gordon, president of a Philadelphia based Labor Brotherhood, who tells Quincy: "Well, lemme tell you a couple of things, Doctor. We did bust a few heads. That's how you run a labor union when you're getting started and you got a bunch of company goons to hassle with."39 The script describes his union Hall as, "A modern, impressive

structure, as befits a labor organization as rich and powerful as the FWA [the rival Farm Workers union] is weak and struggling." Gordon is unflatteringly contrasted to Roberto "Beto" Cruz, the charismatic leader of the "Farm Workers' Alliance" whose honesty and goodness are beyond reproach, but who is, after all, powerless and pitiable. The popular theme that weak union leaders are good, strong union leaders are bad flies in the face of the equally popular theme of sweetheart deals, but logical consistency seems to have very little to do with the care and feeding of such stereotypes.

Even the supposedly kinder treatment accorded unions in the 80s, reinforces more subtly the same themes. A 1989 episode of the drama Wiseguy (Appendix D, No. 60) establishes sympathy for a poor local of New York's Chinese garment workers. But, instead of focusing blame for the abuse of these workers on the employers, it criticizes their national union leaders for being too weak and complacent, and signing sweetheart contracts.

Surely, though, the most remarkable feature of the dramatic portrayal of labor in network programming is the incredibly high incidence of strikes and/or walkouts described. Nearly seventy per cent of the sample (42 episodes) described strikes, with another five programs

40 "Murder by Self," Quincy 36.
depicting threatened strikes. In fact, all twelve of the
ABC programs in the survey were about strikes. And of the
fifteen remaining episodes not about strikes or strike
threats, seven were about corruption and organized crime
infiltration of union election campaigns, five more depicted
the gulf between current workers and out-of-touch union
leadership, and only three (Appendix D, Nos. 6, 23, 48)
showed the union in a positive light, advocating the
legitimate rights of its membership.

While there were some of the strike depictions that
also showed the union positively, particularly those
episodes written shortly after the Hollywood writers' strike
(Appendix D, Nos. 59, 64), none of the positive depictions
appeared in the first five seasons of the sample, and the
other three were spread out equally, one on each of the major
networks (Appendix D, Nos. 34, 39, 51), suggesting tokenism.

Certainly, the bulk of the television strike portrayals
have reflected rather a negative image of the process and a
distorted sense of the purpose and frequency of strikes in
industrial relations and collective bargaining. One
significant way in which these dramas control viewer
perceptions of the subject is by the point of view of the
series' central character. Without much difficulty, for
instance, it is possible to classify each of the surveyed
episodes by one of three possible ways the central character
might relate to the labor issue of the plot. Either the
series' primary star is the laborer (first person) in the situation; he or she is an employer or consumer (second person) directly affected by the issue, but not a laborer; or the central character is an outside observer, mediator, or catalyst (third person) not directly or personally affected by the dispute or labor issue raised by the plot. By this criterion the sixty-two episodes in this survey may be divided as follows:

Table 4

Surveyed Network Dramatic Programs by Point of View

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Person</th>
<th>2nd Person</th>
<th>3rd Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>all episodes:</td>
<td>12 = 20%</td>
<td>28 = 45%</td>
<td>22 = 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strike episodes:</td>
<td>11 = 26%</td>
<td>20 = 48%</td>
<td>11 = 26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both instances, the bulk of the episodes describe the labor issue from the point of view of the employer or consumer, clearly preferring that point of view to the first person dramas in which the central character of the program is the worker or laborer involved. The impact of this subtle placement of vantage on the viewers' sympathies over time cannot be ignored. Particularly when the plot is depicting a strike or labor dispute, the themes are naturally going to be influenced by the position of the series' central character.

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In Ralph Arthur Johnson's 1981 study cited above, a general survey of prime-time television characters revealed a heavy weighting toward professional, white-collar and managerial occupations. No doubt this same class bias in selection of series' principals accounts for the dominance of second person/employer viewpoint in strike depictions. Yet, when the occupations of the striking workers in our survey are tabulated, blue-collar occupations outnumber white collar two to one. Twenty-eight of the forty-two episodes described blue collar workers on strike, most commonly plant workers of some sort. Only three of the blue collar strike episodes described public employees, though half of all the white collar depictions (seven of fourteen) were public workers, either teachers or police officers.

The reversion to primarily blue collar depictions of striking workers when the majority of regular prime time characters are white collar is clearly the result of the preference for a second person/employer point of view. It relates to the larger issue of prevailing media values and reveals the pattern of liberalism most common to television dramatic series. Christopher Lasch first recognized it in his study of Norman Lear's All in the Family. In the consistently condescending approach that series applied to its blue collar anti-hero, Archie Bunker, Lasch discerned

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41 Johnson, "World Without Workers: Prime Times's Presentation of Labor" 202-203.
also a blatant class bias signaling a subtle shift in American liberalism:

All in the Family dramatizes experiences central to the formation of a new, liberal, managerial intelligentsia, which has turned on the ethic of ghettoes, developed a cosmopolitan outlook and cosmopolitan tastes through higher education, and now looks back on its origins with a mixture of superiority and sentimental regret. 42

Indeed, in the popular sequel to All in the Family Archie has himself moved into the white-collar managerial world where his notoriously blind-conservatism is perhaps more consistent if not comfortable when an episode of that series (Appendix D, No. 39) leaves Archie confronted with a labor movement emerging at his restaurant. Murray, Archie's partner, tries to persuade Archie to accept his employees' unionization, but Archie says, "Would you listen to the liberal here? Murray, don't you know nothin'? Once you start in with the unions, they take over. They're like a bad rash." 43 But what is more interesting is Murray's abrupt change of heart when he hears the cost. Archie chides him: "Oh, listen to Mr. Big Union Man here. When it comes to spending your own money, you liberals are all the same: you gotta reach into your own pocket to find your heart." 44

This rare occasion in which the medium comes close to a


43 "Wildcat Strike" by Stephen Miller and Mark Fink, Archie Bunker's Place (Annenberg Script ARCHIE036) 14.

44 "Wildcat Strike," Archie Bunker's Place 17.
scrutiny of its own pseudo-liberalism, however, failed to have much effect on future portrayals of labor.

A similar confrontation between liberal and conservative attitudes toward labor unions was the subject of a 1976 episode of the sitcom All's Fair (Appendix D, No. 9). Conservative Richard Barrington (Richard Crenna) and his liberal girl friend Charley (Bernadette Peters) find a picket line in front of Richard's condominium. While Charley grabs a picket sign and joins the line saying, "These poor men have every right to better their working conditions by negotiating with their money-grubbing, labor-exploiting employers! The rotten tightwads", Richard argues, "Charley, it's a condominium. I own my own apartment. I'm one of the rotten tightwads."45

Significantly, much more space is accorded Richard to justify his opposition to the strikers than was allowed Charley. Richard is asked what he's got against unions and he answers, "I resent the way labor unions pose as the workingman's friend when actually they're nothing but elite clubs for the organized few. Most people out of work can't even get into a union. And not only that -- if you clowns get what you want, the maintenance costs on my apartment will go right through the roof. The whole idea of my having to pay more money just because you join a union makes my

45 "The Perfect Evening" by Gy Waldron, All's Fair (Annenberg script ALFAIR006) 21.
blood boil." 46 No rebuttal or challenge is offered to the wisdom of these remarks, and the question is rendered moot when a hastily reached settlement is achieved and the strike is ended. The final impact, though, has clearly been to discredit Charley's traditional liberal support for the laborer which was portrayed as extremist, lacking deliberation or thoughtfulness and ultimately naive, whereas Richard's anti-union diatribe was portrayed as fair-minded and well-informed.

Nor is this the worst of the TV treatment of labor portrayed in the survey sample. A set of themes sometimes overlapping, sometimes featured alone, but most frequently unfriendly to organized labor are readily discernable in the plots of these TV dramas, particularly the episodes depicting strikes. Daniel C. Hallin, media critic at Johns Hopkins, discovered, for instance, what he terms a "reformist conservatism" typical of television ideology, noting that "the portrayal of conflict by no means always casts established institutions or authorities in a bad light. A great deal of television's conflict is good-against-evil conflict, evil being located outside the mainstream of society." 47 By this reckoning, it should


come as no surprise that in labor-management disputes, it is most often labor that finds itself outside the mainstream.

A persistent theme that commonly establishes the conviction that labor unions are not actually necessary anymore is the portrayal of the collective bargaining process as simplistic or foolish. This theme is the popular sitcom variety of what Parenti observed as the portrayal of labor struggles as senseless, avoidable contests created by unions' unwillingness to negotiate in good faith.\textsuperscript{48}

It is apparent in a significant number of the television episodes surveyed (Appendix D., Nos. 7, 20, 28, 33, 34, 36, 38, 52, 54, 55). For instance, a 1976 episode of Phyllis deliberately confused the bargaining between a city and its garbage workers' union with a personal spat Phyllis was having with Dan Valenti, the city official in charge of the mediation. Not only did the episode misrepresent the real role of mediators in such disputes, but it showed the union leader using the negotiations to coerce Dan into resolving his fight with Phyllis, a purpose obviously irrelevant to the issues of the labor dispute. Thus were Phyllis' spat and the union contract proposals assigned the same weight. This theme is also advanced by the cited scripts in the abbreviated picture they paint of what is purported to be a bargaining session. The script of Hizzoner (Appendix D.,

\textsuperscript{48} Parenti 84-85.
No. 28), for example, settles a long musician's strike in a short page of amazingly simplistic dialogue. And an *Eight is Enough* script (Appendix D., No. 38) settles a bitter strike when Bradford's son, Nicholas, simply explains to the labor and management negotiators, "If the other guy can't give what you want, then you've got to want something he can give..."49 These cursory portrayals of collective bargaining reduce and trivialize labor relations generally and the union role particularly.

The most derisive characterization of union bargaining was depicted in a 1984 episode of *Silver Spoons* (Appendix D., No. 55). Describing the union leader of the toy factory's employees as "an animal" that "keeps his toupee on with staples,"50 the owner of the factory and star of the show had only contempt for the union and the need to negotiate at all. The strike is settled in this episode when the owner's wife discovers that the union leader, who always wanted his own garden, was willing to accept concessions if he could get his garden. And so the strike was settled by paying-off the union leader. In an episode of the popular program, *Taxi* (Appendix D, No. 36), the union allows the personal degradation of Elaine Nardo (Marilu

49 ""Strike" by Bruce Shelly, *Eight is Enough* (Annenberg script EIGHT066) 67.

50 "Beauties and the Beasts" by Robert Illes and James Stein, *Silver Spoons* (Annenberg script SILVER054) 4.
Henner), the shop steward, when she is forced to date Louie De Palma (Danny DeVito), their boss and a disgusting lecher, in order to settle a cab driver strike. And more recently, St. Elsewhere's (Appendix D., No. 54) Nurse Helen Rosenthal (Christina Pickles), who fanatically led a nurses' strike, then a protest against the hospital's new mandatory drug testing policy, becomes herself a drug abuser and kills a patient in her care. In all of these programs, the theme that union bargaining is somehow flawed if not downright foolish is unrelenting.

The depiction of strikes in the television dramas surveyed here definitely affirms Parenti's finding that the media place emphasis on the impact rather than the causes of strikes, laying the blame for the strike totally on the union and detailing the damage the strike does to the economy and the public weal. 51 A common theme running through some of the most popular television dramatic series that focuses on the damage of the strike is the conflict between professionalism and union loyalties (Appendix D, Nos. 22, 32, 37, 47, 49, 54). Particularly in police, hospital, and teacher dramas we see a common resort to the strike as a plot device to test the characters' personal relationships and professional ethics.

51 Parenti 85.
This dramatic conflict between professionalism and union solidarity often pretends to an objectivity that is rarely equitable to the union. All too often the conflict revolves around the decision to respect or cross a picket line. And in almost every case where this theme of professionalism versus solidarity is portrayed, one or more of the star characters does, in fact, cross the picket line and scab against the strikers (Appendix D, Nos. 10, 19, 22, 32, 37, 38, 47, 49, 54, 58, 59, 61). The message that scabbing is or can be the right even heroic thing to do, at the same time vilifies the striking pickets that must be endured by the scab in pursuit of his or her professional commitment.

In *Maude* (Appendix D, No. 22), for instance, Arthur Harmon, Maude's doctor, after brief attempts to honor the local doctor's strike, is made to come to his senses and realize how impossible and futile it is to resist his normal instincts to heal the sick. He and the fellow doctor laughingly admit at the end of the program neither could resist seeing patients despite the strike. And even more devastating was the episode of *Chips* (Appendix D, No. 32) in which the series stars ride into a local city to take the place of that city's striking police force. The *Chips* officers not only cross that picket line, they insult and deride the strikers as incompetent fools, a portrayal emphasized by the characterizations scripted for the
strikers which has them looking out-of-shape physically as well as professionally. By the end of the episode the scabbing Chips team has solved the crime and shamed the striking officers for their lack of professionalism. The theme is particularly devastating because it tends to portray the scabbing worker as deeply involved in a moral dilemma while the striking workers are simply depicted as fanatics whose beliefs are not colored by shades of meaning. In the same St. Elsewhere cited above (Appendix D, No. 54) Nurse Helen Rosenthal (Christina Pickles) fanatically leads a nurses' strike against the hospital's kindly, long-suffering administrators Drs. Donald Westphall (Ed Flanders) and Auschlander while the scabbing nurses are portrayed more as caring, selfless professionals. And Bronx Zoo (Appendix D, No. 58) and Fame (Appendix D, No. 47) ran similar series on teacher's strikes. Not unlike the film Teachers in which Nick Nolte stood up heroically as an individual not with the teacher's union nor with the school's administrators, the strike-breaking (scab) teacher in the Bronx Zoo is admired for his individuality and personal courage while the strikers are portrayed as mindless, uncaring and selfish. And, even the striking teachers in Fame find themselves unable to resist the need to work with


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their students outside of school to help them prepare their various performances.

While the theme of professionalism dominates the white collar strike portrayals, its equivalent offshoot in blue-collar depictions is paternalism (Appendix D, Nos. 14, 20, 26, 39, 44). Curiously, while the theme of professionalism emphasizes independence of thought and action, the theme of paternalism encourages acquiescence and trust in the essential goodness of employers. In the popular series *Hill Street Blues* (Appendix D, Nos. 45 and 46) we saw an unusual appeal to both of these contradictory themes when the police officers were on the verge of a strike. They must weigh their natural "cop instincts" to serve and protect against their union solidarity. And in several other episodes the Hispanic officers and the Black officers get drawn into coalitions that are vaguely construed as union subcommittees, protected by their contract. But we are always given to see that these caucuses or coalitions are divisive to the same extent that they are assertive of the minority officers' rights. The message is leave it to Furillo. Furillo knows best.

Daniel C. Hallin observed, "As entertainment, television is a consensual medium. It focuses on what people are presumed to share." Unions often represent an

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53 Hallin 23.
institutional threat to that national consensus. To some extent, even an employee strike or slowdown of itself is less threatening to the television image of our national consensus than the recognition of a union. A significant number of the strike depictions in the survey are, in fact, non-union strikes (Appendix D, Nos. 20, 26, 39, 41, 49), in which no union is formed or recognized throughout the protest. In each case, the employers amazingly (or rather paternalistically) proceed to negotiate with their workers, instead of just firing them. And in each case the episode ends happily and order is restored when the negotiations restore the happy family quality of the non-union labor management relationship.

Evidence of the networks' avoidance of union recognition may be seen, as Cirino posited, in their "bias through omission" as well. In 1981, for instance, Saracen Productions & Rose and Asseyev Productions in association with 20th Century Fox Television produced a sixty minute pilot episode for a series based on the popular film Norma Rae, which described a bitter union organizing drive in a southern textile mill. As difficult as it may be to conceive of a plot for Norma Rae with the union themes omitted, the script for that pilot focused on a custody battle between Norma Rae and her ex-husband, and featured

54 Cirino 141-146.
the New York union organizer, Reuben Warshowsky, almost as an afterthought, in only a minor role supporting Norma Rae before her courtroom ordeal. Yet even with the union themes so drastically reduced, the pilot was not picked up nor ever aired.

As devastating as any overt expression of bias could ever be, is the "sideswipe," a device described in the previous chapter on the movies. Like the cinema, television dramas, particularly comedies regularly milk the labor union stereotype for an easy joke that then reinforces the same stereotype at the expense of a more accurate depiction of organized labor. The comedy program D.C. Follies (FOX, 24 July 1988) interrupted their program with a mock commercial for a fictitious "Teamster Fund Insurance," that "... holds you in their strong arms." Similarly, on the St. Elsewhere episode "Their Town" (NBC, 13 March 1989), three carpenters working on Dr. Westphall's new home in New Hampshire, refuse a gracious offer to sit and eat with the doctor's wife, claiming "union regulations require that we eat sitting on the floor."

The one bright note in this otherwise bleak survey of union portrayals in television dramas can be seen in a set of programs aired since March of 1988, after the Hollywood writers' strike. In the first case, the popular prime time

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program, Moonlighting (ABC, 22 March 1988) during the strike may have inadvertently, and with the best intentions, trivialized the plight of the striking writers, by ending one of their shows with a humorous dance routine that marched through the offices of the striking writers. The program, written before the strike, fell about seven minutes short, according to the show's producer, Jay Daniel. "Normally we just turn to the writing staff and say we need another scene here." Without the opportunity to do that, Bruce Willis and Cybill Shepherd began singing "Wooly Bully" and danced through the offices of the show's five writers, who joined in on the silly skit carrying their picket signs.

In the relatively short period since the strike, already two well-known sitcoms consciously attempted to portray the plight of labor in a positive light. Designing Women, (Appendix D, No. 59) featured the series stars, who operate a small interior decorating company, being picketed by employees of a drapery manufacturer that was supplying them. At first, the "designing women" cross the picket lines and try to work at the drapery factory to rush their job through. But there they realize how sorry the working conditions and wages were for the striking workers, and in the end they join the strikers to pressure the draper to settle. And in an episode of Head of the Class (Appendix D, 

No. 62), the teacher (Howard Hesseman) is able to teach his class why he is committed to the teachers' union and the issues behind the existing teachers' strike. Working with a variety of his students' misconceptions (essentially the same as in this study's survey of high school student attitudes, Appendix A), the teacher's lesson is so convincing that, at the end of the episode, the class rejects the interference of a scab substitute.

But these portrayals, viewed over the span of the entire survey, are the exception not the rule. In all likelihood they represent a changed attitude affected by the personal involvement in their own industry's strike. But even as an anomaly, they raise the question of where lies the responsibility for the labor union portrayals observed in this survey. Under normal circumstance, the authors or screenwriters would bear responsibility, but there is no pattern of writer assignments apparent. There are nearly as many writers represented in the survey as there are episodes. Where patterns become apparent, as noted above for news as well as dramatic series, is in the network attention accorded labor plots or subjects. And for dramatic series, a significantly larger portion of the sample were dramas produced by MTM (Mary Tyler Moore) studios. These findings suggest that the larger producers and the networks exercise enough control over the scripts to guide and determine the portrayals we see of organized
labor. It would appear that the writers are responding to their own media cliches as they repeat and adapt the common themes described above. Accuracy in television depictions of the labor movement has not been a concern. Labor terminology is abused and situations are often dramatized without respect for realism or the true plight of the union or non-union labor depicted. The episode of Designing Women (Appendix D, No. 59) considered earlier made no mention of the fact that the union picket of their residence actually constituted a secondary boycott under the applicable federal law, and would have been illegal, subjecting the union to major fines, court injunction, and possible civil liability.

Though television programs and films often list in their credits consultants or special advisors for historical or professional accuracy when dealing with police, courtroom, or hospital dramas and documentaries, experienced labor leaders or business agents do not appear to have been consulted on any of the dramas surveyed. Labor portrayals, therefore, are left to what is assumed to be common knowledge. It is unfortunate that this common knowledge has been so riddled with misconceptions and ponderous stereotypes that the television image of organized labor has helped push the values and goals of the American labor movement off of the liberal agenda entirely.
CHAPTER IV

NEWSPAPERS: "The Labor Beat"

Oscar Wilde:

In old days men had the rack. Now they have the press.¹

As Albert Zack, former Director of Public Relations for the AFL-CIO, noted in his 1977 address to a conference on media relations, "The free trade union movement and the free press in this country share a common breeding ground -- the first amendment to the Constitution."² Perhaps for this reason these two institutions, the press and labor, have over the years shared a love-hate relationship as either or both attempted to live up to those constitutional promises of freedom of speech and assembly -- each in its own different way, both asserting the preeminence of their role in bringing about social reform and the broader-based representation upon which democracy is founded.


Certainly there have been many times when the press and organized labor have worked together. In the early days of the labor movement, it was the muckraking press characterization of the "robber barons" and the "captains of industry" that provided workers with much of the rhetoric of their moral imperative to organize. More recently, examples are harder to find, but occasionally, such as in the campaign of the eight bank tellers in Willmar, Minnesota, to organize a union; or the fight of shipyard workers at Pearl Harbor to stop the Navy's use of toxic paints, the press can be seen to champion a labor union's cause.

For the most part, though, the treatment of labor in the press, and the local newspapers in particular, has been and continues to be negative. The image of labor unions projected in the press, as in the other media, is one of corruption, greed, self-interest, and power. As Cirino and Parenti found, stories that support that stereotype are trumpeted while stories that are inconsistent with the stereotype are routinely quashed or run in such an unassuming context as to often go totally unnoticed.³

In some cases there is no doubt this anti-labor bias is heavy handed and deliberate. Local publishers and their editors are, after all, themselves employers dealing with their own workers -often unionized- in the less than happy

³ Cirino 134-179; Parenti 84-85.
circumstances that surround the process of collective bargaining. It is no surprise, then, that they should routinely approach labor relations stories from a management perspective. And when these same publishers, as is often the case, are social companions with the very employers in their community likely to be embroiled in one sort of a labor dispute or another, class loyalties can be expected to prevail.

But, much of the time, the image of labor is colored by more subtle forms of bias, bias that may not be deliberate but has even greater potential for misinforming and stereotyping not only labor, but any non-establishment reform movement at odds with the known and familiar. Abbott Joseph Liebling, who framed some of the most telling criticism of American yellow-journalism, was among the first to notice the anti-labor bias back in the early decades of the 20th century. When Liebling entered Dartmouth College in 1920, he studied under John Moffatt Mecklin, professor of sociology, who first called his attention to the untrustworthiness of the newspaper coverage of the great steel strike of 1919 and the newspaper bias against labor.4 A sample of this coverage can be found in the following excerpt from the Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph, which ran:

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Yesterday the enemy of liberty was Prussianism. Today it is radicalism. Masquerading under the cloak of the American Federation of Labor a few radicals are striving for power. They hope to seize control of the industries and turn the company over to the 'red' rule of Syndicalism ...

America is calling you. The steel strike will fail. Be a 100 percent American. Stand by America ... GO BACK TO WORK MONDAY. 

Typical of the treatment the strikers were receiving in papers throughout the country, the above passage was supplemented by editorial letters and advertisements provided by local churchmen, businessmen and politicians who all joined in portraying the unionists as communists and foreign insurgents bent on the destruction of the American way of life.

It is not surprising that not much later another great media critic, Walter Lippmann, first coined the term "stereotype" in 1922. Indeed the portrayal of labor was badly beset by the stereotype of the foreign-born communist agitator. But even when the bias was not as strident as it was against the steel strikers, Lippmann observed a systematic weakness in ordinary reportage that always seemed to work against labor. He noticed in the same study that:

A great deal, I think myself the crucial part, of what looks to the worker and the reformer as deliberate misrepresentation on the part of newspapers, is the direct outcome of a practical difficulty in uncovering the news, and the emotional difficulty of making distant facts interesting unless, as Emerson says, we can

"perceive (them) to be only a new version of our familiar experience" and can "set about translating (them) at once into our own parallel facts."6

Or, to put it more simply, the reporter, by the nature of his medium, must report news already understandable to the general public on the level of the public's self-interest and consciousness of the issue. Lippmann correctly observed that this usually results in labor stories that focus strictly on overt events or on how these events are likely to interfere with the readers' life. Michael Parenti described the same problem as the fourth characteristic on his list of media-misrepresentations: "Emphasis on the impact rather than the causes of strikes, laying the blame for the strike totally on the union and detailing the damage the strike does to the economy and the public weal."7 And when issues and causes are relegated to effects and consequences, media coverage will be focused on strikes and boycotts rather than on the working conditions or wage inequities that may have occasioned them.

While there are those who regard the period 1933 to 1941 as a time when the "Fourth Estate" was actually

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7 Parenti 85.
friendly to the house of labor,\(^8\) that alliance was restricted to issues like child labor and mine safety. When it came to strikes, newspapers fell back to their traditional defense of the major economic interests. During the 1934 waterfront strike on the West coast, for example, John Francis Neylan, Hearst's man in San Francisco, called a meeting of all the major publishers in San Francisco and Oakland and told them: "We publishers have a responsibility to protect our community from Communism. What we need is a committee that can clear editorials and stories about the strike."\(^9\) A similar strangle hold on strike news was common throughout the 1930s particularly in the case of CIO actions since the papers found the smaller AFL craft unions less threatening than the aims of the CIO to organize the nation's industrial workers.

In Hawaii, however, in 1938 when a unique coalition of AFL and CIO unions were trying to organize the Inter-Island Steam Ship Company, the local press made no secret of its bias against an organizing strike that promised to bring the West Coast spirit of unionism to the islands. And when a small army of local policemen opened fire on a sympathy


demonstration of unarmed men and women sitting on the Hilo docks, the local papers described the demonstration as a "riot" that the police properly dispersed. This was not surprising since the General Manager of the local paper was himself a member of the chamber of commerce that had ordered the police to the docks in the first place.\textsuperscript{10}

The problem has not gotten smaller over the years. If anything, as the issues have grown more and more complex, the same problem Lippmann described in 1922 has only grown worse each decade since. In 1940 another journalist remarked:

\begin{quote}
For some time there has been criticism of labor news in the American press. The New Deal insisted over and over again that it did not get a fair break in the newspapers. Radical groups denounce their treatment by the press. They denounce newspaper owners. 
There is some foundation for all these attacks. In the case of labor the difficulty has often been due to a lack of understanding.\textsuperscript{11}
\end{quote}

By 1940 the need for understanding had increased considerably. President Roosevelt had signed the Wagner Act into federal law granting workers for the first time the legal right to organize unions and granting legal status to union agreements and the process by which they were negotiated. This, of course, was only the first of many


\textsuperscript{11} Neil MacNeil, \textit{Without Fear or Favor} (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1940) 368.
federal and state laws that would eventually weave an increasingly complex web of labor relations issues considerably beyond the scope of the average local reporter and well beyond the ken of the general public's comfortable frame of reference.

For truly informed reporting on the subject, a paper had to be large enough to designate a "labor beat" and assign it to someone dedicated, if not educated, to a thorough, issue-based comprehension of that town's labor relations network. That, unfortunately, requires a professional commitment from publisher, editor and reporter alike that is the exception rather than the rule in the American press. Large, nationally syndicated papers tend to have the best, least biased coverage. The Wall Street Journal, for example, though often guided by a conservative, Republican editorial policy, has nevertheless a reputation for high quality, in depth, informed labor reporting primarily because it has been able to maintain a specialized complement of labor reporters. Sadly, the trend seems to be in the opposite direction, a New Jersey-based labor reporter noted:

While business coverage is on the rise, labor journalism is declining in quantity and quality. "It has been declining for a long time, probably since the 1950s," says John Hoerr, an associate editor at Business Week who specializes in labor.

The San Francisco Chronicle, which in the 1940s had two labor writers, has no one with that title
now, though management says labor issues are handled by its three-person economics team. 12

The practice in Hawaii is probably typical. The former labor reporter for the Advertiser came to that beat directly from the food section. One of their more inquisitive reporters, she had, after a few years, developed considerable credibility in the labor community, at which point she was "promoted" to the economy and business beat. Her replacement then had likewise to start from scratch, and has only been identified as a labor reporter when the article is about labor. His by-line on a series on Japanese investment, written during the same period, described him simply as a staff reporter, and within a year he too had moved off the labor beat into business. Certainly these reporters are trying their best to cover the news fairly and comprehensively, but the constant rotation of the labor beat like this is obviously not designed to promote informed coverage. The same thing happens commonly at local papers throughout the country.

Describing the embarrassing inability of the local and national press to understand any of the developments in the 1981 coal strike, Curtis Seltzer revealed the two primary failings in an article for the Columbia Journalism Review: first, the reporters had not developed any contacts among

the rank and file members of the union; and second, the
reporters had no access to "independent coal observers."\textsuperscript{13}
In other words, the reporters covering the strike were not
properly experienced enough to obtain any information except
the official press releases of the coal companies and
superficial, guarded comments from the union leadership.

Similarly, John Grimes, former labor writer for the
\textit{Wall Street Journal} recounted,

\begin{quote}
But when I used to go out into the field to report
on labor, go to a union convention, or talk to
some union leader, I would very often find that
the local reporter assigned to the story was
actually his newspaper's police reporter, who had
been sent out to cover a strike or some other
potentially dramatic development.
He often had little perception of what the labor
movement was, where it had come from, or what the
important issues were.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

The constant association of labor unions with crime
reporting is probably the single most damaging form of bias
affecting the labor movement. And though this bias may be
less the result of any deliberate attempt to slur labor than
it is the effect of the reporters' and editors'
preconceptions or predispositions toward the subject, the
effect is just as devastating. Reporters who come to the
labor beat from the police beat naturally bring with them
prejudices they may not even be aware of. That they were

\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{14} John A. Grimes "Are the media shortchanging organized labor?" \textit{Monthly Labor Review} August 1987: 53-54.
\end{enumerate}
assigned out of police beat to labor indicates as well the connection that exists between these two subjects in the mind of the City Editor who made the assignment.

Clearly writing is influenced as well. Stories about strikes and picket lines are preferred and even when the news is just about an election or ratification meeting, the tendency is to color it in the adjectives of crime. When Jesse L. Carr's election was reported in the Advertiser in 1984, this was the report:

Jesse L. Carr, 58, Alaska Teamsters boss who almost agreed to a merger of his fabulously rich union fiefdom with the Hawaii Teamsters seven years ago, is the new titular chief of all of the union's operations in 13 western states, including Hawaii.¹⁵

As we see here, there is a peculiar aversion in labor reports to formal titles or proper names for leadership positions. Instead, one would almost think "boss" or "chief" were the actual offices into which labor leaders were elected. Reporters refer respectfully to the "president" or "CEO" of a business, but labor unions are led by chiefs or bosses, words that obviously suggest a lack of democratic selection. Yet it is actually truer that business leadership is much less democratically selected than union leadership. Federal laws, like the Landrum-Griffin Act, require labor union democracy, while businesses

are generally run by executive decree. Yet one would be hard pressed to find a reporter ever referring to a large corporation as a "fabulously rich fiefdom." This story may be an extreme case of reporter bias, but the same tactics— in less concentrated form— are not uncommon throughout local labor coverage.

Labor unions themselves often fail to realize the full impact of this kind of treatment when they remain unperturbed by the labeling and stereotyping of unions other than their own. As long as their own ox isn't being gored at the time, they feel safe. But the truth is that, in the mind of the general public, unions are unions. Fine distinctions between AFL-CIO and independent affiliates (such as the Teamsters and the ILWU were prior to 1988) do not apply. The ordinary reader is likely to lump all union coverage together and, for instance, confuse Carr's alleged "fiefdom" with the organization of unions in general.

The full impact of this kind of writing on the general public is difficult to assess. Even when the reporter has managed to portray the story fairly and evenly, the construction of the headline (which is controlled by an editor, not the reporter), or the lay out of the story in terms of its size and proximity to the front page or other stories of a positive or negative nature may all be influential to the final perception of that paper's readers.
In Leonard Doob's treatise on propaganda, the significance of headlines alone is given particular weight:

Headlines are important as every newspaper man and almost every reader know. Besides being readily perceived, they are almost always the first part of the story to be perceived and hence the responses they produce in the reader are likely to affect his subsequent perception of and reaction to the story itself. ... Many individuals, moreover, read only the headlines and, therefore, their entire impression of a story is derived from this not necessarily adequate source. 16

Inasmuch as the average person reads through the headlines until he reaches a story which interests him to read further, it can be assumed that many readers do, in fact, only read the headlines and are most likely to read the labor headline together with whatever headline is immediately before or after it.

Consider, then, the effect of the regular placement of the labor story next to "police beat" or some other report of criminal activity. Hawaii's two major dailies, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin and the Honolulu Advertiser are generally considered to treat labor objectively, 17 but a study of the lay-out of their labor coverage, in fact, reveals just such a pattern. In an example of Robert Cirino's catalog of "Bias in the Headline," and "Bias


Through 'Coincidental' Placement," these papers month after month run their labor headlines next to unrelated but incriminating headlines of violent or repugnant criminal activity. ¹⁸ "Prince Kuhio Hotel will be picketed" headlined a labor story, for example, that was printed just to the left of the headline "Rape, robbery in Haleakala ..." in such a way that the stories would be easily merged by the casual reader. ¹⁹ Similarly the headline "HGEA seeks role in police union dispute" was immediately followed by a story about a "Man, 60, charged with sex abuse of boy." ²⁰

The following stories appeared next to the regular "Police Beat" feature that summarizes the previous day's criminal arrests and investigations: "Sugar labor contract...";²¹ "Foodland Employees agree to cut in wages..." and "Union, pineapple companies reach agreement."²² But the effect is just as damaging when the labor story is next to a violent, criminal report even if it's not labeled "police beat" per se. And the incidence of this association of labor headlines with crime reports has not abated over the years. A current record of labor

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¹⁸ Cirino 154-159.
coverage in the two Honolulu dailies reveals the regularity of the pattern (see Appendix E).

In an average period where there would be about twenty-four labor stories in a single four-week period, between four and six stories were likely to be located next to some kind of criminal report. For some reason, the incidence actually increased in February and March. And the Advertiser tended to have a lower incidence than The Star-Bulletin primarily because the former often carried more labor stories. From April 1st to May 10th, for instance, the Star-Bulletin only had a dozen labor stories, while the Advertiser carried two dozen. In the same period each paper placed the labor report next to a criminal report four times, but that represents 25% of the Star-Bulletin's coverage as opposed to only 12% of the Advertiser's. At their worst, both papers do it as much as 30%, and it is rarely as low as 10%.

The question, of course, is how much is too much? This is difficult to answer empirically. For the most part, the relevant scientific research is related to the general subject of subliminal perception, which, since Key's overestimation of the process in Subliminal Seduction (1973), has been discredited. Interestingly, though psychologists and psychiatrists have been attacking the idea, advertisers and public relations professionals have continued to explore its possibilities. And there is recent research to support
the idea that "supraliminal" advertising aimed at image creation is effective. In such research message exposure typically occurs in a film format where a brief message is inserted about five times at 1/60th of a second over a two minute period. This would suggest that even a 10% occurrence of labor headlines with criminal reports would have the potential -particularly over time- of creating a public image of labor tainted by criminal association.

But the other question that should arise deals with the basic issue of editorial lay-out decision making. Why isn't it more appropriate to carry labor stories, especially those about major, local industry's labor contract settlements or contract ratifications in the business section in the first place? What possible reason is there for placing contract or even peaceful strike news in or around police beat where it is bound to color public perception and contribute to the stereotyped image of corruption and vice in the labor movement?

To be fair to the editors and press "gatekeepers" who organize these stories like this, it's probably not done maliciously or even deliberately to tar labor per se. These stories are laid out the way they are because labor news is

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classified by the editors, as Lippmann theorized, into "a new version of familiar experience."

This editorial pigeon-holing of labor stories affects not only labor's association with criminality, but many other elements of the stereotype as well. David Ignatius, a former reporter for the Wall Street Journal, studied the way his fellow pressmen unanimously championed Edward Sadlowski in his 1977 election run for the presidency of the United Steel Workers against the older, less colorful Lloyd McBride. Though McBride actually won the election in the end, Ignatius was forced to conclude that the lopsided partisan coverage supporting Sadlowski while portraying McBride as a tool of the labor establishment actually constituted a "class bias."

Older, conservative labor leaders like George Meany of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and I.W. Abel of the Steelworkers tend to be treated by the press with considerable suspicion. Meany, for example, is often characterized as "cigar-smoking," which would be a trivial detail were it not a sort of shorthand for "boss." Similarly, Abel's name is often preceded by phrases like "$75,000-a-year steelworkers chief," which is presumably intended to mean "overpaid."24

There is a certain degree of journalistic nostalgia that harkens back to the young, rabble-rousing union organizer of the 1920s and 30s. As the labor movement has matured and leadership has passed into the hands of more experienced and

professional negotiators in suit-coats and ties, the press has not been comfortable with this transition, and continuously preferred, instead, to degrade the image of such leaders.

It is, for instance, an annual story each summer for the local papers to report on the salaries earned by Hawaii's labor leadership. Partially this is "news" because that is when federal law requires unions to report their expenses and the union's financial status, so the data is conveniently available as public information. But the story is always written in such a way as to suggest, as Ignatius noted above, that the leadership is over-paid. Normally a calculation is provided to indicate how much more the leader makes than an average member. And yet, as Michael Parenti noted as his third feature of press bias, the paper almost never runs a similar column disclosing the salaries of top management leaders, or, where they do, no calculation of its ratio to their employees would be considered relevant.\(^{25}\)

As it happens, the figures provided reporters from the unions' federal reports tend also to be skewed somewhat since the government requires that the union's financial disclosure include as salary such things as travel expenses and meal allowances provided for legitimate union business. This has the unfortunate result, especially in Hawaii, of

\(^{25}\) Parenti 85. 

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erroneously inflating the salary reported by union leaders who have been more actively organizing on the neighbor islands or attending training at the Meany Center, for instance, in Maryland. The net effect is that the more effort a union leader expends trying to organize or improve his representational skills in any year, the more likely the press will be portraying him or her as an over-paid union boss milking the membership.

Another example of the same kind of double standard in the reporting of business versus labor stories can be seen in the different way positive stories are presented. Unions, for instance have been very active in a variety of community service projects, and yet, stories featuring these projects rarely credit the union in the headline, rarely are accompanied by a photo-graph, and rarely are printed in the A section.

In 1977 and 1988 the Carpenters union in Hawaii sponsored an island-wide car wash to raise money for boy scouts and girl scouts in some of the poorer school districts so they could afford the expenses of their respective summer camps. In each case well over $10,000 was raised while the union provided all the expenses and adult labor. The item in the Sunday paper in 1987 read "Car wash raises funds for scouts" and in 1988, "Scouts fund-raising
carwash tomorrow."26 No mention of the union was made in either headline. Yet, when in June of 1987, the Advertiser donated a sum half as large to the American Red Cross, that story was run over the width of the entire page, with a 3 x 5 photo showing the parties exchanging the bank check.27 And it is not just its own drum that gets beaten.

Business donations in general are extolled, labor's are ignored or given short shrift. The Advertiser published a 5" by 5" photograph of R. J. Pfeiffer, "chairman and chief executive officer of Alexander & Baldwin Inc" as he handed a hefty check over to children representing the YMCA.28 But when the Honolulu Port Council, a coalition of several maritime unions, awarded a scholarship to a Hawaii Boy Scout to attend a summer program at the Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship in Maryland, not one member of the local press responded to an invitation to attend the awards luncheon. In response to the council's press release a story was published that fell under the headline, "Tanabe selected Scout of the Year."29 Though a picture of the scout accompanied the story, the paper declined to print a photo

26 The former was in Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser 24 June 1987; the latter in the Honolulu Advertiser 11 Mar. 1988.
of the scout receiving his award though such a photo was offered by the council. The same month Hawaiian Cement Co. awarded a series of scholarships (open only to children of its employees) but the Star-Bulletin ran it with the company's name prominent in the headline and three photographs of the recipients.

Additionally, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin in 1987 started two special recognition features to acknowledge a range of local figures in business and public affairs. Titled "Executive Profile" and "NewsMaker" the series presents positive, image-builders for those fortunate enough to be featured. Similar in many respects to a Wall Street Journal series called "Who's News?" which regularly features union presidents and directors as well as major financiers and CEO's, the Star-Bulletin columns have a different application. In the year since their inception, only one column was given to a labor leader, and she was not the primary or most visible, executive officer of that union.

The media control the visibility of labor as they control and filter the images available. It is by choice that one story is reported over another; or it is by conviction that one story or one angle of coverage is apparent in a situation while another is not. The word

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"grievance" is much misunderstood in the public mind. The average American has been led to perceive of grievances negatively as the method by which unions prevent employers from discharging unproductive, arrogant and insubordinate workers. It is a headline when a teachers' union defends a man accused of child abuse as it is when a transport workers union grieves the drug testing of its members. But in January of 1986 after the Challenger space shuttle explosion, when a postal worker on Maui was reprimanded for lowering the flag to half staff without his supervisor's approval, almost no mention was made in the press of the Postal Workers Union grievance that eventually was responsible for removing the improper discipline.

The principle appears to be: When the news is bad for labor, it's big; when it's good; it's not news at all or it is hardly worth mentioning. In 1986, for example, Walter Kupau, the Business Manager of the Carpenters local 745, was embroiled in a highly publicized dispute with a Maui contractor the union was trying to organize. At about the same time he was accused of attacking a Mililani construction foreman and the two stories were very much intertwined in the press. In the Maui case, Kupau was convicted of perjury before the Grand Jury because he insisted the union picket was informational rather than recognitional. For this he was found guilty and sentenced to a two-year term in federal prison. The headline
reporting the dismissal of his appeal to the federal court, was a banner running across the whole of the front page proclaiming: "Kupau's perjury sentence upheld," while the news that felony assault charges, improperly brought against him, were subsequently dropped was reported two-days earlier over a single column on page six, with less than half the headline space.31

But nowhere is the principle more obvious or more damaging to the image of labor than in the coverage and reporting of strikes. It is said "Harmony seldom makes a headline," but it should not be expecting too much for the press to give a balanced view of labor disputes. It should be noted that, after all, that according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, less then 2% of the overall number of contracts being negotiated in any year will likely result in a strike.32 Put another way, better than 98% of the time collective bargaining is successful in reaching labor agreement without recourse to strike. And yet the public perception of unions is dominated by the images of the picket-line and the strike. Organized employer councils and chambers of commerce annually furnish statistics to the press on the lost man-hours and lost wages, which reporters,


for the most part, scoop up and serve out without ever realizing that far more hours and wages are lost annually to unemployment and industrial injuries.

Again, when the news is bad for labor, it's big. News of strikes or even of threatened strikes commonly receives banner headlines, whether the union or the industry involved represents a significant portion of the local economy or not. But when settlement is reached, particularly if it was reached without even the threat of strike, the news is small and pushed farther and farther from the front page. The impact of this reporting in the media can be seen in the results of this study's survey (Appendix A) in which more than half the high school juniors and seniors responding indicated their belief that the incidence of strikes was 12% or higher. The effect of this misconception is to make it much harder for unions to organize new workers, who are easily convinced by employers' arguments that unionization will inevitably lead to a financially disastrous strike.

Furthermore, the quality as well as the quantity of strike coverage is often prejudicial. Many years ago Lippmann noticed,

If you study the way many a strike is reported in the press, you will find, very often, that the issues are rarely in the headlines, barely in the leading paragraphs, and sometimes not even mentioned anywhere.33

33 Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion 350.
On the one hand, as Lippmann noted, the press will tend to concentrate their reporting on the intrusion of the strike on the reader's comfort or convenience. Often characterizing the public as the innocent victims of a conflict that should somehow have been confined to the parties. Culpability for this rude interruption is generally ascribed only to the union, even in cases of lockouts where the employer is actually the immediate cause of the interruption. Then, the reporters will usually rush out to the company spokesperson who will have a prepared statement demeaning the union's position and supporting the public feeling that the union is totally to blame for the disruption of their valued services.

...every union proposal is called a "demand" and every management proposal is called an "offer." Every strike is calculated in lost wages, never in the lost self-esteem that would result if the workers had caved in to management demands and tolerated unfettered management domination of their lives. Every strike is a strike against the public interest, or inflationary, or pigheaded, in the opinion of the press.34

The following article, which appeared on the front page, described a recent California teachers' strike. Note the dominance of the employer point of view:

L.A. teachers strike for more pay

LOS ANGELES - Teachers in the nation's second-largest school district went on strike today, threatening to create chaos for nearly 600,000 students in the final weeks of school.

United Teachers-Los Angeles, representing 22,000 teachers, is demanding a 21 percent pay hike over two years and more control over classrooms. District administrators said they planned to keep the schools open by using substitute teachers.

Board of Education President Roberta Weintraud, speaking for the majority on a deeply divided school board, said the district would not budge from what she termed one of the best contract offers for teachers in the nation.35

To begin with the headline asserts that the only motive of the teachers is "more pay" ie. greed, despite the information in the second paragraph classroom control is also an outstanding issue. Then, in the first paragraph, the report has characterized the goal of the strike as a threat to create chaos for the students. This description is blatantly biased. By using the word, "threat" a sinister if not malicious intent is imputed, with the hidden editorial message that the strike is wrong. Furthermore, the teachers' "demand" is given precisely, while the employer's position is only described subjectively as "one of the best contract offers for teachers in the nation."

And by reporting the response of the school administrators and the Board of Education official twice as much space is allotted to the employers' views as to the union's. No coverage was given to the teacher's viewpoint regarding the classroom control issues or the justification of their wage package. In all likelihood, such information as is given

about the teachers' "demands" was obtained directly from the employers.

It is the rare journalist who is capable of breaking through this cliched coverage, or who ever manages to report fairly or with comprehension the union's perspective. Part of the reason is the fault of the press, but part of the problem is also the lower accessibility of the union point of view. Michael Hoyt, a former reporter for The Record in Bergen County, New Jersey, related his early efforts to cover both sides of a labor dispute:

It was at lunch, I think, that I learned that the long-running strike at an electrical-parts plant outside town was coming to a head. Soon the workers would vote on whether to keep the union and continue the strike, or decertify and go back to work. They had been out for months.

The plant owner's message, when I called, was that if the strike continued he would shut the plant permanently. This was a region of high unemployment, and the factory was one of the few new industries the town had been able to attract. The town fathers felt that gaining a reputation for having a militant work force would be disastrous.

All that remained for my story was the perspective from the picket line, but no one would talk. The picketers stared at me like a tree full of owls. A woman picketer finally explained: nothing from the strikers' point of view, she said, had been printed in the newspaper since the strike had begun, some months before I'd been hired. More than once the publisher had insulted the strikers in her column.

Earlier that summer, when members of the publisher's favorite church youth choir were arrested at a marijuana picnic, she had tried to kill the story. But the editor, a fair-minded man, had stood up to her. With the sincerity of a believer, I assured the strikers that my story would get printed and that it would be balanced -- and, finally, the picket line talked. But their skepticism was justified. The publisher ordered
the story killed; the editor complied. Church choirs are one thing; labor is serious. 36

Another disturbing outcome of the press's two habits of getting its news primarily from the employer on the one hand and focusing on the way the strike affects the general public on the other is the tendency to accent the strike's ineffectiveness. In the spring of 1985 the Transport Workers Union conducted a very effective strike against Pan American World Airways. The Star-Bulletin headline read, "Pan Am Hawaii Flights Continue Despite Strike." And a few days later after that already effective strike became even tighter, the Star-Bulletin headlined, "Pan American Flight Arrives Here from Tokyo," while in much smaller type it was grudgingly admitted, "But Strike Grounds Others." 37 Similarly, in 1986, the headline describing the Inland Boatman's Union picket of Dillingham Tug & Barge read, "Isle Produce Moves Despite Strike by IBU." Just for the sake of accuracy, one might have expected the Pan Am headline to have read: "Pan Am flights grounded by strike" with the lower case note appended, "lone Tokyo flight arrives."

The real question, though, is why the reports should so commonly stress the strike's ineffectiveness? Clearly it is to the advantage of the struck employer to make would-be

36 Michael Hoyt, "Downtime for labor: Are working people less equal than others -- or is labor just a dead beat?" 39.

customers believe the strike is not adversely affecting its services. Worse than that, however, is the disheartening effect such coverage has on the striking employees. Such headlines reveal clearly the over-riding influence attached by the reporter to the employer's public relations release.

Everett Martin, writing in the 1920s, drew the following useful distinction between education and propaganda:

... Education aims at independence of judgment. Propaganda offers ready-made opinions for the unthinking herd. Education and propaganda are directly opposed both in aim and method. ... The educator fails unless he achieves an open mind; the propagandist unless he achieves a closed mind.\(^{38}\)

In looking at the most common examples of the press treatment of organized labor by the American press, it seems sadly more appropriate to characterize too much of it as anti-union propaganda, where its primary social function has supposedly been to inform and educate.

In April of 1988, the Chairman of the Honolulu City Council excoriated the press in particular at a speech before the Honolulu Media Council for bias in misrepresentative headlines, and what he called selective story telling. A. A. Smyser, former editor of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin replied in the paper the following week by pleading "nolo contendere" or no contest.

My own strong conviction after half a century as a newspaperman is that there is no such thing as an "unbiased" account of anything, and that we all will be able to understand each other a little better if we can agree on this. ... My own bias is that we will always have bias and always have subjectivity. There's no way out of it. But we still can -and should- demand accuracy of our print and video media. Also balance. And fairness. And a chance to talk back. 39

Frankly, this defense is too facile, and leaves the perpetrator still free to sin again. Recognizing there is no such thing as a totally unbiased viewpoint is good, only if it helps to caution the media about expressing their bias in fact. When we look to the press for news, we are or we should as Americans be looking for new information and, wherever possible, for a new way to understand what has happened. Article V of the "Canons of Journalism" first developed in 1922 by the American Society of Newspaper Editors proclaims:

Impartiality -- Sound practice makes clear distinction between news reports and expression of opinion. News reports should be free from opinion or bias of any kind. 40

Labor has a right to expect a more conscientious effort on behalf of the press to live up to this ethical code.


40 In 1975 ASNE revised this "Code of Ethics" or "Canons of Journalism" and renamed it "A Statement of Principles." The last sentence of this quotation was excised.
CHAPTER V
CARTOONS: "Drawn and Quartered"

The old saw that a picture is worth a thousand words has never been more accurately applied than in calculating the impact of editorial cartoons and popular syndicated cartoon strips on the labor movement. Studies bear out that from twenty to thirty times more adults read the newspaper comic strips than the editorials.¹ To the print media cartoons most closely represent the entertainment function that television provides in its prime-time programing. And because it is provided in such a small ratio to news and advertising, the focus of attention on cartoons is proportionately greater than the much more diffuse programing of the video media. Yet in both cases, comedy, satire, drama, and melodrama are allowed the free reign of artistic expression that encourages the portrayal of issues in the light of simple, uncomplicated, often unchallenged values.

To the cartoonist, the labor movement and its leadership have traditionally held the same unprotected, unsympathetic status reserved for politics and corrupt

politicians. To some extent, of course, ridicule is the 
essence of the cartoonist's craft, and it is wrong to expect 
generous treatment from pens dedicated professionally to 
lampooning all institutions, great and small. What we can 
reasonably expect, however, is a commitment to challenge the 
common, undeliberated attitudes prevalent. But to the 
extent that cartoonists simply distill and exaggerate the 
existing popular stereotypes of an institution, the medium 
then fails to stir our thinking and presumes only to confirm 
the prevailing cultural hegemony.

Historically, much of the ideological framework that 
cartoonists have attached to the image of labor can be 
traced back to the work of Thomas Nast, who from 1862 to 
1885 was the political cartoonist for Harper's Weekly. 
Espousing a political philosophy which was considered 
"Radical Republicanism," Nast and the editors of Harper's 
Weekly sought, after the Civil War, to focus national 
attention on government corruption, the end of government 
land grants to railroads and private corporations, and the 
need for a civil service system.² Resembling, in many 
respects, the progressivism of the Democrats in the 20th 
century, radical republicanism and its more conservative 
off-shoot, Liberal Republicanism, became popular among a 
large number of the post-bellum newspapers in addition to

² Morton Keller, The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast (New 
Harper's Weekly. It is particularly ironic, in the light of twentieth century politics, to learn that the first "liberal" alliance of politicians, journalists and intellectuals belonged to the Republican party.

Nast is, in fact, best remembered for his scathing attack on the corruption of New York's Tweed Ring, who ruled Tammany Hall and the city government from 1866 to 1871. Less well remembered was his deep, underlying prejudices against the Irish, Catholicism and Democrats that ran through all of the Nast cartoons. And Nast's influence on the development of the liberal republican agenda was considerable.

In addition to popularizing the famous donkey and elephant symbols for the Democratic and Republican parties, he also defined what would become the standard graphic image of the American laborer. Later supplanted by the hardhat and lunchbox of the 20th century, Nast's image of the single, white laborer sported a white, flat-topped, four cornered, paper machinists' cap and carried a cylindrical dinner pail.3 And the most typical theme Nast and his contemporaries took up with this image was the danger of labor's seduction by outside union organizers. To Nast union meant only the union of the United States. Labor union organizers were simply anarchists and communists

hoping to destroy capitalism. His cartoon on March 16, 1878, captioned "Always Killing the Goose That Lays the Golden Egg" enunciates the theme most clearly [Figure 1].

The golden egg of his wages in his pocket, the laborer has been duped by the on-looking communist into destroying the prolific goose of capitalism. On the wall behind the two are the inflammatory labor slogans of the day: "Labor is Capital" next to the more offensive and threatening sign, "Up With the Red Flag." Seventy-five years before the notorious red-baiting of Senator McCarthy after World War II, Nast launches the first media attempt at labeling the nation's fledgling union movement as a communist conspiracy.

After the Haymarket riot in May of 1886, Nast published his cartoon showing one hand of Miss Liberty, clutching the Haymarket conspirators, and the other bearing the great sword of justice and wearing a wedding-ring with the word "Union" engraved on it. As Parenti found typical of the contemporary media portrayal of labor unions, Nast was setting "emphasis on the impact rather than the causes of strikes, laying the blame for the strike totally on the union and detailing the damage the strike does to the economy and the public weal." To Nast and to the great majority of his contemporaries and his latter-day disciples,

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4 Keller 256, fig. 167.
5 Keller 263, fig. 174.

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the grievances that cause these eruptions of labor disputes do not seem relevant or worthy of their attention. Somehow, these great media clarions of the national conscience have tended to believe that labor should know its place and accept its lot humbly and quietly.

Nast's biographer, Morton Keller, astutely observed:

Nast's sensitivity to social reform co-existed with a quick sympathy for postwar American business enterprise. ... It might seem that there is a failure of sensitivity here; that an artistic conscience quick to react to political and social injustice somehow went blank when it confronted the issues posed by the economy.6

To Nast and the others, the workingman was less to be pitied than the businessman. After Nast, for example, Joseph Keppler who illustrated the New York weekly, Puck, picked up the Nastian symbols as well as sentiment toward labor. Like Nast, Keppler, though an immigrant, was a Republican who saw questions of economic morality only in terms of the contest between big and small business. The workers' view and plight were of no interest except as they might threaten the entrepreneurial promise that constituted the American dream of independent wealth and personal fortune. From this perspective, the dependence of the laborer was held in contempt. As the black slave was considered the "whiteman's burden," the common laborer has been the businessman's burden throughout the history of his media portrayal.

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6 Keller 109.
Keppler's drawing in the August 13, 1879 issue of Puck bears the caption, "Has Capital Any Rights That Labor Is Bound To Respect" [Figure 2]. It depicts the symbolic workingman perched carelessly on the top of a tower of no less than five other men each personifying an extra burden that the poor, bent businessman at the bottom must endure. While the businessman groans under the extra weight of his taxes and debts, the laborer sitting on his back, gleefully waves a picket sign calling for the eight-hour day.7

The labor movement grew and became stronger in the 1880s, and cartoonists grew even less sympathetic. The humble cap and dinner pail were abandoned and cartoonists began to describe unions as a "Labor Trust" in fear of its control of the workforce and its attempt to establish the closed shop. In 1886 a Puck cartoon showed a well-dressed arrogant man, fat and sassy, carried on a palanquin by a throng of striking workers with the banner over his head proclaiming: "I was discharged, and I will be reinstated if all my fellow-workman have to suffer."8 Such was the view held by employers and their media that unions' struggle to achieve job-security protections (which, in fact, only require the employer to have "just cause" for termination) unnaturally prevent employers from firing bad workers.

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8 Puck 31 Mar. 1886, as reproduced in M.B. Schnapper, 337.
As the labor movement passed into the 20th century, interest began to mount in spreading its reach from the older trade and craft unions into the larger realm of the nation's unskilled industrial workers. The newly organized Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) or Wobblies, as they were soon known, quickly grew in size and influence, immediately attracting the unfriendly notice of the press. Even greater than the fear generated by the organization of the various craft unions, the Wobblies cries of "One Big Union" stirred memories of the huge Haymarket and Pullman strikes that threatened to mobilize workers by class rather than just occupation. The media reaction was reminiscent of Nast's attack: these were not unionists, but anarchists. The victim was no longer a poor businessman, but the entire country. Fanned by the latest waves of immigrants that were swelling the ranks of the workers, the threat of union organization was imagined as a threat to the nation. The anti-Wobbly cartoons usually pictured Uncle Sam, symbol of America itself, being threatened by an anarchist, clad in the familiar garb of the immigrant and carrying the lighted bomb of industrial terrorism [Figure 3]. The theme that unions are un-American in their values, strategies, and membership runs deep and long through the history of media treatment.

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9 M.B. Schnapper 410.
In Hawaii, for instance, at about the same time the Wobblies were being vilified as anarchists, the Pacific Commercial Advertiser printed a cartoon of a kimono-clad, immigrant Japanese plantation worker throwing a brick with the note, "strike," tied to it, which missing the figure of the sugar owner strikes Uncle Sam squarely in the head.\textsuperscript{10} Though the Hawaiian plantation strikes of that day were not Wobbly organized, the media weapon and its ultimate target were clearly the same.

One of the basic incongruities of the media attitude toward labor is the ambivalent attitude that seems to characterize the cartoonists' conception of labor and the status quo. On the one hand, most of these graphic journalists feel they are honor-bound to attack the complacent and the mighty. On the other hand, in every contest between the prevailing economic system and the rights of labor, they end up regarding unionists as dangerous anarchists, somehow threatening the fabric of national unity.

What soon occurred to resolve this dilemma was the adoption of the theme that labor was too mighty, complacent and entrenched. It is, in fact, amazing how far back this theme can be traced. Back in the 1880s Puck and the other weeklies were running cartoons like the one [Figure 5]

\textsuperscript{10} Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu, HI] 1 Feb. 1920: 4.
that depicts Sam Gompers, first President of the American Federation of Labor, as "The Labor Pope" with Terrence Powderly, founder of the AFL's predecessor, the Knights of Labor, seated at his right and with Whitelaw Reid, owner of the New York Tribune, kissing Gompers' feet. And when in 1887, Powderly set up the Knights' headquarters in an expensive Philadelphia residence, the Puck illustrators drew him caricatured as a pampered labor boss enjoying "the pleasures of Byzantine ease and grandeur" as a butler held back the plain-clothed workmen and their families.

In more recent times the pen of the editorial cartoonist has concentrated on the themes of money, greed and power when it is being generous and on images of corruption and violence at its most self-righteous. To represent all of these themes most effectively, cartoonists have indulged in the now accepted image of slovenly obesity to represent laborers and their leaders. In our century the fat, cigar-chomping brute has replaced entirely the kinder dinner pail and cornered cap stereotype popularized by Thomas Nast in the 1870s and 80s.

Instead of representing labor leaders as worker advocates, the image of obesity as it has been emphasized in the caricatures of figures like John L. Lewis and George

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11 Schnapper 227.
12 Puck, 16 Mar. 1887, reproduced in Schnapper, 140.
Meany evolved from an initial theme that union leadership feeds on the hard labor of poor, benighted workers who have been somehow suckered into contributing their limited wealth to the personal aggrandizement of the union leadership at no benefit to themselves. The cartoon of rival labor leaders, John L. Lewis and William Green [Figure 6], for instance, which dates back to the rift between the CIO and the AFL in the 30s and 40s, portrays them suppressing an innocent worker with their combined over-weight.13

Similarly, George Meany, founding President of the AFL-CIO from the mid 50s through the 70s was typically portrayed feasting at the expense of the public weal [Figure 7].14 By then, however, the focus was on the victimization of the general public instead of the common laborer, idealized since Nast's time.

Not only have the popular caricatures of John L. Lewis in the 30s and 40s and George Meany in the 50s and 60s hammered this image deep into the class consciousness of the average American, but more often than not the workers themselves suffer the same portrayal. Despite the continued growth of women in the American workforce, the figure cartoonists have continued to favor of the American laborer is male, muscle-bound but over-weight, unkempt, and violent

13 Schnapper 512.

14 Gib Crockett, "cartoon" Washington Star-News,Courtesy of The George Meany Memorial Archives.
by nature. Honolulu Advertiser cartoonist, Harry Lyons, expressed the image grotesquely in his drawing of a dispute at the Pearl City Tavern, a leeward suburb of Honolulu, [Figure 8].

This "Ugly Customer" was immediately recognizable as the union workers hoping to organize the Tavern, not because the drawing resembled any single disputant, but because the public has come to accept the image as a depiction of working class people. Like the image represented by Carroll O'Conner in his portrayal of Archie Bunker, this image is a class-biased projection of ignorance and vulgarity.

One of the most revealing examples of the inconsistency of this stereotype is seen by contrasting two local expressions of the genre that were both penned in Honolulu by the current Advertiser cartoonist, Dick Adair in the mid 80s [Figures 9 and 10]. In the first, the overweight, complacent and seemingly unproductive laborer is shown shifting his position without relieving actually the burden of his oppressive weight on the poor employer, who must pay for the workers' compensation policy that would cover his employees in the event of an industrial injury. In the second depicts an over-weight construction worker, complete with hard-hat and rude behavior, not only blocking

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the view of the poor tourist, but obviously preparing to erect a building which will destroy the beauty and leisure of the beach permanently.\textsuperscript{17} The first cartoon, a virtual spin-off of Keppler's drawing of the living pyramid besetting employers in 1879 [Figure 2], depicts the worker's interests —insofar as they are bad for business— as self-serving and burdensome to the public weal; while the second cartoon, depicts the workers' interests —even when they are supportive of the employer— as self-serving and burdensome to the public weal. In each case the cartoonist was lambasting labor for attempting to protect its welfare; in each case the self-serving interests of labor's opposition were neither attacked nor ridiculed. More often, as Adair's anti-development cartoon [Figure 10] illustrates, the common laborer is substituted as a convenient and more vulnerable scapegoat for a white-collar power interest, who is permitted to remain invisible and, therefore, invulnerable to the editorial attack, while the laborer is left to suffer the mis-directed rage of the public.

Another inconsistency inherent in the popular cartoon stereotype of labor emerges in depictions of labor strength. On the one hand, as we have seen above, artists are fond of representing labor as fat and unproductive, and yet, when bargaining or negotiations are described, labor is portrayed

\textsuperscript{17} Honolulu Advertiser 14 Apr. 1987: A8.
as muscle-bound and powerful. A pair of cartoons published in the Honolulu Star Bulletin less than two months apart each depict powerful unions arm-wrestling with the employer and squeezing the innocent public or even the striking airline employees in its grip [Figures 11 and 12]. The second of these is particularly ironic, since the union described is the University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) which represents the State University Faculty and has never enjoyed the image of a powerful negotiating posture. Obviously the point of both cartoons is to criticize the ability of labor to bargain on an equal footing with management. In this medium, labor is only depicted in its strength when it is disruptive; otherwise, the portrayal of labor at work reverts to the flabby, lazy caricatures described above.

In a review of the past three and a half years of the editorial cartoons in the two Honolulu dailies, twenty-nine cartoons were compared, each depicting organized labor with some other business or economic interest. As such editorial cartoons generally leave no doubt as to their sympathy or antipathy, it was possible to designate each cartoon as either positive or negative in its portrayal of labor versus management. By this measure, only seven of the twenty-nine

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were found to present a positive representation of labor, and of those seven, three were nationally syndicated cartoons republished by the local papers, two were about strikes or strike-threats that were settled amicably and the sixth was about the Polish union Solidarnosc. The only local editorial cartoon in the positive set that could be honestly said to prefer the labor to the management perspective was a March 1989, Star-Bulletin drawing that described the U.S. Supreme Court as unfriendly to labor. 19

The twenty-two cartoons negative to labor consisted primarily of anti-Teamster material that followed the national stories of a recent Department of Justice probe. The prevalence of Teamster news and anti-Teamster depictions has been one of the greatest burdens weighing down the media image of the over-all labor movement. As noted earlier, the average reader of the newspaper who has only a peripheral awareness of unions is not likely to distinguish the Teamsters from other national or local unions, so that media attention to any one union's corruption tends to tar the whole labor movement with the same brush. The average high-school student, for instance, when asked to name a labor leader is most likely to name Jimmy Hoffa or Jackie Presser, and is least likely to have even heard of Lane Kirkland, President of the AFL-CIO or Mary Hartwood Futrell, President

of the National Education Association, though these two unions represent equally large constituencies of the American labor movement.

No fewer than ten of the twenty-two, which is one-third of the total editorial cartoons in that period and forty-five per cent of all the negative depictions focused on the Teamsters and the theme of union corruption. The vast majority of these cartoons did not, however, give any indication of the nature of the corruption or criminal charges. Rather the cartoonists typically considered that union's corruption as a premise upon which their joke may be based. In May 1986, for instance, the Advertiser published a nationally syndicated cartoon without caption [Figure 13], showing the high walls of a state prison bearing the sign "Welcome Teamsters Convention." Surprisingly, however, there were no cartoon editorials in the sample that considered the long-standing political connection and mutual support of the Teamsters with the Republican Party. Though the sample did run through national elections in 1988, and the media attacks on the Teamsters continued apace, the media association between political parties and unions was deftly focused away from the Republicans.

Next to the Teamsters, the second most prevalent labor topic of the editorial cartoonists was, understandably, the

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two nationally significant strikes to occur in the sample period. Seventeen percent of the total and twenty-three percent of the negative depictions concerned either the writers' strike of 1988 or the Eastern Airlines strike of 1989. The three writers' strike cartoons were variations on the theme that the quality of television scripts was so poor to begin with that the strike has only revealed how valueless these union writers really are. 21 And the theme of the Eastern Airlines cartoons followed the pattern of the television coverage noted earlier. One cartoon [Figure 14], for instance, depicted in two frames a representative from each of the three striking unions first threatening the airline owner, Lorenzo, then pointing their guns at their own heads. 22 Not only are all three unions made to look foolish, but the strike itself as a strategy is compared to a weapon of ultimate violence, which --it may be inferred-- is as outdated and bankrupt as the myth of the old West is in our modern world. Furthermore each of the unionists are drawn with huge pear shaped bodies and tiny heads, as if they were not capable of human intellect, and the machinist, in particular, as the one blue-collar unionist is drawn with


a noticeable paunch consistent with the media stereotype of the overweight, unproductive laborer.

The Funnies

Heywood Broun, noted journalist and founding president of the Newspaper Guild, once dubbed the comics the "proletarian novels of America." As such, one might expect a more generous attitude toward labor and trade unions than has been seen in the editorial cartoons and caricatures, which are more closely guided and directly controlled by owners and editors. In fact, the portrayal of the labor movement in comic strips is less proletarian in its approach than bourgeois.

To understand why it is necessary to consider the basic differences in these two forms of newspaper cartoons. For one thing, comic strips are marketed and popularized nationally in a much different form from editorial cartoons. The general tendency throughout the media toward merger and concatenation is equally evident in the marketing of comics. The recently formed "Metro-Puck" organization, which was formed by the merger of the Metro Comics Network and Hearst's Puck, the Comic Weekly, now represents 267 of the more than 500 newspapers that carry comics. Which is
not to say that local editors have no choices at all. When the American Society of Newspaper Editors met in the spring of 1989 one of their workshops concerned the problems and promises of syndicated comic strips. Syndicates currently offer more than 300 strips, which they calculate are read by 75% of the newspaper-reading audience. Yet, once a paper has selected a strip, considerable reader loyalty develops making it difficult for editors to pull strips that contradict the paper's editorial views or policies. Marty Claus, managing editor of the Detroit Free Press remarked, "Pulling a strip draws so much attention to it and to you as a censor, that you're reluctant to do it." As a result, comic strip artists, when they are groping for an audience early in their careers, will naturally be more conservative hoping to appear less threatening to the wide range of diverse editorial positions that might be typical across the nation's newspapers. Once syndicated, however, comic strip artists operate with considerably more autonomy than editorial cartoonists, and the opinions expressed in comic strips are less likely to coincide with that of the newspapers they occupy than


27 Feinsilber.
practically any other feature. The question is: to what extent this thematic caution in approaching either a liberal or a conservative set of values so necessary in their formative stages affects syndicated artists once they are in a position to express themselves.

As a general rule, it is probably fair to say that on a liberal-conservative scale of basic political/social issues, newspapers tend to be more conservative, while such comic-strips as have any stance at all tend to be more liberal. In the fall of 1988, for instance a character in the popular strip, "Cathy," endorsed liberal democrat Michael Dukakis for president and thirty papers across the country pulled the strip until the campaign was over.\textsuperscript{28} Similar threats followed the controversial positions reflected more subtly in Gary Trudeau's "Doonesbury."

But, once again, when it comes to the prevailing portrayal of labor unions, their other-wise liberal agenda reverts to the same stereotyping common to the other entertainment media. In my survey of nationally syndicated comic strips appearing in the two Honolulu dailies, over a four year period from the fall of 1985 through the summer of 1989 there were forty-six comic strips that described or alluded to organized labor or union activities. Over half appeared in Berke Breathed's strip, "Bloom County," which

\textsuperscript{28} Feinsilber.

Unlike the editorial cartoons, considered above, it is not so easy to sort the strips out according to a negative or positive portrayal of labor unions. Typically the ridicule in a comic strip is aimed broadly at all the participants and all their views. In most cases, no one is spared and there is no right side to a dispute. This strategy is what has protected most of the artists from charges of bias. They pretend to be "equal opportunity" satirists and are considered unbiased when they disparage everything. So it is not so much that the comic strips have ridiculed labor that is important as is the nature of the ridicule and the extent to which these strips merely accept and then perpetuate the standard media stereotypes we've seen prevalent throughout the media.

"Bloom County," representing the single largest component of the survey, should be considered first. This comic strip, which only began in the early 80s, quickly developed a huge national audience. It is syndicated by the Washington Post Writers Group to about 800 newspapers, nearly all of the major metropolitan newspapers in the
For over three weeks from October 19 until November 13, 1987 the strip's artist, Berke Breathed, partially as a real protest over an imminent change in newspaper formats reducing the space allotted to his cartoon, created an imaginary strike against the management of "Bloom County, Inc." over the striking characters' grievance that their strip was now too small.

That fall while this strip was running, the headlines of the nations' papers were at the same time following the developments in the National Football League Players' Association strike. Breathed's creation of the cartoon character strike was obviously designed to satirize the NFL strike, and to raise the question of the appropriateness of union representation and collective bargaining in the non-industrial and traditionally non-union private sector.

The demand of these cartoon characters' for a larger strip is clearly ridiculous and not based on any problem previously suffered by the characters in the previous history of the strip. It is true that the fictitious CEO of Bloom Inc., W.A. Thornhump, is made to appear just as ridiculous in his reactions to the strikers, but the humor of this situation lies in the reader's distance and consequent ability to see the folly of the whole dispute. While editorial cartoonists tend to exaggerate defects and

vices, comic strip artists prefer to trivialize and reduce the significance of beliefs and accomplishments.

Four examples from the "Bloom County" series [Figures 15-18] show how the portrayal of unions is steeped in the ordinary media stereotypes of labor unions. In the first example, from the 22nd of October [Figure 15], young Milo, now a picket captain, orders one of his imaginary monsters out of his anxiety closet to participate in the strike and pay his dues, both against the creature's will. The previous day, as Milo rousted Opus against similar resistance, Opus argued, "Think of the readers! The poor, joyless, innocent ..."30

The second example [Figure 16] from the following week (27 Oct. 1987), shows W.A. Thornhump, management chairman, labeling the strikers "gangsters and philistines" united in an "Evil Connection" to communism, sin, hemorrhoids and Khadafy. Here Breathed appears, by ridiculing management, to be supporting the strikers, but as the strike drags on, even the loveable Opus resorts to violence and attacks scab, Steve Dallas [2 Nov. 87: Figure 17]. That day's strip opens with the provocative headline from the fictitious Bloom Picayune proclaiming, "Strike Tensions Near Hysteria." Breathed's imaginary strike is, after all, a lost strike in which the union "Caves ...", and the characters are left

with a worse condition than they had before the strike [see last box of 9 Nov. 1987: Figure 18].

In the final analysis, the two major themes of the "Bloom County" strike are both anti-labor. On the one hand, the sequence showed that for some workers unionization and concerted activity though legally permissible are actually ludicrous: unions are not for everyone. Workers not traditionally represented by unions should probably not be. And the other message of this series is that strikes are wasteful, hazardous and easily broken by management.

The treatment accorded labor in the other comic strips is no better. Gary Trudeau's "Doonesbury," for example, had five of the strips in the survey, all of which portrayed organized labor badly. The first, a 1987 installment, showed three arbitragers at a computer terminal selling off trusts and rolling over investment funds in astronomical amounts as if they were playing a video game [Figure 19]. The last block shows a loser, who just dropped $4 million in one bad exchange, being warned "Steady, kid. That's the Teamster account." Implicit is the threat of violence in the punchline that relies on and reinforces the popular image of "the evil connection" that Breathed would satirize later that same year. Three of the other four in the "Doonesbury" set are "side-swipes" in which, while treating

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a different subject, a non-union or management character disdainfully dismisses union interference. And one chastises a fictitious author's guild for failing to more aggressively support the work of black-listed or hit-listed writer's, such as Salman Rushdie was suffering for his controversial book, *Satanic Verses.* In each case, the union is attacked for its weakness and perceived irrelevance. "Bloom County" and "Doonesbury" were two of the most numerous comic strips in the survey, and represented the kindest portrayals of labor, since in both cases the ridicule of the management perspective that accompanied the labor critique was even worse. This fact plus the fact that most of the popular strips never even broach labor relations themes indicate the highly individualized nature of this medium, and its essentially conservative position on labor.

Johnny Hart's "B.C.," a cross between "Peanuts" and the "Flintstones," is a more common example of the reduction of labor to the absurd in comic-strip portrayals. In a late 1985 strip, one of his cavemen leaning over a rock labeled "Union Headquarters" is approached by a snake who wants to

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join because "Striking is my 'Biz'." And in a Sunday, eight-block cartoon in 1988, he has father and son ants discussing careers say, "When I grow up, I want to be an umpire or a union boss," because, "I love to call strikes." Clearly to this cartoonist, strikes are the sole business of labor unions, who are lead by "Bosses," rather than presidents, agents or stewards. And, as we see in Hart's January 1989 strip, the related theme that not everyone should have the right to strike is expressed in "B.C." as well, when Hart's prehistoric fisherman is forced to quit because his bait has walked off the job.

Yet the worst treatment of labor in all the strips surveyed is found in Brant Parker's "Wizard." A partner of Johnny Hart, with whom he co-authors the Sunday "Wizard of Id" strip, Parker's cartoons in the survey consistently pursue the theme that unions are foolish organizations that improperly elevate the status of unskilled labor and allow workers unproductive employment. In one example from 1986 [Figure 20], the promotion of a stable hand who makes neater piles is the occasion for the foreman to quip, "Of such

things trade unions are made." The grammatical reference to "of such things" is, of course, neater piles of manure, which leaves no doubt as to the cartoonist's view of labor unions.

Similarly in a 1987 strip, Parker stabs at the pretentiousness of unionization when he shows an immigrant at the customs' desk declaring "Agricultural Harvest Specialist" as his occupation, to which the Wizard comments, "The migratory workers finally got a union." In the history of media portrayal, this might well be the first time the much-abused migrant farm workers have suffered criticism for their efforts to unionize. Though this attack on the farm workers may be unusual, in most other respects Parker's treatment of unions is typical. An earlier 1987 installment, for instance, revealed a discussion between Sir Rodney and the King in which the difference between a "work slow-down," then being applied by the King's guard force, and a strike is given by Rodney, "In a strike you don't get paid." This acerbic remark leaves the reader with the impression that unions are not only greedy and selfish but cowardly as well. The implicit commentary is that the Guard


Force union was using the slow-down because it didn't even have the courage to strike openly and accept the consequences.

And finally Parker rubs at the single most infuriating wound unions have inflicted on employers, break-time. For some reason the idea that ordinary workers should have the right to take coffee breaks, or in any way limit the right of their overseers to crack a whip of intimidation over their heads seems to excite the most virulent anti-union condemnations. Parker's July 1987 strip is typical of such attacks. In it [Figure 21], the soldiers are apparently unionized and have stopped the battle on both sides to take their coffee breaks.40 Once again the themes are that unions are not for everybody; that unions impair productivity; that unions are nuisances and leave managers powerless to manage.

To some extent it is clear that, as in the case of television, an overall class bias lies behind the generally negative treatment accorded labor unions in the comic strips. A study of comic strips in the 40s and 50s revealed the preferred occupations of cartoon characters were professional and managerial and that lower status occupations were much less likely to be assigned to major

characters.\textsuperscript{41} It is doubtful there has been much change in occupational preferences if recent surveys of racial depictions are any indicator. In 1988 the Detroit \textit{Free Press}, after a month long study of its comics page, found that it featured 5,250 white characters and 31 black characters.\textsuperscript{42} As the media are populated and regulated largely by white, male professionals, it is little wonder that the dominant portrayal of the labor movement is essentially managerial in its sympathies.

With the American labor movement so often cast in the role of outsider by the media, labor must more and more begin to consider new strategies for dealing with the unflattering images it has been assigned.


\textsuperscript{42} Hughes.
Figure 1

Always Killing the Goose That Lays the Golden Egg.

Thomas Nast cartoon, 16 March 1878 from Morton Keller's The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast (1968), page 167.
Figure 2

Joseph Keppler cartoon, 13 August 1879 from M.B. Schnapper's American Labor: A Pictorial Social History (1972), page 92.
Wobbly Terrorist cartoon from M.B. Schnapper's American Labor: A Pictorial Social History (1972), page 410.
Japanese Striker cartoon, 1 February 1920 from the Pacific Commercial Advertiser (Honolulu, Hawaii), page 4.
Figure 5

Lewis and Green cartoon from the Schnapper collection in *American Labor: A Pictorial Social History* (1972), page 512.
Figure 7

'COMPLIMENTS OF PRESIDENT NIXON, SIR!'

Gib Crockett cartoon, originally from the Washington Star-News reprinted here by permission of the artist courtesy of the George Meany Memorial Archives.
Harry Lyons cartoon, 11 November 1971, reprinted here by permission of the Honolulu Advertiser
Dick Adair cartoon, 5 March 1985, reprinted here by permission of the Honolulu Advertiser
Figure 10

Dick Adair cartoon, 14 April 1987, reprinted here by permission of the Honolulu Advertiser
Figure 11

Corky cartoon, 7 March 1989, reprinted here by permission of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin
Figure 12

Henry Yuen cartoon, 28 April 1989, reprinted here by permission of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin
"Teamsters Convention" cartoon, 31 May 1986, reprinted here by permission of the Honolulu Advertiser
Palm Beach Post cartoon on Eastern Airline Strike, March 1989, reprinted here by permission of the Honolulu Advertiser
Bloom County Chairman W.A. Thornhump here... just an "Angel of Equity" overseeing events during this troubled time of labor restlessness...

Yet there are those who would accuse me... me... of the unfair use of this medium for propaganda purposes...

There is but one way to respond to these gangsters and philistine...

The Evil Connection

United Socialist Party

"Bloom County" by Berke Breathed, 9 November 1987.
Reprinted with permission.
"Wizard" by Brant Parker, 17 April 1986.
© 1986, reprinted by permission of Johnny Hart and NAS, Inc.
"Wizard" by Brant Parker, 3 July 1987.
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CHAPTER VI

CASE STUDY: "Labor Tarred and Feathered"

Walter Kupau and the Mungovan Trial
From May of 1983 to December of 1986 three of Hawaii's newspapers in Honolulu and on Maui reported a long and complicated series of events and legal contests arising out of a labor dispute between Carpenters Union, local 745 and a Maui construction contractor. This chapter will analyze the range and content of the press coverage accorded the union and Hawaiian labor leader, Walter Kupau, the key union figure in this coverage, as an example of the media portrayal of organized labor.

This study reveals the way in which a local press can single out a union or its leader for special adverse treatment beyond what the facts of the case merit. In such instances the editorial opinion of the paper toward the union, once formed, tends to inhibit fair consideration or fresh interpretations of ensuing developments. In these ways editorial policy biases public opinion against the union and its leadership in such a way that not only tarnishes the reputation of the union but negatively affects the overall image of organized labor in that community.
As noted earlier, Article V of the Canons of Journalism defined impartiality in terms of the important distinction between news reports and the expression of editorial opinion. According to that code, "News reports should be free from opinion or bias of any kind."¹ And more recently Everette Dennis, Executive Director of the Gannett Center for Media Studies, described press objectivity as the "crown jewel in American journalism, as our reporting, unlike that of European papers, moved away from party politics and heavy-breathing ideology and established a functional difference between news columns and editorial columns."² Subjects of press coverage, whether they are labor leaders or not, have a right to expect a conscientious effort on behalf of the press to live up to this ethical code.

The press coverage of the case of C & W Construction v. the International Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, local 745 and of its Business Representative and Financial Secretary, Walter Kupau, is significant for at least three reasons. First, the local papers, to somewhat varying degrees, early and consistently adopted an anti-union, anti-Kupau perspective which permeated its news reporting as well


as its editorial columns. This "lynch-mob" mentality then prevented them from seriously considering alternate interpretations of the subsequent events. Secondly, coverage of the central issue of the dispute intimated that the union defendant was guilty of egregious criminal violence instead of a relatively common form of non-violent organizational picketing. And third, there is evidence in the pattern of coverage of what has been called "pack journalism" in the way two of the papers appear to have followed the attack, not independently but at the heels of their lead paper.  

The Papers

The history of all three papers goes back into the previous century to the days of the "Big 5" when five large, plantation-based companies owned almost every financial enterprise. Since 1971 the Star-Bulletin has been owned by the Gannett Pacific Corporation, while the Advertiser and the Maui News remain locally owned. Though the Advertiser and the Star-Bulletin are separately owned, under a state-approved joint operating agreement in effect since 1962, they share productions facilities, and combine for their single Sunday edition.

The two Honolulu papers, the Honolulu Advertiser and the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, embrace a circulation that extends

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throughout the state of Hawaii, while the readership of the *Maui News* is confined for the most part to the county's three islands, Maui, Molokai and Lanai. Collectively, therefore, they represent nearly all the newspapers likely to cover this story before the general public, with a total combined readership of well over 208,000 people. ⁴

It should be noted at the outset that the newspapers under study here do not all habitually express arch-conservative or anti-labor editorial perspectives. Indeed, Hawaii is generally acknowledged to be a state where a much more favorable attitude toward labor unions prevails than may be found in the rest of the country. A higher percentage of Hawaii's workforce is unionized, including most of the newspaper reporters and production staff. ⁵ Certainly all three papers would hasten to disclaim any partisan affiliation or intentional bias. Nevertheless, in this case, the newspapers violated generally accepted canons of journalistic ethics and created a negative portrayal of organized labor.

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⁴ According to their respective circulation departments, as of November 1988, the Advertiser's daily circulation was 93,088; the Star-Bulletin's was 97,950; and the Maui News was 17,400.

⁵ In 1983 about 800 employees of the two Honolulu dailies were represented by six different unions according to an article in the Honolulu *Star-Bulletin* 11 Apr. 1983: A10.
Biography of Walter Kupau

Though the incidents upon which the case and the ensuing press coverage are based date back only to 1980, it is important to know something of the background of the principal union figure, Walter Kupau. The son of an Army officer, he was born in Kalihi in 1937. Growing up in that poorer and notoriously rough-neck part of Honolulu, Kupau is one of an ever decreasing minority of indigenous Hawaiians, who have been struggling without much success for cultural identity in the state's American institutions. *6* Though his family was able to send him to a local parochial high school for a time, like many Native Hawaiians he had difficulty adjusting to formal education. Eventually his family sent him to live with relatives in San Francisco. *7* He graduated from high school there and spent three years in the Army Corps of Engineers. After that, he returned to Hawaii and started working first as a construction laborer then, in the early 60s, he worked his way through the union apprenticeship program and began work as a union carpenter.

In 1965 he was elected job steward for the workers at the Lagoon Towers at the Hilton Hawaiian Village and began a rapid rise through the union's leadership. By 1969 he was


elected President of the Hawaii State AFL-CIO. At the same
time he served as the Administrative Assistant to the former
Financial Secretary of the Carpenters' local, Stanley Yanagi.
He ran against Yanagi in 1975 for that position and lost,
though he won re-election as president of the State AFL-CIO.

In 1977 Kupau launched a campaign to stop what he
believed was organized crime's attempt to gain control of the
state's key construction unions, naming Henry Huihui and
Wilfred "Nappy" Pulawa as the two most notorious criminal
figures in that effort. 8 Then in 1978, almost a year after
Stanley Yanagi passed away, Walter Kupau won election in a
hotly contested race against Yanagi's hand-picked successor.
In a rare example of intervention, the president of the
union's International office in Washington D.C. moved to
disqualify Kupau. A Federal Judge finally ordered his
installation over the objections of the mainland officers.
The International's role in this dispute would, of course,
leave a deep breach between Walter Kupau and the mainland
officials.

By the time of his clash with the Mungovans and the
ensuing legal dispute, Walter Kupau had already earned a
reputation as a colorful, but aggressive union activist,
unafraid to speak up for labor, or to express his own opinions
in a local style of oratory that, in the 60s, the press

8 See Honolulu Advertiser and Honolulu Star-Bulletin 18 May
1977.
originally found refreshing and entertaining if not sympathetic copy. But, more significantly, by this time, Walter Kupau had made for himself a long list of powerful adversaries.9

His avowed goal in both the 1975 and 1978 union elections was to double the union's membership and increase unionization of the state's building contractors. In 1980 his leadership was put to the test as he led the Carpenters on a four-week general strike that succeeded in winning an unprecedented 58 percent increase in their wage package.10 At the same time, the strike drove a bitter wedge between the Carpenters and some of the more conservative unions in the Building Trades Council that resulted in three of the major unions crossing the Carpenters' picket lines during the latter half of the strike.11

Nor was Kupau reluctant to speak out in the political arena. An early backer of the state's first Democratic Governor, John Burns, Kupau also became an outspoken critic of Mayor Fasi. By the 1980s, though, his political alliances had changed. He had become a critic of Democrat Governor


Ariyoshi and was now a staunch supporter and defender of the City of Honolulu's Republican Mayor Frank Fasi.

Indeed, by 1981, Walter Kupau's relentless pursuit of the leadership goals he had set back in 1975 had created for him a strong support base in his union at the expense of an ever-growing list of enemies among the outside interests he had either bruised or ignored in the process. 12

The Issues of the Legal Dispute

Of all of Kupau's various campaigns, it was his organizing agenda that would prove to be the most controversial. Following a national trend based upon a recession economy and a growing series of legal decisions unfavorable to union organizing, the union share of the state's construction labor was down to about thirty percent and dropping. 13 Organizing in the construction industry is one of the most difficult and legally complex operations under American labor law. Though the original purpose of the New Deal's Wagner Act was to give workers the right to join unions and require employers to recognize workers' unions and bargain with them in good faith, unionization of construction workers

12 Within a year after the strike he was reelected by an overwhelming 2-1 margin; see Honolulu Star-Bulletin 25 June 1981.

never seemed to fit the pattern cut for it by the framers of the National Labor Relations Act. The law provides, instead, a process designed for more conventional industrial workers which presumes the kind of stable workforce that is not normal to the construction industry. Federal law, for instance, encourages workers and their employers to wage union election campaigns, and, if the union is successful, the law expects the parties to bargain until a contract settlement is reached. The problem is that a construction contractor doesn't generally maintain a permanent workforce but hires masons, electricians, carpenters, plumbers in sequence and only for as many days as the work requires.

In the construction industry, then, the practice is for the craft unions themselves to train workers and maintain the workforce through the union hiring hall to which contractors may apply for workers as needed. For a contractor to use the union hiring hall, he must sign a master agreement to pay wages which are negotiated with the local contractors' association. Consequently, the methods of organizing or expanding the union's membership are entirely different in the construction industry from the way other industrial workers are able to organize.

Labor law generally forbids unions from exerting influence upon the employer when it is trying to organize the workers. For example, the law forbids unions from picketing an employer's premises if the purpose of the picket is to urge
the employer to subscribe to a master agreement with the union. Though this makes a lot of sense for workers in an auto or garment factory, in the construction industry, the union or any interested workers would be completely unable to conduct any kind of legal campaign among the workers during the few days or even weeks that the contractor would be using a given craft's services. And even if it were possible to achieve recognition, before a contract could reasonably be bargained—which regularly consumes months of effort, the job would be long done, and the workers would futilely be attempting the whole process again with some new contractor.

In practice, then, construction unions are left with the job of trying to persuade contractors to use trained, union craftsmen from their respective halls. To persuade the non-union contractor the unions may legally conduct a picket which is strictly "informational" and is therefore protected by the First Amendment. Construction unions across the country conduct such informational picketing using picket signs that inform the public that, "This contractor is not paying Area Standard Wages," for instance. Of course, everyone realizes the real aim of such picketing is to convince the contractor to use union labor.¹⁴

issue in the dispute between the Carpenters' Union and the Maui construction company. The dispute eventually resulted in the conviction of Walter Kupau and two of the union's Maui agents for perjury; that is for describing their union's picket as "informational" when other evidence suggested its purpose was organizational.

Facts of the Case

1979 - Walter Mungovan, a former union carpenter, and his wife Cher started business as "C&W Construction" on Maui.

1980 - In December the Carpenters Union began informational picketing of "C&W Construction" work sites.

1981 - February 3rd, Walter Mungovan secretly taped conversations with the local Maui union agents suggesting that the purpose of the union pickets was organizational.

- February 27th, Walter Mungovan secretly taped a phone conversation with Walter Kupau who assured him that the pickets would come down if he signed some form of acceptable agreement.

- June, Mungovan filed Unfair Labor Practice charges with the NLRB (the National Labor Relations Board) against the Carpenters for conducting an organizational picket of his company.

1981 - June, Carpenters filed a civil suit in Circuit Court charging Mungovan and Honolulu attorney Barry Marr with violating Hawaii's electronic eavesdropping law.
June, Mungovan filed a counter-suit in Circuit Court accusing Walter Kupau and the Carpenters Union with causing him "severe emotional distress, loss of business income and loss of earnings."

1982 - NLRB charges against Carpenters' union were dropped due to improper filing by NLRB attorney.

1983 - The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Attorney's office charged the two Carpenters' agents on Maui and Walter Kupau with perjury made on the affidavits filed in response to Mungovan's 1981 NLRB complaint, on the basis that the union had claimed their pickets were informational when Mungovan had made audio-tapes that indicated the purpose of the picket was organizational.

- May 13th, Mungovan reported that two unidentified men tried to abduct him from his apartment at the Hilton Hawaiian Village.

- May 18th, the FBI placed Walter Mungovan in the Federal Witness Protection program, without his wife or her son.

- May 21st, the two Maui Agents, Nishibayashi and Torres, were found guilty of perjury (sentenced to six months each).

1983 - August 18th, a federal grand jury indicted Walter Kupau on 7 counts of perjury.

- November 17th, Walter Kupau was found guilty of 6 counts of perjury.
December 27th, Federal Judge Harold Fong denied Kupau's appeal to overturn the verdict.

1984 - May 14th, Nishibayashi and Torres lost their appeal before the 9th Circuit to overturn their convictions.

- November 5th, during a Carpenters' strike, an Oahu construction foreman, Thomas Murchison, was allegedly assaulted by three union agents.

- November 10th, Walter Kupau was charged with hindering prosecution (a misdemeanor) since he drove the van that brought the three agents back from Mililani.

1985 - February 20th, Walter Kupau was indicted on felony charges of hindering prosecution in the Mililani assault case.

- November 4th, a Circuit Court jury acquitted one of the agents and reduced to petty misdemeanor the charges against the two other agents in the Mililani assault case.

1986 - January 28th, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals rejected Kupau's motion to overturn his perjury conviction.

1986 - January 31st, The felony charge against Kupau in the Mililani assault case was dismissed by the state's Circuit Court.

- June 12th, Walter Kupau was taken to Lompoc Federal Prison in California, where he served six months of his two-year sentence before being furloughed to a half-way house back in Hawaii.
Analysis of Coverage

Though there were three papers reporting the events of this case to the state's residents, the Honolulu Advertiser led the way while the other papers generally reacted to the Advertiser coverage or followed suit. A quick look at the 1983 headlines of the three papers (provided here in Appendix F) reveals clearly the Advertiser's dominance. 15 During these first eight months of the story's life, the Advertiser ran fifty-two articles, the Star-Bulletin twenty-five, and the Maui News twenty-eight.

The Advertiser's coverage was distinctive in another respect as well. Most newspapers designate one or more reporters to the so-called "labor beat." The Advertiser and the Star-Bulletin, no exception to this rule, had so designated Charles Turner and Sandy Oshiro at the former and Phil Mayer at the latter. Labor stories would typically go to these beat reporters unless there was some reason why their objectivity might be called into question. Phil Mayer, for example disqualified himself since he had once worked for Kupau. 16 The Advertiser, from the time it broke the story in 1983 through to 1986, had turned the story over to Walter Wright, their specially-designated investigative reporter, who

15 The full coverage of this story spanned four years. The appendix of 1983 headlines is a sample meant to suggest the weight and character of each paper's overall treatment.


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was directed to deal exclusively with all aspects of the Kupau/Mungovan dispute.

It is not clear why this assignment had been made. For whatever reason, it also meant, as Appendix F reveals, a much greater level of coverage was produced by the Advertiser than either of the other two papers found appropriate. Indeed, Walter Kupau raised the issue of this "media attack" even as the events of the case were unfolding. Though three Advertiser reporters wrote from time-to-time on this story, Walter Wright carried the lead. All but eight of the credited bylines during those first eight months were attributed to Walter Wright.

Much significance is attached in this analysis to headlines. As noted in Chapter IV, headlines are significant both in their content and their placement. Even when a reporter has managed to portray a story fairly and evenly, the construction of the headline can tip the scales. The layout of the story can also affect the way the story is perceived. Things like the size of the headline and the proximity of the story to the front page or other stories of a positive or negative nature are all influential to the final perception of that paper's readers. And these decisions are almost

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entirely out of the control of the beat reporter and made by a separate editor.

It is significant that Leonard Doob, was writing on propaganda, when he noted that headlines alone have a pronounced influence on the way stories are perceived by readers. Not only are they the first and most readily perceived, but, as Doob noted, many people read only the headlines and, therefore, owe their entire impression of a story to these terse messages.\textsuperscript{18}

When the \textit{Advertiser} first broke the Kupau/Mungovan story in 1981, Charles Turner picked it up from the Circuit Court suits filed, and the headline ran, "Suit, countersuit in bugging accusation."\textsuperscript{19} This headline is noteworthy and, as we shall see from subsequent coverage, atypical in that it did not implicate, accuse or unfairly associate either litigant in any way. The body of the article was likewise objective and carefully constructed to express both disputants' cases in an understandable and forthright manner.

When the story was next taken up, in May of 1983, the new perspective was immediately apparent from the headline, "FBI probing Carpenters, Kupau Says."\textsuperscript{20} What Kupau actually said on that occasion, as was revealed in the second paragraph


\textsuperscript{19} Honolulu \textit{Advertiser} 23 June 1981: A12.

\textsuperscript{20} Honolulu \textit{Advertiser} 12 May 1983: A1.
of the text, was that the FBI was "harassing" the union. This two page story, over 1400 words, was the first of Walter Wright's articles. It details the background of the perjury charges that were pending against the two Maui agents, Torres and Nishibayashi. But the headline focuses attention on the prospect of future discoveries of union malfeasance, when in fact the case was already being tried with as much evidence as was ever tried in court.

Wright's next two articles on the 15th and 17th of May were more overt in their bias. The first headlined "Tape technology -- last word in crime fighting" appeared in the Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser and so enjoyed the combined circulation of both dailies. As the title suggests, the lengthy article defended the Maui contractor's technique of secretly taping his conversations. It also compared Mungovan's labor dispute with the FBI's campaign against organized crime. Furthermore, Wright's article was actually arguing against the union's suit, based on Hawaii's 1978 law prohibiting electronic eavesdropping. Without mentioning the suit specifically, Wright was asserting that people who are protected by a law that has protected criminals must also be criminals.

In a second article on the 17th, the connection is made even more obvious. Titled "Contractor taped union 'threats'," this piece throws objectivity to the wind as it refers to
"threats" that paragraph six is forced to admit were not taped:

But Mungovan acknowledged he failed to lure Nishibayashi into repeating that threat while Nishibayashi was being recorded in a later conversation. 21

The alleged threat was that Mungovan's home would be "torched" if he refused to sign up with the union. But the fact that no recording can corroborate this allegation, despite both sides' concession that the tape was made without Nishibayashi's knowledge, was interpreted only to mean that Mungovan was not lucky enough to get the threat taped the first time. No consideration was given to the equally plausible interpretation that there was no "threat" in the first place and that Mungovan was hoping to "lure" Nishibayashi into making such a threat for the first time in order to have the NLRB enjoin the Carpenters' organizing efforts. Clearly, the reporter had already determined what the crime was, who was guilty, and who was victim in this case. In fact the issue of the trial was perjury, not "terroristic threatening." None of the agents was ever tried or found guilty (except in the media) of "threats." But the tactic of guilt-by-association, begun in the headlines and carried into the construction and argument of these early stories, has already established a negative attitude toward

the Walter Kupau and the Carpenters' Union. And this attitude is already evident though it is only May of 1983 while the first of the two trials was still in progress, and the Star-Bulletin had not even begun its coverage.

The other way in which headlines affect the image of labor is by their environment. As Doob correctly noted, most people who scan the newspaper read only the headlines are read them in tandem with the headlines of neighboring stories on the same page, creating --where there is an environmental pattern-- a subliminal association or link between the emotional impact of the one story and the other. For years, labor stories had suffered from the common editorial penchant for laying out the "labor beat" and "police beat" on the same page. Though this practice has declined in recent years, a survey of Advertiser and Star-Bulletin labor stories revealed each paper still tended to place the labor report next to a criminal report. As noted in Chapter IV, at their worst both papers do it as much as 30%, and it is rarely as low as 10%

Just the first month of the Advertiser's coverage of the Carpenter's perjury trial shows a high incidence of this environmental guilt-by-association. On the 20th of May the headline "Didn't lie, 2 carpenter unionists testify" appears under the story whose headline was "Cellblock suicide case goes to jury." On the 25th of May the story of the federal investigation into a house fire on the island of Oahu (which
the FBI hoped to link to Walter Kupau and the Carpenters) was printed next to a large photo of a fireworks display over the Brooklyn Bridge, curiously unrelated to any of the other stories on that page, but easily mistaken for a picture of a burning house. Similarly, on the first of June the headline that first disclosed Mungovan had been placed in the witness protection program, "Contractor put under protection," appeared on the front page over a special obituary for boxing great Jack Dempsey and the headline "Dempsey Dies" and an old photo of Dempsey with his fists up in a threatening stance. At first glance the Dempsey photo looks more like it belongs to the Mungovan story than the obituary.

The assumption of guilt-by-association is even more blatant in the text of another of the May '83 articles by Walter Wright. On May 25th, Wright reported on the denial of documents requested by the Carpenters under the Freedom of Information Act. According to the article such requests under the FOIA are typical of the way Russia, the Mafia and big corporations try to find out "what the government knows about them" as if seeking such information were somehow inherently un-American. Case after case of Detroit organized crime families and Cosa Nostra informants are cited to defend the denial of documents to the Carpenters union as if they were somehow logically related; as if the Carpenters union were one and the same public enemies with Russia and the Mafia. Not unlike George Bush's attack of the ACLU during
the 1988 presidential campaign, a legitimate and even laudable institution (in this case the FOIA) is made to appear subversive in a kind of yellow journalism.

This same article illustrates another shortcoming that often contributes to imbalance and distortion in press coverage. In dealing with labor disputes, reporters usually prefer management sources and informants. In his May 25th article on the Carpenters' FOIA request, the majority of the article is a virtual transcription of the government agent, William Ervin's, response to their denial. Of the 500 words in that article only 56 describe the union's position, and that passage was limited solely to the text of the union's written request filed with the government:

The Carpenter's Union said in the request letter it revealed yesterday that it wanted any information the government had about the 17 union officials or employees, and had or would submit authorization forms from each of those individuals. 22

Quite beyond the issue of the legal status of this request or the government's denial, it is difficult to understand why this request should be characterized as subversive. Bias in the "source of news," as Cirino called it, commonly results, as it does here, in advocacy reporting.

Other examples of the press' preference to interview and source the non-union side of a labor dispute can be seen by the frequency with which the reporters turned to Cher Mungovan for her comment on developments. The preference is particularly curious since it was Cher's husband, Walter Mungovan, who was both plaintiff and principal witness. Though she was part-owner of the company, as the court proceedings revealed, Cher was not a direct witness to any of the alleged threats or organizing interviews that were tried by the court. And yet it was Cher, not Walter, that became the media focus for the press coverage. And, later, it was Cher who would go to Washington D.C. and testify before Senate hearings to amend federal labor law.

And it was not just the Advertiser that allowed itself to be so directed by the Mungovan press releases or so inclined to accept unquestioningly and uncritically the Cher Mungovan version of events that she never witnessed. All three papers ran stories that were virtual panegyrics in praise of the heroic young couple's valiant struggle with the unionists.

The Advertiser kicked off the series on the Mungovans with Walter Wright's story July 25th, 1983, under the headline "The trials for Viet vet, wife just beginning." Not only does this article exaggerate Walter Mungovan's military career, which was in any event irrelevant to the case, but it
attempts again to establish emotionally the un-American nature of unionism:

"This is America," Cher told her husband when he said the union wanted to organize him. "No one can force you to sign."

It was America, but, Mungovan would say later, it became worse than Vietnam.23

Bearing in mind that the trial was never about violence, threats or any of the brutality that these and other press descriptions of imagined mayhem suggest, this continual onslaught of press insinuations to the contrary had clearly gone beyond the scope of reporting and smacked of an editorial crusade. In the eyes of the law, the union agents were tried and convicted of perjury for saying their picket line was informational; in the eyes of the media and its public, the union was guilty of criminal threats, extortion, arson and assault.

The rest of the article plays up the destruction of their family, focusing on the abandonment of her 12 year-old son Ian:

"I have no husband here any longer. My son is without a father," Cher says.

This quote is followed by a tear-wrenching description of the boy's deep feelings for his father. The fact that he was the boy's step-father, that a few months before this model-father was on the mainland visiting a girl-friend, and that he put himself into the witness protection program without asking or
consulting his wife or step-son are not represented in the article. Furthermore, these articles were very damaging not only to Walter Kupau but to the union movement in general. The headlines of most of the articles that were spun off this first Advertiser attack feature the word "union" instead of "carpenters" or the names of the defendants, thereby tarring all unions with the same tainted brush.

Advertiser
- 7/25/83 "The trials for Viet vet, wife just beginning"
- 2/7/84 "Mrs. Mungovan hopes to join husband"
- 4/30/84 "Senators due to hear Mungovan today; step-son, 12, also will tell of tribulations"

Star-Bulletin
-10/26/83 "Maui Woman Testifies on Union Harassment"
-11/5/83 "Union Ruined Firm, Mungovan Testifies"
-2/8/84 "Cher Mungovan Raps Isle Unions"
-10/30/87 "Mungovan wages long, hard fight in union dispute"

Maui News
-11/24/83 "Battle site over unions returns to Washington"
-1/6/84 "Hard line made dispute inevitable"
-1/6/84 "Mungovan dispute brings ills of union excesses into focus"
-1/26/84 "Mungovan anger not with unions alone"
-5/1/84 "Once happy family tells how union ruined lives"

Formal editorial opinion of all three papers, even when it expressed opposition to Kupau's actions in this case, attempted to distinguish the rest of the union movement from their censure. And yet the persistent reference to unions

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generically in the many headlines cited above was bound to accomplish the opposite impression.

This brings us to a consideration of the impact of so-called "pack journalism" or the apparent connection between the coverage of the Advertiser and the other papers. During the Watergate era, the phenomenon of "pack journalism" was first noted. Many were surprised by the way in which, after the Washington Post finally succeeded in puncturing the cover-up, so many of the country's previously pro-administration papers suddenly turned with a vengeance on Nixon, hastening his eventual resignation and creating the misleading impression that the press was exercising a liberal bias. Actually the press was exercising the much less admirable practice of ganging up on fallen prey. It happened again to Gary Hart and Vice-presidential candidate Dan Quayle. And a similar phenomenon is evident in the Hawaii press coverage of the Kupau-Mungovan dispute.

After the Advertiser coverage drew first blood in its attack, it wasn't long before the other papers followed. Once Walter Wright's articles had begun to take attract public notice, particularly after the perjury convictions of Nishibayashi and Torres, first the Maui News and then the Star-Bulletin were quick to join the attack.

The Maui News began its coverage by simply borrowing the story from the Advertiser.

As can be seen from the 1983 headline summary (Appendix F), of the twenty-four stories it printed in the eight month period, nineteen credited Honolulu (UPI) with the byline. United Press International (UPI) is a wire service that picks up the lead stories from one paper and transmits them nationally for the benefit of the service subscribers. Since the Advertiser was introduced and was leading the coverage of this story, the UPI material would largely be drawn from its coverage. To some extent the Maui News' reliance on the wire stories may be understandable in that, though the disputants were primarily Maui residents, the trial was in Honolulu. But, even so, more background information could have been available had the Maui News been interested in the story earlier.

And yet, once the Maui News did become interested, its coverage quickly took on the character of a crusade. During the eight months of its initial coverage the Maui News featured four editorial attacks on the Carpenters or Walter Kupau personally. That was twice as many editorials as the two Honolulu papers combined, and represents one-seventh of their entire coverage.

The remaining articles published in the Maui News reveal, particularly throughout 1983, the growing dominance of editorial hostility toward Walter Kupau. The first
stories were just excerpts from the Advertiser material picked up through the UPI. By June, however, about a week after the first editorial condemnation of Kupau's defense, the headline featuring the report about Walter Kupau's offer for information on Walter Mungovan's two alleged abductors, was "Carpenters boss offers reward." The term "boss" instead of "leader," "agent" or "head" is always unfavorable, suggesting he was not elected democratically and maintains his power by force and coercion. It's a loaded label that dredges up a most loathsome stereotype and reveals the user's bias.

Though the Star-Bulletin's coverage was, by comparison, considerably less pointed in its attack, its treatment of Kupau's trial and the Mungovan family seemed to follow the Advertiser's lead as well. The bulk of the Stories were written by their court-reporter Charles Memminger, whose coverage does not reveal the same degree of sympathy to Mungovan as Walter Wright's. And Yet the headlines, which were not written by the reporter but by a desk editor, consistently pick up the nonunion features of the story. Over his article on November 5th, for instance, the headline was "Union Ruined Firm, Mungovan Testifies."\(^{26}\) The selection of that nugget from all the testimony, instead of "Mungovan planned to sign up with union" which was also

reported in that article, or instead of any of Walter Kupau's comments reveals an editorial policy decision that had already determined which side of the story should be emphasized.

Unlike the Advertiser, whose coverage pattern was largely the product of its local reporter, Walter Wright, the Star-Bulletin coverage, as a Gannett paper, was often pulled away from Memminger's reporting and influenced by out-of-state reporters and commentators: in October of '83, the story "Maui Woman Testifies on Union Harassment" was taken from the Associated Press; in February of '84 the story "Cher Mungovan Raps Isle Unions" was written by Jessica Lee, Gannett's News Service; and in April of '84 the story "Mungovan's Son Testifies in Senate" was written by John Teare of Gannett.\(^27\) And near the end of the story's life in 1987, Star-Bulletin writer Ann Murakami wrote a "report" completely limited to the Mungovan side of the story.\(^28\) Under the headline, "Mungovan wages a long, hard fight in union dispute," the story makes no pretense to objectivity or balance. The article is an accurate "report" only of Cher Mungovan's diatribe against the Carpenters Union:

In the meantime, Mungovan said, it's been "very emotionally and financially


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draining" for her family. She said she must fight alone, and it's like fighting a "mighty conglomerate corporation."29

This portrayal of the Mungovans as the victims of a large and powerful conspiracy was only one possible interpretation of the facts. Just as likely was Kupau's belief that the large and powerful federal government had conspired to crush the union's efforts to survive the incursion of non-union construction.

In fact, the press bias against Walter Kupau in the handling of the Mungovan case is just as apparent in its omissions as in its commission. As reporters began to identify with Cher Mungovan, less attention was given to details that did not support their negative opinion of Walter Kupau. From the beginning, Kupau had insisted that this case was engineered by the federal government in order to stop the spread of union organizing in Hawaii's construction industry.30 Without question, Walter Kupau's administration of the Carpenters' local had distinguished itself in the labor community as the most active and aggressive union organizers. Yet, at no time did any of the Hawaii press ever give serious consideration to Kupau's charges.


Similarly, Walter Kupau also raised the question of racial prejudice throughout the campaign. And not only did the papers fail to credit the validity of such charges, the Maui News even editorialized on the ridiculousness of the allegation. But, it is true that the Mungovan's, themselves only recent residents of Hawaii, like the Federal investigators and prosecutors as well as the overwhelming majority of the jury were all Caucasian and that the key issue in the union defense dealt with intended meaning of English spoken in the local "pidgin" patois. It is also true that the case was taken out of the hands of the local police and local NLRB office and handled exclusively by mainland, primarily Caucasian officials. And, finally, it is also true that the case, almost immediately, became a platform for a legislative attack on the entire labor movement staged by the National Right-to-Work Committee in Washington D.C. before a special Republican-controlled Senate Committee.

Though none of the papers at the time elected to deal with the discriminatory impact of this racially "stacked deck," it is no coincidence that not long after Walter Kupau's conviction, the Federal jury-pools were re-structured to avoid just such imbalances as Kupau described.

The coverage also failed to consider a growing body of evidence that called the credibility of the Mungovan's testimony into question. It is hard, for example, to reconcile the poor, hopeless, downtrodden image projected by the press in describing the Mungovans with the skillful and deft management of their frequent press releases and the wide circulation accorded their version of the story. Starting with two Jack Anderson columns in September of 1983, which were syndicated throughout the country, a barrage of national articles in Readers' Digest, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Times, The New York Times, The Washington Post and even in London's Daily Mail revealed a media handling of the Mungovan dispute which was professionally conceived and indicative of a political agenda that appears to validate Kupau's expressed suspicions.

Looking also at the trial depositions taken from the Mungovans in February 1986 and November 1987, some amazing and inexplicable details emerge that did not fit the heroic image the press had been portraying of Walter and Cher


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Mungovan and were, therefore, never reported in the local papers or the national stories they spawned. Walter Mungovan's surprising disappearance in May of 1983 into the federal witness protection program should raise several questions. Mungovan's acceptance into that program and the subsequent media attention occurred after an alleged attempt was made by two unidentified men to abduct him. His wife was the only witness to this alleged attempt which was so easily foiled, so we have only Mungovan's word that it ever happened. But the press coverage of this incident assumed it was real and implied that the attempt had been made by agents of the Carpenters' union. Indeed, the pattern throughout the coverage was for the press to accept unquestioningly any information attested to by either of the Mungovans and to dismiss or ridicule everything proffered by Walter Kupau.

A fair report would have considered the possible flaws in both sides of the case. Why, for example, did Mungovan not place his wife and step-son in the program with or instead of himself? A threat, if one ever existed, would be even more effectively made against a witness's loved ones than against his own person. The papers were content with Cher's response that she needed to stay out to pursue the civil suits against the union, but this answer ignores the question of the danger alleged to have existed to her or her husband in the first place. And, if Walter Mungovan was
able to be a witness in court from the federal program, why wouldn't Cher Mungovan have been able to maintain the suits just as well from the program? None of the three reporters ever pursued these question to a satisfactory response. 

Furthermore, information Walter and Cher Mungovan expressed in their depositions which might shed light on this unusual decision was also ignored. These deposition were available to the reporters, but do not seem to have had any influence on their investigation. 34 Indeed, while the press was bemoaning the destructive effect of the union's organizing campaign on the Mungovan family, evidence from the depositions suggested Walter and Cher Mungovan did not enjoy a normal family relationship apart from their business partnership, which, if true, would have supported Walter Kupau's assertion that the entire incident was arranged to stop his aggressive union organizing in the state. According to Cher, for example, her husband's disappearance into the program was a surprise to her as well as to the press. Walter Mungovan went into the program on May 18th without discussing it with her or her son, emptying out their mutual bank accounts and leaving her to fend for herself. Furthermore, at his deposition though he was easily able to spell several unusual Hawaiian and Boston

34 Walter Wright was considered by the Advertiser as an "instigative reporter," Charles Turner, personal interview, 28 Nov. 1988.
place names of passing acquaintance, he was somehow unable to correctly remember the spelling of his wife's maiden name (Norrie), despite the fact that her parents and brother had lived with her on Maui.\textsuperscript{35} Furthermore, her deposition revealed that unbeknownst to her at the time, in the Spring of 1983, Walter Mungovan was in Florida visiting his old girlfriend while trying to get into the witness protection program.\textsuperscript{36}

In the same deposition, Cher Mungovan admits to knowing that her husband Walter had tried to strangle her in her sleep and was using cocaine\textsuperscript{37}, which should raise several new questions regarding the credibility of Walter Mungovan's testimony and the possibility that some collusion might have existed between him and the government; not to mention the irony of the federal prosecution's apparent prioritization of union-related perjury over drug-related embezzlement.

The depositions, in fact, revealed a range of improprieties and improbabilities that are inconsistent with the heroic victim image the press had projected. Walter Mungovan, a high school drop-out, had himself been a union carpenter and served as a union steward and member of the negotiating committee. He started his construction company

\textsuperscript{35} "Deposition of Walter Mungovan" 67.

\textsuperscript{36} "Deposition of Cher Mungovan" 185.

\textsuperscript{37} "Deposition of Cher Mungovan" 193.
with the healthy investment funds Cher's family provided together with a Worker's Compensation settlement he received from a former employer (which would ordinarily mean he was disabled and unable to continue working).\footnote{Deposition of Walter Mungovan} 125-127.

Conclusions

There is certainly enough evidence in the record to cast some doubt on the government's case against Kupau and justify a serious inquiry into his charges of governmental union-busting. The fact that no connection was ever made between Mungovan's alleged abductors and the Carpenters' union or Walter Kupau has not mitigated the effect that the press coverage has had in just such an insinuation. Walter Kupau was tried in the press and found guilty of crimes he was never even accused of in court. While the press reports were careful not to make overt accusations, the implications drawn were just as damaging and virtually impossible to contest.

It is common enough for news editors to defend occasional instances of bias, the labelling headline, the tactic of guilt-by-association, or even the more subtle preference for anti-union sources, by dismissing these instances of negative portrayal as mere lapses in otherwise objective coverage. But balanced coverage will never result

\footnote{Deposition of Walter Mungovan} 125-127.
from a pattern of objectivity so disturbed, for objectivity is not just a pattern of gyroscopic fluctuations between opposite poles. A slanted word, paragraph or headline are not compensated or excused by the following day's fairness. The final orbit of such treatment is bound to be skewed.

Nor is it a defense to claim that bias was unintended, or that, being unintended, it was not bias at all. When black civil rights groups and feminists first called attention to the deeply prejudicial impact of such expressions as "nigra" or "girl," the issue of intentionality was shown to be irrelevant. Labor's resentment of the tactics illustrated in this study has generally been ignored or dismissed by the press as were the frequent complaints raised by Walter Kupau throughout his trial. Press bias should be regarded in the same light as scandal, slander and rumor in that it cannot be recalled or mitigated. The responsibility of the press is therefore, enormous, and should never be limited only to the harm it has consciously and wilfully caused. In the words of a feminist writer:

The boys throw stones at the frogs in jest,
But the frogs die in earnest.  

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It is hoped that such studies as this will help establish a new sensitivity in the press and throughout the media to the negative impact of their traditional patterns of labor coverage, and establish a heightened awareness among reporters and editors of the need to curb such unconscious tendencies as might already be influencing their portrayal of organized labor.
CHAPTER VII

LABOR'S RESPONSE: "Image Enhancement"

A. J. Liebling:
A Free Press? Anybody in the ten-million-dollar category is free to try to buy or found a paper.... As to us, we are free to buy a paper or not as we wish.¹

In view of the formidable barrage of media imagery directed against unions over the years, it is surprising that labor's response has not been more aggressive. Only in the past ten years have a few of the larger Internationals and the AFL-CIO itself begun to demonstrate the commitment of their limited resources into public relations with the fervor formerly applied only to direct organizing campaigns. Indeed, only in the past decade has organized labor considered its public relations activity as an integral part of its overall organizing program.

A complete history of the public relations efforts of the AFL-CIO is related in the second chapter of Sara Douglas' 1983 dissertation at the University of Illinois.² Later published under the title Labor's New Voice (1986),


Douglas' study shows how the response of organized labor to the treatment it has received has slowly evolved from avoidance and defensiveness into a greater willingness to use radio, and television particularly in special, though somewhat isolated, target-campaigns during selected organizing drives, strikes or contract negotiations. No doubt her developing critique of this history contributed to the founding in 1982 of the AFL-CIO video production studio, known as the Labor Institute of Public Affairs (LIPA), and of the first coordinated national media campaign to enhance labor's image and promote unionization, the "Union, Yes!" program of 1988-1989.

As Douglas' study reveals, labor's response classically has evolved through four basic categories. To begin with, public relations to most unions meant simply their internal newsletter, or "house organ" as it has been called. In the early days of the movement, "Labor leaders," as historian Jack Barbash noted, "did not care very much what the "capitalist" press thought about them or their unions."³ So the focus of the labor press was to provide simple and direct communication between the union leadership and the rank and file, with the underlying assumption that union membership will ignore the morass of media bias once they have access to the official union perspective.

A second type of response that labor developed early in order to improve its general image was essentially a reaction to the media stereotypes from the 1920s and 30s that portrayed organized labor as the tool of foreign anarchists and, in a modified form, became popular again in the 1940s and 50s as red-baiting. To counter the image that labor unions were unpatriotic or un-American, many unions resorted to community service projects and other related programs designed to impress the public with the civic-mindedness of union leadership and with the theme that unions are institutionally consistent with free enterprise and the "American Way."

The third variety of response used by labor in reaction to specific atrocities of media bias has been the counterattack. Essentially defensive in nature this response has typically included resort to media councils or ombudsmen, application, in broadcast media, to equal time provisions under FCC regulations, and, more recently, to media monitoring activities by which union members or other recruited analysts systematically record, analyze and evaluate the tenor of one medium's treatment of a given union, or labor in general. The Machinists project in the early 1980s, as I noted in chapter III, was the most comprehensive example of such monitoring and provided the model.
And finally, as the introductory quotation from A. J. Liebling suggests, the fourth basic category of labor's responses to the negative media portrayals it has suffered includes the resort not just to its own internal press, but direct access to the local and national mass media.

There were, as Douglas has carefully detailed, a large number of attempts made by various labor unions to improve their public image and combat the anti-union stereotypes which otherwise dominated the media portrayals. The ILGWU and the UAW in particular developed compelling and innovative media campaigns. But even these early efforts were handicapped by two basic problems that fatally limited their ability to reach the numbers of people necessary to effectively influence the vast weight of American public opinion. To begin with, the limited financial resources of any single union or local thereof has made it very difficult to sponsor a concerted, multi-media program. As a result, when such campaigns were attempted, for the most part they employed only one communications medium and were waged in a single local geographic area. Following the traditional brand-name advertising approach already familiar to their media advisors, such campaigns also featured their specific union's name, often without using the word "union" in their copy but focusing on their occupational or craft designation. A large number of unions, after all, do not even have the word union in their name, but use words like
"association," "federation," "organization," or "brotherhood."

Unfortunately, as noted earlier, unions are lumped together in the public consciousness. The conduct or reputation of any one union, good or bad, is imputed generally to the labor movement as a whole. The fact that the NEA (National Education Association) representing teachers, the UAW (United Auto Workers) or the Teamsters for many years were not in the AFL-CIO are distinctions relevant only to their members and labor relations professionals. As far as the public is concerned, they are all unions and, therefore, all intrinsically inter-related. For years, labor's response to this misconception has been either to ignore it or for individual unions to spend their limited media investments on campaigns which hoped to distinguish their union somehow above the rest.

This lack of unity and purpose in labor's response has been its greatest handicap. It has, until recently, resulted in the inability of the American labor movement to effectively coordinate a national, multi-media response promoting a general image of labor unions that could appeal to a spirit of union solidarity rather than a variety of professional or craft hauteur.

The one noteworthy exception to the reluctance and awkwardness of early union efforts to work the media can be seen in the campaigns of the International Ladies' Garment
Workers' Union (ILGWU). Not only was this the first union to write and run a special advertising supplement on its history published in the New York Times back in 1959, but, even before that, the ILGWU produced and staged its own drama, *Pins and Needles* (1937), a comedic revue that featured the problems of garment workers in the depression.\(^4\) Then, in 1950, the ILGWU produced a classic film, *With These Hands*, depicting the struggles of the immigrant garment workers who formed the backbone of the ILGWU. And, most famously, in 1975 the union popularized the inspiring song, "Look for the Union Label," in a series of nationally run television and radio advertisements.\(^5\)

The ILGWU projects were exceptional in their sophistication. Though their membership was based primarily in New York, they realized the importance of reaching a national audience as well. Likewise, their commitment to a multi-media approach that focused on the larger issue of "union label" instead of their own personal union name was unusual and uniquely effective. Clearly most union leadership had viewed such media efforts as a huge sinkhole, swallowing their funds and leaving little hard evidence of effectiveness behind. Unlike money spent on an organizing campaign or negotiations, where in the end it is

\[^5\] Douglas 85.
possible to measure the effectiveness of the investment, the net effect of public opinion campaigns was almost impossible to measure accurately. Labor's leadership, therefore, was ordinarily disinclined to risk the commitment. As a consequence, for most of its history, communications departments of most union locals were given short shrift. For this reason, V.O. Key noted in the 60s that,

Union Leadership has no impressive record in propagandizing its own members. Many members remain unaware of issues that the leadership regards as of prime importance to the union itself. Of those members who have opinions many take positions that depart from the official union line.... Yet if a mass-membership organization meets limited success in managing the attitudes of its own members, how much more ineffective must be campaigns of propaganda designed to settle like a mist over the population generally.6

There is no need to contest the appropriateness of Key's characterization of union public relations efforts as "propaganda," since it is not unreasonable to consider the union-made counterpoint to the media-entrenched anti-union propaganda in the same light. But anyone comparing the way unions have managed "persuader activities" as opposed to business or political interests can hardly fail to see labor's historic disadvantage. Jacques Ellul, for instance, writing a few years after Key, observed that, "union propaganda has a character of its own: it is much more 'human,' costs less, uses the devotion of union

members, their close human contact, and so on." In other words, it was propaganda that attempted to work outside rather than through the media.

Today, however, there is new evidence of a growing determination on behalf of many unions to respond proactively to the distorted images created by the media. As Gary Hubbard, Communications Director for the United Steelworkers, has remarked, "Any union in today's society that doesn't have good communication with its members and the public will not survive." There's no doubt this sentiment is shared by the new generation of labor leaders throughout the country.

In the mid-1970s several Hawaii unions successfully instituted a labor education television series, known as Rice & Roses, that aired weekly on KHET, the state's public television channel. Funded through the University of Hawaii's Center for Labor Education and Research, this program featured thirty minute labor documentaries, histories and panel discussions for sixteen years under the general supervision of a Labor Advisory Committee. With the producers given a free hand to control their own programming, Rice & Roses soon developed a much-coveted reputation for fairness and innovation in its approach to a

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7 Ellul 227.

wide variety of labor issues. Not the tool of any one union, it provided the public viewing audience with a insights into worker perspectives not available on commercial television. Unfortunately, its limited production budget prevented the program from growing technologically with the rest of that medium through the 1980s, and it enjoyed only a state-wide rather than national scope.

In 1985 the AFL-CIO, after a decade of declining union membership, reviewed its organization and structure and issued a report designed to improve its response to a newly evolved labor force and turn the tide on their national organizing efforts. It is significant that the entire third section of that report's five-part recommendation concerned the improvement of the labor movement's communications, which include the following specifics:

3.1 Efforts should be made to better publicize labor's accomplishments.

3.2 Union spokespersons need training in media techniques.

3.3 Efforts must be made at every level to better inform reporters about unions and trade unionism.

3.4 The AFL-CIO should develop a pilot project for a targeted area to test the usefulness of advertising to improve the public's understanding of labor.
3.5 Interferences with the right of workers to form a union should be forcefully brought to the attention of the general public to develop public support for labor law reform.

Indeed, in the four years since that report, considerable progress has been made. Current examples of labor's response to its media portrayal may be broadly classified into two basic categories: media monitoring and advocacy advertising.

Media Monitoring

Labor's media-monitoring activities are by no means unique or original to the labor movement. In fact, there is probably much more involvement by conservative interest groups in monitoring than all the other groups put together. Accuracy In Media (AIM), for example, employs a twenty-member staff that continuously monitors national news stories to complain of errors and misinformation prejudicial to their conservative agenda. A plethora of advocacy groups, from the National and World Council of Churches to

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the Media Project of the National Organization for Women and the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, monitor the media either to make sure their members are not ignored or to record and formally protest misrepresentation and stereotypes. According to a study done by graduate students in Journalism at American University in Washington, D.C., the AFL-CIO by comparison has been less direct in its reaction to media bias:

The AFL-CIO simply snubs journalists from offending news organizations. Interviews with federation president Lane Kirkland are never granted to the non-union Cable News Network, whose owner, Ted Turner, has made clear his dislike for unions.\(^{11}\)

The AFL-CIO treatment of Turner, of course, is not a proper example since it is likely that it is prompted less by his network's media portrayal of labor than by his anti-union employment practices. And yet this strategy of avoidance, probably learned from the example of the White House, has been commonly used by labor. Often newspapers, in consideration of this strategy, either quietly drop the reporter's byline or reassign stories which are negative to their local unions in order to protect their regular labor reporters from lack of future access. But this "snubbing" has usually, at least in the case of labor, been in response to very specific and localized stories, not the product of any organized or systematic monitoring program.

\(^{11}\) Breedlove, et al. 19.
A really extensive media-monitoring project for labor was not conducted until the *IAM Television Report* of 1980 (five years before the AFL-CIO report), carried out by the International Association of Machinists. As noted earlier, this project was remarkable in its scope since it considered entertainment as well as news programming and covered national as well as local broadcasts across the country. Though the effectiveness of this or any response is difficult to gauge, the Machinists' staff who worked on this project noticed a definite difference in the attitude of network officials and news reporters in their post-survey relations. Editors and reporters, they found, were much more attentive and responsive to the union's concerns.¹²

Also in 1980, Sara Douglas and a team of researchers at the University of Illinois monitored three local newspapers in a month-long project categorizing labor stories thematically.¹³ With the Machinists' survey clearly in mind, this study revealed many of the same basic patterns of coverage bias in local newspapers that the Machinists had found in television programming. But the Illinois study was not, after all, a union response *per se*, though it was


obviously union inspired and designed to complement the Machinists' study.

For the most part, unions have not made systematic efforts to survey and evaluate the media attention they have received. Rather, unions have tended to respond to specific instances of a given medium's portrayal. Walter Kupau, for instance, the Business Manager of Hawaii's Carpenters Union, Local 745, responding to the pounding he was receiving in the press (see Chapter VI: Case Study), cited the Honolulu Advertiser for its crusade against him and his union's organizers. And, the following year, the local president of the Teamsters in Hawaii, Art Rutledge, complained to the same paper for a similar series of stories that improperly imputed guilt to the union leadership. In each of these cases, however, the only satisfaction granted the complainant was the single item worth of coverage the paper gave to the complaint, and this short shrift was, of course, heavily outweighed by the number of articles that constituted the offending portrayal.


15 Charles Ware, Advertiser Ombudsman, "Fairness of Advertiser's Rutledge Suit Coverage," Honolulu Advertiser 6 May 1984: B3.
It is this hopelessly one-sided advantage that the press has in presenting its case to the public that Liebling had in mind when he remarked that freedom of the press belongs only to those who own one. As a result, most labor unions have not even bothered expressing their complaints directly to the news media. Or, if they do, they do not tend to register their complaints formally through the vehicles which their community or local press have instituted.

The Rutledge complaint was unusual in that it was officially directed to the paper's ombudsman. But no aggrieved union or its leader in Hawaii ever brought a complaint of media bias to the Honolulu Community Media Council that was established to deal with such complaints in 1970. This aversion to formal response seems to be endemic of labor's relationship with newspapers, which has a much longer history of antagonism behind it.

When it comes to television coverage, though, labor has shown a considerably greater inclination to respond. As Ralph Arthur Johnson described in his article, "World Without Workers: Prime Time's Presentation of Labor," the Steelworkers were able to work their objections to a network series into an opportunity for positive public relations:

In a recent striking example, NBC's short-lived drama, "Skag," may have distorted the image of steelworkers,

but the image created was tangible. The United Steelworkers resourcefully created a public debate about the lack of its authenticity and capitalized on the opportunity to inform the public about the function of labor unions.17

It is, indeed, rare that instances of media distortion are seen as opportunities. More often labor has avoided raising its objections for fear of calling even more public attention to the distorted portrayals. Certainly this can be the result if the objections, after being publicized, are not followed by a concerted educational program of the kind the Steelworkers developed after "Skag." To be effective, labor's response must go beyond the objection stage and commit resources to re-education. Beyond what is usually considered just rebuttal, the response must be a form of what lawyers call "redirect."

After the Machinists' monitoring project, another extensive union-sponsored survey of television coverage was conducted by Local 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). This New York City Local was concerned about the TV news coverage it was receiving and so, in 1981, it organized 294 members into fifty-four teams in order to monitor TV newscasts on all

seven New York channels for a four-week period.\textsuperscript{18} The subsequent report found that 55\% of the time when a City employee or service was criticized they were not given the opportunity to answer. Mayor Koch in particular, the survey revealed, was given wide latitude. Nine times out of ten his statements went unchallenged, a deference shown to no other figures in the survey.\textsuperscript{19} But this survey, as extensive as it was, was directed at a specific problem peculiar to one union local. It did not, unfortunately, include questions on the general patterns of union portrayal prevalent, of which their complaint may well have been only a symptom.

The basic weakness of monitoring that is so finely focused is that it misrepresents the true scale of the problem. This is not to say that labor's reaction to specific instances of media bias are unwarranted. The Communications Workers of America, for example, mounted a very successful campaign against MCI for a series of ads featuring comedienne Joan Rivers in what they perceived as an insulting portrayal of their members. Such defensive maneuvers are often necessary and valuable in the context of the workers' self-image, but they have left unaddressed the


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larger issue of the media's portrayal of unions and unionization.

Norman Isaacs, former president of the National News Council, in his book, *Untended Gates*, endeavored to show the viability of self-regulatory bodies such as ombudsmen and media councils as avenues of redress for media bias.\(^{20}\) A tireless monitor of newspaper improprieties, Isaacs formed his theory based on the premise that the overall treatment accorded most groups is fair, and that media councils and independent ombudsmen are needed to pass judgment on the isolated examples of abuse that are bound to crop up occasionally. Labor's response to its media portrayal, particularly in its monitoring efforts, has been hampered by its tendency to accept unchallenged this same premise.

Recently, however, several union newsletter editors in Hawaii have developed an innovative approach to media monitoring on the state level. In 1988, editors representing five different unions formed the Hawaii Association of Labor Editors (HALE) in order to pool their technical expertise and deal with state-wide labor problems that effect the entire labor movement.\(^{21}\) One of the first


\(^{21}\) I.L.W.U., Local 142, Carpenters' Loc. 745, Laborers' Loc. 368, Hawaii State Teachers Ass'n, and Musicians' Loc. 677.
issues they addressed was the problem of press relations with the state's major newspaper and television reporters.

Using research and data collected for this study, the labor editors began a series of informal discussions with the principal labor reporters. Eventually, the group was able to develop a series of guidelines that it submitted to the Honolulu Community Media Council in September of 1989. The proposed guidelines (see Appendix G for the full text) consist of five primary recommendations:

1. Remain neutral
2. Refer to labor leaders by their proper title
3. Don't "play up" labor disunity
4. Do not perpetuate popular misconceptions
5. Give coverage to positive stories about labor

Though the Media Council did not immediately adopt the proposed guidelines, they are being studied in committee, and the dialogue with the council as well as with the local reporters has helped to sensitize both the media and the community to the problems labor has been experiencing.

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Advocacy Advertising

Beyond just monitoring the treatment labor is receiving, more and more unions are stepping into the various media arenas to reform their media portrayal directly. Though such campaigns are always costly and almost always unpredictable in their outcome, the dramatic decline in union memberships experienced in the late 70s and early 80s has spurred the labor movement generally to reconsider its traditional aversion to professional media advertising.

As early as 1985, the year of the landmark AFL-CIO reassessment, Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 33 in Des Moines, Iowa began a union image promotion campaign that was partially tied in with their 95th Anniversary celebration, but was essentially designed as an organizing campaign. Six commercials were aired on local channels, particularly during broadcast of local ball games. Emphasizing the quality and stability of union labor and the high standards of craftsmanship that are fostered through the union apprenticeship programs, the ads were designed to appeal to contractors, potential members and the public-at-large.

All six of the commercials they produced, as their 95th Anniversary video explained, were responding to the long years of biased portrayals in the popular media. One of their most effective ads showed a union hardhat with an
American flag on it, placed in a large vise and gradually crushed as the announcer read the following script:

Remember when "Made in USA" meant craftsmanship? We do. But there are those in this country who would cheapen American labor, and their pressure is building every day. With every wage agreement that's broken, with every safety standard that's allowed to slip, with every reduction in accident and health benefits, the quality of American labor is cheapened. Isn't it time the pressure stopped?
Let's keep quality, and build union. We're the Plumbers and Steamfitters of Local 33. 23

Without naming a specific adversary, this ad skillfully portrayed union workers as victims of economic policies that ultimately depreciate not just our currency but our work ethic as well. And though these ads were specially focused on the Plumbers and Steamfitters, like the ILGWU union label campaign a decade earlier, they aimed at the larger issue of union-made products, and, therefore, had a spillover benefit to all unions in the area.

A second of their ads showed a young construction worker returning home from work, his face obviously lined with worry and apprehension, while the voice-over read:

Nine years ago Jack Ferris went to work for a non-union company. They promised him job security, decent wages and profit-sharing for his skills as a plumber. Today, Jack's dreams were shattered, so were the promises. He was laid off. Jack and his family have to start over ... alone. Things might have been different. He could still have his rights if he'd belonged to the union. Maybe you should look into the union. For more

information call this number. We're the Plumbers and Steamfitters of Local 33.24

Focusing on the issue of job security, traditionally the most persuasive union organizing feature, this ad appealed not just to would-be plumbers but to a wide variety of workers who were likely to be anxious at that time over the future of their employment.

Certainly the balance of such campaigns throughout the nation have been directed toward specific, local issues. In Hawaii, for instance, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union, Local 5 ran a $50,000-to-$60,000 media campaign supporting a particularly difficult round of bargaining in 1987.25 And in 1988 the National Education Association ran a set of three commercials produced by Beber Silverstein and Partners of Miami, Florida which aired in the fall on over-the-air and cable news, news analysis and public affairs programming. These ads used NEA members and presented common issues facing teacher bargaining throughout the country, including teacher shortages, over-crowded classes and non-competitive salaries, but were targeting political action and support for legislative changes in the November elections.26

24 Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 33, Video-tape.


This past year the United Auto Workers launched a media campaign with a somewhat broader target. In a set of two ten-day segments designed for national television in April and June, the UAW sought to turn national attention on anti-labor business practices. In one 30-second spot called "Products," newsreel images of American success in production dissolve into images of a frenzied Wall Street trading floor as the narrator contrasts market manipulation and buyouts with the real products of American labor made idle by plant closings and foreign investments. These ads were broadcast in more than 21 markets nationwide in Washington, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Detroit on Cable News Network, Financial News Network and ESPN.

Another variety of Advocacy Advertising that has become popular recently in the labor movement is image advertising. Unlike most of the previous media campaigns, image advertising is not directed toward the achievement of some specific union goal, like organizing or bargaining. Image advertising targets the general public rather than union membership or recalcitrant employers. And, unlike political spots, image advertising is not focused on a specific public outcome so much as a general improvement in the public


approval of unions within the framework of other American institutions.

Historically, labor has resisted this form of media use more than any other. It is ironic that over thirty years ago officials of the AFL-CIO spoke disdainfully of such advertising. As one spokesman remarked, "It's not like selling soap. You can't just sing a jingle that says 'Love that AFL-CIO.'" And yet, by the end of the 1980s, the same AFL-CIO has launched a nationwide program that is, indeed, succeeding in reforming public opinion with jingles and media imagery virtually identical to the way Madison Avenue has marketed soap, cigarettes and political candidates since the days of Albert Lasker.

In Hawaii, the Carpenters Union, Local 745, after the beating they took in the local press from 1983 to 1986 (see Chapter VI), produced and telecast a series of 30-second commercials that began airing in December of 1987. Designed to air on holidays, the various spot worked off the seasonal message. Their first Christmas spot, for instance, was set to a bright musical score that went:

If what they say is true
That holiday good cheer
Is really what we built
For others through the year,
Let's celebrate together
Families strong and fast.
Good deeds without measure
Friendships built to last.

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Building a better Hawaii
folks like you and me.
Merry Christmas, Hawaii, from Santa's Carpenters.\(^\text{30}\)

So understated was the message of this and their other commercials, that they were virtually subliminal. The spot was run eighteen times in prime time slots on the four network television channels in the two-weeks before Christmas. And similar spots were run on Fathers' Day and Thanksgiving, having the general effect of greeting cards, subtly identifying the union with the most cherished and integral institutions in the state.

In October of 1987, the AFL-CIO Convention approved the inauguration of a $13 million media campaign unlike anything ever attempted before. Placed in the charge of the AFL-CIO's Labor Institute for Public Affairs (LIPA), this new campaign would be the product of careful market research and, according to the convention resolution, be dedicated "to raise the level of public understanding of unions and of the AFL-CIO; and to increase both the predisposition of a new generation of American workers (20 to 40 years old) to union organization and those workers' understanding of how unionism responds to their own needs and concerns."\(^\text{31}\)

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By the spring of the following year, LIPA was ready to launch the two-year project under the theme, "Union, Yes!" As the Wall Street Journal recorded, the ads were created by the New York advertising firm of Lois Pitts Gershon Pon/GGK, and featured TV stars Tyne Daly and Howard Hesseman as well as movie star Jack Lemmon. The ads were aired on network television and on local stations in 13 large cities beginning on May 11th, 1988.

But the success of the "Union Yes!" program is due primarily to the way it has overcome the two greatest handicaps dogging union media campaigns in the past. On the one hand, "Union Yes!" is a multi-media, long-term program. Designed for two years saturation in television, radio, billboard, as well as print media throughout the nation, "Union Yes!" is not a flash-in-the-pan effort with just a hit-and-run impact. And on the other hand, "Union Yes!" is an AFL-CIO sponsored campaign addressed to the general improvement of the public's attitude about unions. But the real beauty of this campaign has been its adaptability to local-issue campaigns that complement and enhance the national theme. More than 120 union sponsors have used the special "Union Yes!" radio spots in conjunction with their own organizing campaigns, and an

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estimated 200 billboards have been put up nation-wide.\textsuperscript{33} The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) used the campaign's radio and television ad to promote its successful organizing drive at Harvard.\textsuperscript{34} And in Pennsylvania, the "Union Yes!" message was used by the State AFL-CIO in its legislative campaign to increase that state's minimum wage.\textsuperscript{35}

And, not only did the AFL-CIO invest in market research in its design of the campaign, but it began public opinion surveys almost immediately after the program started to gauge campaign effectiveness. By the end of July, it was already able to report that many who had seen the television ads earlier in the year had changed their attitudes significantly.\textsuperscript{36}

Organized labor has, it seems, turned a corner in its willingness and commitment to the sophisticated use of mass media in its response to the onslaught of negative portrayals it has suffered at the hands of the commercial news and entertainment media nationally. Though it remains to be seen whether the hard lessons it has learned over the


\textsuperscript{35} "Union Yes Spots Aired Widely on Radio."

years will result in on-going programs of media-monitoring and advocacy advertising, as indeed corporate America has been engaged in since the 1950s, the success of its organizing efforts in the last two years of this decade will probably determine the future course of the labor movement's response to its media portrayal as well as its survival as a viable economic and social force in the future of American society.
CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

Maureen Williams, a Ph.D. candidate in Communications at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, has studied the patterns of news media attention to organized labor and has described the change over the years as a progress "from incendiary to invisible." While I must agree with Williams that labor is not getting the direct attention it used to, the conclusion of this study is that the image of labor has not been reduced to invisibility so much as it has been refocused and filtered into more subtle, indirect projections than before. The media image of labor in contemporary American portrayals is most likely to appear in the side-swipe and the subliminal representation where labor or unionization is not actually the focus or center of the story, but is slapped in passing. As the previous chapters have shown, this pattern of abuse often conforms strategically to Cirino's thirteen forms of bias and fits into Parenti's seven generalizations of media treatment of labor disputes summarized in chapter I.

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To some extent we have seen that each medium studied tends to focus on a particular facet of an over-all labor union stereotype. The movies most often focus on the perceived connection between organized crime and organized labor. Only occasionally, in deference to its imagined liberalism, does it honor the weak or unsuccessful attempts of minorities to unionize. Television portrayals tend to emphasize the pettiness or foolishness of union bargaining goals and take the cinematic portrayals an extra step along by portraying good unionists out of power and generally suppressed by their local or national leadership, whose power is considered excessive, out-of-touch, and corrupt. Television news and print news share in common their preference for employer sources which cause them to adopt, as the basic premise of their reports, the employer's perception of the issues. Or, just as commonly, they will attempt, in covering labor disputes, to adopt a standpoint which supposedly advocates the interests of a "general public" which they have somehow defined to contain only victims of the strike action, not victims of the collective personnel policies established by national and local employer councils. Furthermore, local newspapers, as noted in the case study, can become so completely caught up in this chamber-of-commerce mentality that they come to regard aggressive labor organizing as itself a criminal activity and, thereafter, are unable to even consider alternate
interpretations of labor activism. And the favorite target of the cartoon images of labor unions, in addition to all of the other components of the stereotype considered above, is the worthless, unproductive nature of an overpaid blue-collar work force, which is considered the unhappy but inevitable result of unionization.

To these media specific portrayals, it should be added, then, that there are what might be called "lenses" coloring and distorting all of the different media portrayals of organized labor. This study has isolated at least eight of these lenses which have traditionally and consistently distorted the media images of labor unions and their leaders. Collectively these lenses define the media stereotype of organized labor, which reporters, editors and script writers see and then amplify in their portrayals:

1. Labor unions protect and encourage unproductive, (usually fat) lazy, and insubordinate workers.

2. America is unable to compete internationally in open markets because big, powerful unions have forced the nation's employers to pay exorbitant union wages to unproductive laborers.

3. While some very poor and abused workers (particularly women and immigrants) may need to form unions to protect themselves, big international unions usually fail to represent the interests of such workers.

4. Union leaders, because they do not come from the educated/cultured (privileged) classes, are more likely to be corrupted by the power they achieve than are business or political leaders.

5. Unions should really be volunteer societies organized and led by unpaid, unprofessional staffs of selfless workers; nor should union dues ever be used to pay anyone's salary.
6. There was a time, long ago when unions were necessary (when some of our older friends and relatives were in the movement), but now things are different. Employers are enlightened and would not generally try to abuse their workers. In the few cases where they might, new federal laws (FLSA, EEO & OSHA) are enough to provide reasonable protection against employer abuse.

7. Unions institutionalize conflict. Unions came into being to solve a specific labor relations problem. They solved the problem and, instead of going away, they remain to dredge up conflict where there would otherwise be perfect harmony.

8. All unions are the same. All unions are, therefore, accountable for the corruption or excess of any one union or union leader and share the guilt or shame.

Unlike Cirino's thirteen forms of bias or Parenti's seven misrepresentations as outlined in Chapter I, these eight lenses operate as underlying values often absorbed so thoroughly into the conception of labor relations held by the press and entertainment media that the resulting portrayals of organized labor will necessarily be guided into further negative stereotypes.

The impact of this labor stereotyping on public opinion or on labor's ability to organize and bargain effectively is difficult to quantify or measure with any certainty since there are so many other variables at work. Not only have the media images been warped and permuted over the years, but the reach of the media has extended deeper into the American psyche. A. J. Liebling correctly observed that, "The lazy mind, faced by recurrent but changing problems,
takes refuge in a formula."² To the average American, who
is not personally involved in the country's labor movement,
on the country's labor movement,
organized labor is a distant, but recurrent phenomenon.
Like foreign news and its geography labor news and its
arenas steadily hum in the background of his consciousness,
generally without requiring a personal decision or impinging
on his daily affairs. It is on such a benumbed or
indifferent consciousness that the media are most
influential. As V. O. Key, Jr. discovered, "In the short
run the effects of the media probably are greatest on topics
for which readers and viewers have only the vaguest
internalized norms or standards for independent judgement."³
And, certainly, the results of this study's survey of high
school students (Appendix A) indicate how mistaken that
image is likely to be in a generation whose knowledge of
labor relations has been formed by the media considered
here.

The media, whether news or entertainment; electronic,
cinematic or print, share a civic responsibility to
scrupulously avoid stereotypical portrayals of races,
ideologies and institutions. The larger part of any
stereotype is ignorance, and the labor stereotype is no

² A. J. Liebling, "Foreign News," The Most of A. J. Liebling
³ V. O. Key, Jr., Public Opinion and American Democracy (New
exception. Lack of informed coverage has been the bane of the labor movement since its inception. The media regularly resort to experts in medicine and law when treating these subjects, but it is assumed that anyone with a casual knowledge of current affairs can fairly and accurately describe labor relations. Newspapers encourage rotation rather than stability of their labor beat and qualified experts in TV News reporting are ordinarily employer representatives. These news media need to seek out and train reliable and objective experts, versed in the complexities of labor history as well as labor law and capable of researching and representing the issues of the disputes they report. Likewise, the producers of film and TV dramas, who regularly hire military, police, medical and legal consultants to assure accuracy of plot and detail, need to accord the same respect to their treatment of labor scripts. Ignorance feeds a stereotype just as education destroys it. Like it or not, our media are our most influential and pervasive educators. Richard S. Salant, former president of CBS News, asserted, "Our job isn't ... to give people what they're interested in. Our job is to provide people with the basic data that make democracy work." And like all educators, the media has a responsibility to its students as well as to its subjects.

Conservative media critics like Rusher and the Lichters have complained over the past twenty years that America's "media elite" have systematically pursued a liberal agenda of political and social issues. For the most part such arguments rely on a definition of liberalism that is limited to policies affecting defense spending, federal funds for social programs, and advocacy of civil rights advances. Somehow the rights of labor to organize and bargain collectively have been removed from that liberal agenda so that not even its conservative critics can find traces of sympathy to the labor movement in the media they have so single-mindedly harangued otherwise.

It is difficult to say exactly why or even when this separation of traditional liberalism from the cause of labor occurred. To some extent it may be true that the labor movement may have itself contributed to this political disaffiliation. As noted in the previous chapter, labor's response to the red-baiting of the McCarthy era involved a considerable amount of reactionary reorganization. To counter the image that labor unions were unpatriotic or un-American, many unions resorted to community service projects and other related programs designed to impress the public with the civic-mindedness of union leadership and with the theme that unions are institutionally consistent with free enterprise and the "American Way."
In many respects, it may be said that this response lay behind the abandonment of the labor movement by the liberal agenda for much the same reason that, as Christopher Lasch commented, American liberals turned their backs on the likes of Archie Bunker. Both the labor movement and exponents of liberalism were ultimately interested in moving up the social ladder of acceptance. The labor movement saw the old Wobbly/socialism as its weak underbelly in struggles with its public relations. At the same time the sympathy of American liberals came to regard the unlettered, and uncontrolled strength of its blue-collar progenitors as a social embarrassment. It may be said they sold each other out for a better seat on the American omnibus.

Progressivism yielded up the labor movement as it devolved into liberalism in the fifties. Richard Pells' careful analysis of the development of social philosophies espoused by American intellectuals in the 1940s and 50s identified the significance of the postwar political climate as it was reflected in such influential writers as William Whyte and David Riesman:

Reading Whyte or Riesman, one sensed a profound shift in language, or in the connotations assigned to the same words. What the writers of the 1930s called "community," the postwar intelligentsia labeled "conformity." Cooperation now became "other-direction"; social consciousness had turned into "groupism"; solidarity with others implied an invasion of privacy; "collectivism" ushered in a "mass society"; ideology translated into imagery;
economic exploitation yielded to bureaucratic manipulation; the radical activist was just another organization man.

Likewise, the union organizer became another organization man; and union solidarity was viewed as misplaced loyalty.

By the 1980s, under the Reagan onslaught, liberalism metamorphosed again into "Neo-liberalism." To the extent this political philosophy has been championed by the media, it now admittedly excludes the promotion of organized labor from its agenda. Media sympathy for the working class in the United States is reserved almost exclusively to the powerless and egregiously victimized. To the extent that organized labor is successful at developing bargaining power in any sector of the work force, it is vilified and attacked. In 1982 the Washington Post published a "Neo-Liberal Manifesto" written by Charles Peters, editor of the Washington Monthly, that minced no words regarding the changed neo-liberal attitude toward labor.

If neo-conservatives are liberals who took a critical look at liberalism and decided to become conservatives, we are liberals who took the same look and decided to retain our goals but to abandon some of our prejudices. We still believe in liberty and justice and a fair chance for all, in mercy for the afflicted and help for the down and out. But we no longer automatically favor unions and big government or oppose the military and big business.  


Indeed, by 1982, this declaration came as no surprise to labor. If anything, the startling revelation in Peters' "manifesto" must have been whatever led him to believe that liberals of recent generation had any "prejudice" that favored unions. Even a traditional "Progressive" stronghold like Amherst, Massachusetts which rallied behind Cesar Chavez' grape boycotts and supported the candidacy of Jesse Jackson over favorite son candidate Michael Dukakis, when confronted with a local organizing drive by the United Food and Commercial Workers in 1986, was hard pressed to find any support in their local press. Instead, as Harold P. Schlechtweg described in his account of the dispute, "The public image, skillfully projected in the press, was of a liberal community speaking with one voice to defend a cherished community institution against the irrational attack of a large outside union." The fact that the wages and benefits paid by that cherished local institution were significantly less than the area standard wages was of no concern. It is an old saw that Charity begins at home, but apparently liberalism ends there.

There never were a great number of media advocates for labor. Even the Heywood Broun, the A. J. Liebling were not products of a liberal press so much as they were self-

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admittedly, knights errant to the pack of their peers. More recently there is not even the lone media voice left to uphold the rights of union labor.

Two hundred years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that "The influence of the liberty of the press does not affect political opinions alone, but extends to all opinions of men, and modifies customs as well as laws..." He realized even then, that "the influence of a power is increased in proportion as its direction is centralized" and that "the only way to neutralize the effect of the public journals is to multiply their number." Heffner

Similarly A. J. Liebling predicted "that labor unions, citizens' organizations, and possibly political parties yet unborn are going to back daily papers. These will represent definite, undisguised points of view, and will serve as controls on the large profit-making papers expressing definite, ill-disguised points of view." Like Tocqueville, he realized that diversity of expression provides the best guarantee of freedom of speech; unfortunately, neither Tocqueville nor Liebling could have imagined the frightening degree to which the American media would be centralized in our day.

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Labor, therefore, cannot afford the luxury of just "backing" a larger variety of daily papers. The labor movement can only hope to deal with the power of the national media on a national level. For this reason, as I indicated in the previous chapter, labor must be unified and accept the inescapable reality that unions are lumped together in the public consciousness. The "Union, Yes!" campaign is a good example of an effective response, but if this two-year campaign is not followed by similar national efforts, its momentum will be swallowed up by the sheer volume of such negative media portrayal as this study has documented. Surely the time is past when labor unions can simply ignore the impact of the mass media.
APPENDIX A

Introduction to Labor Survey Results:
(Correct responses given in bold print)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Schools:</th>
<th>Maui</th>
<th>Kalani</th>
<th>Radford</th>
<th>(total)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>number of respondents</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>462</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Which of these countries has the largest percentage of its workers represented by labor unions?
   a) England 3 10 8 21 5%
   b) Japan 13 32 52 97 21%
   c) USA 73 122 127 322 70%
   d) W. Germany 3 8 4 15 3%
   e) Australia 0 1 3 4 1%

2. Which of the above countries has the lowest percentage of its workers represented by labor unions?
   a) England 7 12 23 42 9%
   b) Japan 32 61 58 151 33%
   c) USA 3 6 19 28 6%
   d) W. Germany 20 32 38 90 20%
   e) Australia 30 59 56 145 32%

3. What percentage of American workers are now represented by a union?
   a) 11% 2 3 2 7 1%
   b) 17% 11 19 36 66 15%
   c) 24% 38 67 76 181 40%
   d) 33% 33 82 83 198 44%

4. The "Right-to-Work" Committee exists to:
   a) help create more jobs in the economy 16 26 48 90 20%
   b) defend workers unfairly dismissed. 53 87 93 233 51%
   c) outlaw contracts which require union membership. 10 24 27 61 13%
   d) none of the above. 12 31 27 70 16%

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APPENDIX A

High Schools: Maui Kalani Radford (total) (%)
number of respondents 92 173 197 462

5. All unions have the right to strike.
   a) True 69 132 146 347 75%
   b) False 23 41 51 115 25%

6. If a union official doesn’t like one of his members, he doesn’t have to help him.
   a) True 11 20 24 55 12%
   b) False 81 152 173 406 88%

7. In the last national election, all the big unions endorsed the Democratic party’s presidential candidate.
   a) True 47 77 103 227 50%
   b) False 45 89 92 226 50%

8. What percentage of contract talks result in strikes?
   a) 2% 20 32 27 79 17%
   b) 6% 32 46 67 145 32%
   c) 12% 32 68 77 177 39%
   d) 26% 8 22 26 56 12%

9. What percentage of strikes are called without an authorization vote of the membership?
   a) 0 to 1% 35 36 41 112 25%
   b) 2% to 6% 31 52 67 150 33%
   c) 7% to 12% 18 55 66 139 30%
   d) 13% to 18% 8 24 23 55 12%

10. The right of State & County workers to be represented by a union is protected by federal law.
    a) True 78 125 152 355 78%
    b) False 14 40 45 99 22%
APPENDIX A

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</tbody>
</table>

11. After paying their dues, union workers make about the same as non-union workers in comparable employment.
   a) True  39  66  87  192  42%
   b) False 53  102 110  265  58%

12. What percentage of labor unions are corrupt?
   a) less than 1%  18  34  36  88  19%
   b) about 5%  44  50  86  180  40%
   c) nearly 10%  30  50  50  130  29%
   d) close to 25%  0  32  25  57  12%

13. List one main reason you wouldn’t want to be represented by a labor union:

   - Unions are always going on strike.
   - Unions are too powerful.
   - Unions are corrupt.
   - Unions are greedy/selfish.
   - Unions are ruining the country.
   - Union leaders are over-paid.
   - Union dues are too high.
   - Unions are not unAmerican.
   - Unions protect bad workers.
   - Unions are not needed anymore.
APPENDIX B
American Movies About Labor Unions

CAPITAL vs LABOR (26 March 1910) Vitagraph
   Director: Van Dyke Brooke
   Starring: Maurice Costello, Harry T. Morey, Earle Williams

A MARTYR TO HIS CAUSE (1911) Essanay Film Mfg.
   Screenwriter: Arthur McMackin

INTOLERANCE: The Modern Story (1916) D.W. Griffith
   Director: David Wark Griffith
   Screenwriter: David Wark Griffith
   Starring: Robert Harron, Mae Marsh, Miriam Cooper,
   Sam De Grasse, Walter Long and Monte Blue

ALICE'S EGG PLANT (1925) Walt Disney
   Director: Walt Disney

MEN OF STEEL (1926) Milton Sills
   Director: George Archainbaud
   Screenwriter: Milton Sills
   Starring: Milton Sills

THE POWER AND THE GLORY (1933) Fox
   Director: William K. Howard
   Screenwriter: Preston Sturges
   Starring: Spencer Tracey, Colleen Moore, Ralph Morgan,
   and Helen Vinson.

I BELIEVED IN YOU (1934) Fox
   Director: Irving Cummings
   Screenwriter: William Conselman
   Starring: Rosemary Ames, Victor Jory and John Boles

RIFFRAFF (1935) MGM
   Director: J. Walter Ruben
   Screenwriter: Frances Marion, Anita Loos & H.W. Hanemam
   Starring: Spencer Tracy, Jean Harlow and Mickey Rooney

BLACK FURY (1935) Warner Brothers
   Director: Michael Curtiz
   Screenwriter: Abem Finkel & Carl Erickson
   Starring: Paul Muni

MODERN TIMES (1936) Chaplin Studios/United Artists
   Director: Charles Chaplin
   Screenwriter: Charlie Chaplin
   Starring: Charlie Chaplin and Paulette Goddard

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DEAD END (1937) United Artists
Director: William Wyler
Screenwriter: Lillian Hellman
Starring: Humphrey Bogart, Joel McCrae and Sylvia Sidney

RACKET BUSTERS (1938) Warner Brothers
Director: Lloyd Bacon
Screenwriters: Robert Rossen and Leonardo Bercovici
Starring: Humphrey Bogart and George Brent

OUR LEADING CITIZEN (1939) Paramount
Director: Al Santell
Story Writer: Irvin S. Cobb
Screenwriter: John C. Moffitt
Starring: Bob Burns and Susan Hayward

THE DEVIL AND MISS JONES (1940) RKO
Director: Sam Wood
Screenwriter: Norman Krasna
Starring: Jean Arthur and Robert Cummings

HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY (1941) 20th Century Fox
Director: John Ford
Screenwriter: Philip Dunne
Starring: Walter Pidgeon and Maureen O'Hara

AN AMERICAN ROMANCE (1944) MGM
Director: King Vidor
Storywriter: Herbert Dalmas and William Ludwig
Starring: Brian Donlevy, Ann Richards, Walter Abel and Horace McNally

THE WHISTLE AT EATON FALLS (1951) Columbia Pictures
Producer: Louis de Rochemont
Director: Robert Siodmak
Screenwriter: Lemist Esier and Virginia Shaler
Starring: Lloyd Bridges and Dorothy Gish

Director: Herbert J. Biberman
Screenwriter: Michael Wilson
Starring: Rosaura Revueltas and Juan Chacon

ON THE WATERFRONT (1954) Columbia
Director: Elia Kazan
Screenwriter: Budd Schulberg
Stars: Marlon Brando and Eva Marie Saint

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EDGE OF THE CITY (1957) MGM
Director: Martin Ritt
Screenwriter: Robert Alan Arthur
Starring: Sidney Poitier and John Cassavetes

THE PAJAMA GAME (1957) Warner Brothers
Director: George Abbott and Stanley Donen
Screenwriters: George Abbott and Richard Bissell
Starring: Doris Day and Ray Tait

THE GARMENT JUNGLE (1957) Columbia Pictures
Director: Vincent Sherman
Screenwriter: Harry Kleiner
Starring: Lee J. Cobb, Kerwin Matthews and Gia Scala and Richard Boone

NEVER STEAL ANYTHING SMALL (1959) Universal
Director: Charles Lederer
Screenwriter: Charles Lederer
Starring: James Cagney and Shirley Jones

THE MOLLY MAGUIRES (1970) Paramount
Director: Martin Ritt
Screenwriter: Walter Bernstein
Starring: Sean Connery and Richard Harris

JOE HILL (1971) Sagittarius Production/Paramount
Director: Bo Widerberg
Screenwriter: Bo Widerberg
Starring: Thommy Berggren and Anja Schmidt

SOMETIMES A GREAT NOTION (1972) Universal
Director: Paul Newman
Screenwriter: John Gay
Starring: Paul Newman, Henry Fonda and Lee Remick

BOUND FOR GLORY (1976) United Artists
Director: Hal Ashby
Screenwriter: Robert Getchell
Starring: David Carradine

WHICH WAY IS UP? (1977) Universal
Director: Michael Schultz
Screenwriters: Carl Gottlieb & Cecil Brown
Starring: Richard Pryor and Lonette McKee

BLUE COLLAR (1978) Universal
Director: Paul Schrader
Screenwriter: Paul and Leonard Schrader
Starring: Richard Pryor, Yaphet Kotto, and Harvey Keitel
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Director: Norman Jewison
Screenwriter: Joe Eszterhas and Sylvester Stallone
Starring: Sylvester Stallone

NORMA RAE (1978) 20th Century Fox
Director: Martin Ritt
Screenwriter: Irving Ravetch & Harriet Frank, Jr.
Starring: Sally Field & Ron Leibman

POWER (1979) Columbia Pictures (Television)
Director: David Gerber
Screenwriter: Ernest Tidyman
Starring: Joe Don Baker and Karen Black

STEEL (1979) Davis/Panzer Production
Director: Steve Carver
Screenwriter: Leigh Chapman
Starring: Lee Majors, George Kennedy & Jennifer O'Neil

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER (1982) Great Amwell-Nebraska ETV
Director: Peter H. Hunt
Screenwriter: Julian Mitchell
Starring: Chris Makepeace and Lance Kerwin

SILKWOOD (1983) 20th Century Fox (ABC Pictures)
Director: Mike Nichols
Screenwriter: Nora Ephron and Alice Arlen
Starring: Meryl Streep and Cher (Bono)

Director: Michael Newell
Screenwriter: Robert Boris
Starring: Robert Blake and Cotter Smith

TEACHERS (1984) United Artists/MGM
Director: Arthur Hiller
Screenwriter: W.R. McKinney
Starring: Nick Nolte, Lee Grant, and Judd Hirsch

Director: Mark Rydell
Screenwriter: Robert Dillon and Julian Barry
Starring: Sissy Spacek and Mel Gibson

TWO FATHERS JUSTICE (1985) A. Shane Company
Director: Rod Holcomb
Screenwriter: David J. Kinghorn
Starring: Robert Conrad and George Hamilton

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ACT OF VENGEENCE (1985) Telepictures Production (HBO)
   Director: John Mackenzie
   Screenwriter: Trevor Armbister
   Starring: Charles Bronson and Ellen Burstyn

GUNG HO (1986) Paramount
   Director: Ron Howard
   Screenwriter: Edwin Blum, L. Cantry and Babaloo Mandell
   Starring: Michael Keaton and Gedde Watanabe

WALL STREET (1987) 20th Century Fox
   Director: Oliver Stone
   Screenwriters: Stanley Weiser & Oliver Stone
   Starring: Charlie Sheen, Michael Douglas
            Martin Sheen and Hal Holbrook

ROBOCOP (1987) Orion Pictures
   Director: Paul Verhoeven
   Screenwriters: Edward Neumeier and Michael Miner
   Starring: Peter Weller and Nancy Allen

   Director: John Sayles
   Screenwriter: John Sayles
   Starring: Chris Cooper and James Earl Jones

   Director: Michael Switzer
   Screenwriter: Lee David Zlotoff
   Starring: Anthony LaPaglia and Vincent Guastaferro
   ABC Sunday Night Movie April 17, 1988
APPENDIX B

SELECTED DOCUMENTARIES

THE PEOPLE OF THE CUMBERLANDS (1937) Frontier Films
  Directors: Sidney Meyers and Jay Leyda
  ** Documentary -18 minutes

MEN AND DUST (1940) Dial Films
  Producers: Lee and Sheldon Dick
  ** Documentary -17 minutes

NATIVE LAND (1942) Frontier Films
  ** Documentary -84 minutes

WITH THESE HANDS (1950) ILGWU
  Writer: Harold Rome
  Starring: Arlene Francis and Sam Levene

HARVEST OF SHAME (1960) CBS-TV
  ** Documentary -54 minutes

THE INHERITANCE (1964) Amalgamated Clothing Workers
  Director: Harold Mayer
  Writer: Millard Lampell
  ** Documentary -60 minutes

BULLET BARGAINING AT LUDLOW (1965) KOA Radio-TV
  Producer: KOA Radio-TV Denver
  ** Documentary -23 minutes

HUELGA (1967) King Screen
  ** Documentary -53 minutes

THE RISE OF LABOR (1968) Metropolitan Broadcasting Co.
  ** Documentary - 30 minutes

WITH BABIES AND BANNERS (1975) New Day Films
  ** Documentary -45 minutes
  Directors: Anne Bohlen, Lyn Goldfarb
  & Lorraine Gray

UNION MAIDS (1975) New Day Films
  ** Documentary -48 minutes
  Directors: Julia Reichert, Miles Mogulescu
  and James Klein

HARLAN COUNTY, U.S.A. (1976) Cabin Creek Films
  Director: Barbara Kopple
  Producer: Barbara Kopple
  ** Documentary -103 min
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EUGENE DEBS AND THE AMERICAN MOVEMENT (1978) CAM. DOC.
Producer: Cambridge Documentary Films
**Documentary -42 min

THE WOBBLEYS (1979) First Run Features
Directors: Stewart Bird & Deborah Shaffer
Screenwriters: Stewart Bird & Deborah Shaffer
**Documentary -89 minutes

THE WILLMAR 8 (1980) California Newsreel
Director: Lee Grant
Producer: Mary Beth Yarrow
**Documentary -55 minutes

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ROSIE THE RIVETER (1980) Clarity Productions -60 minutes

-51 minutes
Directors: Ken Craig and Ian Stuttard
Writer: Martin Short

SELECTED FOREIGN LABOR FILMS

STRIKE (1924) Soviet: Goskino; released 1 Feb. 1925
Director: Sergei Eisenstein
Screenwriter: S. Eisenstein and Valeri Pletnyov
Starring: A. Antonov, Mikhail Gomarov and Maxim Shtraukh

THE ORGANIZER (1964) Lux Film-Vides-Mediterrane Cinema, Italy
Director: Mario Monicelli
Screenwriter: Age & Scarpelli, Mario Monicelli
Starring: Marcello Mastroianni, Renato Salvatori

COUP POUR COUP "Blow for Blow" (1971) Red Ball Films
Director: Marin Karmitz
Producer: Marin Karmitz/Cinema Services/W.D.R.
Starring: garment workers in Rouen
**American release, March 1975**

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APPENDIX C

NETWORK NEWS SPECIALS AND DOCUMENTARIES
ABOUT LABOR UNIONS ON AMERICA TELEVISION

30 Dec. 1951: CBS
"SEE IT NOW"

16 Oct. 1953: CBS
"PERSON TO PERSON"
American Federation of Musicians president James Caesar Petrillo in Chicago. (E. 2893)

08 Jan. 1954: CBS
AF of L President George Meany in Bethesda, Maryland. Singer Ethel Waters in Brooklyn. (E. 2905)

15 Jan. 1956: NBC
"LABOR'S NEW LOOK"
Report on the impact on the US and its economy of the recent merger of two major labor organizations into the AFL-CIO. Guesting are the organization's president George Meany, vice-president Walter Reuther, secretary-treasurer William Schnitzler and Charles Sligh of the National Association of Manufacturers. W: Morton Wishengrad N: Chet Huntley (E. 5383)

08 May 1957: ABC
"SENATE LABOR INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS"
Highlights of Dave Beck's testimony were aired by ABC on 5/9, 5/10, 5/14, 5/15 and 5/16. (E. 5419)

20 Aug. 1957: ABC
"SENATE LABOR INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS"
Highlights of Teamster official James R. Hoffa's testimony before the Senate. Other excerpts from Hoffa's testimony were aired by ABC on 8/21, 8/22 and 8/23. (E. 5427)
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13 Oct. 1957: NBC
"OUTLOOK"

05 Jan. 1958: NBC
"LOOK HERE"
United Mine Workers President and pioneer labor leader John L. Lewis. (E. 2427)

25 Sep. 1958: NBC
"MAN AGAINST THE SENATE"
Report on the Senate investigation into the activities of Teamsters Union boss James R. Hoffa. (E. 5495)

24 Jun. 1959: CBS
"HOFFA AND THE TEAMSTERS"
Report on Teamsters Union boss James R. Hoffa, currently under investigation by the Senate. (E. 5550)

25 Nov. 1960: CBS
"CBS REPORTS: HARVEST OF SHAME"
Broadcast on Thanksgiving evening, this program dramatically brought to national attention for the first time, the plight of American migrant farm workers and the shocking conditions in which they live, travel and labor in American fields and orchards. Included are interviews with Labor Sec. James P. Mitchell, Sen. Harrison A. Williams, and farm officials. ExP: Fred W. Friendly P: David Lowe D: Palmer Williams W: Fred W. Friendly, Edward R. Murrow, David Lowe R: Edward R. Murrow (E. 895)

09 Dec. 1960: ABC
"FEATHERBEDDING?"
Representatives of labor management in the home building and railroad industries comment on the practice of limiting a worker's chores in order to create jobs for others. (E. 737) N. John Daly

07 Jan. 1961: NBC
"SHOULD PUBLIC EMPLOYEES HAVE THE RIGHT TO STRIKE?"
With Michael J. Quill, president of the Transport Workers Union, and former congressman Fred A. Hartley, co-author of the Taft-Hartley Act. Moderator for this program: Gabe Pressman. (E. 2674)
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27 Jul. 1961: CBS
"AT THE SOURCE: WALTER REUTHER"
Interview with United Auto Workers president Reuther. Topics discussed include Reuther's role as co-chairman of the Tractors for Freedom Committee which unsuccessfully attempted to make a deal for the release of some Cuban political prisoners. Also discussed are the current UAW contract talks. (E. 5664)

07 Mar. 1962: NBC
"DAVID BRINKLEY'S JOURNAL"
Investigation of Labor Secretary Arthur Goldberg's concept of the five-hour work day, focusing on the Electrical Workers Union which operates on that schedule. Workers are seen at "think" schools and recreational facilities provided for their leisure time by their union. (E. 1557)

13 Apr. 1962: CBS
"EYEWITNESS TO HISTORY: THE BIG STEEL SCRAP"
Report on the reaction of government and labor to the recent steel price increase includes statement by JFK, RFK, Labor Secretary Arthur Goldberg, US Steel President Roger M. Blough, and Steelworkers Union leader David G. MacDonald. Also, a look at a recently automated steel plant in Indiana. (E. 1833)

02 Sep. 1962: ABC
"EDITOR'S CHOICE: LABOR DAY, 1962: MILESTONE"
Examination of the changing status and shape of organized labor in the US. Interview with labor union spokesmen David McDonald, president of the Steelworkers Union, and James Carey, president of the Electrical Workers Union. Also, a talk with James F. Lincoln, director of an electric company whose employees have a profit-sharing plan. (E. 1699)

1963: CBS
"BIOGRAPHY: JOHN L. LEWIS" (E. 829)

01 Apr. 1963: NBC
"DAVID BRINKLEY'S JOURNAL: INSIDE JIMMY HOFFA"
Profile and interview of Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa, focusing on the activities of his union in the East and Midwest. Hoffa responds to Brinkley's questions on the Senate Labor hearings, Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy, and the image of the Teamsters Union. (E. 1598)
09 Apr. 1963: ABC
"BELL & HOWELL CLOSE-UP!: THE MINERS' LAMENT"
Report on the issues and arguments behind recent violence in the eastern Kentucky coal regions. Kentucky governor Bert T. Combs discusses union vs. non-union friction. Cameras reveal bombed homes, impoverished towns, and thousands of unemployed miners. (E. 776)
P.D. William Weston

05 Mar. 1965: ABC
"F.D.R.: STRIFE!"
Chronicle of the labor/management conflicts of the early 1930's: the San Francisco and Minneapolis general strikes; West Virginia coal strikes; the split of labor into AFL and CIO camps; the efforts of unions to gain collective bargaining powers. Interviews with Mrs. Roosevelt, New York City Mayor Robert F. Wagner, and labor leader James Caey. W: Quentin Reynolds (E. 1907)

02 Aug. 1966: CBS
"THE AIRLINE STRIKE: WHAT PRICE SETTLEMENT?"
Exam of issues involved in the current strike and a look at how they may be resolved. (E. 6126)

15 Nov. 1966: CBS
"CBS REPORTS: THE STATE OF THE UNIONS"
Study of the history and present activities of American labor unions and of how the American public perceives these organizations amid charges of racism, parochialism, and excessive power. Also, a look at how unions do act to improve conditions among the dispossessed, focusing on Desar Chavez and the United Farm Workers of California. Sen. Wayne Morse, Labor Sec. Willard Wirtz, and AFL-CIO president George Meany are interviewed. (E. 1028)
EXP: Leslie Midgley P: Joseph Wershba R: Charles Kuralt

23 Sep. 1969: CBS
"CHALLENGE IN THE COAL MINES: MEN AGAINST THEIR UNIONS"
Report on dissident elements within the United Mine Workers and the split between the Union's long-entrenched leadership under its president W. A. "Tony" Boyle and a new breed of concerned miners led by Joseph Yablonski. (E. 6396)

18 Jan. 1970: NBC
"FRANK MCGEE REPORTS: Report on the steel union crisis"
Examination of crime in Washington, D.C., in the aftermath of Nixon's anti-crime program inaugurated in February 1969. A look at the effects of sonic booms in Boron, California. (E. 2187)
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22 Mar. 1970: NBC
"FRANK MCGEE REPORTS: THE STRIKE OF THE MAILMEN"
Entire show is devoted to reports on the current strike by US postal employees. (E. 2195)

22 Mar. 1970: CBS
"STRIKE!: CRISIS IN THE POST OFFICE"
Special report on the postal strike. (E. 6428)

31 Aug. 1970: ABC
"NOW: UNIONS AND THE BLACKS"
Report on the opinions of union leaders, working men, and rank and file union members regarding the current status of blacks in the construction industry and efforts on the part of black workers to join labor unions. Civil rights leader Jesse Jackson is among those interviewed.
P: Sid Darion R: William H. Lawrence (E. 2736)

19 Mar. 1972: CBS
"60 MINUTES"
Jack Anderson and the ITT scandal. Report on George Meany and President Nixon. Examination of marriage laws and the Equal Rights Amendment. "Point/Counterpoint": The topic is equal rights for women. (E. 3731)

12 Sep. 1972: NBC
"NBC REPORTS: PENSIONS - THE BROKEN PROMISE"
Examination of the inequities and insecurities of pension systems that all too frequently do not pay back veteran workers who are helpless to do anything about it. Pension victims from New York to California relate their stories. The program won American Bar Association and Peabody awards and stirred Congress into dealing with the problem in its pensions reform law of 1974. However, the FCC cited the show as a "one-sided documentary that created the impression that injustice and inequity were widespread in the administration of private pension plans." NBC went to court over the matter and after three years and a number of decisions and opinions, the Court of Appeals turned the case back to the FCC which then decided it would no longer seek compliance from the network.
ExP: Eliot Frankel P: David Schmerler (E. 2541)
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30 Nov. 1974: ABC
"ABC NEWS CLOSE-UP: HOFFA"
Profile of former Teamsters' president Jimmy Hoffa, who had been
sent to prison in 1967 for jury tampering and was released under
Presidential commutation by Richard Nixon in 1972 on the condition
that he stay out of union affairs until 1980. Investigation into
Hoffa's rise to power discloses some previously unknown facts
surrounding his conviction and sentence commutation. Interview
with current Teamster boss Frank E. Fitzsimmons and with Hoffa
himself. (E. 14)
P-D: Stephen Fleischman W: Richard Gerdau R: Brit Hume, Bill
Gill, Jim Kincaid

11 Apr. 1976: CBS
"60 MINUTES"
"Norman Lear": Profile of one of TV's most successful producers.
"Do the Teamsters Own Alaska?": Report on union power and
influence. "Hoffa": Discussion with Mrs. Jimmy Hoffa and with
former Hoffa associates regarding the former Teamster official's
disappearance. (E. 3857)

03 Oct. 1976: CBS
"60 MINUTES"
"Unions, Money and Politics": Examination of the influence and
on the murder of Phoenix newspaper reporter Don Bolles. "Oriana":
Interview with Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci. (E. 3876)

13 Mar. 1977: CBS
"60 Minutes"
"Target: J. P. Stevens": As Mike Wallace says, "This is the story
of big labor versus J. P. Stevens." Also "Ivory Tower
Cop": Profile and interview of criminologist and policeman
Dr. George Kirkham. "Natasha": Profile of ballerina Natalia
Makarova. (E. 3698)

20 Dec. 1977: NBC
"NBC WHITE PAPER: TROUBLE IN COAL COUNTRY"
Examination of the difficult task America faces in trying to make
coal its major energy source and the problems this effort is
creating for miners, the coal industry, and environmentalists.
Also, a look at mine safety, strip-mining, and UMW efforts to aid
striking miners.
P: Fred Flamehaft R: Douglas Kiker (E. 2576)
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14 Jul. 1978: ABC
"ABC NEWS CLOSE-UP: ASBESTOS - THE WAY TO DUSTY DEATH"
Investigation into the biggest industrial killer in history
reveals the health dangers of working with asbestos, risks that
have been known for years by federal agencies. Focus on
Philadelphia and Groton, Conn. shipyards includes interviews with
victims and physicians. (E. 48)

18 Nov. 1978: CBS
"30 MINUTES"
"Student Strike Enders": Report on students in Tacoma,
Washington, who sued to end a teachers' strike. "The Dieter's
Disease": Profile of a teenage girl suffering from anorexia. (E.
4279)

03 Dec. 1978: CBS
"60 MINUTES"
"Taking on the Teamsters": Examination of efforts to reform the
giant union by rank and file members. "Remember Pearl Harbor?":
A look at Japan's self defense forces. "From Burgers to
Bankruptcy": Investigation into how many people invested and lost
money in Wild Bill's fast food restaurants. (E. 3987)

06 Mar. 1979: CBS
"CBS REPORTS: INSIDE THE UNION"
A look at the labor movement today as experienced by members of
Local 1010 of the United Steelworkers at East Chicago, Indiana's
Inland Steel plant. Included are films of internal battles
between rank-and-file members and union officials. (E. 1135)
ExP: Perry Wolff  P-D-W: Irv Drasnin  R: George Herman

5 Jun. 1983: CBS
"60 MINUTES"
"The Palestinians": Yasir Arafat is interviewed about Arab
Terrorism and the future of the PLO. "Uncle Sam Doesn't Want You":
A look at the Army's concerns about homosexuals in the Armed
forces. "Trouble Brewing": An unsympathetic look at the AFL-CIO
(originally broadcast 26 Sep. 1982).

05 Mar. 1983: NBC
"NBC REPORTS: Labor in the Promised Land." A report on the
problems faced by the AFL-CIO in its attempts to organize workers
in Houston, Texas. Reporter. Mike Jensen. Writ. Mike Jensen, Tom
Spain, Marilyn Nissensen.

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APPENDIX D

TV Dramas about Unions

This chronological List and Plot Synopses of American TV Dramas Dealing with Labor Unions is compiled from scripts and other documents at the Annenberg Television Script Archive, Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania. [Date given is air-date unless marked: * indicates script date; +/- indicates whether portrayal of unions was positive, neutral or negative. All quotations are referenced to pages of the scripts at the Annenberg Archive]

1. All in the Family (17 Sep. 1974) CBS: Saturday 8-8:30pm
   - Episode: "The Bunkers and Inflation"
   - Authors: Don Nicholl, Michael Ross, Bernie West
   - Studio: Tandem Productions
   - Starring: Carroll O’Conner, Jean Stapleton, Rob Reiner

   Synopsis: Archie’s union down at the plant decides to go out on strike.

2. All in the Family (21 Sep. 1974) CBS: Saturday 8-8:30pm
   - Episode: "Archie Underfoot"
   - Authors: Don Nicholl, Michael Ross, Bernie West
   - Studio: Tandem Productions
   - Starring: Carroll O’Conner, Jean Stapleton, Rob Reiner

   Synopsis: Archie’s still on strike, and when he’s not out picketing, he’s in Edith’s way at home.

3. All in the Family (28 Sep. 1974) CBS: Saturday 8-8:30pm
   - Episode: "Edith the Job Hunter"
   - Authors: Don Nicholl, Michael Ross, Bernie West
   - Studio: Tandem Productions
   - Starring: Carroll O’Conner, Jean Stapleton, Rob Reiner

   Synopsis: With no money coming in, Edith is forced to take a job ... in the Jefferson’s cleaning store.

4. All in the Family (5 Oct. 1974) CBS: Saturday 8-8:30pm
   - Episode: "Archie’s Raise"
   - Authors: Don Nicholl, Michael Ross, Bernie West
   - Studio: Tandem Productions
   - Starring: Carroll O’Conner, Jean Stapleton, Rob Reiner

   Synopsis: The strike has been settled and Archie goes back to work with a 15% raise. He is pleased until his son-in-law, Mike, points out he’s already behind the rise in the cost of living.
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5. Serpico (30 June 1976*) NBC: Friday 10pm
   - Episode: "Every Man Must Pay His Dues"
   - Author: Brad Radnitz
   - Studio: Paramount
   - Starring: David Birney, Tom Atkins

Synopsis: Set in Brooklyn, John Maloney, a rough but big-hearted Irishman is running for President of his local Truckers' union (BTC). The show opens with his campaign worker and close friend, Ed Demarest, killed in car bomb explosion. Maloney's campaign speech, "Is that the kind of man you want at the head of your union? Do you want to go on putting up with violence and the sweetheart deals that Powell's been negotiating with management for six years." (p. 5). "Look at your paychecks. In three years we've had a total raise of seven percent! I've got the facts and figures to have shown three hundred percent increases in profit! ..... Your wives aren't getting any of that profit! Your kids aren't getting any of that profit! You aren't getting any of that profit! (p. 6)... But management is. Jack Powell is! And when somebody like me steps up to challenge that fact! Somebody dies! Somebody gets murdered!" (p. 7). Serpico foils Powell's attempt to have Maloney assassinated. Powell ends up going to jail, but Maloney loses the election anyway.

   Quote from script: "In the back seat is JACK POWELL, forties, a Jimmy Hoffa type, tough, rough, king of his mountain and not about to be dethroned." (p. 11)

   + Episode: "Andrea"
   - Author: Edward Adler (John O'Hara)
   - Studio: Columbia/ David Gerber Prod.
   - Starring: Gig Young and John Savage

Synopsis: subplot re: United Mine Workers of America in PA. Set in Gibbsville, Pennsylvania, Senator Barton Styler is in town for a fact-finding session on mine safety, intended to be only a whitewash. Andrea Cooper, fiancee to Judge Walter Mulligan, is new in town also. She was once a lover to Ray Whitehead, the town newspaperman -the Gibbsville Courier-, who is intent on presenting the miners' side of the safety problems to light. In the meantime Tad Kelly, the union's Information Officer is organizing a play of John L. Lewis' life. The three miners scheduled to testify are bribed-off and when Whitehead tries to investigate he is attacked by thugs hired by the jealous Judge and narrowly escapes with his life and a few broken ribs. Andrea is spurned by the Judge and after apologizing to Ray in his hospital room, she leaps out the window to her death.
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7. Phyllis (9 Sep. 76* - 18 Oct. 1976) CBS: Monday 8:30pm
   - Episode: "Boss or Buddy or Both or Neither"
   - Author: Earl Pomerantz
   - Studio: MTM Enterprises
   - Starring: Cloris Leachman, Henry Jones

Synopsis: Re: San Francisco Garbage Workers strike. Phyllis is the assistant to Dan Valenti who is the supervisor in charge of the situation. Two weeks into the strike, Dan is appointed mediator. Paralleling the conflict between the city and the union is Phyllis' bad feelings toward Dan after she learns he's been taking advantage of her good nature and treating her like his secretary. At the mediation the management and labor teams have to mediate between Phyllis and Dan. As the negotiations wind down at 6 in the AM the issues of the strike get all mixed up humorously with Phyllis' issues against Dan, but finally a settlement is reached when Dan agrees to pay for the dress Phyllis bought earlier when she thought he had invited her to the dinner she arranged for him. The union refuses to sign its agreement until Dan accepts these conditions.

8. Executive Suite (27 Sep. 1976) CBS: Monday 10pm
   - Episode: "The Trap" Part Two of Augmented Pilot
   - Authors: Barbara Avedon, Barbara Corday, Henry Slesar
   - Studio: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
   - Starring: Mitchell Ryan, Stephen Elliott, Sharon Acker

Synopsis: A subplot in the episode shows Harry Ragin, the shop steward at a chemical plant (Cardway Chemical) in Southern California, is angered by the news that Brian Walling, the owners' son, is working at the plant when there has been a rash of recent lay offs. A Chicano women at the plant passes out and is taken to the hospital. Harry goes to see Don Walling, Brian's father, about the lay offs. Don likes Harry but defers to the union leadership. Harry says: "You know, there's union management... and there's union rank and file. You talk to the wrong guys... you come up with the wrong answers." (p. 19)
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9. All's Fair (4 Oct. 1976) CBS: Monday 9:30pm
   - Episode: "The Perfect Evening"
   - Author: Gy Waldron
   - Studio: T.A.T. Communications Co. Productions
   - Starring: Richard Crenna, Bernadette Peters

Synopsis: Conservative Richard Barrington and his liberal girlfriend Charley in the second half of the program are coming home from a movie and find a picket line in front of Richard's condominium. Charley: "These poor men have every right to better their working conditions by negotiating with their money-grubbing, labor-exploiting employers! The rotten tightwads." Richard: "Charley, it's a condominium. I own my own apartment. I'm one of the rotten tightwads." (p. 21) At which point Charley grabs a picket sign and joins the line with the strikers. When asked what he's got against unions, Richard says "I resent the way labor unions pose as the workingman's friend when actually they're nothing but elite clubs for the organized few. Most people out of work can't even get into a union. And not only that -- if you clowns get what you want, the maintenance costs on my apartment will go right through the roof. The whole idea of my having to pay more money just because you join a union makes my blood boil." (p. 24) Senator Joplin passes by and tells them the strike will probably be settled soon anyway so Richard finally agrees to go off until then.

10. The Quest (17 Nov. 1976) NBC: Wednesday 10pm
    - Episode: "Welcome to America, Jade Snow"
    - Author: Anthony Lawrence
    - Studio: Columbia Pictures TV
    - Starring: Kurt Russell, Tim Matheson

Synopsis: Historical set (1840s?) in California re: Mine Workers/Knights of Labor. The mining company, AMPAC (American Pacific), is bringing in Chinese workers as scabs to break the miners' strike. The representative of the mine owners admits frankly that he not only intends to break the strike, but he plans to eliminate all the white miners entirely. H.P. Pierson says: "John Chinaman is a marvelous discovery." (p. 26) After the strikers are all fired, they begin to get violent with the Chinese scabs, who are the focus of the program's sympathy. The hero of the series, Quentin, comes to the aid of the Chinese as he comes to despise the selfishness and racism of the strikers. Though in the end, Pierson is fired and the guilty striking miners are banished from the territory, the final impression is that the strike was an extension of racial more than industrial conflict, and the victims were not the striking miners but the Chinese scabs.

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11. Gibbsville (9 Dec. 1976) NBC: Thursday 10pm
- Episode: "Manhood"
  Author: John T. Dugan (John O'Hara)
  Studio: Columbia/ David Gerber Prod.
  Starring: Gig Young and John Savage

Synopsis: Re: Mine Workers in PA. Reporter Ray Whitehead is investigating a story about a murdered miner, Martin Dubcek. He soon learns that Dubcek was a supporter of Matt Ryan, the new candidate for treasurer in the coming union election, who claims he'll set up a credit union so the miners won't need to use the local loan shark, Ed Haney. Sean Banigan at the union meeting proposes they go and take care of Haney themselves, but Ryan talks them out of it. Later, Sean Banigan goes to Jim Malloy, Ray's fellow reporter, with the suspicion the Ryan has been paid off by Haney. As Jim tells the unionists at their gathering, "Don't you get it? Haney wanted Ryan to be your treasurer. So they can loot the union." (p. 56)

- Episode: "What are Patterns For?"
  Author: Don Brinkley
  Studio: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
  Starring: Mitchell Ryan, Stephen Elliott, Sharon Acker

Synopsis: Continuation of above subplot with the added complication that Harry Ragin is beginning to have a relationship with Walling's daughter, Stacey. Rutledge, another corporation board member, and Walling discuss Ragin's proposal to establish a preventative medical program with regular exams to check the daily effects of CD-7, the pesticide they produce, but Rutledge believes the existing union medical plan is enough. Reference is to "Ragin's group" as different from the union. Rutledge believes they should fire Ragin, but Walling decides against it.

Another Shop Steward, Donnalee (female) and Ragin meet with the workers after receiving the employer's rejection letter to their requests. Ragin instigates a protest "slow down". Walling offers Ragin a foreman's job, to promote him out of the union, but Ragin is undecided.
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13. Laverne and Shirley (21 Dec. 1976*) ABC: Tuesday 8:30pm
   - Episode: "Lonely at the Middle"
   - Author: Jack Winter
   - Studio: Paramount: Miller-Milkis
   - Starring: Penny Marshall, Cindy Williams

Synopsis: The Cappers and Labellers Unit of the union is gathered for a strike meeting. Henry Wanda (played by Pat McCormick), described in the script as "A very fat man ... all fired up" is addressing them. They are all told that picket duty will be 16 hours on, 8 hours off, and that they are to dress up as though they are all ragged and pregnant. Shirley Feeney (Cindy Williams) is against the strike and argues with Laverne De Fazio (Penny Marshall): "every year we go out on strike and what do we wind up with? A nickel raise that doesn't make up for all the money we lose by striking." (p. 5) Shirley talks them out of the strike and goes in herself to negotiate a promotion for herself, the suggestion box and a "worker of the week" program. When she starts using Taylor-type time/efficiency methods to increase productivity, but the actual productivity of the group drops 20% instead, Shirley is demoted back to the line. The episode ends with Lenny and Squiggy singing their new labor song: "If we strike when the union is hot."

14. Eight is Enough (10 Jan. 1977* 24 Mar 1977) ABC: Wed. 8pm
   - Episode: "Pieces of Eight"
   - Author: Greg Strangis based on book by Thomas Braden
   - Studio: Lorimar Productions
   - Starring: Dick Van Patten, Betty Buckley

Synopsis: Acting editor of Sacramento newspaper while his boss is vacationing in Europe, Mr. Bradford suddenly finds himself having to deal with a series of crises, including a "Wildcat Strike" of the paper's printers' union (p. 13). Also a revealing stab at blue collar workers is revealed on p. 13A of the script in which the following direction appears: "Nancy, in hardhat, cut-offs, t-shirt inscribed with some inane blue-collar slogan, and a pack of smokes rolled in one sleeve, sits side-saddle on a motorcycle ..." (13A) The following exchange also indicates the anti-labor position of the writers:

MARY
C'mon Dad. You don't really do work. You're management.

BRADFORD
I've seen the enemy and she is mine.
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JOANNIE
Don't blame Mary. She's just basically pro-labor.

BRADFORD
And habitually anti-father. [Bradford shakes his head, moves to the portable bar to mix a drink.]

BRADFORD
(continuing; gloomy)
I don't think any of you see the real issue here. Strikes like this are notorious for dragging on. It could break the back of the paper. (p. 15)

Bradford becomes so worried about the loss of work the strike might mean to his family that he gives in and lets his wife go to work against his better judgement. But the strike is settled early and he has to work out the plot with his wife's job at the end of the program.

15. The Fitzpatricks (7 Feb. 1977* 22 Aug '77?) CBS: Tue. 8pm
- Episode: Pilot aka "It's a Great Life"
  Author: John Sacret Young
  Studio: Warner Brothers TV
  Starring: Bert Kramer, Mariclare Costello, Michelle Tobin

Synopsis: Detroit steel workers are on strike. Mike (played by Bert Kramer) expresses his disgust with the whole process: "Sooner or later they're going to settle on something they could've settled on weeks ago. ... I hate 'em, the management, and maybe the union too. The last couple a years have been lousy for steel, layoffs, inflation, but we're striking. I'm for it, I guess. Always have been. (and) I'm just sick of the whole rotten load." (p. 16)

- Episode: "Strike, Part 1"
  Author: Reinhold Weege
  Studio: Four D./Columbia Pictures TV
  Starring: Hal Linden

Synopsis: The squad goes on an unauthorized strike leaving Barney to run the station alone.
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17. Barney Miller (31 Mar. 1977) ABC: Thursday 9-9:30pm
   - Episode: "Strike, Part 2"
   Author: Reinhold Weege
   Studio: Four D./Columbia Pictures TV
   Starring: Hal Linden

Synopsis: While the squad is still on strike, Barney deals with a man-hungry spinster.

18. Alice (6 July 1977* 12 Aug 77) CBS: Wednesday 9:30pm
   + Episode: "The Bus"
   Author: Chris Hayward
   Studio: Warner Brothers TV
   Starring: Linda Lavin, Philip McKeon

Synopsis: [a diner somewhere between San Diego and the Grand Canyon]
Subplot: episode starts with two union organizers trying to persuade Alice to join. Mel, her boss, describes himself as a New Dealer (pp. 6/7), but draws the line at industrial workers. Later Vera and Alice use the threat of unionization to pressure Mel into paying them overtime while Mel is catering to a bus company that might contract to stop regularly at his diner.

19. What's Happening!! (19 Jul 77*/22 Sep 77*) ABC: Thurs. 8:30pm
   - Episode: "One Strike and You're Out"
   Director: Michael Warren
   Studio: T. O. Y. Productions
   Author: Rick Mittleman
   Starring: Ernest Thomas, Haywood Nelson

Synopsis: Supermarket Workers: Raj, who is working at Pronson's Supermarket, is upset that the boss has not provided an employee lounge as promised in the union contract. Raj talks Harold, his union steward, into confronting the boss. The next thing they know they are taking a strike vote. In the meantime, Raj finds out his mother is sick and the family can't afford to lose his paycheck. But it's too late because the rest of the workers vote to strike. For two weeks he's able to hide it from his mother until, [version 1] at the end of the program, the boss agrees to negotiate the problem of the lounge. But the twist is that to get the lounge they had to agree to layoff one worker, who turns out to be Raj (Roger). [version 2] Raj decides to cross the picket line, and is clubbed with a picket sign by a big striker from the meat department. Recuperating at home he learns that the strike was settled when Pronson agreed to put in the lounge if he could layoff one worker, Irene -his own mother.
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- Episode: "Union vs. the Confederacy"
  Author: Sheldon Bull
  Studio: T.O.Y. Productions
  Starring: Victor French, Kene Holliday

Synopsis: Police Officers: Police Chief Roy Mobey explains to Baker how he "negotiates" improvements for the force with Mayor Burnside. Baker is surprised that no lawyers, judges or unions were involved. The Chief says, "Union? This is Clinton Corners, Baker. We're all like members of a big family here ... We don't need any union." (p. 8) As it turns out the Mayor is getting legal advice to be tough, so the Chief's negotiating doesn't work this year. The Chief then goes home sick and Baker organizes a bout of "Blue-flu" just as the Mayor was expecting a motorcade to receive the governor's visit. The Mayor gives in and agrees to negotiate like always with the chief who proudly exclaims at the end of the program: "Did I tell you guys? Did I tell you? And we didn't need any unions, or any of their big city-negotiators. All we needed was Chief Roy Mobey!" (p. 36)

- Episode: "Murder by Self"
  Author: William Froug
  Studio: Universal TV
  Starring: Jack Klugman

Synopsis: East L.A., Farmworkers: Quincy is investigating the apparent suicide of David Brady, a young anglo (Irish) lawyer who was engaged to marry a young Chicano woman and was working as a fund-raiser for Roberto "Beto" Cruz, the charismatic leader of the "Farm Workers' Alliance," one of "two labor unions, long at each other's throats, fighting to represent nearly a hundred thousand farm workers." (p. 15) Tony Gordon president of the Philadelphia-based Labor Brotherhood is soon implicated. The script describes the latter's union hall: "A modern, impressive structure, as befits a labor organization as rich and powerful as the FWA is weak and struggling." (p. 36) Gordon tells Quincy: "Well, lemme tell you a couple of things, Doctor. We did bust a few heads. That's how you run a labor union when you're getting started and you got a bunch of company goons to hassle with." (p. 31). Though in the end it turns out that David was done in by Beto's aide Luis, whom David discovered was getting a kickback for smuggling in illegal aliens across the border.
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22. Maude (7 Nov. 1977) CBS: Monday 9:30pm
   - Episode: "The Doctor's Strike"
   Author: William Davenport
   Producer: Bud Yorkin-Norman Lear-Tandem Prod.
   Starring: Beatrice Arthur, Bill Macy

Synopsis: Doctor's Association: Arthur Harmon, Maude's doctor is upset about the possibility of a local doctor's strike planned to force the hospital to pay the physicians' escalating malpractice insurance. Maude points out the inconsistency of Arthur's beliefs: "Well, here you are, all set to lead a doctor's strike. And yet you're the man who's been against unions striking ever since I've known you. In fact, you're the man who said, 'If the immigrant farm workers don't like it here, let 'em swim back where they came from.'" (p. 9) Then in the middle of writing a prescription for his old friend Walter, Arthur learns that the strike has started and he has to tear up the prescription and let Walter fend for himself. Arthur struggles with the conflict between his professional ethics and the union strike until the end of the program. Finally Arthur caves in and scabs, doing the right thing by his patients, which even his fellow doctor and strike leader accepts wisely.

23. The Jeffersons (10 Dec. 1977*) CBS: Saturday 9pm
   + Episode: "Florence's Union"
   Authors: Andy Guerdat, Steve Kreinberg, Patt Shae, Jack Shae
   Studio: T.A.T. Communications/ NRW Productions
   Starring: Isabel Sanford, Sherman Hemsley

Synopsis: Maids/domestics, New York: The Jefferson's maid, Florence (Marla Gibbs), is working with Cassy Kincaid (Dorothy Meyer), president of the "United Sisterhood of Household Technicians, Local Number Two" to organize the maids in her building. George Jefferson decides to support the union drive when he thinks an influential neighbor is also supportive. When he finds the opposite is the case, he quickly switches sides. But when this Mr. Big comes by to see if his maid is joining the union, he ends up insulting Louise, George's wife along with the maids there. George gets angry and sends him packing with his pledge to support the maids any way he can.
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24. Quincy (27 Jan. 1978) NBC: Friday 9pm
   - Episode: "Passing"
   - Author:
   - Studio: Universal TV
   - Starring: Jack Klugman

Synopsis: Amalgamated Factory Workers Union, L.A.: Quincy finds a motorcycle gang member with a real human skull ornamenting his bike. They impound the skull and learn that it belonged to David Lockwood, a labor leader, who embezzled two-and-a-half million dollars in union funds missing for over two years. Quincy suspects the present President of the Union, Sal Jarrett. As Quincy says: "It's common knowledge that your Mr. Jarrett was working hand in glove with the mob ever[sic] before he gained control of this union." (p. 17). In a surprise twist at the end, it turns out Bricker, one of Lockwood's old friends was the real embezzler and murderer.

25. Hawaii Five-O (2 Feb 1978) CBS; Thursday 9pm
   - Episode: "A Short Walk on the Long Shore"
   - Author: Richard DeLong Adams
   - Studio: CBS-TV
   - Starring: Jack Lord, James MacArthur

Synopsis: Honolulu, Longshore Workers: Rebel dock worker Anton Krebs is running against Jackson Croft for the presidency of the Longshore local. Charging Croft [sometimes Cross] with criminal corruption, extortion and violence before a crowd of reporters, Krebs is shot to death by a professional hit man before he can drive off. Croft then threatens the Governor with a dock strike unless and until McGarrett finds the killer and exonerates him before the union election. On a lead that the case is related to drug traffic, McGarrett pretends to leave town but goes into a secret identity with FBI investigators to crack the case. Acting like a recently laid off seaman, McGarrett discovers that it was Krebs who was supposed to be the mobsters' handpicked candidate. The mob killed him because he was getting too independent and arrogant when it looked like he might really win the election.
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26. The Ted Knight Show (21 Feb. 78*) CBS: Sat 8:30
   - Episode: "Strike"
   Author: Barry Rubinowitz
   Studio: Paramount Pictures
   Starring: Ted Knight

Synopsis: New York City, female escorts: The women of Roger Dennis' (Ted Knight) escort service go on strike (without forming a union) in protest of the terrible treatment they usually are accorded by the "Wolves Conventioneers" who have contracted Roger for their service. The escorts want "double time for conventions and time-and-a-half for all dates where food is thrown." (p. 20) Finally when his brother Burt comes over to applaud his business acumen, Roger realizes he has been unfair to his "girls" and concedes to their demands, more because he can't stand Burt than because he is pro-employee.

27. The Incredible Hulk (26 May 1978) CBS: Friday 8pm
   - Episode: "The Waterfront Story"
   Authors: Paul Belous and Robert Walterstorff
   Studio: Universal TV
   Starring: Bill Bixby

Synopsis: Galveston, Texas - Longshore Workers: Banner (the Hulk) is staying at a Waterfront Cafe run by the widow of the former union president as the new union election heats up between Cliff McConnel (good guy) and Tony Palomino (bad guy). Both want Josie, the widow, to endorse their candidacy. As she shows her favor to Cliff, thugs come to ransack Cliff's office and Josie's cafe, but David overhears Cliff plotting with his men and learns that it was Cliff who had the previous President killed and is responsible for the thugs wrecking his office and the cafe. Of course the Hulk jumps in and saves Josie from Cliff and his corrupt cronies.

28. Hizzoner (1 Sep. 1978*) NBC: Thursday 8-8:30pm
   - Episode: [#3] "Mr. Perfect"
   Author: Deborah R. Baron
   Studio: 
   Starring: David Huddleston

Synopsis: Musicians' Union: subplot - Hizzoner, the Mayor, is trying to keep track of the negotiations surrounding a local musician's strike, which he wants to see settled before a big benefit for the city orphanage. He calls the union and management
representatives together like a federal mediator and threatens to keep them together till they reach a settlement. In one short scene (a page long, p. 36) they bargain the whole contract easily.

29. Sword of Justice (13 Sep. 1978*) NBC: Saturday/Sunday 10pm
Episode: "Blackjack"
Authors: Glen A. Larson and Michael Sloan
Studio: Universal TV
Starring: Dack Rambo, Bert Rosario

Synopsis: Cincinnati, Teamsters (implied): Jack Cole working out of a Federal Taskforce on organized crime, goes after a union boss, Vincent Conti, who illegally put 10 million dollars of union funds into a Las Vegas casino then retrieved the money in winnings at the blackjack table -when Conti gets nailed in an audit. The head of the Federal Task Force is killed in an explosion and another union officer planning to testify against Conti is running for his life as Jack rescues them and traps Conti and the mobsters in their Las Vegas scam.

30. The Rockford Files (22 Sep. 1978) NBC: Friday 9pm
Episode: "Tears on the Skillet"
Author: Stephen J. Cannell
Producer: Universal/ Cherokee Productions
Starring: James Garner, Noah Berry

Synopsis: L.A to Cripple Creek, Arkansas, Truckers -I.T.T.W., Local 214- Interstate: Rockford’s dad, Joseph, driving an eighteen-wheeler across the country jackknifes his truck and ends up in the hospital. The police find that he was carrying illegal cargo and the union pulls his card (i.e. throws him out) for driving a non-union run even though he had been a member for forty years. Joseph: “These guys from the union ... they’re saying I was ignorant of working rule eight. In ‘56 I was on the strike committee, ‘member, sonny?” Joseph again on the same page: “Me’n fifteen other guys helped write working rule eight. (from memory) ‘Any member attempting to, or participating in either long or short hauls, county, state or city, without union authorization or consent, will be judged to be a scab operator ... and if adjudged guilty ... will lose all health, welfare and pension benefits and will be permanently suspended from the I.T.T.W. Local and International.’” (p. 17) In Arkansas they find a Clement Chen who tells them the sausages Joe was carrying were made in Mexico because, “If we were producing in the U.S., with all the union restrictions, it would cost us eighty-five cents a unit. In Mexico, with everything exactly the same, we’re getting them in L.A., F.O.B. my food distributing company for thirteen cents a unit.” (p. 52)
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31. Grandpa Goes To Washington (16 Nov. 1978*) NBC: Tue. 8-9pm
   - Episode: "The Union Boys"
   - Author: Paul West
   - Studio: Paramount Television Productions
   - Starring: Jack Albertson & Sue Ann Langdon

Synopsis: Kitchen Workers, Local 37: A union official tells Mama he's putting a picket line up around her Mama Matrella's Restaurant because she doesn't hire union workers, but Mama realizes it's because her son is trying to "clean up the union" that this pressure is being put on her. Mama says, "It's a good union, but this is a rotten local. The president of the local, Ed Crandall [Allan Miller], should be in prison." (p. 8) When the Senator offers to get involved, his aide says, "Don't fight the unions, Senator. It's bad politics." But the Senator doesn't listen. Lou Matrella tells Sen. Joseph Kelley about the corruption and "sweetheart deals" Crandall makes. Kelley calls for a hearing into the union and charges him with using a goon squad to keep control over the members and rigging the elections. But another senator tells him, "Labor is a sacred cow. You go taking out after unions and your next election you'll be able to count your votes on your fingers." (p. 17) Later Lou confronts Crandall and after an argument leaves saying, "You know what the union is? Just another rip-off in a rip-off world" (p. 24) When Lou prepares to testify at the hearings, his leg is broken by Crandall's goons. Fortunately, at the end of the program, just as it looks like the Senator's investigation is going to be cancelled, the National Union's President, Meyer Brockman (Victor Jory), shows up at the local's meeting to help the Senator and Lou turn Crandall out of office. In a stirring speech about the history of the labor movement, Brockman reaffirms the high purpose of unions and pleads with the rank and file to testify against Crandall.

32. CHIPS (18 April 1979*) NBC: Thursday 8:30pm
   - Episode: "Candi"
   - Authors: William D. Gordon, James Doherty
   - Studio: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
   - Starring: Larry Wilcox, Erik Estrada

Synopsis: Police Officers, California: Subplot - In the middle of tracking down some crooks, the CHIPS team finds out that the Palma Vista Police Force has just gone on strike. According to Getraer, "The cops there called the strike at this time because there's a big stock-car race coming up." (p. 16) They have to go to Palma Vista to (scab) substitute for the striking officers. Shamelessly, they cross the PVPD picket line insulting the local officers as they go.
33. Lou Grant (11 June 1979*) CBS: Monday 10-11pm
   Episode: "Slammer"
   Author: Johnny Dawkins
   Studio: MTM Enterprises
   Starring: Edward Asner

Synopsis: Pressman's Union, L.A., California: subplot - Negotiations between the Pressmen's Union lawyers and the lawyers at the LA Trib degenerate until the new union president and Charlie Hume (Mason Adams) sit down alone together and hammer out an agreement unfettered by legal advice. At the end of the same show, Hume is trying to stockpile paper because of a rumor he picked up about a possible lumberman's strike.

34. One In A Million (15 Jan. 1980) ABC: Tuesday 8:30-9pm
   + Episode: "Executive Dad"
   Authors: Bill Box & Dick Westerschulte
   Studio: TOY/Columbia TV Production
   Starring: Shirley Hemphill, Richard Paul & Carl Ballantine

Synopsis: Bus Drivers: Shirley's dad, Raymond Simmons, a city bus driver, has been on strike for three weeks and is driving his wife crazy. Shirley is persuaded to put him to work as a secretary at her corporation. Not only does he begin to drive Shirley and the other execs crazy, but after a few weeks he organizes 127 of the firm's secretaries to go out on strike as well. Happily, Shirley supports her father and the secretaries' demands which are, in fact, portrayed as reasonable. In the end, Shirley and her dad sit down and negotiate a settlement informally. On the same day the city settles with the bus drivers and the show ends happily ever after.

35. TAXI (29 Jan. 1980) ABC: Thursday 9-9:30pm
   - Episode: "Shut it Down, Part 1"
   Authors: M. Jacobson, M. Tolkin, H. Gewirtz & I. Praiser
   Studio: Paramount
   Starring: Judd Hirsch, Marilu Henner, Danny DeVito

Synopsis: Enraged by a series of accidents and near accidents, the cab drivers of the Sunshine Cab Company want to walkout in protest. Elaine Nardo (Henner) talks them into working through their union procedure first. Banta (Tony Danza), the most recent victim of the unsafe equipment, is quickly elected steward to confront Louis (DeVito), but Banta is soon flattered and cajoled into giving up the "grievance." Then Elaine is elected to try, but she is bluntly rebuffed by the owner, Louis' boss. So they call a strike. In the meantime, Louis brags to Alex (Hirsch) that he is doctoring the company books so the up-coming hearing on their safety complaints will make the company look good and force the union officials to call off the cabbies' strike.
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Alex gets Louis worried about possible damnation for lying under oath, so Louis agrees to negotiate with Elaine. Louis, a disgusting lecher, then agrees to grant all the union demands if Elaine will go out on a date with him.

36. TAXI (5 Feb. 1980) ABC: Thursday 9-9:30pm
   - Episode: "Shut it Down, Part 2"
   Authors: M. Jocobson, M. Tolkin, H. Gewirtz & I. Praiser
   Studio: Paramount
   Starring: Judd Hirsch, Marilu Henner, Danny DeVito

Though Elaine tries to keep her 'deal' with Louie a secret, Alex figures it out. He tries to talk Elaine out of it, but Elaine reluctantly goes out on her date with Louie, who, at the end of the date, wrestles her to the ground in a lecherous embrace.

   - Episode: "Strike" Annenberg # TRAP018
   Author: Kenneth Berg
   Studio: Frank Glickman & Don Brinkley/20th Century Fox
   Starring: Pernell Roberts

Synopsis: Nurses, San Francisco: The nurses at San Francisco Memorial Hospital go on strike. Ben Calvert, a professional union negotiator has been hired by the nurses. Shortly after he gets there, though, he has a heart attack and needs to be hospitalized himself. His old girlfriend, Starch, a striking nurse, helps keep the strike going for him while he must decide whether to have dangerous surgery or completely forsake the stress of labor relations as a profession. All the nurses are torn between their professional commitment to nursing and the demands of the strike. In the end, Ben has his operation after working out a settlement with the administrator, the pompous Arnold Slocum.
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38. Eight is Enough (1 Nov. 1980*) ABC: Wednesday 8pm
   - Episode: "Strike" Annenberg # EIGHT066
   - Author: Bruce Shelly
   - Studio: Lorimar Productions
   - Starring: Dick Van Patten, Betty Buckley

Synopsis: Sacramento, Newspaper Pressmen and Typesetters: The pressmen at the Sacramento Register are on strike and his friends on the line want Tom Bradford, a columnist, to honor their picket line and not cross. He crosses the line, and goes inside to be pressured by management to write attacks on the union and then to be trained to run the presses while the strike is on. Angered by these orders, Bradford goes cut and joins the picket line and prepares a pro-labor editorial. At home, Abby praises him as a "closet Samuel Gompers" (p. 30). But when he goes to work the next day with his new editorial, the editor tells him that "corporate has decided to shut us down" (p. 34)- i.e. lockout- for the duration of the strike since they figure the cost of maintaining the skilled crew is too high. Mounting financial pressures make life hard at the Bradford's, so at the urging of his accountant, Tom Bradford reluctantly applies for Unemployment Insurance. Back at the picket line, Bradford tells Joe he’s changed his mind about the strike now, because: "This strike is unfair to innocent bystanders." (p. 53). In the end, Bradford sets up a meeting between Joe, the strike leader, and his editor, Mr. Randolf, where his son Nicholas shares his insight about a barter system he tried to set up: "If the other guy can’t give what you want, then you’ve got to want something he can give or else nobody gets anything."(p. 67) This gets the two sides talking, and before they leave that day, the strike is settled.

39. Archie Bunker's Place (22 Nov. 1980) CBS: Sunday 8pm
   + Episode: "Wildcat Strike" [#0205] Annenberg # ARCHIE035 +036
   - Authors: Stephen Miller and Mark Fink
   - Studio: Tandem Productions
   - Starring: Carroll O'Conner

Synopsis: New York, Restaurant Workers: Jose, one of Archie’s cooks, cuts his finger and has to go to the hospital to get stitched up. Uninsured, Jose and his fellow workers expect Archie to pay for it, but Archie won’t. When confronted with his contradictory feelings about unions, Archie answers, "That was different. When I worked on the loading dock, we needed a union. We were up against a bunch of tyrants. Does this look like the face of a tyrant?" (p. 13) Murray, Archie’s partner, asks Archie to reconsider, but Archie says, "Would you listen to the liberal here? Murray, don’t you know nothin’? Once you start in with the unions, they take over. They’re like a bad rash."(p. 14) Then Archie rants, "Don’t youse people know who’s behind them unions? It’s all Mafia guys. Whatever you get they’ll make you pay for it. ...
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What about Jimmy Hoffa?" (p. 16) When Murray hears the cost, though, he retreats. Archie chides him: "Oh, listen to Mr. Big Union Man here. When it comes to spending your own money, you liberals are all the same: you gotta reach into your own pocket to find your heart." (p. 17) Archie fires Samantha, the union proponent, and the rest of his workers decide to strike him in protest. In the cold wintery weather, they are picketing and freezing. Veronica complains that God, "the man upstairs is taking their side" and Mr. Van Ranseleer rejoinders "You have to remember, he is management." (p. 36) But Van Ranseleer brings them together and Archie finally agrees to talk to them, at which point the strike seems to be over and the episode ends with the workers singing their own version of "Look for the Union Label (Ladle)."

40. The Incredible Hulk (6 Dec. 1980) CBS: Friday 8pm
   o Episode: "Deep Shock" Annenberg # INHULK039
     Author: Ruel Fischmann
     Studio: Universal TV
     Starring: Bill Bixby

Synopsis: SouthWest, Union Construction Laborers: subplot- Working on a construction site with a union crew, David Banner (the Hulk) hears the shop steward talking to the men about their imminent lay-off. Later, after an industrial accident in which David is almost electrocuted, the men are considering a wildcat strike to protest the loss of jobs and the automation of the plant they are working on. The steward, Edgar Tucker, an older worker with a medical problem, is then called in by the company and forced to retire. Worse still, he learns that all the benefits he had promised his men are not going to be honored by the company when they are all laid off in a few days. The men turn on Edgar and accuse him of selling out to management for his retirement package. So Edgar breaks into the electrical generating plant's control room and takes it over (ala Black Fury). Threatening to destroy the plant unless they stop the layoffs, Edgar nearly kills himself and destroys the whole plant but for the Hulk's intervention. In the Epilogue or "Tag" scene, Edgar finds out that the company has relented about the benefit packages and will be keeping the workers longer than expected now to clean up the mess.
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41. House Calls (10 Dec. 1980*) CBS: Monday 9:30pm
   - Episode: "No Balls, One Strike" Annenberg # HOUSE008
   Authors: Tom Chehak, Kathy Greer, Bill Greer
   Studio: Universal City Studios
   Starring: Wayne Rogers, Lynn Redgrave, Sharon Gless

Synopsis: Nurses & Orderlies: Administrative Assistant, Ann Anderson is trying to negotiate a raise for the (non-union) nurses and orderlies, but the administrator, Conrad Peckler, refuses grant any raises to an unorganized, unofficial representative. She gets up a petition and gives it to Johnny, one of the orderlies, who formally presents their demands to Peckler. Peckler threatens to fire him and everyone on the petition, so the orderlies and nurses go on strike (without a union per se). After a few days of trying to make things work without the staff, the doctors are getting upset. Dr. Charley Michaels, the key figure in the series, says, "I'll tell you why they're on strike ... because they went too far ... going in and making all those demands. They backed themselves into a corner! You know how cheap Peckler is." (p. 16) Later on, when they found out Charley was the one who told the workers they should organize, Norman says, "Charley...When you say organize to underpaid workers, they always strike." (p. 22) At the end of the program, Charley and Ann convince Peckler that the strike is costing them more than it would to settle, so the strike is over and everyone is happy again.

42. Lou Grant (23 Dec. 1980*) CBS: Monday 10pm
   - Episode: "Strike" [#0510] Annenberg # LOUGR071
   Author: April Smith
   Studio: MTM Enterprises
   Starring: Edward Asner

Synopsis: Los Angeles, Newspaper Printers: Story opens on the difficult negotiations at the Trib over the question of automation and 200 existing jobs with Hume versus Bronsky of the Print Media Workers Guild, Local 5503. This scene cuts to the newsroom where Rossi is describing to Lou a case of assault in the police holding cell. Hume interrupts with his account of the bargaining, "The London Times had the same situation: wanted to automate, unions wouldn’t allow it. Boy it was bitter. ... The unions shut the paper down eleven months. The London Times almost folded." (pp. 6-7) Rossi bemoans the union leadership, "Our future is being decided by a bunch of loudmouths, who love to make speeches just to hear themselves talk." (p. 8) At the meeting that Rossi goes to a strike vote is taken and all but Rossi enthusiastically vote for it. Back at the newsroom Rossi
finds all the reporters who didn’t go to the meeting are against the strike. Animal compares the strike to Viet Nam, "I’m telling you we’re just foot soldiers. The Pynchons and Bronskys don’t care about us."(p. 27) When the strike does start, though, Rossi, Animal, Donovan and Billie all go out, leaving Lou and Hume alone with a few scabs to write the paper. After two weeks, the strike is still on. Lou and Hume are commiserating, Hume says, "I guess I’ve got this old fashioned loyalty to the printed word. It’s powerful. And vital to the expression of human thought. The printed word is in danger in this country, and I believe it’s got to be saved. Too many newspapers have been killed by strikes."(p. 51) Ironically, Billie is disturbed by the press coverage the strike is getting: "I can’t believe how the other papers are covering the strike. Look how they distorted this. Wages are not the issue. They make the printers look greedy."(p. 56) A little later Billie is hit in the head by a flying rock as she chases after a "scab truck." The scene switches to the editorial conference room where Lou Hume and the other editors are reading, and one of them remarks: "Look how they've distorted the issues to make management seem greedy."(p. 58). Lou can’t take it any more and tells Hume he’s got to leave, then he goes out to join the strikers, but a little later Pynchon comes in to tell them the strike is settled; the union has accepted automation for a guarantee of $20,000 to each worker displaced.

Norma Rae* (23 Jan. 1981*) NBC Pilot 21 Nov. 81?
   Episode: 60 minute pilot -66p.
   Author: Carol Evan McKeand
   Studio: Saracen Productions & Rose and Asseyev Productions
   in association with 20th Century Fox Television
   Synopsis: Okalona, Georgia, Textile Workers: At the Teeter Towel Company, Norma Rae Webster, thirty, is helping Reuben Warshowsky, the organizer for the Fabric Workers’ Union of America, to form a union at her plant. Her ex-husband, Frank Osborn, now a company spy, is remarried but his new wife cannot have kids so he’s trying to take his and Norma Rae’s son away from her. Osborn takes her to court. Reuben tries to help her but she refuses legal counsel. After taking a beating about her loose reputation in court, Norma Rae is still able to make a convincing plea to the court about her love and maternal interest in her boy, and the episode ends with the judge dismissing Osborn’s suit.

* This program, because it was not aired, and the "Moon-lighting" episode on page 293, which did not involve the plot, are not numbered since they are not included in the Chapter III analysis.
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43. Lou Grant (14 March 1981) CBS: Monday 10pm
   Episode: "Compesinos" [#0513] Annenberg # LOUGR074
   Author: Michael Vettes
   Studio: MTM Enterprises
   Starring: Edward Asner

Synopsis: Farmworkers, San Joaquin Valley, California: An old high school acquaintance of Rossi's, now a union organizer, calls him about their strike in Ortega. Rossi goes down with the assignment to write about how a promising high school football player ended up as a union organizer. The farmowners have brought in scabs from Mexico to work in the fields, and Rossi's friend, Hernandez, has brought an old 60s farm labor activist, Rev. Holstrom, to speak to the strikers. Rossi starts to learn of the bad working conditions and wages that caused the strike. Meanwhile, back at the newsroom, Lou is moving articles to accommodate a full page ad by the growers attacking the strike. In Ortega after interviewing one of the growers, Rossi goes to a demonstration at the jailhouse which gets out of hand and Rossi is arrested as part of the crowd. In jail, Rossi is able to interview the Rev. Holstrom who asks Rossi where he stands. Rossi: "That's my job - to report both sides. I've got to stay objective." Holstrom: "How convenient. You can hide behind your objectivity and never have to decide for yourself what's right or wrong."(p. 35). Hume and Lou tell Mrs. Pynchon they are planning to run the story on the strike. Interestingly, the issue of automation of farmwork is opposed by Hume and Lou (note opposite attitude in earlier episode about newspaper strike). Rossi and Donovan after talking to the growers try to set up a meeting between one of them and Hernandez. It fails because of their soured personal relationship. Hernandez, therefore, is seen as prolonging the strike because of a personal grudge. On the picket line, violence erupts and Hernandez is shot and killed. Geyer, the one farm owner who knew Hernandez, signs the contract in remorse, and the strike starts to cool down so Hume dis-passionately pulls the reporters off the story and wraps it up.

44. WKRP in Cincinnati (21 October 1981) CBS: Wednesday 8:30pm
   Episode: "The Union" [#1002] Annenberg # WKRP041
   Author: Blake Hunter
   Studio: MTM Enterprises
   Starring: Gary Sandy, Gordon Jump, Loni Anderson

Synopsis: Cincinnati, Ohio -Radio employees: Venus, Johnny, Bailey and the others each get a letter from the Brotherhood of Midwestern Radio Workers encouraging them to organize a union. Those three are for it but, of course, Les Nessman isn't. He says: "I'll make a deal with you. 
I'll join the union if you can tell me where Jimmy Hoffa is."(p. 15) Herb tells Carlson, who becomes irate. Mrs. Carlson tells her son to start a rumor that she's going to sell the station if it goes union. Andy tries to stay between the Carlsons and the staff, but he is management, after all. He tells Mr. Carlson "I'd make a deal with the devil to put some money into this station."(p. 38) This he does and when it comes to a vote, the union loses 5 to 4. But Mrs. Carlson starts putting more money into the station as promised. Happy ending.

45. Hill Street Blues (3 Nov. 1981*) NBC: Thursday 10pm
- Episode: "Cranky Streets" [#1405] Annenberg # HILLST022
  Authors: Steven Bochco, Michael Kozoll, Robert Crais
  Studio: MTM Enterprises
  Starring: Daniel J. Travanti, Charles Haid

Synopsis: Hill Street, New York?, Police Officers: subplot - At roll call, Sgt. Esterhaus briefs the station on the impasse in negotiations and the City's early rejection of all their proposals. Later in the episode Esterhaus gets more bad news about the bargaining, and news of a possible wildcat strike. Lt. Hunter complains about the "road to Socialism" that unionism represents and almost gets into a fight with Lt. Calletano over his racist remarks. Throughout the various scenes, officers comment to each other about the increased stress of the possible union walkout. As Furillo notes: "I don't believe this! ... The negotiating committee hits a snag and we're all tearing at each others throats." (p. 40)

46. Hill Street Blues (4 Nov. 1981*) NBC: Thursday 10pm
- Episode: "Chipped Beef" [#1406] Annenberg # HILLST023
  Authors: Steven Bochco, Michael Kozoll, Robert Crais
  Studio: MTM Enterprises
  Starring: Daniel J. Travanti, Charles Haid

Synopsis: Hill Street, Major Metropolitan Area, Police Officers: subplot -Esterhaus' roll call "Item ten, the union situation. Word is the city got down to serious bargaining yesterday. But let's not raise any expectations or put down any thousand dollar deposits on Caribbean love nests yet." (p. 2) And later Renko (Charles Haid) snaps "Wish that union we pay all them dues to would get us some money, you know?" (p. 11) Then Bobby Hill reminds him of all the money he's wasted on motorcycles, girls, cowboy boots, motor boats, etc.
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47. Fame (13 Nov. 1981*) NBC: Thursday 8pm
- Episode: "The Strike" [#2702] Annenberg # FAME006
  Authors: Danny Jacobson and Barry Vigon
  Studio: MGM/UA TV

Synopsis: New York Teachers Union: After showing how involved the students at the School for the Arts are in all their projects, Miss Sherwood tries to talk Mr. Shorofsky into attending the union strike meeting. He doesn't believe public employees should have the right to strike. At the meeting the teachers passionately discuss the repercussions of striking with the rest of the public school teachers on their students and their projects. Shorofsky has come and speaks against the strike because of its harm on the students and divisiveness, but the vote favors striking. While the teachers picket, the students try to work out their projects on their own. Outside in the rain, Shorofsky reluctantly reports to picket duty under the threat of a fine from strike headquarters. Miss Lydia Grant, the dance teacher/drama coach, though on strike, wants to work with her students at night on their performance project, but Miss Sherwood talks her out of it. But then Leroy catches Miss Sherwood, the English teacher, at home to ask her if she can help him with his pronunciation and elocution for the play. She finally agrees to accept a token fee for tutoring him after hours, with tears in her eyes. At the end of the episode the striking teachers are happily, proudly sneaking a peak at the dress rehearsal of their students for the play that they have managed to keep afloat on their own.

48. Lou Grant (23 Nov. 1981) CBS: Monday 10pm
+ Episode: "Hometown" [#1504] Annenberg # LOUGR084
  Author: Micelle Gallery
  Studio: MTM Enterprises
  Starring: Edward Asner

Synopsis: Goshen, Michigan, Glass bottle factory: Lou goes back to his home town for his aunt's funeral. At the Goshen Glass Factory, tracking down an old acquaintance, Lou finds out how a string of corporate buyouts and deals has left this factory in the lurch, scheduled for shut-down, even though it's still producing as well as before. Lou decides to do a story on the plant since the corporate HQ are in LA. Back in LA, Billie finds out from corporate HQ that the decision was made because that subsidiary wasn't growing fast enough, and only 250 workers compared to the corporation's 85,000 work force were affected. The city fathers and the union (local 462) back in Goshen don't have much to say about it. Lou writes the stories, aggravating the corporation. In the meantime, the workers in Goshen are trying to engineer an ESOP. The episode leaves them hopeful and determined, but uncertain of success.

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49. Quincy (4 Feb. 1982*) NBC: Wednesday 10pm
   - Episode: "Flight of the Nightingale" Annenberg # QUINCY131
   Authors: Gene Church & Paul Edwards
   Studio: Universal TV
   Starring: Jack Klugman

Synopsis: California, Nurses: subplot - in a hospital already plagued by short staffing and over loading, a patient gets the wrong medication partly because the doctor failed to note a change on the patient’s chart. The nurse is blamed and suspended. Fellow nurses decide to strike over her suspension and the work-load problems. The nurses are torn between their professional ethics about patient care and their desire to protest the bad conditions. Over and over again, doctors and nurses exclaim that the real losers in the strike are the poor patients. Meanwhile, Lynne, the suspended nurse, who has now decided to quit the profession, is persuaded by one of the doctors to cross the picket line and help one of her patients calm down before a big operation. The striking nurses abuse and jeer her as she crosses the line. At the same time, Quincy has discovered that the patient whom she was supposed to have killed did not, in fact, die from the change in medication but from a completely unrelated condition. Note: the whole strike and its final resolution are described without reference to a nurses’ union.

50. Trapper John, M.D. (29 March 1982*) CBS Sun 10pm
   - Episode: "John’s Other Life" Annenberg # TRAP069
   Author: Jerry Ross
   Studio: Frank Glickman Productions
   Starring: Pernell Roberts

Synopsis: San Francisco, CA, Garbage Collectors: subplot - The hospital is suffering from a garbage collector’s strike. Dr. Stanley Riverside is furious at the "rabble-rousing" strikers. Meanwhile the central plot is about the medical treatment of an ex-syndicate figure. As rumors circulate about the syndicate, they get all mixed up with the garbage strike until Riverside thinks the mob is behind the strike.
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51. Voyagers! (01 Nov 1982*, poss. Air 19 Dec. 82) NBC Sun 7pm
   + Episode: "Merry Christmas, Bogg" [#57215] Annenberg #
     Author: Bruce Shelly
     Studio: Universal City Studios
     Starring: Jon-Erik Hexum and Meeno Peluce

   Synopsis: Pittsburgh, PA (1892), Factory Workers: subplot
   - The voyagers, Phineas Bogg and Jeffery Jones, bounce back and forth in
time between Washington 1776 and PA 1892 where Sam Gompers is leading a
factory workers strike. Gompers is described by the boy as "the greatest
labor leader America ever had." (p. 19) and as they watch him a squad of
strikebreaking goons attack the strikers with clubs, one of them making
off with a cash box containing the union strike fund. It's Christmas
eve and the union needed the money to keep the strikers morale up.
Gompers is suspected of stealing the money for himself and the whole AFL
and the strike in Pittsburgh seems lost. The voyagers retrieve the gold
and history is saved together with the strike and the AFL.

52. Benson (25 Nov. 1983) ABC: Friday 8pm
   - Episode: "Labor Pains" [#100] Annenberg # BENSON107
     Author: Brill Boulware
     Studio: A Witt/Thomas/Harris Production
     Starring: Robert Guillaume, James Noble

   Synopsis: Highway Maintenance Workers, Public: Benson is negotiating on
behalf of the Gov. with the road workers. Their leader, Stump Walker
(John C. Beecher) comments "As far as the workin' man is concerned,
there ain't no such thing as a fair contract." (p. 2). Later, in the
midst of a terrible snow storm, Benson is called back to the office
because the road workers are now on strike and are refusing to clear the
streets. The bargaining reveals that Stump rejected the package without
going to the membership with it just because the snow gave him the
upperhand in the negotiations. Stump won't trust Benson until the baby
staying at the mansion gets sick and Stump finds out Benson is caring
for it. That turns the tide and Stump agrees to put his men back to work
while he and Benson renegotiate their contract.
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53. Empire (1 Feb. 1984) CBS: Wednesday 8:30pm
   - Episode: "Episode Six" [#3329] Annenberg # EMPIRE006
   Authors: Jim Geoghan, Lawrence Cohen, Fred Freeman
   Studio: Humble Productions with MGM Film Co.
   Starring: Patrick Macnee, Dennis Dugan and Cameron Mitchell

Synopsis: Springfield, Missile Plant: Ben's hothead father, Lou
Christian (Cameron Mitchell), shows up to lead a union protest on the
eve of a presidential visit. His father, "an old union dog,"
was off living with a stripper until the union called him up. Ben
complains to him, "The only place you ever took me was to picket ...
We'd march around a factory somewhere, they'd beat us up and then we'd
go home." (p. 9) Ben is worried about the pickets around the plant, but
goes ahead with his plans. In the meantime his father threatens to blow
the plant up if they won't negotiate the job/work transfers from their
US plant to their new African factory. Of course the dynamite is a bluff
as Calvin Cromwell (Patrick Macnee), his old adversary, well knows. In
the end, Lou admits to Ben that he just got involved in the strike as an
excuse to see him again. They let him negotiate, but the issue is moot
when Ben learns their plant in Africa was just appropriated by the king
of that nation.

54. St. Elsewhere (3, 10 Oct. 1984) NBC: Wednesday 10pm
   - Episode: "Two Balls and a Strike"
   Authors: John Macius, Tom Fontana & John Tinker
   Episode: "Strike Out"
   Author: Steve Bellow
   Studio: MTM Enterprises
   Starring: Christina Pickles & Ed Flanders

Synopsis: Nurse Helen Rosenthal (Christina Pickles) fanatically leads a
nurses' strike against the hospital's kindly, long-suffering
administrators, Drs. Donald Westphall (Ed Flanders) and Auschlander,
while the scabbing nurses are portrayed more as caring, selfless
professionals. And later, the same nurse, after leading a protest
against mandatory drug testing, becomes herself a drug abuser and kills
a patient in her care.
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55. Silver Spoons (9 Dec. 1984) NBC: Sunday 7pm
   - Episode: "Beauties and the Beasts" [#0310]
   Authors: Robert Illes & James Stein
   Studio: Embassy TV
   Starring: Ricky Schroder, Joel Higgins, Franklyn Seales

Synopsis: Toy Factory: subplot- Ed Stratton (Joel Higgins) is negotiating with Big Jake Geoghan (not pictured), the Cuddly Toy union rep. for his company's workers. Ed describes the union leader as an "animal" who "keeps his toupe on with staples" (p. 4). But after bitterness prevents Ed from being able to come to a settlement with Big Jake, Kate (Erin Gray) proposes an employee vegetable garden in lieu of pay raises and Jake accepts because he always wanted a garden but couldn't have one in his apartment.

56. Simon and Simon (14 Feb. 1985) CBS: Thursday 9pm
   - Episode: "The Mickey Mouse Mob" [#58538]
   Author: Ross Thomas
   Studio: Universal TV
   Starring: Jameson Parker, Gerald McRaney

Synopsis: California, generic union: subplot- Dan Thacker is an international vice-president of the LDUW, (described as one of the country's biggest unions) trying to get elected president of his union. He lends his car to his young attorney who is blown up as he turns the ignition on. Thacker goes to Simon & Simon for help. It turns out that he is being blackmailed because he used to have a different name and ran to Canada to evade the draft during the Viet Nam war. He's decided to come clean about all that and wants their help to find the wife and kids he had deserted as well. They find her and she turns out to be running the Delaporte mob (the Mickey Mouse Mob), who seems just as interested in keeping Thacker's former life a secret as he was. We soon learn that Thacker's blackmail, the car bomb and everything else is part of a plot by his ex-wife's lawyer to take over that mob. But a heavy comes in from the East Coast and stops that plot and everything goes back to normal, except we never find out what happens to his union election.
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57. Diff'rent Strokes (9 Mar. 1985) NBC: Saturday 8pm
   - Episode: "Blue Collar Drummond" [#0702]
   Authors: Robert Jayson and A. Dudley Johnson, Jr.
   Studio: Embassy TV
   Starring: Conrad Bain, Gary Coleman, Todd Bridges

Synopsis: Factory workers: Phil Drummond (Conrad Bain) is negotiating with Bill Perkins (Barney Martin), a "Die-hard labor Rep" (p. 1) at Drummond's home over dinner. The session ends with a lot of name-calling and no progress. Later Phil's wife Maggie (Dixie Carter) suggests that Perkins was right about Phil being out-of-touch with the workers. He decides to go to work in the factory to prove he can do the work as well as any of his employees. At the factory, Phil finds out how boring the work is and how unresponsive his managers have been to employee suggestions, and how the workers have come to hate him for the way he distanced himself from their work, unlike his father who used to know them all by name. Note: no return to the union negotiator is shown.

58. Bronx Zoo (20 Jan. 1988) NBC: Wednesday 10pm
   - Episode: "The Long Gray Line"
   Authors: Patricia Jones, Donald Reicher, Kathy McCormick
   Studio: MTM Enterprises
   Starring: Edward Asner

Synopsis: Not unlike the film Teachers* in which Nick Nolte stood up heroically as an individual not with the teacher's union nor with the school's administrators, the strike-breaking (scab) teacher in the Bronx Zoo is admired for his individuality and personal courage while the strikers are portrayed as mindless, uncaring and selfish.

Moonlighting (22 March 1988) ABC: Tuesday 9pm
   Studio: Picturemedia Productions -ABC Circle Films
   Starring: Bruce Willis & Cybill Shepard

Synopsis: During the Hollywood writers strike may have inadvertently, and with the best intentions, trivialized the plight of the striking writers, by ending one of their shows with a humorous dance routine that marched through the offices of the striking writers. The program, written before the strike, fell about seven minutes short, according to the show's producer, Jay Daniel. "Normally we just turn to the writing


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staff and say we need another scene here. " Without the opportunity to do that, Bruce Willis and Cybill Shepard began singing "Wooly Bully" and danced through the offices of the show's five writers, who joined in on the silly skit carrying their picket signs.

+ Episode: "Curtains"
   Authors: Pam Norris
   Studio: Bloodworth/Thomason Mozark Productions
   Starring: Dixie Carter, Royce D. Applegate, Pat Li

Synopsis: The stars operate a small interior decorating company that get a long awaited big job. But the drapery manufacturer's workers go on strike. The interior decorators are themselves picketed and, at first, cross the picket lines and try to work at the drapery factory to rush their job through. There they realize how sorry the working conditions and wages were for the striking workers, and they join the strikers to pressure the draper to settle. A rare and sympathetic view of a union and a strike.

60. Wiseguy (11 Jan. 1989) CBS: Wednesday 10pm
- Episode: "All or Nothing."
  Story Editor: John Schu1ian
  Studio: Stephen J. Cannell Productions
  Starring: Anthony Denison and Joan Chen

Synopsis: In the first of a two-part program, entitled "All or Nothing," the star, John Raglin (Anthony Denison) is an FBI undercover agent investigating corruption in New York's garment district. Though the target of the probe is primarily a mob-run business, the fictitious "Fashion Union Workers of American" is portrayed as complicit with the owners and unconcerned with the plight of the Chinese immigrant garment workers. On the one hand the program shows a heroic strike led by the young female immigrant, Maxine Tzu (Joan Chen). The father of the Jewish factory owner, who was himself once a union member, doesn't want to cross their picket line; his son, played by Jerry Lewis, dismisses the strikers as 'commies'. While sympathy is clearly established for the Chinese strikers, it is just as clearly against the established union which is criticized for being too weak and complacent, signing sweet-heart contracts with the owners.

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61. *In the Heat of the Night* (28 Mar. 1989) NBC: Tuesday 9pm
- Episode: "Walkout"
  Author: Stephen Aspis
  Studio: MGM/UA TV- Fred Silverman
  Starring: Carroll O'Connor, Howard Rollins, O.J. Simpson

Synopsis: [Sparta, Mississippi] Wade Britton, the new manager at the town's Thai River Industries plant forces the union to strike by demanding major concessions. When Chief of Police (Carroll O'Connor) hears about it, he tells his big city deputy, Virgil Tibbs, to prepare for a murder. The local black leader and Councilman Lawson Stiles (O.J. Simpson), who has been trying to get jobs for the poor blacks there, is asked to provide scabs but won't. But a rival black leader (Darnell Williams) wants to scab because the union has not been accepting blacks as members anyway. First the councilman is murdered, then the union leader is killed in the same way. The scabs come in with the new black leader and the strike gets more and more violent. Though, in the end, the murders turn out to be unrelated to the strike, the union is portrayed as a violent, red neck, discriminatory institution, and the strike is seen as destructive and totally indefensible.

62. *Head of the Class* (3 May 1989) ABC: Wednesday 7:30pm
- Episode: "Labor Daze"
  Author: Jerry Rannow
  Studio: Eustis Elias Prod./Warner Brothers Television
  Starring: Howard Hesseman

Synopsis: As the semester is drawing to a close, the teachers are about to strike because of a planned "roll back" in wages. Charlie Moore (Hesseman) leads the teachers at his school on a pre-strike "slow-down" in order to draw attention to their protest while the negotiations are stalled. At first the students in his class are angry because of their anxiety about an advanced placement history exam they have to take the following week. Two days later the slow down becomes a work-stoppage, and Moore refuses to teach (though he's still in the class-room with them). Moore finally relents, but teaches the class about labor history. He does such a good job that, when a replacement teacher is brought in, the class refuses to be taught by the "scab".
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Labor Headlines next to Crime Reports

05-21-87 Star-Bulletin, p. D-6, "Hotel Workers seek arbitration" next to "Student murder" and "Traffic homicide"

05-30-87 Star-Bulletin, p. B-6, "Tentative accord reached ..." next to "police beat"

06-02-87 Star-Bulletin, p. A-9, "Island teachers face..." next to "Police" and "McCully man, 35, charged in shooting"

06-02-87 Star-Bulletin, p. A-12, "Airport hotel workers win..." next to "Bar will be sold, ending sex charges"


08-10-87 Advertiser, p. D-16, "Labor alliance ..." next to "police beat"

08-30-87 Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, p. D-45 "Auto union leader remains..." next to "Police trying to catch rapist"

09-09-87 Advertiser, p. A-7, "HSTA’s rival Union ..." next to "police beat"

08-29-87 Advertiser, p. A-2, "Wilcox Hospital nurses on strike" next to "police beat"

09-12-87 Star-Bulletin, p. A-2, "... striking Wilcox nurses" next to "police & fire"

09-18-87 Star-Bulletin, p. D-4, "Construction workers reach..." next to "Man, 26, charged with knifing, robbery"


11-06-87 Advertiser, p. A-10, "Operating engineers ratify..." next to "police beat"
11-09-87 *Star-Bulletin*, p. A-3, "Steelworkers get wage hikes"  
next to "FBI arrests Australian"

11-21-87 *Advertiser*, p. B-5, "Union seeks to block"  
next to "Lawyer convicted"

11-27-87 *Advertiser*, p. A-7, "Pickets up at dock ..."  
next to "Judge upholds Wong fraud charges"

next to "Youth, 16, arrested in slaying"

02-24-88 *Star-Bulletin*, p. A-4, "ILWU studies affiliation..."  
next to "Thai drug couriers" and "Waipahu man arrested"

02-29-88 *Advertiser*, p. A-5, "Sugar labor contract allows ..."  
next to "police beat"

03-15-88 *Star-Bulletin*, p. B-1, "Writer Strike could burst"  
next to a large picture of a cockroach

03-16-88 *Star-Bulletin*, p. A-2, "Radcliffe gets... faculty union"  
next to "Ex-football player pleads guilty" on A-3.

03-21-88 *Advertiser*, p. D-2, "Radio, TV actors to picket"  
next to "police beat"

03-22-88 *Star-Bulletin*, p. A-4, "Local screen actors join strike"  
next to "Leaders of North Shore drug ring ..."

03-22-88 *Star-Bulletin*, p. D-16, "HSTA Endorsement Interview ..."  
next to "Study finds day care sex abuse overdrawn"

03-26-88 *Advertiser*, p. B-5, "Union picks Pickens"  
next to "Motorola cops plea"

03-28-88 *Advertiser*, p. A-5, "Radcliffe replacement"  
next to "police beat"

04-07-88 *Star-Bulletin*, p. A-3, "Turtle Bay workers ... contract"  
next to "Paradis pleads guilty to sex charges"

04-09-88 *Advertiser*, p. A-5, "NEA head raps U.S. ..."  
next to "Ex-athlete guilty in sex case"

04-13-88 *Advertiser*, p. A-6, "... union study says"  
next to "Verdict due soon in Appell trial"
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04-27-88 Advertiser, p. B-1, "New labor turmoil ..." next to "Terrorists put poison in fruit from Israel"

05-02-88 Advertiser, p. D-1, "Filipino workers protest" next to "Rebels bomb bus, kill 26"

05-03-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-1 "Poland rejects legalizing Solidarity" next to "Police Beat"

05-05-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-15 "Poland strike leaders nabbed" next to "17 Killed as French raid Kanak stronghold"


05-15-88 Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, p. A-26 "Presser's illness sets off Teamster power struggle" next to "Inmates hold 3 at Oklahoma prison"

05-17-88 Advertiser, p. C-5 "Teamsters powwow" and "Strike may spread" and "HSTA job finalists get second thoughts" all reported next to "Sex scandal at SEC"

05-19-88 Advertiser, p. A-3 "... nurses ratify new contract" between "Vice squad trap sets up Isle AIDS 'test case'" and "Didn't plan to harm anyone, 'ninja' sailor testifies"

05-28-88 Advertiser, p. B-1 "245 hotel workers arrested in protest" next to "Embassy is seized ..."

06-01-88 Advertiser, p. D-1 "Labor unrest escalates" next to "Aussies seize arms cache"

06-20-88 Advertiser, p. A-7 over a letter opposing an allegedly 'anti-business' Senate bill was the bold headline "Rambo, handguns, unions"

06-22-88 Advertiser, p. A-3 "UPW victorious in Big Island sewage dispute" next to "State mulls $1,000 fine ..." and "Trial begins in Officer Barboza slaying"

06-27-88 Advertiser, p. C-1 "Armenian strikers returning to work" over a picture of a devasted city with the caption "* dead in Beirut battle"

07-06-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-6 "Labor leader urges 'buy American' policy" next to "Child-sex figure sent to prison"
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07-07-88 Advertiser, p. A-14 "Wahiawa nurses ratify accord"
next to "GAF indicted in stock fraud case"

07-12-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-7 "Teamsters boss praised at funeral"
next to "Reagan picks crime buster to succeed Edwin Meese"

07-16-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-2 "178 school workers sue state and
union" next to "Barboza trial keys on shotgun"

07-21-88 Advertiser, p. A-1 "Speech class for weathermen making
labor relations cloudy" next to "Judge finds some holes in
sheriff's indictment"

07-19-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-10 "Labor group calls strike in Peru"
next to "Harassed by FBI, defector says" and "Moslems bomb
a Catholic town"

08-04-88 Advertiser, p. C-7 "Teamster aides out"
next to "Scandal intensifies"

08-07-88 Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, p. A-6 "No monopoly of crime
in the Islands, experts in law enforcement say" next to a cartoon
depicting picket signs with the legend "Labor Racketeering"
(despite the fact that the article did not refer in any way to
labor racketeering)

08-16-88 Advertiser, p. A-2 "KHBC-TV 2 in tentative NLRB accord"
next to "Police Beat"

08-17-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-7 "Police union does turnaround, ...
next to "O'Connor asks drug tests in felony arrests"

08-17-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-17 "Poland strikers urge recognition of
Solidarity" next to "Bank robbers take 30 hostage in bus" anu
Rebels say they killed 500 Soviets"

08-17-88 Advertiser, p. A-3 "SHOPO's Oahu chapter backs Kaneshiro
over Marsland" next to "Liquor panel investigated"

08-19-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-7 "Pole shipyard workers may join strikers"
next to "Thousands die in Burundi's tribal fighting"

08-25-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-4 "Teachers' union staff threatening to
strike" next to "Police Beat: Maui police investigate child's
death" and "4 arrested; gun, marijuana seized"

08-28-88 Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, p. A-20 "Polish leaders
firm on Solidarity" next to "N. Ireland shaken with 17 bombings"
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08-31-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-17 "Walesa urges workers to end all labor unrest" over "IRA kills 2 in a blundered bombing, apologizes"

09-01-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-15 "Walesa plea brings end to two strikes" next to "IRA backers riot, stone police station"

09-01-88 Advertiser, p. C-1 "Gdansk shipyard workers end strike" over "IRA bombers sorry for latest mistake" and "Settler shoots soldiers in chase confusion"

09-02-88 Advertiser, p. A-17 "Some strikers ignoring Walesa's call" under "House arrest banned for drug offenders"

09-02-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-9 "Poland PM, Walesa urge labor peace" between "IRA brothers slain by British" and "Grenade, mine explosions rock S. African cities"

09-05-88 Advertiser, p. A-8 "Isle unions celebrate new ties, old traditions" below "Ousted executive says GTE used bribery, black market"

09-09-88 Advertiser, p. A-21 "British Postal talks continue in strike" next to "Key figure in trial limits his guilty plea"

09-12-88 Advertiser, p. D-1 "Intellectuals, artists endorse Solidarity" under "Chileans stone Pinochet's motorcade"

09-22-88 Advertiser, p. A-3 "Examine candidates' values, Waihee tells ILWU delegates" over "Campbell student shooting was a 'gang-related' event"

09-24-88 Advertiser, p. C-1 "Civil service strike ends" next to "Deaver gets three years of probation."


10-20-88 Advertiser, p. D-1 "Union protests base pact" next to "Britain restricts terrorist statements"

10-22-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-2 "Bitterman, Bornhorst win ILWU support" under "Beating death witness freed on $2,000 bail"

10-24-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-4 "Strike continues at Molokai hotel" with photo of pickets, next to "Police: Police have no suspects in shooting"

10-25-88 Advertiser, p. A-7 "Attendants protest" next to "ITT pleads guilty"
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11-03-88 Advertiser, p. A-11 "Welfare office faces Local 5 picket line" next to "Another indictment on Wall St."


11-05-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-3 "Rutledge turns down attorneys' bid" under "Maui murder trial is delayed again"

11-05-88 Advertiser, p. A-3 "Teamsters say 'no' to deputy prosecutors' union." under "Luck, work and TV show lead to arrest of 'Bad Boy'"

11-07-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-5 "Tam takes new shot at hotel union helm" with phot of Rutledge next to "Falk says isle prison reforms not sufficient"

11-08-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-9 "Workers at 2 shipyards defy Walesa's back-to-work plea" under "Father says Hamadi was only 20 during hijacking"

11-09-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-19 "Walesa plea, management threat scuttle Polish strikes" over "Gunman holds Arab envoy, 4 other hostages at Khartoum embassy"

11-12-99 Star-Bulletin, p. A-6 "Police battle thousands in Poland rallies" & "Rome jammed by trade union protest" & "Strike poses Sinhalese food shortage" next to "Brazilians continue to burn up Amazon forests"

11-16-88 Advertiser, p. D-1 "95,000 commuters stranded by strike" "Tornadoes, ice blamed for 10 deaths"

11-18-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-3 "U.S. labor board certifies union vote at Schofield laundry" under "State will ante up $60,000 law library for prisoners"

11-22-88 Advertiser, p. D-1 "Hungarian unions balk at austerity" next to "U.S. probes tear gas blasts"

11-24-88 Advertiser, p. A-23 "Strike leader arrested" under "Massacre by Sikhs reported"

11-30-88 Advertiser, p. C-1 "Koreans strike U.S. bases" next to "Nimitz fire incident causes death, damage"

11-30-88 Advertiser, p. C-6 "Some Kaluakoi strikers may work today, but perhaps not tomorrow." over "Police deny beating hotel worker"
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12-01-88 Advertiser, p. B-1 "Labor Party rebels shatter unity talks" over "11 more slayings reported in Armenia"

12-06-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-9 "5,000 Yugoslav strikers in march" over "Air Force general killed in jet crash"

12-08-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-17 "Consultant says union contracts hurt poor schools" over "Courts: Kaneohe man indicted in ramming of police car"

12-20-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-4 "Negotiator not surprised at responses" next to "Police/Fire: Suspect held in sex assault, stabbing"

12-28-88 Advertiser, p. A-6 "Kaluakoi blames pact delay on union" next to "Expert backs prosecution's version of killing"

12-31-88 Star-Bulletin, p. A-3 "UH Professional union hires Radcliffe" under "High court orders new trial in slaying"

01-06-89 Advertiser, p. A-21 "Unions file suit" next to "Not-guilty plea"

01-13-89 Advertiser, p. A-21 "Mexico arraigns leader of oil union" next to "36 killed by separatists"

01-23-89 Advertiser, p. D-1 "Teamster negotiate..." next to "Detective saves partner but is shot in the brain"

01-24-89 Star-Bulletin, p. A-5 "Hotel Union seeks pact" next to "Youth nabbed for taking mom's truck"

01-31-89 Star-Bulletin, p. A-6 "Union: Lawyer blames 'Fast Eddy' for probe" next to "Isle officials hoping to extradite Maui sex-abuse suspect"

01-31-89 Advertiser, p. A-4 "Lawyer calls Rutledge indictment a sham" next to "Former Maui health aide seized in child-sex case"

02-03-89 Advertiser, p. A-21 "Oil union elects pro-government head" under "Paraguayan leader reported arrested"

02-14-89 Star-Bulletin, p. A-13 "Leader of Peru miners' union is killed" next to "Iran executes 70 for smuggling drugs"

03-14-89 Advertiser, p. A-1 "Teamsters OK vote and crime-buster" under "McKellar judge lets jurors mull partial judgment"
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02-21-89 Star-Bulletin, p. A-13 "UH Faculty union leader says..." next to "Scandal puts reform pressure on Japan"


03-08-89 Star-Bulletin, pp. A-1 & 8 "Union fails to block train travel" over "Top Kalihi gang figure aided in drug bust"

03-13-89 Star-Bulletin, p. A-5 "Isle Pickets support Eastern strikers" next to "Police Beat"

03-19-89 Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, p. A-12 "Teamsters threaten to expand strike" sandwiched between "Mafia strike force may be rubbed out" and "New Jersey man shoots 3 kids, dies"

03-20-89 Advertiser, p. A-3 "Union, owners dispute role of crew in oil spill" over "Artists of the rogues' gallery give crime a face"

03-29-89 Star-Bulletin, p. A-1 "5 unions seek new contracts" under "U.S. smashes global money ring"

04-14-89 Star-Bulletin, p. A-4 "Continental attendants may walk off their jobs" next to "Police Beat"

04-09-89 Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, p. A-27 "Solidarity wants all seats" next to "Vienna nurses kill dozens"

04-15-89 Advertiser, p. A-2 "UPW calls off Kuakini Geriatric strike" next to "Police Beat" and over "Genetic link leads to sex case conviction"

04-18-89 Star-Bulletin, p. A-4 "Unions: Talks cont. on 4-year pacts" across "North and McFarlane are accused of using Hitler tactics"

04-19-89 Star-Bulletin, pp. A-1 & 8 "HGEA, state close in on wage pacts" next to "Crystal meth called a potential powder keg"


04-19-89 Star-Bulletin, p. A-8 "HGEA: Hopes to have new contracts today" next to "Street gangs on Oahu"

04-26-89 Star-Bulletin, p. A-4 "No strike seen by UH faculty over contract" next to "Payments for sex admitted, but not extortion"
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04-29-89 *Star-Bulletin*, A-5 "Screen Actors Guild ratifies new contract" under "Computer chips stolen, traded for cocaine, pot"

05-03-89 *Star-Bulletin*, A-1 "Poland rejects legalizing Solidarity" under "Police Beat"

05-08-89 *Advertiser*, A-4 "Teamsters dispute 'voluntary' levy" over "Followers of drug 'Godfather' say he demanded to be killed"

05-10-89 *Advertiser*, A-3 "Mehau is playing a role in Teamsters turf battle..." under "Council panel OKs settlement in child rape"

05-10-89 *Advertiser*, A-15 "Profs deserve pay hike" under the headline "UH, Labor, crime, more"
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1983 Kupau-Mungovan Headlines

HONOLULU ADVERTISER (1983)
-WW -byline by Walter Wright
-CT -byline by Charles Turner
-BV -byline by Barbara Vobejda

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<tr>
<td>05-12/A-1</td>
<td>&quot;FBI probing Carpenters, Kupau says&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>05-12/A-4</td>
<td>&quot;Major FBI probe of Carpenters revealed&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;Tape technology--last word in crime fighting&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;Contractor: taped union 'threats'&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;Torres no union organizer, court told -- just a man who believes in solidarity&quot; CT &amp; WW</td>
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<td>&quot;Didn't lie, 2 carpenter unionists testify&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;2 union agents guilty of perjury in 'sign-up' case&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;FBI probe off limits to Carpenters&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;U.S. agencies investigating house blaze&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;Contractor put under protection&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;Hunt on for fake lawmen: Tried to lure union witness from hotel&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;More contractors tell of threats&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>07-16/A-1+</td>
<td>&quot;2 union aides sentenced to 6 months for perjury&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;The trials for Viet vet, wife just beginning&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>07-25/A-4</td>
<td>&quot;Isle delegation heedful but it's uphill battle&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau quizzed on fire, says he wasn't involved&quot;</td>
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<td>07-27/A-6</td>
<td>&quot;Marsland reacts to story about the Mungovans&quot;</td>
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<td>08-04/A-3</td>
<td>&quot;Labor law fight carried to capital: Union aide renews attack on contractor&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;U.S. jury indicts Kupau on seven perjury counts&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;Federal grand jury indicts Kupau in perjury case&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>08-27/D-11</td>
<td>&quot;Kupau could keep union post even if convicted of perjury&quot;</td>
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<td>08-31/A-5</td>
<td>&quot;Labor leader Kupau says unsigned card threatened his life&quot; -WW &amp; CT</td>
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<td>&quot;40 union officials support Kupau in battle with FBI&quot;</td>
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<td>09-02/A-11</td>
<td>&quot;Kupau pleads not guilty; perjury trial set for Nov. 1&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>09-03/A-3</td>
<td>&quot;Kupau blasts GOP, media, management at unity breakfast&quot; -CT</td>
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<td>Letters: &quot;Kupau's defense&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau elected, defies order by national union&quot; -CT</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau re-elected, refuses to take a leave&quot; -CT</td>
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<td>09-13/D-3</td>
<td>&quot;Kupau again refuses to yield presidency&quot; -CT</td>
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<td>09-14/A-7</td>
<td>&quot;Kupau, still defiant, refuses again to step aside&quot; -CT</td>
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<td>&quot;Legal help promised to Mungovans&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>09-24/A-6</td>
<td>&quot;Mungovan's case topic of columns by Jack Anderson&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;Not taking any leave, says Kupau&quot;</td>
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<td>10-18/A-7</td>
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<td>10-23/A-17</td>
<td>&quot;Marsland backs anti-extortion amendment&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>10-24/A-3</td>
<td>&quot;Anti-labor violence amendment backed&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>10-25/A-3</td>
<td>&quot;Kupau denies union violence or threats&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>10-26/A-3</td>
<td>&quot;Mungovan-union case in D.C. spotlight&quot; -BV</td>
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<td>10-26/A-16</td>
<td>&quot;Mungovan case: Maui woman testifies at D.C. union hearing&quot; -BV</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau’s perjury trial begins: Carpenters’ business agent testifies&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>11-05/A-1+</td>
<td>&quot;Mungovan back in courtroom here to testify against Kupau&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>11-08/A-6</td>
<td>&quot;Kupau’s defense will begin today&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>11-09/A-1+</td>
<td>&quot;Two setbacks for Kupau: Mauian contradicts Mungovan&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>11-10/A-1+</td>
<td>&quot;Kupau says he didn’t lie; case goes to jury today&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau verdict delayed until next week&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau jury to continue deliberations&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau jury still deliberating&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau guilty on 6 counts, faces maximum of 30 years&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;Wants family to join him But Mungovan to stay hidden&quot; -WW</td>
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<td>&quot;AFL-CIO silent about Kupau&quot; -CT</td>
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<td>12-28/A-5</td>
<td>&quot;Fong refuses to dismiss verdict in Kupau trial&quot;</td>
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HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN (1983) -CM byline by Charles Memminger
-SM byline by Susan Manuel
-PM byline by Phil Mayer
-SG byline by Stu Glauberman

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<td>&quot;Jury Deliberates Maui Perjury Case&quot; -CM</td>
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<td>&quot;2 Union Leaders Found Guilty of Perjury Charges&quot; -CM</td>
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<td>&quot;FAKE FBI AGENTS&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau Claims Advertiser, U.S. Agencies Conspired&quot; -SM</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau Is Indicted for Perjury&quot; -PM</td>
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<td>&quot;United Labor Coalition Votes to Support Kupau&quot; -SM</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau Pleads Innocent in Perjury Case&quot;</td>
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<td>09-02/A-7</td>
<td>&quot;Kupau Says Reaganites Want to Bust the Unions&quot;</td>
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<td>Letters: &quot;Picket Line Violence&quot;</td>
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<td>09-05/A-3</td>
<td>&quot;Hawaii's Unions Struggling with New Challenges&quot; -SM</td>
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<td>&quot;Fighting Union Power&quot; by Jack Anderson in Washington DC</td>
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<td>&quot;Labor Law With Loopholes&quot; also by Jack Anderson</td>
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<td>Editorial: &quot;Prosecuting Union Violence and Threats&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Isle Woman Testifies on Labor Strife&quot; -Assoc. Press</td>
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<td>&quot;Maui Woman Testifies on Union Harassment&quot; -Assoc. Press</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau Trial on Perjury Charges Under Way in Federal Court&quot; -CM</td>
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<td>&quot;Ex-Union Agent Questioned at Trial of Kupau&quot; -CM</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau Convicted on 6 Perjury Counts&quot; -CM</td>
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<td>11-18/A-1</td>
<td>&quot;Kupau Has Had Plenty of Scraps in His Career&quot; -CM &amp; SG</td>
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<td>11-24/A-5</td>
<td>&quot;Kupau, Mungovan Still at battle&quot; -CM</td>
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MAUI NEWS (1983) * Honolulu (UPI)
-BT =byline by Brian Thornton
-RM =byline by Robert McCabe

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<td>05-11/A-3</td>
<td>&quot;Torres, Nishibayashi perjury trial begins&quot; *</td>
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<td>05-12/A-1</td>
<td>&quot;Yoshida testifies in perjury trial of union officials Torres and Nishibayashi&quot; *</td>
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<td>05-12/A-4</td>
<td>&quot;FBI Harassing union, Kupau says&quot; *</td>
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<td>&quot;Union official defended because he was new to the job&quot; *</td>
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<td>&quot;Union agents deny making false statements on pickets&quot; *</td>
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<td>05-24/A-1</td>
<td>&quot;Jury finds two Maui men guilty of perjury&quot; *</td>
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<td>05-25/A-9</td>
<td>Editorial: &quot;Union not served by racism charges&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Protective custody for contractor reported&quot; *</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau will see[k] another term&quot; *</td>
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<td>&quot;Perjury Case: Carpenters Union sued&quot; *</td>
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<td>&quot;Union agents to serve six month prison term&quot; *</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau call grand jury a ‘fishing expedition’&quot; *</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau indicted on 7 perjury counts&quot; -BT</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau claims threatening letter sent to him&quot; *</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau defies order to give up office&quot; *</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau rejects offers of funds&quot; *</td>
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<td>&quot;Battle site over unions returns to Washington&quot; -RM</td>
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<td>&quot;Kupau: Calls Mungovan a liar; says union not to blame&quot; *</td>
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<td>Kupau won’t quit; union leadership system criticized&quot; *</td>
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Media Handling of Labor Issues
Possible Guidelines Proposed by
The Hawaii Association of Labor Editors

The following Guidelines were drafted by Mel Chang, Vice-President of the Hawaii Association of Labor Editors, and were presented for discussion to the Honolulu Media Council on September 19, 1989.

1. Remain Neutral - There are many ways that the media presently sides with business in reporting labor issues.

   a) During negotiations, union "proposals" are called "demands" while management "demands" are called "proposals." Both should be called proposals, and equal time should be allotted to coverage of both.

   b) Strike coverage is often biased towards management. The following cliches are misleading and should be avoided:

      1) Stories that focus on the inconvenience of strikes to customers or that exaggerate the wages of union workers by citing the highest possible position on a pay scale no matter how unrepresentative such a rate may be.

      2) Giving prominence to the employer's ability to operate during a strike, glorifying strike-breakers and "scabs," and/or dismissing the effectiveness or significance of a well-managed and widely supported union picket.

      3) Interviewing only the official, professional representatives of management while seeking out "rank and file" workers or dissidents instead of official union spokespersons.

      4) Featuring strike news more prominently than news of successfully negotiated settlements.

   c) Labor news reports should be placed in the economic or business sections, not next to crime beat, obituaries, court reporting, etc.
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2. Refer to labor leaders by their proper titles.
   a) Do not use terms such as labor "boss" which connote a dictatorial, rather than a democratic structure. In most cases, the person quoted is more accurately the spokesperson and is carrying out the instructions of the rank and file or democratically arrived at union policies. He or she should properly be referred to by title, as "spokesperson" or speaking on behalf, etc.
   
b) Do not cite the age of labor leaders when it is not the practice to cite the age of business, government, military or other leaders.

3. Instances of disunity within the labor movement should not be played up, while news of labor unity in such issues as support for the United Way, legislative efforts to increase the minimum wage are commonly ignored.
   a) It is improper that ordinary competition among unions in organizing campaigns is exaggerated and condemned as a "feud" "battle" or "war," while similar competition among business is seen as wholesome and natural.

4. Do not perpetuate popular misconceptions.
   a) Concerning violence and strikes: scouring the national services to report any out of state strikes that describe incidents of violence, when they have little or no local connection or interest, improperly distorts public opinion.
   
b) Concerning Criminal elements and labor: Reporting that insinuates that labor leaders are more corrupt on average than business, political, or even religious leaders is biased and should be reported in proper context.
   
c) Concerning the impression that unions are powerful: The terms "Big Labor" and "powerful union" are misnomers. In view of the often unreported low union membership of the American workforce compared to other countries, the power of big business is much more formidable than big labor ever was.

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d) Though the National Labor Relations Act makes it a national policy to recognize the right of workers to bargain collectively, labor unions trying to organize workers are made to appear subversive while national and local anti-union campaigns are lauded.

e) There is a fondness for portraying unions as undemocratic or financially irresponsible. Yet unions are far more regulated than business --requiring financial disclosures, reports and audits of union budgets, elections, contracts and membership services.

5. Give coverage to positive stories about labor.

a) Community service projects performed by unions do not get attention. Headline credit should acknowledge the union that sponsored the service instead of the individual workers or their general profession or employers.

b) Unions should not suffer misrepresentation or media inattention because they do not have professionally trained public relations staff. It should be the job of the press to guard against such professional manipulation and report the news fairly.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books:


Periodicals:

"Accentuating the positive about your union membership."


Berkman, Dave. "You Can Fool 48% of the People All the Time ..." *Channels* 4.2 (May/June 1984): 68.


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