

The Fighting Machinists:

A Century of Struggle



by Robert G. Rodden



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"Without machinists there could be no machines; they make the die and the basic tools from which the machines are made. From the initial blueprint the machinist fashions the original tool-the first step in the process. His is the essential skill at the core. He holds the key that unlocks the mystery of the mechanical age. He makes the miracle."

Tom Tippet
IAM Director of Education
1947-1956

God watches over Drunks, Old Ladies, Little Children
and The International Association of Machinists
(Old Machinists saying)

... And if he won't fight he
ain't a Machinist.
(Printable part of another, even older Machinists saying)

Dedication

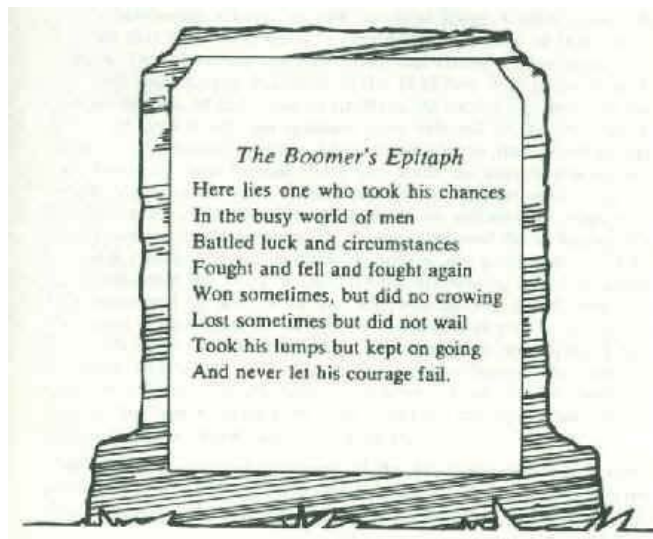
The history of the Machinists Union is dedicated to a unique brotherhood of roving machinists who were known as boomers.

They knew each other by such names as Dutchy Bigelow, Milwaukee Bill, Fireball McNamara and Red Clifford . . . Texas Frank, Black Jack Roberts, Windy Lane and Silverheel Smith...

Crusty Paulson, Happy Anderson, Big Nose Brennan and Steampipe McDermott . . . Smoky Davis, Silk Hat John Kelly, Yankee Tim Sullivan and Hard Luck Bob Carson . . . Gabby Cook, Shanty Frank Shannon, Pittsburgh Murphy and Highball Mooney . . . Kid Richardson, Deacon Hague, Pay Day Conners and Scarface Charlie.

It is dedicated to these and all the other unknown, unsung, and unremembered boomer machinists who fought, cussed, drank, rode the rails . . . and built a union.

But most of all it is dedicated to Pete Conlon...the greatest boomer of them all.



Author's Foreword And Acknowledgements

From the time of its founding in 1888 to the present, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) has had eleven International presidents. For almost three decades I was privileged to work as a special assistant to four of them. When my first boss, Al Hayes, finished his apprenticeship and joined the IAM in 1918 many of the early founders were still active. From Hayes and other old-timers, many of whom are now gone, I first heard the stories and legends that fired my interest in the history of the Machinists Union,

In college and graduate school I took a number of courses in U.S. labor history. But I did not appreciate how much the IAM had contributed to the progress of American labor until I met and worked and became friends with Howard Tausch, Rudy Faupal, Bill Dameron, Charlie West and the many other fine old representatives who were stationed at Grand Lodge when I first began to work there.

As one of the oldest unions in the United States and Canada, the Machinists have a long and proud history. And yet when I went to the union's leadership schools to talk to local lodge leaders about the struggles that built their union, I generally met a kind of institutional amnesia. Even business representatives and Grand Lodge representatives who were deeply dedicated to the IAM had little concept of the colorful richness of their union's tradition. At local lodge meetings and Grand Lodge Conventions speakers often referred to the IAM as the "Fighting Machinists" but few knew the origins of that proud expression, partly this was because those who made the union's history were usually too busy to write it. Written accounts of the union's history were not only scarce, but tended to be either self-serving propaganda or dry-as-dust academic treatises. Feeling the need for a history that steered a course somewhere between puffery and ponderousness I began to set down this story of The Fighting Machinists. Although admittedly motivated by admiration and affection for the people who built this union, I have tried to maintain a reasonable degree of objectivity. Since this history of the Machinists was written for machinists I have dispensed with source footnotes and other impedimenta that normally serve as evidence of scholarship. However, I set out to create an account that was accurate even when it was not flattering. I am satisfied that to the best of my ability I have done so.

My sources consisted primarily of the Machinist Monthly *Journal*, published from 1889 to 1956. Proceedings of Grand Lodge Conventions, Executive Council minutes and the Machinists newspaper. But I am also indebted to many people who supplemented these sources from their own experiences or memory either orally or in unpublished written accounts. Among those I especially wish to thank are:

Alice Chase, an employee at Grand Lodge from 1915 to 1965, who shared her personal impressions of the generation of leaders that included William H Johnston, Emmet Davison, Arthur Wharton and Pete Conlon.

George Pearlman, now deceased, a rank-and-file IAM member spent his retirement digging into the union's earliest days and uncovered persuasive evidence that the true founder of Labor Day was a machinist mate Matt Maguire.

George Watkins, retired GVP, whose phenomenal memory of experience as a delegate to the 1948 grand Lodge convention contributed to the reconstruction of the off the record debates that eliminated the color bar in the ritual.

Frank Heisler, retired airline coordinator, who helped to fill in the story of the early organizing days in the airline industry.

Tom Tippet, the IAM's first education director, whose unpublished history of District Lodge 751, written in retirement, was essential in discussing significant events involving members employed by Boeing in Seattle.

Hal Shean, retired GLR, and Neil Vandercook, editor of District Lodge 727's American Aeronaut, for details on the early years at Lockheed in Burbank.

Harold Shaw, retired district 54 business rep, for reminiscence and company brochures relating to the so-called workers' paradise at the Jack and Heintz company in Cleveland during World War II.

Bob Brown, GLR, Great Lakes territory, who contributed to a number of sections including the Exodus from the UV, the tragedy that led to Indiana's compulsory open shop law and the successful campaign that culminated in its repeal.

Joe Cott, retired district 54 business rep, for help in narrating the IAM's role in defeating a right to work for less referendum in Ohio in 1958.

Paul Brunsky, president of the AFL-CIO's metal trades Department, for his help recreating certain dramatic events in Chicago in the 1950's.

Frank Waldner, administrative assistant to the transportation GVP and George Robinson. Director of the IAM's OSHA and community services Department, for clarifying underlying issues in the great airline strike 1966.

Jean Glover, GST, and Jerry Law Rawlings, machinist associate editor, who is on the spot participation contributed to the account of events at McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis in 1969.

Gordon Cole, editor of the Machinists from 1947 to 1977, who helped enormously throughout the work by responding willingly and frequently to questions about the many personalities and events with which he was associated.

Oscar Jager, veteran trade unionist, writer, editor and consultant (now retired) whose editing undoubtedly made the manuscript more readable.

Janice DiPasquale, grand Lodge librarian, repeatedly and cheerfully accepted the challenge of tracking down needed materials all over Washington and who helped in so many other ways from start to finish.

Judith Rodden Young, my daughter, the high school English teacher, who got more than she bargained for when she volunteered to check and correct the mistakes in grammar and punctuation.

And finally, Barbara Oster, my secretary, who not only typed and then patiently retyped the manuscript through a number of revisions and editing, but said it would have gone a lot faster if she had not found it so interesting to read.

Robert G Rodden

Abbreviations

ACLU American Civil Liberties Union

AEU-Amalgamated Engineering Union (British)

ALMA-Air Line Mechanics Association

ALPA-Air Line Pilots Association

AFL- American Federation of Labor

AFL-CIO-American Federation of Labor ----Congress of Industrial Organizations

ARU-American Railway Union

ASA- Amalgamated Society of Engineers (British)

BR-Business representative

CCC-Civilian Conservation Corps

CCF- Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (Canadian)

CIO- Congress of Industrial Organizations

CP- Communist Party (USA)

CWA- Communications Workers

DBR-Directing business representative

DL-District Lodge

FDR-Franklin D. Roosevelt

GEB- General Executive Board

GLR- Grand Lodge representative

GST-General Secretary-Treasurer

GVP- General Vice President

IAM-International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

IBEW-International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

IBT- International Brotherhood of Teamsters

IMF-International Metalworkers Federation

MU -International Machinists Union

IP- International President

ITF- International Transport Workers Federation

IUE-International Union of Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers

IWW-Industrial Workers of the World

LBJ- Lyndon B, Johnson

LL-Local Lodge

MNPL-Machinists Non-Partisan Political League

NAM-National Association of Manufacturers

NCF-National Civic Federation

NCSC-National Council of Senior Citizens

NDP-New Democratic Party (Canadian)

NLRA-National Labor Relations Act

NLRB-National Labor Relations Board

NMTA-National Metal Trades Association

NRA-National Industrial Recovery Act

NRTW-National Right-To-Work Committee

OSHA- Occupational Safety & Health Act

PWA- Public Works Administration

RLA- Railway Labor Act

UAW- United Auto Workers

UE- Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America

WFTU-World Federation of Trade Unions

WLB-War Labor Board

WPA- Works Progress Administration

Introduction Prelude To A Union

The Times . . .

They were hard years. Times had never been easy for working men and women in the 19th Century. But the decades that followed the Civil War were especially brutal. These were years of massive unemployment, widespread poverty and a level of human suffering hard to imagine today. During one typical winter of the 1870's, Harper's Weekly reported that 900 people starved to death in New York. Three thousand babies were abandoned on doorsteps and 11,000 children were homeless. In winter and summer alike, thousands huddled for sleep in hallways and doorways. It was an era of cruel contrasts. On one hand, teeming masses of working families were crammed into tenements under the most primitive conditions of safety and health. On the other a new aristocracy of money--with names like Vanderbilt, Rockefeller, Mellon, Morgan, Carnegie, Astor, and Belmont--lived in mansions that stood as monuments to wealth extracted from the sweat of human labor. In 1883, when the average working family earned less than \$400 a year, Mrs. Vanderbilt gave a fancy ball on which she spent \$250,000 in a single night.

This was a time of violence, of desperate workers rebelling in desperate ways against exploitation by ruthless employers. . . .

In 1877 a nationwide uprising of railroad workers was touched off by a 10% wage cut that dropped worker income to \$5 a week for a fifteen-hour day. . . .

In Pittsburgh, militias sent in to protect railroad property were chased in a roundhouse. They escaped by shooting their way through a crowd of men, women, and children. Twenty people were killed and many more seriously wounded. . . . According to a report by the Pennsylvania Riot Commission, when someone tried to prevent the burning of a grain elevator, protesting it was not railroad property, a machinist yelled, "It don't make a damn bit of difference. It's a monopoly and we're tired of it."

In Chicago workers and their families battled police and militia at the Halsted Street viaduct on two successive nights. Virtually all railroading and manufacturing in the city came to a halt In Baltimore crowds took to the streets to prevent the movement of troops sent to protect the property of the B&O. In city after city officials trying to disperse crowds of workers were jeered and ridiculed. . . .

The insurrection spread like a raging fire from city to city, from Baltimore to Altoona, Scranton, Buffalo, Toledo, Louisville, Chicago and St. Louis. The revolt rolled westward until it engulfed nearly every railroad in the nation. . . .

This spontaneous worker rebellion--which newspapers referred to for many years as "The Great Upheaval"--badly frightened employers. Eventually federal troops restored order...But by the time the men went back to work a new spirit of labor solidarity had been forged on the railroads. From that time on the men who worked in the engine cabs and roundhouses began to force railroad managements to recognize their right to bargain collectively.

... And the Man



Thomas W. Talbot
1888-1890

During these years of violence and upheaval a young machinist, Thomas Wilson Talbot, was struggling to feed and clothe his growing family. Born on a farm in Chesterfield County, South Carolina on April 27, 1849, Talbot was left fatherless at six months and was working in a shoe factory to support his invalid mother by the time he was ten years old. When young Tom reached the age of sixteen, a few weeks after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, he entered an apprenticeship in the machine shop of the North Carolina Railroad in Florence, South Carolina. Many years later he said he chose this trade, "To make an honorable mechanic of myself, to be a worthy member of society and to ... give me a good start in life,"

In the dawning of the machine age, journeymen in metalworking were highly respected and well paid. Machinists were among the most independent of the skilled craftsmen. They were trained in the shaping of cold, unformed metal to the precise specifications of the most intricate blueprint.

When Talbot entered his apprenticeship, journeymen machinists earned as much as \$3.50 and \$4.00 a day, a princely income for a working family. Upon completing his apprenticeship, the Twenty-year-old Talbot moved from Florence to Sumpter where he established his own machine shop. There he met and married Miss Keitt Brooks Hauser. In the early years of their marriage much of the South lay devastated in the wake of the Civil War. The poverty of the region was aggravated by the general depression that hit the entire country in the 1870's. When Talbot's shop failed, in 1881, he took his family back to Florence and went to work in the machine shop of the Wilmington, Columbia and Augusta Railroad.

As a result of hard times, jobless workers appeared at the gates each morning, desperate for work and ready to undercut wages. Talbot sought to protect working conditions in the shop by organizing his fellow machinists. He was able to get at least nine of his shop mates interested, but little seems to have come of this early stab at organizing. Talbot later reported, somewhat cryptically, "The members soon scattered and the organization was dissolved." Talbot himself was discharged for "union activities." He spent the next several years moving about, plying his trade in various cities and towns throughout Georgia and the Carolinas.

According to family stories Talbot was a joiner. Some ninety years later his granddaughter wrote "Grandpa loved fraternal orders. He was a member of the Knights of Pythias, the Knights of Honor and several smaller organizations." In the 19th Century fraternal orders such as these served as benevolent and burying societies-helping in times of sickness and insuring workers against ending up in potter's field.

By 1887 Talbot drifted into Atlanta where he went to work as a machinist for the Eastern Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia Railroad. Under the impact of hard times journeymen machinists' wages had declined to about half as much as when he entered the trade some twenty years earlier. Undiscouraged by his earlier organizing failure in Florence, Talbot remained convinced that machinists needed an order of their own. Years later an old IAM member who worked with him recalled that Talbot had personal as well as philosophic reasons for wanting to establish an order of machinists. This old timer claimed Talbot once told him that he decided machinists needed an organization to upgrade the trade when he realized that after twenty years as a highly skilled journeyman he couldn't afford to send his sons to high school.

As a skilled craftsman Talbot certainly felt entitled to his fair share worldly goods, but his later writings and statements indicate that he was even more bothered by the lack of status and respect accorded his trade.

As a young lad working in a shoe factory Talbot saw that workers without special skills were most vulnerable to exploitation. That's why he had gone through the four years of apprentice training needed to become skilled in the art of metal-working. But even while he was learning his craft, and increasingly during the years after he began practicing his trade, specialization was eroding the value of his skills. In 1883, a machinist named John Morrison, testifying before a Senate Committee investigating conditions of labor, said, "you frequently find the trade so subdivided that a man is not considered a machinist at all ... One man may make just a particular part of a machine and may not know anything whatever about another part of the same machine." Thus when Talbot arrived in Atlanta in 1887, conditions were ripe for the formation of an organization that was primarily dedicated to advancing the status and working conditions of journeymen machinists.

Talbot was not the first to try to raise the dignity of trade through organization. As early as 1859 delegates representing local unions in a number of major cities met in Philadelphia to form a National Union of Machinists and Blacksmith. This organization was soon split by the War Between the States. After the war, it recovered somewhat, reaching a peak 18,000 members in the early 1870's, but was wiped out by the great business panic (i.e. depression) of 1873. Most of the members went into the Knights of Labor. According to one report Talbot belonged to the Knights in his younger years and helped to organize some of its Southern assemblies. There can be little doubt that machinists were active and influential in the affairs of this early experiment in social activism. Not only was the Grand Master Workman, Terence Powderly, a machinist by trade but, as he told the IAM's 1916 Grand Lodge Convention many years later, machinists drafted a large portion of the Knights' platform, including the plank that called for "Equal pay for equal work for both sexes."

Throughout the 1870's and early 1880's the Knights prospered and grew in numbers and power. But the order's basic flaw was that it was more of a fraternal society than a union. It accepted almost anyone into membership except certain defined exclusions such as lawyers and saloon keepers. Moreover, it was less interested in negotiating better wages and working conditions than reforming society. Although some local assemblies conducted strikes the membership as a whole was too broad and diffuses to unite in a spirit of trade union solidarity in support of the goals of ordinary workers. After reaching a peak of almost 800,000 in the early 1880's the Knights of Labor began to decline rapidly after Wall Street financiers decided in 1886, that the time had come to put workers back in their place. By this time the fears of class warfare generated by "The Great Upheaval" of 1877 had receded. The order's downfall started with a strike against railroads controlled by a robber baron named Jay Gould. Boasting that he could "Always hire one half of the working class to kill the other half," Gould routed the Knights and broke the strike. The end was hastened by a tragedy that took place during a labor rally at Haymarket Square in Chicago in 1886. As the crowds were dispersing someone threw a bomb that killed seven policemen. To this day no one knows who was responsible. But newspapers from coast to coast pinned the blame on the Knights of Labor. Lacking a base of solid trade union support, the Knights quickly faded. Within a few years the vacuum left by the demise of the Knights of Labor was filled by the more practical and lasting craft unionism of the American Federation of Labor. Talbot's early connection with the Knights of Labor seems to be verified by the fact that he and the other founders transferred much of the Knights ritual directly to their new order.

In The Beginning 1888 - 1900

When the Knights started to fall apart, following the Haymarket affair, Talbot saw an opportunity to create an order exclusively for machinists. Many, if not most, of his shop mates had undoubtedly belonged to the Knights of Labor at one time or another during its heyday. . . .

Carefully, slowly, he felt out others in the machine shop. He went visiting at night, talking to groups of two or three gathered at the homes of fellow workers. Undoubtedly, word was passed back and forth over lunch boxes and was whispered around lathes and milling machines. As a result of such ground-work, Talbot and eighteen other machinists met secretly on the evening of May 5, 1888. They came singly or by two's or three's to an engine pit where they were sheltered by surrounding locomotives from snooping stooges or spies. . . .

No minutes were kept, no written records survive. But it is reasonable to believe that none imagined that from this gathering would come one of America's great trade unions, the only international directly rooted in the struggle of Southern labor.

From the beginning the others acknowledged Talbot's leadership and he accepted the task of building something out of nothing. . . . Circumstances surrounding his premature death suggest he may have had a short fuse. But during the few short years he led his union he provided the rock-like qualities needed for a firm foundation.



W. L. Dawley
1888-1895

Originally these nineteen machinists called their organization the Order of United Machinists and Mechanical Engineers of America. They adopted and adapted the rather grandiose terminology that had been used by the Knights of Labor. Tom Talbot became Grand Master Machinist and William L. Dawley, another of the original nineteen, became Grand Secretary. This was the beginning of what has come to be one of the largest and most influential organizations of workers on the North American Continent. Tom Talbot was the first of a chain of continuous leadership now vested in the International President of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

Following the first meeting on the evening of May 5, Talbot and the others spent much of the next two weeks getting their new "order" properly launched. They drafted an oath or "obligation" of membership which each of the nineteen founding members took. They formed Local Lodge 1 of Atlanta and assessed themselves \$1.50 each-then almost a day's wage-to help pay for printing constitutions, rituals, membership applications, dues cards and charters. Word of this new order quickly spread to nearby shops. A second meeting was scheduled for the evening of July 18 in DeGives Opera House in Atlanta. When it convened a number of machinists from out of town showed up. Encouraged by this evidence of wider interest, the member decided to send an organizer out to spread the word in other

cities and towns. Unfortunately, he returned several weeks later empty-handed except for a stack of unpaid bills.

Lacking the resources needed to keep an organizer on the road Talbot sought other ways to recruit new members. He and Dawley drafted and printed a circular with a bold, black head, "Order of United Machinists and Mechanical Engineers of America." In a densely-packed, closely-printed tract, Talbot explained why the machinists of Atlanta had organized and why machinists in other places should join them.

Talbot noted that while the large majority of machinists were "honorable, industrious and sober," their reputations were being damaged by a minority who were quite the reverse. And since the "honorable, industrious and sober" majority were, "healthy and long-lived people", they were paying more than their share for insurance provided by 'beneficial societies.' Talbot also discussed such problems as unemployment, falling wages and the general dearth of information about conditions in the trade. He made a special point of the fact that every-one else was organized "from the man who shovels sand upon the rail road track to the railroad president, from the street sweeper the manufacturer, and even to the bloated bond holder."

Why, he asked, are machinists the "only branch of trade" not organized? His answer was that it was not due to lack of intelligence or need, but lack of "push and energy." He asked his readers to "reflect on these matters and consider where we will be ten years from today if we do not awake to our condition and danger."

After hailing the progress already made by the new order in Atlanta, Talbot stressed that his purpose was not to "create disorder and strikes, or to antagonize capital and enterprise" but to help members find jobs and raise the dignity of the craft. Under a subheading titled "Description of the Order" Talbot set down qualifications for applicants - a member was to be white and a free male citizen "of some civilized country," twenty –one years old and "a practical machinist capable of commanding the average rate of wages in some well regulated machine shop and must be working at his trade at the time of his election,"

Prospective members were further informed that dues would be 50¢ a month but after six months they would be eligible for a weekly sickness or disability benefit of \$5.00. The order would help machinists find employment and protect employers against those unqualified to work at the trade. It planned to create optional life insurance for members and would publish a monthly *Journal* to keep members informed of job opportunities, statistics and other matters of special interest to machinists.

Talbot closed, by noting that lodges in four states had already joined forces with the founding group in Atlanta, He urged interested individuals to enter this new order by sending the names of at least eight machinists, together with \$7.00 to pay for rituals, constitutions and other materials leading to a charter.

Talbot's flyer was long, wordy, and not very eye-catching. What he lacked in polish and grammar, he more than made up in conviction. This was a time when ordinary people had few

diversions, giving them time to read materials that would be considered too long, too dull and too heavy today.

All through that fall and winter of 1888 machinists working in railroad roundhouses and job shops read, pondered over, and discussed the order that a couple of machinists named Talbot and Dawley had written about from Atlanta. Obviously a lot of them liked the idea. Some may have responded to the notion that machinists needed an organization primarily concerned with their own needs. Others may have belonged to the fast disintegrating Knights of Labor and were looking for a place to jump.

Whatever the reason, responses addressed to T. W. Talbot began trickle into 78 McDaniel Street in Atlanta. By February 1889, when Talbot was ready to publish the first little four-page issue of the *Machinists Monthly Journal*, he included a roster of no less than is two lodges in twelve states. Just three months later, when the first Grand Lodge Convention met in Atlanta in May, 1889 another twelve had been added. Most were clustered in Southern states. But this union of machinists was already spreading across the land. A group picture taken outside the Georgia State House, where the first Grand Lodge Convention met, shows thirty-seven stiffly dignified delegates representing members of sixteen lodges in eleven states. Though most were from nearby states, some had come from as far as Texas and Kansas. In just twelve months this new order of machinists had grown from a little band of nineteen men meeting secretly in an Atlanta engine pit to a growing array of more than 1,500 journeymen. Machinist's lodges ranged from Harrisburg in the North to Galveston in the South, from Norfolk on the East Coast to Pueblo in the West.



At the first Convention the delegates adopted a new name--the National Association of Machinists. They designated Atlanta as Grand Lodge headquarters, drafted a constitution and platform which, among other things, advocated that grievances be settled by arbitration rather than strikes, established a \$10.00 chartering fee, and approved the emblem which is still recognizable in IAM publications, shop cards, and union labels today.*

**The design for the Machinists emblem was submitted by delegate Frank French. Representing Lodge 12 in Houston, It was chosen over several others submitted. The figures on the design were a flywheel, friction joint caliper and machinist square with the initials of the organization between the spokes of the flywheel. According to Brother French in a letter to the Journal dated September 7, 1890, "The flywheel is significant because it generates a lot of power once it gets started." The connection with the trade is clear since most shops in these days were powered by stationary steam engines with large flywheels, Brother French explained that the calipers signify "that we extend an imitation to all white male persons [sic] of civilized countries who are practical machinists. The square signifies that we are square and honest,"*

They also set a dollar a year subscription fee for the *Machinists Monthly Journal* and directed that it be expanded to no less than sixteen pages. In these earliest years, when a dollar equaled three or four hours of skilled labor, many members could not afford even this small amount. Thus some lodges

authorized subscriptions for certain officers, usually including the financial secretary. They, in turn, would pass their copies on to other officers and interested members. Later, as the organization grew, the *Journal* was sent to the lodges in bundles, to be picked up by members individually. Unfortunately, many simply gathered dust in the lodge hall.



The early Machinists Monthly *Journals* were largely written by the members themselves. The *Journal* carried lodge news, notices and other information of special interest to the trade sent in by recording secretaries. It was wide open to members' ideas, letters, philosophy, jokes, opinions, verse, death notices, and such terse tips as "Lodge 223 warns the Order against John E.

Hall. He is a deadbeat." Or "Clifton Sutton, Lodge 281, left Shreveport after beating everyone in sight, Look out for him, do not accept any dues on his card"

Following the first convention in 1889 Talbot's little organization began to grow even more rapidly, it provided a needed rallying place for skilled machinists increasingly concerned about specialization, piecework, and dilution of their craft.

The Boomers

Most of the Machinists Union's organizing, then and for many years to come, was done by a rare breed of men know as boomers. Like most worthwhile movements, the IAM was built on the faith, courage and determination of men (and later women as well) who refused to give in to hardship and defeat. These journeymen were known as boomers because they followed the railroads to towns that were booming.

The boomers were part hobo, part skilled craftsmen. Many years later one of the original boomers, Pete Conlon, recalled that in expanding west the railroads desperately needed good mechanics. In Conlon's words, the boomers were machinists with a love of adventure and sightseeing who "could make good anywhere." They were fiercely independent. If they didn't like a job they would tell the boss to shove it and move on. . . . Conlon colorfully described what a boomer coming to a new area could expect:

When a boomer hit town and got a job it was up to someone of the fraternity to square him for a boarding house and at a store to get overalls, soap, tobacco and other necessities. This was always done without question and the boomer generally regarded these obligations as sacred no matter what else the might be guilty of.

As noted, railroads only paid once a month. But, said Conlon:

Thirty days between drinks was a long time for a boomer to go and around the middle of the month a solemn conference would be held as to who would quit and draw his time in order to show the rest of the gang a good time for a night at least. The next morning the boomer would set out for a new town with whatever change he had left. As a general rule, a paid up Machinists' Union card was good for a ride either in the caboose or engine cab. The boomers had a code of their own. They could tell where every member . . . was working and . . . the paydays of every railroad in the United States.

Often boomers had to communicate by a system of secret passwords or signals known only to other machinists. Union organizers not only risked firing and blacklisting but beatings and jail. The old-time boomers accepted these risks. Little by little they spread the word, signing up more machinists, chartering more lodges.

One of Conlon's partners in those early days, Jim Reynolds, later became a state legislator and county commissioner of Cuyahoga County, Ohio. He had joined the first lodge chartered in Cleveland in January 1890 and by the 1940's had become one of the IAM's oldest living continuous dues paying members. In a memoir of those first years he recalled:

In early days if you became active in the Machinists Union you became a wanderer on the face of the earth . . . if you landed in a strange town [and could show your membership card] you could borrow \$5.00 from the local lodge, enough to keep you going for quite a while in those days.

Membership in the union meant a great deal to us. Our meetings were conducted in a dignified manner. We had almost religious feeling toward the ritual of initiation. . . . Every man's character was carefully studied before he was admitted. We investigated his ability as a craftsman, also. We wanted to furnish employers with high-class, all-around machinists.

By 1910 the boomers had pretty much passed from the scene. The rising number of apprentices in the trade was more than enough to meet the demand for machinists. Moreover, the railroads were no longer expanding in all directions. But, as Peter Conlon wrote in 1927, in a touching tribute to the many boomers he had known -- men with names like "Milwaukee Bill," Fireball McNamara, "Texas Frank," "big Nose Brennan," Scarface Charlie, and so many others,

The old-time boomers deserve a lot of credit from members of the International Association of Machinists. It was their independence that caused railroad officers to respect machinists. They gave the home guard better conditions than he could obtain for himself because they were ready to go to

the front on a grievance committee or wage committee and take the consequences without involving anyone else in trouble.

By the time the second Grand Lodge Convention met in Louisville in May 1890, the roster listed eighty lodges in twenty-five states and the Wyoming territory. Among other actions the Louisville Convention approved a per capita tax of 25¢ per member per month. The delegates also adopted a secret code, known as the Russian Prison Knock Cipher, to be distributed to the membership.

The code's purpose was to help machinists communicate with one another when under cover or in jail; the need for traveling passwords, cipher codes and other forms of secrecy was due neither to paranoia nor the kind of reverence for mysteries and mumbo jumbo so dearly loved by the many secret fraternal orders of that time. For many years officers and representatives had no way of quickly communicating from one locality to another except by telegram. In many places the only telegraph office in town was in the railroad depot.. This meant that the primary employers of IAM members, the railroads, could literally look over the shoulder of operators sending or receiving union messages.

To safe guard against such eavesdropping the IAM's leaders very early created a cipher code of words and phrases that could be used to conduct union business by wire. By referring to this code a local business representative could wire a wide range of coded messages to the territorial GVP. If he sent the one word "astute," for example, it meant "I have met officers of the company; they refuse to settle." The GVP could respond with a wire that said "astringent," meaning "Do you think a settlement can be reached if I come or send a GLR?" Or he could answer with the word "Atlantic" which meant "Call all machinists out,"

The official code contained more than 1,400 secret ciphers in all. They covered almost every foreseeable situation that could come up in the conduct of union business. At least to the eve of the First World War, and possibly even later, cards carrying secret traveling passwords were reissued to officers and representatives every six months.

The Murder of Talbot

Delegates to the second Grand Lodge Convention in Louisville re-elected Talbot as Grand Master Machinist unanimously and without opposition. Just a few months later, however, he suddenly resigned for what he termed "matters of a personal nature." No other clue exists to explain why he walked away so abruptly from the organization he had initiated. Within a year he left Atlanta and returned his family to his former home in Florence. By this time he was known as a "labor agitator." To support his wife and children he set up a machine shop business of his own, apparently he was prospering when, in March 1892, he was shot to death in a street scuffle with two brothers named Will and Charles Barrenger over an incident involving the good name of his daughter. He was just forty-three years old; the youngest of his seven surviving children was one-and-a-half years old.

In accounts of the slaying, newspapers described both Talbot and the Barrengers as prominent citizens. Though the story was widely reported throughout the state, versions of the killing differ. A front page story in the Charleston News and Courier on March 8, 1892 said, "The good name of as modest and beautiful girl... had been profaned and the irate father held Charles Barrenger responsible."

Talbot had cowhided Charles the previous Saturday evening in full view of "a large number of citizens," A few days later Talbot and a friend were on their way to the freight depot when Charles and his brother William came after them. Both Talbot and the Barrengers were armed.

It is at this point that various accounts become somewhat confused and contradictory. After some argument, described by one newspaper as "high words". William Barrenger struck Talbot in the face. Charles, who was standing nearby, and Talbot both drew their pistols. One witnesses claim Talbot shot first. Others said they both shot simultaneously. In any event Will was hit. He staggered but did not fall. Talbot apparently tried to disengage by going into a nearby store. Will pursued him and several more shots were fired. Neither the witnesses nor the coroner's jury were able to definitely determine the sequence of shots that left Talbot with a punctured left lung. He died while his friends were trying to carry him home. According to one newspaper, business was almost suspended in Florence that day and "Machinists at the railroad shop struck work in respect to their dead comrade." It was also reported that feelings ran so high the Florence Rifles were called out to guard the jail in which the Barrenger brothers were lodged.

After two lengthy trials both Charles and Will were acquitted. They were undoubtedly well connected, being identified in the press as the sons of a wealthy South Carolina family, however, the jury was probably persuaded by the testimony of a witness who swore that Talbot fired first and whose statement was verified by "the character of the wound and the position of the parties at the time of the first fire."

Talbot was laid to rest in a fraternal cemetery in Florence. Newspaper accounts clearly identified him as the "Father of the International Order of Machinists and at one time the National President." But as Pete Conlon noted, in a resolution submitted to the 1897 Grand Lodge Convention in Kansas City, Talbot's grave originally lay "unmarked and unknown to strangers." In compliance with Conlon's resolution, the convention voted funds for a "handsome monument built of Georgia and Vermont marble." Later Talbot's family left Florence, and the fraternal burial ground was abandoned. In 1928 the Grand Lodge arranged to move Talbot's remains along with the monument to another cemetery in Florence, New Mount Hope.

On May 5, 1948, the IAM celebrated the 60th Anniversary of its founding by dedicating a memorial to Talbot which stands in Grant Park in Atlanta. The inscription reads:

Erected by the membership of the International Association of Machinists,
May 5, 1948 to the memory of its founder Thomas Wilson Talbot 1849-1892,
Through whose efforts came light out of darkness and hope out of despair and
that generations to come might exhort his greatness, this monument is
dedicated to free men everywhere who solemnly toil for a livelihood.

Several months after news of Talbot's murder had spread throughout the Machinists Union; The Executive Council issued a circular letter informing all lodges that Talbot's widow and children were seriously "in want" As a result a trust fund was collected for the Talbot family. The January 1893 *Journal* included a letter in which Mrs. Talbot wrote "With (the assistance received) we will be above want; without it we would have been in need"

New Leadership: Creamer and O'Day



J. J. Creamer
1890-1892

Talbot's successor, James J. Creamer of Richmond, Virginia was born in 1861. At seventeen he began his apprenticeship in the machine shop of the Richmond Locomotive Machine Works. A member of the Knights of Labor, he served as secretary of the Richmond Assembly. However, when he heard of Talbot's Order of Machinists and Mechanical Engineers, he became a charter member and helped to organize Local Lodge 10. He was a delegate to the first Grand Lodge Convention in Atlanta. According to contemporary reports he was an eloquent orator and a brilliant debater. He was selected to chair the first convention, and when the delegates elected Grand Lodge officers, he was chosen Grand Foreman. Creamer was only twenty-nine when he succeeded Talbot. He immediately moved the headquarters to Richmond. During his brief term the first Canadian local, Lodge 103, was chartered in Stratford, Ontario. Thus in July 1890 the Machinists became an "International" (although the name was not officially amended until the 1891 Grand Lodge Convention in Pittsburgh).

Creamer headed the IAM for only two years. The records do not reveal his reasons for stepping aside. He may have been seeking larger scope for his talents. At that time the IAM's future was still very much in doubt. The I.P.'s compensation was uncertain and slight. Speaking of this period almost a half century later, an officer recalled "We started out as fifty cents a month dues-paying organization; with twenty-five cents a month per capita tax and we had nothing but volunteer organizers. We paid our International President eighty-five dollars a month when we had it. Most of the time he was living from hand to mouth and being fed by the members along the line of the road where he was traveling." Creamer later served in the Virginia legislature where he helped to write many of the State's early labor laws. However he kept close ties with his union for the rest of his life, edited the *Journal* until 1895, was an official IAM delegate at numerous AFL Conventions and for many years served as chairman of the IAM's Law Committee. When he died in 1918 the *Journal* credited him with drafting much of the IAM's early constitution.

Cremer's decision may also be explained by the limitations then restricting the Grand Master Machinist. In the early years the power of the IAM's chief officers were more ceremonial than real. The Constitution vested executive power in a five member General Executive Board (GEB). . . .The GEB had final oversight over official circulars, strike sanctions, payment of death benefits, appeals, propositions, investments, audits and other union business. They also had power to remove any officer by majority vote for "incompetency or unfaithfulness." The International President and General Secretary-Treasurer were later made members of the GEB, but until it was abolished in the early 1920's General Vice Presidents were primarily organizers rather than administrators in their assigned territories.



John O'Day
1892-1893

When Cremer's successor, John O'Day of Indianapolis, took over as Grand master Machinist in 1892 business and industry were in a deep economic downslide. During the course of a strike against the Carnegie Steel Co. [Homestead, Pennsylvania] 300 armed professional strikebreakers, known as "Pinkertons" tried to outflank union picket lines by landing from barges on the river. The Pinkertons drew first blood, but were pinned down when the steamboat that had towed their barges fled. After hours of gunfire, with many killed and scores wounded on both sides, these private police ran up the white flag. The strike was broken when the governor sent in 8,000 militia at the company's request, ending unionism in the steel industry for decades to come.

In machine shops and on the railroads management also attempted to exploit bad times. IAM members increasingly were faced with demands for piecework. The result was an upsurge in strikes that soon drained the union's slender resources. At the time membership, which had grown rapidly the first three years, leveled off and even began to fall. Complicating O'Day's problems, the AFL chartered a rival organization, known as the International Machinists Union (IMU) the year before he took office. AFL President Sam Gompers adamantly opposed the IAM's lily-white membership policy. The rival organization, the IMU, admitted specialists and production workers as well as journeymen machinists. Perhaps because of this industrial orientation, it was openly Socialist, even Marxist, in its platform and philosophy. For a number of years it gave the IAM stiff competition, especially in such Northern cities as New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago.

Soon after taking office O'Day angered many members by calling off a four-month strike (and suspending strike benefits) on the Pennsylvania Panhandle Railroad. The General Executive Board, which originally agreed, quickly backed away when a backlash developed in the ranks. The Board issued a statement which shifted the blame to O'Day. In effect, they said the Grand Master Machinist may have been "too hasty." They recommended that "more time be taken before a fixed date be made to declare a strike off." Despite these troubles, O'Day succeeded in signing the first Machinist contract with a major railroad, the Sante Fe, and also approved the organizing of the first district lodge on the Union Pacific by Pete Conlon.

O'Day spent much of his short time as Grand Mater Machinist traveling from one crisis to another. It seemed that as soon as he got to one place to deal with a threatened strike or lockout, he'd get a telegram to come and put out a fire someplace else.

One stormy dispute involved a lodge in Indianapolis where members protested so-called "chunkers" roughing out machinist work. The boss told O'Day that if he could not run his business to suit himself, he would close it up. O'Day reported "I told the men they had better help him, which they did by every man walking out."

Another strike of some interest today was touched off when the commanding officer of the Army Arsenal in Troy, New York, a certain Major Bryant, ordered machinists to run two machines. When he tried to enforce this order by firing two IAM members, every machinist in the shop walked out. O'Day sent a representative who got the Army and the men together in a face-saving solution. When the Commandant agreed not to order men to run two machines, the men agreed to "obey orders." This was an early skirmish in a battle that continues to this day. Interestingly enough at the time no one seems to have even suggested that workers employed by the U.S. Government forfeited any right to strike.

O'Day tried to keep the IAM clear of involvement in the Homestead strike, explaining "We were not in a financial position to fight for the principles of our own order and could not engage in the battles of others." Apparently this did not help his popularity with hotheads in the heavily industrialized Pittsburgh area who were eager to demonstrate labor solidarity against Carnegie, Frick, and the other steel barons. The generally unfavorable membership reaction to O'Day's handling of the Pennsylvania Railroad and Homestead strikes may explain why he was not re-elected nor even re-nominated at the 1893 Grand Lode Convention in his home town of Indianapolis. The election was between James O'Connell of Oil City and James Barnes of Boston. Creamer was nominated but declined acceptance.

The abrupt and unexplained repudiation of O'Day may also have been triggered by the astounding news, in the middle of the Indianapolis Convention, that the Grand Treasurer, one J. J. Lamb, had secretly withdrawn the IAM's entire treasury, \$5,300, from the bank and taken off for parts unknown. Pete Conlon later wrote that because of the embezzlement, "the international officers had to borrow . . . from their friends to get back to headquarters."

The Era Of O'Connell



James O'Connell
1893-1911

Because of the embezzlement the new Grand Master Machinists, James O'Connell, had to start from scratch. Though membership growth was slowed by hard times, more than 350 lodges were now meeting regularly in forty-five states, five Canadian provinces, Mexico and the District of Columbia. Talbot, Creamer, and O'Day all helped to provide the IAM with a firm foundation although none stayed at the helm more than two years. It was now time for leadership that could provide

continuity. That is what the IAM got from James O'Connell.

For the next eighteen years, longer than any other International President before or since, O'Connell began to shape the IAM into the organization it is today. A goodly number of machinists attending the convention (Knights of Labor, 1886) met to talk about establishing a National Machinists District within the structure of the Knights. An effort to do so in New York failed because, in O'Connell's words, it was a "conglomerated mass" that extended beyond machinists to "all who were employed in the construction of machinery: including "helper boys" and "handymen."

By 1887 O'Connell was back in Oil City working for the Pennsylvania Railroad. In 1890, still convinced that machinists needed a union of their own, he left the Knights, organized a lodge of Machinists and affiliated with the IAM. A year later he was named a delegate to the 1891 Grand Lodge Convention in Pittsburgh where he was elected to the first General Executive Board.

As a member of the Executive Board O'Connell and Creamer became friends and allies. He usually stayed at Creamer's home when in Richmond on union business. When elected Grand Master Machinist he was thirty-five years old. In appearance O'Connell was slim, dapper and elegantly handsome. In manner, however, he seems to have been somewhat aloof and distant. An observer at the 1908 AFL convention described O'Connell as a "veritable iceberg," too cold blooded and deliberate to be a "true Irishman." But he also credited O'Connell with being sharp and shrewd in his dealings with employers and with "successfully managing the affairs of the International Association of Machinists, which has a record of being one the best fighting labor organizations in the country." Although not an orator in the florid style of the time, he could deliver an effective stump speech. In reporting remarks he once made in Boston, a local newspaper noted that, "Mr. O'Connell riveted the attention of his audience through the force and strength of his personality."

Debs and the American Railway Union

O'Connell barely assumed his new office when he was challenged by a new union, the American Railway Union (ARU), led by Eugene V. Debs, one time locomotive fireman, became the foremost Socialist of his day and remains a legendary folk hero to many working people. (He [Debs] was the Socialist Party's candidate for President five times, from 1900 to 1920. His platform called for public ownership of railroads, telegraphs, public utilities and mines. Eventually Debs came to believe that nothing less than public ownership of all means of production and distribution would end the industrial inequities and horrors he saw all around him.) The ARU sought to organize railroad workers into one big union without regard to craft or class. Debs believed that he could unite skilled and unskilled workers behind a more militant (and political) leadership than they could get from the more conservative, mostly AFL-affiliated, brotherhoods. The ARU attracted widespread sympathy and support from IAM members, especially those employed against the Great Northern Railroad, many members of the IAM, whose own strikes had failed during these depressed years, flocked to join the ARU.

O'Connell naturally resented and resisted the invasion of the IAM's membership. His opposition to Debs' brand of "industrial unionism" was philosophic as well as practical. Having seen the swift deterioration of the Knights of Labor he sincerely believed that unionism had to be based on craft, that the strength of worker organizations derived from the special skills, not the sheer numbers of the members.

When Debs led a strike against the Pullman Company in Chicago in May, 1894 many IAM members rallied in support of the walkout. The ARU seemed to offer working people a stronger response than craft unionism to the hated railroad bosses.

The Pullman strike remains one of the landmarks in American labor history. The workers in Pullman's factories had been squeezed into virtual economic peonage. Company rules required them to live in company houses and buy at company stores. Company police watched their every move. Their long-smoldering animosity exploded when George Pullman haughtily told them, "Workers have nothing to do with the amount of wages they receive." In the strike that followed Gompers and the AFL remained "neutral" but grass roots support sprung up spontaneously among railroad workers on more than twenty lines running out of Chicago. Within a month 125,000 workers, including thousands of IAM members, joined a boycott against trains hauling Pullman cars. One eminent labor historian, Selig Perlman, has called the Pullman strike, "The only attempt ever made in America of a revolutionary strike on the continental European model." According to a later report in the *Journal*, "Mobs destroyed Pullman cars, attacked strikebreakers, and flouted the blanket injunction issued by the federal government."

The end result was the same as the Homestead strike two years earlier. The superior economic power of the employer was further strengthened by the political force of the state. The strike was broken when President Grover Cleveland dispatched federal troops to keep the mail cars moving. Debs was sent to jail and the ARU was smashed. According to Pete Conlon, who later wrote a series of memoirs about the early days for the *Journal*, the Pullman strike not only destroyed the ARU, but "very nearly wrecked the IAM as well."

Although the total defeat and destruction of the industrially-organized ARU confirmed O'Connell's faith in craft unionism, many members became radicalized, especially in the West. Both in convention debates and in letters written to the *Journal*, members freely voiced support for Socialist political action and industrial unionism. Reflecting membership sentiment, the Grand Lodge Convention in 1893 called for public ownership of railroads and telegraph and telephone companies.

Opposition to industrial unionism became less rigid as new technology continued to narrow the gap between machinists and machine tenders. Increasingly, employers could substitute machine tenders—who had to learn little more than which button to push and which lever to pull—for journeymen who had invested years of rigorous apprenticeship in learning their trade.

Changing conditions helped to persuade many journey men that the IAM's stiff membership requirements would have to be relaxed. Though the skills of specialists and helpers might be limited, they were competing for machinist's jobs. Moreover, with the new technology, employers could break strikes by dividing the jobs of journeymen into simple operations performed by specialists. Gradually the barriers of exclusion gave way. The first to, in the IAM Constitution at least, was the color barrier.

Burying the Color Bar

From the moment he became International President, O'Connell wanted to affiliate with the American Federation of Labor (AFL). The head man of the AFL, Sam Gompers, was a thickset, strong-jawed former cigar maker whose philosophy of trade unionism O'Connell shared. In his youth Gompers was exposed to every idea for reforming society: socialism, anarchism, the single tax, cooperatives. The more he studied, the more he concentrated on trade union goals: higher wages, shorter hours, safer work places, better treatment—in short practical rather than ideological goals. He saw no shortcuts to Utopia. For this reason he strongly opposed efforts to involve the labor movement in politics. His political philosophy was summed up by the phrase—"Reward your friends, defeat your enemies". To Gompers unions had one major purpose—to bargain for better wages, hours and working conditions. Not only was this O'Connell's view of unionism but he and Gompers were close personal friends. All in all the IAM was far more palatable to the AFL's leadership than the openly socialist International Machinists Union which had been chartered a few years earlier.

Acceptance of O'Connell's application for AFL affiliation would have been automatic were it not for the color bar which went back to the IAM's Southern beginnings. One of Talbot's primary objectives in working to establish this new union had been to restore and enhance the image of machinists as "aristocrats of labor." From the first, membership was strictly limited to an exclusive fraternity of white male machinists. This meant no production workers, no specialists, no women, and no blacks. By today's standards, such bigotry is inexcusable. But it is not excusing Talbot and the others to point out that these were not learned or worldly men. They were limited to the time and place where they were born and bred. They were shaped by the views and convictions and accepted truths of their own narrow environment. They were part of a tradition which not only barred black Americans from most of the

rights of full and free citizenship for several generations yet to come, but did so with the full knowledge and approval of the Supreme Court of the United States.*

**In this connection it should be noted that bigotry has, by no means, been limited to Southern machinists in the 19th Century. As late as the Second World War, more than half a century later, the president of North American Aviation declared that "Regardless of training we will not employ Negroes in the North American plant. It is against company policy." And an executive of the Standard Steel Corporation in Kansas City informed the Urban League "We have not had a Negro worker in twenty-five years, and do not plan to start now."*

Notwithstanding the early Southern influence it is clear that at least some Northern lodges ignored the ban on black membership from the start. This is indicated by a heavy-handed lampoon in an early issue of the *Journal* in which a Southern member, writing in the crudest of black dialects, pretended to be sending a letter of inquiry about membership to a lodge in Erie, Pennsylvania, that was known to accept black members. In 1928, O'Connell, invited to speak at the IAM's Grand Lodge Convention in Atlanta, recalled:

The first real battle that took place in the organization was . . . In Pittsburgh in 1891. At that convention there was a movement on the part of the delegates coming from the Northern states towards striking the work "black" [sic] out of the Constitution. Considerable friction was created.

. . . While we did not settle the matter at that convention [I decided] to take a trip through the Southern states to try to convince the Southern lodges of the necessity of developing a more liberal attitude.

O'Connell told of visiting the Eat Tennessee shops where the IAM had begun and seeing Machinists sitting on benches amiably chatting and eating lunch with their "colored helpers" while other whites and blacks engaged in friendly wrestling and horse play. O'Connell's attempt to persuade the Southern members to drop the color bar was only partially successful. A majority of the delegates to the 1895 Convention finally voted to take it out of the Constitution--thus satisfying the AFL--but they promptly buried it in the ritual, thus satisfying the prejudices of the Southern founders.

The 1895 Grand Lodge Convention was memorable for a number of reasons. But it almost didn't come off. The deep recession of 1894, together with Lamb's earlier embezzlement, left the organization strapped for cash. O'Connell had to mortgage his home in Oil City to help meet convention costs in Cincinnati.

In addition to paving the way for affiliation with the AFL by removing the color bar from the Constitution, the delegates also required future constitutional changes to be approved by referendum of the membership as a whole. This insured grass-roots membership control throughout the IAM's important formative years. Finally the convention voted to move Grand Lodge headquarters from Richmond to Chicago, the city that had become the undisputed center of the nation's burgeoning railroad industry. In Chicago the Grand Lodge consisted of two rooms--one shared by the International

President (IP), the other by the editor of the *Journal* and the General Secretary-Treasurer (GST). They were assisted by one lone woman who served as stenographer to the IP, typist to the editor, and bookkeeper to the GST.



George Preston
1895-1917

The 1895 Convention elected a new Secretary-Treasurer, George Preston, to replace William L. Dawley who, though personally innocent of any wrongdoing, carried the burden of Lamb's betrayal. Dawley returned to Atlanta where he "again donned his overalls and resumed work at the trade." When he died at the age of forty-nine in 1909 he was a foreman in the shops of the Seaboard Air Line but still held his charter membership in Local Lodge 1.

The new Secretary-Treasurer, George Preston, was born in England in 1864 and reared as a militant trade unionist in Nottingham, a breeding ground of the early British trade union movement. When he immigrated to America in 1886, he almost immediately joined the Knights of Labor. He switched to the IAM in 1890 and was barely in his thirties when he was elected to the union's highest financial office. Although his contemporaries, including his friends, describe Preston as having a rather disagreeable and overbearing personality, no one ever questioned his honesty, integrity or efficiency. He has been credited with putting the IAM's finances on a permanently secure footing after the Lamb fiasco, during the twenty-two years he served as the union's top financial officer; he developed many of the safeguards which are still followed today in handling and accounting for IAM funds.

With the offending "Whites only- clause deleted from the IAM Constitution, the AFL quickly pulled the IMU's charter and awarded sole jurisdiction of the machinists trade to the IAM. Most of the IMU locals that did not disband eventually affiliated with the IAM. Many of these IMU lodges were hotbeds of Socialist, and even Marxist, ideology. This strengthened the still small strain of radicalism that was beginning to grow more rapidly as the IAM became further removed from its Southern roots.

The Old Century Ends

As the 19th Century drew to a close O'Connell, as "chief organizer," set out to regain the momentum lost during the Pullman strike. Old timers later recalled that the I.P. often had to travel in a caboose and depend on local lodges to provide a place to stay. Following Talbot's earlier example, O'Connell mailed great numbers of organizing circulars, leaflets and free copies of the *Machinists Monthly Journal* to railroad roundhouses and machine shops throughout the nation. Slowly he began to build a crew of organizers in the field.

One of the most remarkable of these was a twenty year old named Pete Conlon. Born in Brooklyn in 1869 Conlon grew up and went to school in Springfield, Illinois. After completing his formal education--usually no more than eight grades in those days--Conlon, always foot-loose, drifted down to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, where he stayed around long enough to apprentice and get his journeymen papers with the St. Louis and Western Railroad. As was customary for beginning journeymen seeking wider experience he moved on to Kansas City where he went to work for the Union Pacific. At one point in his

youth he was a member of the Knights of Labor--whether in Pine Bluff or Kansas City is unclear. In February 1890, soon after his arrival in Kansas City, he helped to organize and became a charter member of Local Lodge 27.

In Talbot's new order of Machinists, Conlon found his purpose in life. Starting out from Kansas City he rode the rails for the next five years, generally stopping off at rail centers just long enough to get a job and organize the machinists in the repair shops. It was later said of Conlon that by the time he was twenty-five he had traveled and organized in every state west of the Mississippi. It was also said that if a town had no IAM lodge when he arrived, it had one when he left. In a series of memoirs written the *Journal* in the 1920's, Conlon provided vivid descriptions of the life of the old-time boomers who were the IAM's first unpaid organizers. He told of sleeping in boxcars, of sometimes hocking his prized railroad watch for money to live on, of being endlessly arrested for violating local anti-union or anti-picketing ordinances.

In 1894 Conlon settled down in Omaha long enough to organize the IAM's first district lodge out of local lodges serving members on the Union Pacific. The following year he was a delegate to the Grand Lodge Convention in Cincinnati and was elected to the General Executive Board. When the 1901 Grand Lodge Convention in Toronto established five vice presidencies he was elected First Vice President. In one way or another Conlon was in the thick of every major battle and campaign fought by the Machinists for almost four decades. By attracting and keeping the loyalty of men like Conlon the IAM was able to recoup much of the ground lost in the ARU debacle. By the end of the century it was solidly and permanently established. In just twelve years Tom Talbot's little band of Atlanta machinists became the fifth largest union on the North American continent, counting more than 22,000 members throughout the United States and Canada.

The outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898 powered a sudden demand for skilled workers. Machinist wages surged to 35¢ an hour and most could demand time-and-a-half for overtime. Despite war-fueled prosperity the great majority of industrial workers remained poorly paid and exploited. Academic historians usually refer to this period as the "Gay Nineties" but in working class annals, as recorded in the *Journal* some years later:

The "heart-breaking nineties" were packed with grim facts that tried men's souls--hard times, business failures, mortgaged farms and labor disturbances. Corn selling at ten or fifteen cents a bushel was cheaper to burn than coal. The tenant farmer in the South was starving on five-cent cotton. In the industrial centers the laborer frequently faced a reduced wage scale after long periods of idleness.

This pervading poverty and misery strengthened socialist sentiments in the IAM. A number of the national officers, including GST Preston and *Journal* editor Douglas Wilson, were avowed Socialists in the British labor tradition. Communications in the *Journal* during this period show that support for moderate, reformist socialism was spreading in IAM lodges.

O'Connell, however, continued to reject any philosophy other than strict craft unionism. When delegates to the Buffalo Grand Lodge Convention in 1899 resolved support for "Public Ownership of Public Utilities," he argued that trade unions should not be deflected by political issues from their trade union purposes. Although O'Connell warned that issues such as this would mean "ripping up the back of our association," he was overruled by a large majority.

The Origins of Labor Day

George Washington did not chop down the cherry tree. St. Patrick did not drive the snakes out of Ireland. Toads do not cause warts. And a Carpenter named Peter McGuire was not the father of Labor Day.

The first Labor Day was celebrated in New York City with parades, picnics and speakers on September 5, 1882.

It was sponsored by the New York Central Labor Union.

The secretary of the New York Central Labor Union was a machinist named Matthew Maguire.

From the beginning the Labor Day parade and picnic was the idea of Matthew Maguire the machinist.

The resolution proclaiming the 5th of September, 1882, as a "general holiday for the working men of this city" was promulgated by Matthew Maguire the machinist.

The invitations were sent out several weeks earlier over the name of Matthew Maguire the machinist.

On this first Labor Day, 1882 Peter McGuire, the carpenter, was not even a member of the Central Labor Union. Peter McGuire, the carpenter, was but one of many speakers. But apparently he had a good time at Matthew Maguire's parade and picnic. Because a few weeks later he proposed "A harvest festival of universal rejoicing for organized labor" in an article for a local union publication. And fifteen years later he anointed himself "The father of Labor Day."

This misrepresentation of the facts stood unchallenged for more than three-quarters of a century because Matthew Maguire, the machinist, was a quiet and modest man. He never boasted of his own role in proposing and planning that first Labor Day, But the McGuire myth was finally exploded by a retired machinist named Pearlman. Digging through old newspapers, union archives and labor records from New York to Seattle, he has proven, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that at the original celebration of Labor Day a carpenter named Peter McGuire was nothing more than one of many invited guests of the man who proposed and planned it all

--a machinist named Matthew Maguire.

Matt Maguire held Due Book No. 217 in the IAM.



THE NEW CENTURY 1900-1920

When the new century began, organized labor had been agitating, parading and demonstrating for the eight-hour day for almost forty years. In 1863, Ira Steward, a Boston machinist known as the father of the eight-hour day, inspired the National Union of Machinists and Blacksmiths to pass a resolution saying "From East to West, from North to South, the most important change to us as working men. . .is a permanent reduction to eight of the hours exacted for each day's work."

In labor temples and union leaflets from coast to coast the slogan endlessly repeated, was:

Whether you work by the hour or day
The shorter the hours, the greater the pay

Employers and the press ridiculed the notion, claiming fewer hours on the job would encourage laziness and sloth among the working classes. Many preachers assured their comfortable, well-fed congregations that the devil would surely make work for idle hands.

The overwhelming majority of Americans still worked ten or twelve hours a day, six, and sometimes seven, days a week. Some employers still posted notices warning their workers, "If you don't come in Sunday, don't come in Monday." When the ILGWU began organizing in New York City in 1900, for example, the normal workweek for the garment industry was seventy hours. Nevertheless, by the turn of the century a few of the highly skilled trades, including most machinists, had already won the ten hour day. Local Lodge 52 in Pittsburgh negotiated the IAM's first nine-hour day contract in 1898. The following year many Canadian members won a nine-hour day after a four-week strike against the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

The Nine-Hour Day and the Murray Hill Agreement

Hearing of these break-troughs, machinists everywhere itched to shorten the prevailing ten-hour day in metal working. In January, 1900, District 8 presented 150 machine shops in Chicago with a contract demand for a nine-hour workday. After several weeks of hard bargaining it became clear that employers would not agree.

Chicago machinists hit the bricks. Later the *Journal* reported "Another blow was then struck in Cleveland, when 2,000 machinists went on strike. The machinists in Columbus then laid down their tools, as did those of Patterson, New Jersey." As walkouts spread to Detroit, Philadelphia and other industrialized centers, employers began looking for a way to get their skilled craftsmen back to work. In Chicago, the newly organized National Metal Trades Association (NMTA) called for industry-wide negotiations between top management and top union officers.

O'Connell leaped at management's offer to sit down and talk. His response was undoubtedly influenced by his association with and faith in an organization known as the National Civic Federation (NCF). The NCF was a prestigious and publicly acclaimed organization of some of the most prominent and powerful business, industry, labor and professional leaders in America. It preached labor arbitration and conciliation and was based on the supposition that union officers were more stable and trustworthy than their members. A surprising number of America's leading trade unionists, including AFL President Sam Gompers, as well as top officers of the Iron Molders, the Boilermakers, the Miners and the Carpenters, grasped for respectability and employer recognition by supporting NCF goals.

O'Connell met with NMTA representatives at New York's Murray Hill Hotel in May 1900. After more than a week of tense negotiations the employers finally agreed to what seemed to be a great victory for the union. The agreement provided there would be no discrimination against union labor, defined "machinist" in the all-round terms of the IAM Constitution, stipulated extra pay for overtime, adopted an apprenticeship ratio and, most importantly, promised to put a fifty-four-hour week into effect May 1, 1901, one year from the signing of the contract.

When word of this settlement swept work places, Machinists, together with workers everywhere, were jubilant. *Journal* editor Douglas Wilson exulted in the June, 1900, issue, "Less than twelve months from now we shall be working a nine-hour day. It seems scarcely credible when we consider how far off it seemed twelve months ago. To the thoughtless this may not appear much, but it is really revolutionary." Union publications began to count down, month-by-month, the time left until the nine-hour day became reality. The NMTA's recognition of the IAM encouraged thousands of unorganized machinists to sign up. Although management had stubbornly rejected a union shop clause,

machinists began enforcing union membership by refusing to work with non-union help. During this one year alone membership increased 25%--from less than 25,000 to more than 32,000. O'Connell had agreed not to place limits on production but union members themselves refused to do piecework or operate more than one machine.

Today, more than eighty years later, piecework and operating more than one machine are still prohibited by the IAM Constitution. Art. K, Sec. V.

EMPLOYER BETRAYAL . . . AND THE FIGHTING MACHINISTS

As May Day, 1901, neared it became increasingly apparent employers intended to cut wages as well as hours. This possibility had been skirted in the Murray Hill negotiations. O'Connell apparently assumed--or hoped--the reduction in hours would be granted with no reduction in pay, in effect, a 12% wage increase. As May 1 neared, O'Connell was forced to ask for a clarifying statement. NMTA heads responded that wages would have to be negotiated local by local, shop by shop. Employers had sandbagged O'Connell, ending a strike and grabbing a year's peace, in exchange for practically nothing. When it became clear, even to O'Connell, that he had been betrayed, a furious reaction swept through the union. O'Connell called for a nationwide strike to begin May 20, 1901.

According to a contemporary account in the *Journal*, "Local lodge halls were soon thronged with machinists eager to show their martial skills." In all, some 50,000 machinists, non-members as well as members, laid down their tools in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Cleveland, Philadelphia and other industrial cities. Many years later an old-time member of Lodge 264 in Boston recalled that in 1901 when he was a young operator working ten hours a day in a factory, "Twenty machinists went on strike and gained for 300 operators the nine-hour day and the Saturday afternoon."

Faced with this uprising in hundreds of machine shops the National Metal Trades Association dropped all pretense of allegiance to the Nation Civic Federation's brand of labor-management cooperation. Top metalworking employers met in Chicago's Great Northern Hotel and adopted a haughty "Declaration of Principles" asserting the employers' sole and exclusive right to determine conditions of labor. Pledging that they would hire "handymen" and apprentices at wages determined by local conditions, employers flatly rejected any deal with the strikers. Nevertheless the *Journal* reported that by August seventy-three firms had conceded the nine-hour day with an increase in pay and only twenty-six were still holding out.

The Frazier-Chalmers plant of Allis-Chalmers was the last to settle. It held out for fifty-four weeks and was so heavily fortified it became known in the press as "Fort Chalmers." Allis-Chalmers' management prepared for a fight to the finish. Tents were pitched inside the fence to house scabs brought in from all over the country. Provisions and food were shipped in daily through the gates. The scabs themselves were practically prisoners. During a fire in one of the buildings, some made a break for the gates, but were driven back by the company's special guards. Through a 50¢ a week assessment on each member, District 8 raised \$60,000 to help support the strikers. Relays of picket lines circled the plant day and night for more than a year.

Six months into the strike a picket named Ferdinand Trapp was shot and killed by one of the scabs. Police made an arrest, but a friendly judge reduced bail from \$20,000 to \$5,000, which the company immediately posted. The *Journal* carried a poignant account of Trapp's funeral:

Brother Trapp was buried on Sunday, November 24th. The funeral was a public one, and although the weather was very bad, with a chilling rain falling all day which chilled the marchers to the bone, yet it was one of the largest funerals ever seen in Chicago. Five thousand trade unionists, with two bands of music, escorted the remains to their last resting place, while all along the line of the march the streets were thronged with sympathizing citizens. Brother Stuart Reid preached the funeral sermon at the house and also at the grave, and although a cold wind drove a wintry rain into the faces of the mourners and soaked their clothing, not one of them moved. And as Brother Reid, at the close of the oration, lifted his hands and implored the Almighty to bless the organization for which our brother had given his life and to cheer the loved ones left behind, the shadows of evening were falling, but the mourners still lingered at the grave. As the earth covered all that remained of our brother a few voices started to sing "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and the refrain was taken up by the hundreds at the graveside.

With the rest of the industry long since back to work, Allis-Chalmers finally sent in a new superintendent to negotiate a settlement. After a lengthy session with District 8 business representatives, A. E. Ireland and J. J. Keppler, the company agreed to a fifty-five-hour work week, and 11% wage increase and replacement of scabs with men furnished by the union. When the company tried to retain some of the scabs, IAM members took matters into their own hands, at the lunch break one day they chased the last eight scabs out of the plant and down the street, warning them not to return. In retaliation the company fired four IAM members. A half-hour later the plant lay empty. An agreement was eventually worked out with the shop committee. According to the *Journal* the nine-hour day strike in Chicago finally ended when "the men returned to work Monday morning, August 18, with a clear shop, the scabs gone and [those] discharged returned to work."

In many other cities the strikers were tied down by injunctions. In most cases judges were content to prohibit specific acts. In Cleveland and Milwaukee, for example, strikers were forbidden to congregate, interfere with other employees or try to stop the sale of goods. But in Connecticut a judge slapped workers striking against the Farrell Foundry Co. in Ansonia with a \$20,000 fine and attached the property of individual strikers.

By August, 1901 the *Journal* reported that in Pittsburgh every general and contract shop was on the nine-hour day, that in Denver nineteen firms had granted the shorter workweek, "making Denver a nine-hour city," that 200 firms employing 3,500 machinists had conceded the demand in New York, that nineteen shops employing 200 machinists were on the nine-hour day in New Orleans; that 2,000 machinists in Philadelphia and 1,000 in Baltimore were now enjoying the shorter workday. Other numbers, ranging from 150 to 700 were reported to have won the nine-hour day in Columbus, Joliet,

Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Hartford, Yonkers, Syracuse, New Haven, Wilmington, Providence, Youngstown, Detroit, Erie, Hoboken, Trenton, Bay City, Michigan and Dunkirk, N.Y. However, the same issue of the *Journal* warned machinists not to travel to look for work in a number of cities where "our members are still on strike and struggling for the inauguration of the shorter workday." The list included San Francisco and Oakland. Buffalo, Watertown, Seneca Falls and Lockport, N.Y., Newark, Plainfield, New Brunswick and Trenton, N.J., Seattle and Tacoma, Reading, Boston, Louisville, Richmond, Birmingham, Selma, Charleston and Columbia, S.C., Knoxville and Memphis Tenn., Atlanta and Macon, Ga., Ottawa and the entire Southern Railway system.

In San Francisco Lodge 68, with almost 1,900 members, remained on strike against the Iron Trades Council for ten months. Although the battle for the nine-hour day was eventually won in San Francisco and in many other cities, the IAM paid dearly. The union's treasury was emptied by the steady outflow of strike benefits. Many IAM lodges disbanded. According to later memoirs and reports in the *Journal* thousands of members were blacklisted—placed on a list of troublemakers circulated among employers. Blacklisted workers usually were unable to get a job anywhere. An old railroader later recalled in the pages of the *Journal* that in his youth there was "no forgiveness" for workers.

A man who has once transgressed is blacklisted for all time...When a man finds his name standing between himself and employment at the only vocation his hands have mastered, he often clears his record by changing his name. This practice became common, especially among...the wanderers of the railroad world.

The NMTA's betrayal inflicted permanent damage on O'Connell's leadership. He never recovered the respect and trust he had previously enjoyed in the local lodges. Believing that employers would deal fairly with respectable and responsible labor leaders like himself, O'Connell found his "friends" in the National Civic Federation quick to turn their backs when the chips were down.

The 1901 strike spread the seeds of radicalism throughout the IAM. Delegates to the 1903 Convention in Milwaukee amended the Preamble to the IAM Constitution by adding a declaration affirming the "class struggle." O'Connell remained International President for several more years but his brand of conservative craft unionism was increasingly challenged by Socialism and Populism in the ranks.

The IAM vs. the NMTA

When O'Connell sat down with representatives of the National Metal Trades Association he hoped to bring about what he called a "peaceful revolution." He did not understand that across the table sat men who viewed unionism in any form as a threat. The collapse of the Murray Hill agreement not only revealed the NMTA's true colors but ended the fantasy of collaboration. Over the next four decades the NMTA developed into the largest, richest, strongest and most viciously anti-union employer organization in America. Many years later an investigating committee of the United States Senate, the LaFollette Committee, shocked the nation by exposing the criminal tactics used by this big business

organization to bust unions. During the thirty-five years between the Murray Hill agreement and the LaFollette hearings the NMTA was the IAM's number one enemy in every work place and on every picket line.

The NMTA became an association of 952 large and small metal working companies. No firm having an agreement with any union was eligible for membership. The NMTA's constitution required a member company threatened by an organizing drive, strike or labor trouble of any kind to turn the problem over to the NMTA's Executive Board. If a member company agreed to deal with a union, it was heavily fined and could be expelled. Companies belonging to the NMTA knew they would get all the help they needed to break a strike or a union. The association not only hired and paid strikebreakers, but, if necessary, paid the cost of recruiting, transporting, housing and feeding them in the plant. On occasion the NMTA volunteered its strikebreaking services to non-members. In addition to the NMTA's extensive spy network, many member firms employed their own spies and passed information on to other NMTA members. Spies were hired with instructions to join the union and work into positions of leadership so that they could supply the company and the NMTA with complete membership lists. These NMTA spies often became officers of local lodges. An IAM lodge at the Morse Twist Drill and Machine Company in New Bedford, Massachusetts was infiltrated by a certain George Lichtenberger, an NMTA spy, who got himself elected financial secretary and then plunged the lodge into hopeless chaos by accusing the business representatives of embezzling funds. By the time the charges were proven false the lodge had disintegrated into warring factions. Meanwhile the company increased hours, cut wages and erased seniority.

"King of the Strikebreakers"

The Machinists' aggressive nationwide drive for the nine-hour day badly frightened the business establishment. The most popular and influential magazine of that day, *The Saturday Evening Post*, suggested that employers could deal with strikes in a more efficient, business-like manner by setting up a central agency to provide professional strike-breakers whenever and wherever needed.

Before long an underworld character named Pearl Bergoff answered this call for business efficiency.* Out of the IAM's fight for the nine-hour came America's most infamous, violent and profitable strike-breaking agency. Bergoff offered employers the services of four specialized departments: strike prevention, undercover, open shop and protection. He advertised his protection department as being "composed of big, disciplined men with military or police experience, for the protection of life and property." In describing the "strike prevention" service the *Journal* noted, "They called at a worker's home and in a chat with the wife mention that her husband in the event of a strike is apt to be carried home any day on a shutter; or they go to a saloon, set up the drinks and try to persuade the workers to renounce the agitators as radicals."

**When Bergoff was born his mother, expecting a girl, named him Pearl. In the labor movement it was often said that "His mother must have loved children when she raised him."*

Over the next thirty years Bergoff's thugs, operating with brass knuckles, rubber truncheons and guns, helped to smash more than 300 strikes from New York to San Francisco. These plug-uglies were violent and ruthless, serving leading industries for fun and profit. An official government report on their activities in a 1915 strike described them as "so vicious and unreliable . . . their presence alone was sufficient to incite a riot . . . [They] shot without provocation at everyone who came within sight."

Beginning with the fight for the nine hour day, and for the next three decades, up to and including the IAM's famous battles to organize Remington Rand's Mohawk Valley plants in the late 1930's, IAM organizers and members met Bergoff's mercenaries at countless factory gates and in many dark alleys. It was here, in such close encounters, the IAM earned the right to wear the proud label: "The Fighting Machinists."

Opening the Door

As noted earlier, the Machinists initially excluded blacks, women and others who could not meet the exacting requirements of training and skill demanded by the Southern founders. In most places, and for many years, IAM lodges had to guard against infiltration by employer agents and spies. In those early years, the IAM was like a fraternity. It wasn't easy to join.

When Harvey Brown retired as International President in 1949 he described the obstacles he met in 1905 when he first tried to join in Allentown, Pa. On a Sunday, his only day off, he and another young machinist traveled to Easton, searching for the financial secretary of the nearest local Machinists lodge. When they finally located him, they were given applications and, after much questioning, were told to bring back the endorsement of a member in the shop where they were employed. Since Brown worked in a rabidly anti-union shop in what was then a notoriously anti-union area, the financial secretary refused to tell Brown which of his fellow workers were members. It was only after days of careful observation and cautious questioning that Brown decided a certain big, rough redhead was the kind of machinist who would belong to the union. When Brown approached to ask him to vouch for his membership, the big redhead looked him up and down. According to Harvey Brown's later recollection, he said "Brownie, I'm going to take a chance on you. Sure, I'm a member of the Machinist Union and I'll sign your application, but if I get fired I'll kick the hell out of you before I go."

Although the need for secrecy remained for decades, other barriers to membership fell earlier. In 1903, when the IAM absorbed a union of bicycle workers, delegates to the Milwaukee Grand Lodge Convention opened membership to "specialists." Two years later, meeting in Boston, the convention authorized limited membership at half the normal fees and dues for apprentices. Until the 1920's however, apprentices were not enrolled directly with Grand Lodge until they became journeymen. They were assigned to separate "apprentice" or "junior" lodges chartered and overseen by sponsoring local lodges.

Despite constitutional language originally limiting membership to males, women were accepted into membership even before the constitution was changed to include them. Though few women were likely to enter the trade, an early report in the *Journal* indicates that male machinists did not object to those who did. According to a somewhat enthusiastic account in the February 1890 *Journal*,

Miss Nellie Patterson, one of the prettiest girls in the village of Mt. Carmel, Montgomery County, N.C., has just completed a four years' apprenticeship at the machinists' factory of the Mt. Carmel Belt Company, and there isn't a machinist in the whole shop who can do a better job or in any less time than the fair young workman. Four years ago, when Miss Nellie began to think of the means whereby she could earn her living, she looked over the entire field of woman's work among the trades or occupations which the pushing woman could make her own. There none she especially liked. She was a bright girl, with a great deal of cleverness and considerable ingenuity and inventiveness, and having been advised to enter a machine shop, she applied for a place as apprentice. For the past four years she worked faithfully, and a few days ago her time expired, and she is now a full-fledged machinist. She is able to block up a piece of work on the planer, or turn up an arbor on the lathe. She uses the drill and handles the file as well as any man in the shop. Miss Patterson is the only female machinist in North Carolina.

Though there were undoubtedly many like Miss Patterson throughout the country the IAM's first female member was a Miss Nellie T. Burke, who was initiated into a lodge in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., in 1904--a full seven years before the constitution was officially amended to admit women members. According to the March, 1904 *Journal*, Miss Burke was admitted to "all the rights and privileges of complete membership" in recognition of "the fundamental trade union principle that a woman should receive the same pay as a man when she renders similar service. In other words no discrimination shall be made against a woman in the way of wages when she does the same work as a man. Her sex shall be no barrier to her progress."

Apparently the event was considered newsworthy by the local press. According to a Wilkes-Barre paper:

Miss Burke . . . secured employment when a young girl at the lace mills and from the very commencement took an active interest not only in the work assigned to her but in the machines . . .

Several years ago she undertook, during the absence of the regular machinist, to repair a machine, and she did so well it elicited commendation from the management. Shortly afterward she was made an assistant machine fixer, a duty that was performed with some excellence.

Being conversant with her won capabilities, the young woman requested an increased rate of wages, which was granted. Several days ago a dispute arose

over some trifling matter, and in order that she should be on the safe side the woman machinist sent for Business Agent Galligan, of the Machinists Union, and requested permission to make a formal application for membership in the union. The request was granted.

The *Journal* congratulated both Miss Burke and the lodge and offered the hope that by regularly attending local lodge meetings the young woman would make "every one of her fellow members a thorough gentleman." Unfortunately, surviving records do not indicate such an optimistic result. In the Officers' Report to the Davenport Grand Lodge Convention in 1911, O'Connell acknowledged that women had been accepted into IAM membership for some time despite language to the contrary in the constitution. He pointed out, "We have female members . . . because of [union shop] agreements." The Resolutions Committee also noted the presence of "a considerable number of female members" and drafted a resolution, adopted by the delegates, instructing the Law Committee to make any needed amendments to the IAM Constitution that would encourage "the organizing of all females engaged in our trade."

Years of Growth--Years of Struggle

As membership expanded to include craftsmen in city job shops as well as railroad roundhouses, specialists as well as journeymen, and women as well as men, the IAM grew year by year, from 32,500 in 1901 to 48,500 by 1905, from 60,900 in 1910 to 75,000 by 1915. At a number of early Grand Lodge Conventions chaired by O'Connell, delegates established or modified rules for paying death benefits and strike benefits from the general fund. Business agents, with Grand Lodge paying half of their "legitimate expenses," were authorized as early as the Buffalo Convention in 1899. But the first special assessment--one day's pay--on every member was not approved until the membership referendum following the 1907 Convention in St. Louis. Before it went into effect, however, thousands of members were thrown out of work by the historic Panic of 1907. Several extensions had to be granted lodges unable to collect from their members. Nevertheless O'Connell stressed in his report to the 1909 Convention that had it not been for this assessment the Grand Lodge would have been "embarrassed" in trying to meet its strike and victimization obligations.

The struggle never stopped. In the nation's metalworking centers, such as Dayton and Cincinnati, Ohio, Beloit, Wisconsin, Rockford, Illinois and Sedalia, Missouri, the IAM became the special target of employer associations mobilized to stamp out unions. In many cities and towns so-called Citizens' Alliances (in Dayton it was called the "Modern Order of the Bees") recruited businessmen, teachers, doctors, lawyers, supervisors and fraternity boys into the fight against "union tyranny." In 1903 the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) formed a National Citizens' Industrial Association to defend America's working people against "The . . . violence, boycotting and tyranny now being carried out by a majority of labor unions."*

** Three-quarters of a century later the NAM was still playing the same tired old tune. In 1977 they announced with great fanfare in the media the establishment of a "Council on a Union-Free Environment."*

With the business downturn of 1903, the National Metal Trades Association tried to rescind the nine-hour day which Machinists won in Chicago, San Francisco and many other cities only a year or so earlier. A number of companies unilaterally rescheduled ten-hour days. When this set off a new wave of strikes, the NMTA retaliated with one of the recurring "open shop" campaigns that have poisoned industrial relations in America ever since. With hard times employers could usually recruit all the scabs and strikebreakers they needed. A number of Chicago's largest metal-working companies, acting in concert, locked out their employees and reopened as non-union shops two weeks later. This touched off so much violence President Theodore Roosevelt himself came to the city, condemned "class hatred" and threatened to send in the Army.

In an early version of today's union-busting "labor-management consultants", the NMTA provided employers with expert advice and assistance on combating the IAM. A nationwide card file on each of the 35,000 machinists employed by 325 firms was compiled. In a massive surveillance operation employers in Portland, Oregon summoned every machinist in the city, one by one, to central office. Those who belonged to the IAM were shown their dossiers--which the NMTA had supplied--and were ordered to tear up their due books on the spot. In addition to honeycombing the labor movement with spies--some of whom served as delegates, organizers and even officers of several unions--the NMTA set up an organization called the "Independent Labor League." It recruited skilled machinists who could be sent wherever struck employers needed scabs and strikebreakers.

Injunctions and the Anti-Trust Laws

In these early years many employers forced job seekers to sign agreements not to join a union. These were known as yellow dog contracts. Judges sternly enforced such contracts by issuing injunctions and jailing organizers for contempt. Employers routinely received government help in disputes with their workers. If the police couldn't break strikes the state militia was called in. But of all the many weapons used to keep workers impoverished and under the employers' thumb, court injunctions were probably the most effective.

On the federal level these injunctions were usually issued under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. It had been passed in the 1890's to curb the awesome power of huge corporate combinations. In practice, anti-trust suits became another way to harass unions. Employers hit by a strike or bothered by a labor organizer merely had to ask the nearest court to declare the union's activity a "conspiracy in restraint of trade." Fines and jail sentences became a way of life, even a badge of honor, for early trade unionists.

During the strike against the Pope Motor Company of Indianapolis in 1907 a judge issued an order which, in the words of the financial secretary of Local Lodge 161 enjoined members "from doing

anything except breathing." When a member named Louis Poehler defied the order, the judge directed an auction of his property. This ignited one of the largest protest demonstrations ever seen in the city. Speakers called for the impeachment of the judge and a "defense fund" was set up to solicit donations to help Brother Poehler get this property back.

During the early years the *Journal* dripped with scornful condemnation of "capitalist courts." Editor Douglas Wilson advised workers "to abandon all hope" when entering an American courtroom. Explaining a decision in which an employer was acquitted after physically attacking a picket Wilson wrote, "Courts are not friendly to organized labor because . . . judges have been mostly corporation lawyers before their elevation to the bench."

The blatant bias of the judiciary finally forced Congress to try to legislate some relief for workers. The Clayton Act, passed in 1914, declared that human labor was no a commodity in commerce and courts should no longer rule lawful acts for lawful goals as "conspiracies in restraint of trade." When this new law went into effect Sam Gompers called in "Labors Magna Carta." However, the ink barely dried before the judges began once more to issue injunctions against unions. The case that shattered union labor's last illusion about the Clayton Act was brought against the IAM by the Duplex Printing Company. The Supreme Court affirmed punitive damages against IAM members who refused to work on scab printing presses. Holding this a "conspiracy in restraint of trade", the high court put the law right back where it had been and where it would stay until the Norris-LaGuardia Act was passed in 1932.

Suffer The Little Children

In early years of the century, child labor was rampant in factories, mines and mills. In 1907, *Journal* Editor Douglas Wilson noted that, "A miserable attempt is being made to minimize the fact . . . that children of tender years are being exploited and . . . but for persistent agitation . . . by the trade unions for the last half century this exploitation would be inutterably greater." On another occasion Wilson raged that child labor was the worst form of race suicide.

A few states began to move cautiously and slowly to temper some of the more horrifying conditions under which so many workers, especially women and children, were employed. But the exploitation of children continued for many years to come. As late as 1911 a commission investigating child labor in Pennsylvania found eleven-year-old girls working from 6:30 in the evening to 6:30 the next morning for 3¢ an hour. It was hard for even the most backward politician not to admit the need for some degree of legal protection against this kind of greed.

In that same year 154 women, mostly teenagers, burned to death in a fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York. The Triangle Company, a typical sweatshop, operated on the three top floors of a ten-story building. It had no fire escapes and the bosses had bolted emergency doors to keep the girls from leaving their machines. The tragedy shocked the conscience of the nation and revealed the criminal lack of health and safety standards in America's work places. Although middle class

progressives cried out for reform, the courts continued to nullify laws setting minimum standards for wages, hours, child labor, health and safety.

Class Struggle and the Wobblies

In theory the IAM endorsed the class struggle. It was mentioned approvingly in the preamble to the Grand Lodge constitution almost from the time of the founding. In fact, however, early members barred from their association those who needed unionism the most; the unskilled and the semi-skilled. Machinists were convinced their organizational strength depended on skills, not numbers. They believed this had been proven by the disintegration of the Knights of Labor, the smashing of Debs's one big railway union and the rout of the striking steelworkers at Homestead.

Rejected by most old-time AFL craft unions, unskilled and semi-skilled workers gravitated to a more radical organization, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), founded in 1905 by a group that included Eugene Debs and "Mother" Jones. Also known as the "Wobblies" the IWW was "one big union" of radical hell-raisers. They were led by a big, brawling former miner with a booming voice known as "Big Bill" Haywood. He was openly and proudly committed to destruction of the employer class and the "capitalist state." The Preamble to the IWW's Constitution began with a ringing declaration that the "Working class and the employing class have nothing in common." Employers and the press depicted the IWW as an organization of the unwashed and unwanted; popular cartoonists pretended the initials stood for "I Won't Work."

Since the IWW considered itself to be at war with capitalism it openly advocated sabotage and did not hesitate to use violence in organizing workers, black and white, immigrants and the unskilled, into "One Big Union." IWW organizers were a reckless, brawling, hell-bent-for-leather, irreverent and singing bunch of agitators. They led many bitterly fought strikes of mill workers, copper miners, lumber men, ranch hands, dock wallopers and others who had been by-passed by what the IWW called the "American Separation of Labor." Two of the strikes for which they were best remembered shut down the textile industry in Lawrence and the silk mills in Patterson. Adopting a tactic developed by the European labor movement the IWW sent strikes' children to live with working families in other cities, so that the workers would know their children would eat even if the parents starved.

Reformers and intellectuals of the period romanticized the IWW. They raised funds, wrote articles and made speeches. But they were rarely found in the mining camps or other outposts where the real battles were fought. They had little understanding of the depths of the desperation that drove workers into unequal battles--like the Ludlow Massacre in Colorado--in response to the misery of their daily lives.

In the decade or so in which the IWW flourished, it attacked craft unions as vigorously as it did employers and government. Shortly after the IWW's founding, an editorial in the *Journal* accused it of calling IAM officers "thieves and fakers" and of raiding the IAM's membership. According to Wilson the

IWW was "preying upon legitimate trade unions, causing dissension in the ranks and recruiting among the disloyal, the disgruntled and the weak its false teachings had created."

IWW inroads into IAM membership never became extensive. But after 1905, delegates to IAM conventions began adding and strengthening provisions authorizing expulsion of members circulating "malicious or untrue statements" or impugning the motives of any officer or member.

Like the majority of Americans, most machinists abhorred the violence inherent in Haywood's gospel of revolutionary class warfare. Numerous writings in the *Journal* indicate that even if Haywood had been a moderate in the mold of Debs. Machinists would see "one big union" as a threat to the value of their superior skills. A recurring fear, evident in the pages of the *Journal*, was that the IWW's brand of unionism would cheapen the trade by destroying the pride machinists felt for their craft.

Though membership reached a peak of 200,000 by the eve of World War I, the IWW was eventually crushed by the power of the United States Government. Under wartime espionage laws, federal agents suppressed IWW publications, jailed more than 150 officers and scattered the membership with threats, harassment, prosecution and deportation.

The Wobblies left a legacy of the labor movement's best-known songs, including "Solidarity Forever," "Joe Hill" and "Pie in the Sky." Their deeper significance was in paving the way for the CIO and industrial unionism less than a generation later. Although finally overwhelmed by the awesome power of the Federal Government, the IWW proved that semi-skilled and even unskilled industrial workers could be welded into a cohesive, militant, effective union organization. When the IAM finally began to organize industrial workers in the 1930's IAM representatives found embers of IWW ardor still glowing, waiting to be sparked into militant unionism once more.

Vigilantes and a Case of Mistaken Identity

Labor organizing has always been a high risk occupation. Through the years IAM organizers have taken their share of bumps and lumps at the hands of employer goons. Moreover, in many places the law offered no recourse. Violence often began with officers sworn to preserve and protect the peace. An incident in Jackson, Michigan, in November, 1912, illustrates the point. An organizer named Fred Griffith was sent to Jackson to meet with a group of workers who were interested in the IAM. A member of Local Lodge 95 in Jackson, Herbert Crawford, helped Griffith set up meetings and make the right contacts. Late one Saturday night a uniformed police officer appeared at Crawford's door and threatened to break it down if not immediately admitted. Since Crawford had broken no laws he assumed he had nothing to fear. But when he opened the door he was hustled out to a car in which a group of vigilantes were waiting. He was tarred and feathered and so brutally beaten he had to be taken to a hospital in Chicago for special treatment. Griffith was marked for the same treatment, but the vigilantes got the wrong man. They went to the hotel room of an innocent and unfortunate traveling salesman named Griffin. Unable to convince them he wasn't who they wanted, he ended up like

Crawford, tarred, feathered and in an emergency room. Griffith nonetheless, stayed on in Jackson and signed up more than 100 new members the following week.

Socialism in the IAM

The cruelties of unrestrained corporate capitalism, together with the callousness of the legislatures and the courts, strengthened Socialism in the IAM as in the working class as a whole. Between 1900 and 1912, the vote for the Socialist slate in presidential elections increased almost ten-fold, from 94,700 in 1900 to 897,000 in 1912.

As Socialist sentiment grew in the IAM, divisions spread between members who subscribed to the idealism of Eugene Debs and those who believed in the practical business unionism of Samuel Gompers. From time to time O'Connell sought to appease the Socialist faction by voicing sympathy for Socialist goals. In practice, however, he remained true to Gompers's brand of bread and butter unionism, i.e. working for achievable day-to-day goals without reference to social theories or ideological master plans.

Despite the Murray Hill betrayal O'Connell continued to seek stable relationships with management through the National Civic Federation. Having seen the IAM's treasury all but wiped out by strikes time after time, he preferred to settle labor disputes by mediation and arbitration. Employers, however, heeded the National Civic Federation's line only when stability and continuity suited their purpose. Most joined open shop drives whenever they had the upper hand.

The IAM and Scientific Management

Among the problems facing IAM members in the work place in those early years, the movement known as "scientific management" was one of the most irritating. This was an attempt to tighten employer control over the job and the work force. It included a wide range of supervisory techniques: piecework, incentive pay, time and motion study and efficiency ratings.

The father of scientific management, a late 19th Century industrial engineer named Frederick Taylor, viewed workers as little more than standardized attachments to machines. According to Taylor every factory "exists first and last and for all time for the purpose of paying dividends to its owners." He preached there is only "one best way" for a job to be done. This could be found through "scientific" analysis of the time and motion involved in each operation. After finding the "best way" employers could set a daily quota and a rate for every job. The fallacy of scientific management, as described in an early *Journal*, was that "it assigns a larger aggregate in profits to a few capitalists than it assigns aggregate wages to thousands of workmen." The *Journal* also warned, "He who would build a

permanent structure of scientific industrialism would leave thousands out of work and would perpetuate child labor and poverty."

To self-respecting machinists scientific management was an insult, a put-down of their intelligence and training. Scientific management was in vogue in American industry for many years. In some places it still is. Then, as now, Machinists stubbornly resisted the dehumanization inherent in Taylor's theories. Although employers in the National Civic Federation tried to persuade O'Connell and other early IAM leaders that piecework and incentive systems were a fair exchange for the nine hour day, the members saw what experience has proven ever since: piecework inevitably degenerates into speedups and lower wages. In 1907, for example, the *Journal* reported that when piecework was started in the Susquehanna shops of the Erie Railroad "a set of class I rods that originally paid \$35.00 now pays . . . \$7.00." Moreover, this report said, "From the time the operation started until it was finished, the highest speed and coarsest feeds were required and no margin allowed for accidents. When the price was once set, machinists had to accept it or get out."

Local Lodge 81 at the Rock Island Arsenal also fought time study and incentive pay for many years after being chartered in 1903. Members at Rock Island and other government lodges considered "efficiency ratings" a formula for tyranny. Pay scales were adjusted twice yearly according to supervisors' judgments of "attendance, skills, accuracy, deportment and speed." A worker caught looking out a window was fined an hour's pay each day for six months. Another, who accidentally broke a tool holder, was docked two day's pay and had his merit score reduced.

When federal officials announced that the Taylor system would be introduced into all U.S. Navy yards and arsenals in the summer of 1911 IAM lodges affiliated with Federal District 44* were up in arms.

**For many years all lodges of federal workers were affiliated with a nation-wide district known as District 44. In 1966 it was disbanded when the Executive Council replaced it with the Government Employees Department at Grand Lodge.*

Backed by rallies and resolutions, District 44 president William H. Johnston, led a delegation to meet with the Secretary of the Navy. They lodged a strong protest, citing reasons workers could not cooperate with Taylorism. Within three months the November, 1911 *Journal* reported that the Navy Secretary "had decided to stop all further attempts to introduce the Taylor system of management into Uncle Sam's Navy yards and arsenals."

Despite such temporary victories IAM members have faced scientific management in various forms in both private and public employment from that time to this.

A House Divided

From the start O'Connell tried to persuade employers to accept his kind of trade unionism. Favoring mediation over strikes, he offered business Unionism instead of Socialism. He cultivated contacts and friendships with business leaders through the National Civic Federation. The futility of such an approach became painfully apparent when the National Metal Trades Association reneged on the Murray Hill agreement. The members' faith in O'Connell was further shaken by the severe business depression known as the Great Panic of 1907. At one point more than a third of the IAM's membership was either jobless or on short time. With the work force so vulnerable, employers quickly dropped all pretense of labor-management cooperation. Metalworking firms that had given lip service to the NCF now joined the NMTA in a spasm of union-busting. In Pittsburgh, U.S. Steel, Mesta Machine and the Pressed Steel Car Company rushed to support the Pittsburgh Manufacturers Association's open shop campaign. The Machinists fought back with at least twenty-five strikes, many lasting throughout the long, cold winter. Scores of members were arrested and at least three of the IAM's district officers went to jail. Many of the gains made in earlier years were lost. Pittsburgh was not unique. Similar defeats were suffered as these radicalized the membership, strengthening the drift to Socialism while weakening faith in "labor statesmanship."

By mandating that all Grand Lodge officers, except the Assistant General Secretary-Treasurer, be elected by referendum, the 1905 Convention made O'Connell directly vulnerable to growing discontent at the grass roots. He survived challenges in 1907 and 1909 but by 1911 his leadership, already weakened by the rising tide of Socialism, was further wounded by his friendship with a corrupt business representative named George Warner. As DBR of District 15 in New York and a delegate to the AFL, Warner was one of O'Connell's most powerful allies in the union. However, he was tarnished by evidence that he had taken bribes from the Erie Railroad in exchange for labor peace. Warner denied wrong-doing and remained popular and powerful in his own district. Feelings ran so high elsewhere, however, that delegates to the 1907 Convention rejected a Credentials Committee recommendation that Warner be seated despite a challenge from the floor. When O'Connell was finally certain of Warner's guilt he demanded his expulsion. He then refused to let Warner go out with an honorary withdrawal card which offended Warner's supporters and added to O'Connell's opposition in the organization.

From remarks he made later O'Connell clearly sensed his time had run out after the 1909 Convention. He claimed he decided not to run in 1911 but changed his mind only because he thought his withdrawal might be seen as cowardice. After being defeated in a referendum vote by District 44 President William H. Johnston, 15,300 to 13,300, O'Connell had to endure the humiliation of presiding as a lame duck over the bitterly hostile Grand Lodge Convention that met in Davenport, Iowa. He noted in closing remarks that feelings ran so high "It needed only a match to have fired the magazine of secession

among the men in this convention." He also reminded them, with understandable resentment, that not a single delegate rose at any time to thank him for the years in which he held the IAM together when there was barely enough cash in the treasury to buy postage stamps. No one stood to salute his skill in leading a small, struggling organization safely through hard-fought battles with some of the largest and most powerful railroads in the land. To the contrary, the delegates rubbed salt in his wounds by voting to prohibit any member of the IAM from ever again "holding office in or becoming connected with the Nation Civic Federation." This prohibition remained in the IAM Constitution for decades, long after anyone could remember what the NCF was or why there was a ban against it in the constitution. The delegates also tried to ensure that future IP's could not exert the degree of influence O'Connell had achieved while chairing a long succession of Grand Lodge Conventions. The Socialist bloc voted to do away with regularly scheduled Conventions altogether. They directed that future constitutional amendments should be submitted to biennial membership referendums.

O'Connell was not the only advocate of bread and butter business unionism to be swept under a Socialist tide in the labor movement in 1911. Raging unemployment and hard times radicalized members in many unions. "Pure and simple" trade unionists such as O'Connell were defeated for top offices that year in the Hatters, Pattern Makers, Journeymen Tailors, Sheetmetal Workers and Carpenters.

O'Connell himself was still relatively young, only fifty-three, in 1911. As a long-time friend and ally of Sam Gompers, he kept his seat as a vice president of the AFL for some years despite IAM efforts to have him replaced by Johnston. O'Connell lived for another quarter of a century, heading the AFL's Metal Trades Department until forced to resign by failing health in 1934. He died in Washington at the age of seventy-eight in 1936.

The Johnston Era



William H. Johnston
1911-1926

William Hugh Johnston, the new international President, was born into a trade union family in Nova Scotia in 1874. His father was an early leader of the Shipwrights and Spar Makers, the union of craftsmen who built the elegant Yankee Clippers. In 1888, at the age of 14, Johnston became an apprentice in the machine shops of the Rhode Island Locomotive Works. Later he worked as a journeyman in various machine shops throughout New England. In 1895 he helped organize and became a charter member of an IAM lodge in Pawtucket. Following the Panic of 1897 he returned to the Rhode Island Locomotive Works in Providence, transferred his membership to Lodge 147 and soon became president and chairman of the shop committee. On several occasions the company invited him to drop his union activities by offering to promote him to general foreman. He not only stayed with the union, but went over to Brown and Sharpe to try to organize that violently anti-union company from within. In 1905 he was elected president of a district

lodge covering much of New England. Later, as a district business representative, he negotiated a fifty-four hour week along with wage increases for most of his members. In 1909 delegates to a District 44 Convention, representing members employed at federal installations throughout the country, asked Johnston to come to Washington to serve as district president and chief lobbyist for government machinists on Capitol Hill

Johnston was thirty-seven when he took office as International President. He was bald, short, stocky and powerfully built. Though somewhat forbidding in appearance, he was described by those who knew him as good natured and amiable. Johnston was well read, commanding attention of audiences through his logic and knowledge rather than the more florid flights of oratorical rhetoric more common to that time.

Many members probably voted for Johnston because of his record and reputation as a Socialist, but he seems to have been less radical than his supporters assumed. In a letter written to the *Journal* as early as August, 1911, he warned that unions and political movements should "... remain separate and distinct, each working in its separate sphere for the uplift and final emancipation of the working class." This could have been written by O'Connell or Gompers.

Johnston's presidency was one of extremes. Under his leadership membership fluctuated wildly, bouncing up from 67,000 in 1912 to more than 300,000 in 1919, then plunging back down to 79,000 less than five years later. During the feverish growth of World War I Grand Lodge added a night shift because the day staff could not keep up with the flood of lodge charterings, membership applications, insurance claims and other paper work pouring into Washington.

Though hard-working, some say hard-driven, Johnston never quite succeeded in closing the split in IAM ranks that contributed to O'Connell's downfall. In taking office Johnston immediately inherited a problem that was to keep the union in turmoil for years to come. A few months earlier the railroad shop craft unions had agreed to a unified strike against the Illinois Central and Harriman lines. This was one of the labor movement's first attempts at coordinated bargaining. The action followed generations of fruitless efforts by various craft unions to bargain for their own members alone. For years the various unions of machinists, boilermakers, blacksmiths, sheetmetal workers and carmen had negotiated one by one. And when they went on strike management usually defeated them one by one. By joining together the shop crafts hoped to achieve through unity what they had rarely been able to achieve separately. Management dug in, determined to fight coordination to the bitter end. The strike lasted forty-five months. Originally 38,000 workers went out, including 4,000 Machinists.

The shop crafts formalized their new found cooperation by setting up a "Federation of Federations" which later became the nucleus of the Railway Employees Department of the AFL. A machinist, Arthur O. Wharton, General Chairman of the IAM's district on the Missouri-Pacific, was chosen to head the union's negotiating team.

Delegates to the Davenport convention approved a special assessment, \$2.50 for journeyman, \$1.25 for apprentices, to help defray weekly benefits for the striking railroaders. GST Preston later reported that the Harriman-Illinois Central strike quadrupled the Grand Lodge's "pay roll." Although he

described the response to the assessment as "perhaps the most liberal experienced by our association" it was not nearly enough to support such a long and exhausting battle.

As the strike dragged on, benefits were reduced from \$8 to \$6 and then to \$4 a week. After two years and more than \$700,000 paid out, strike benefits were suspended altogether. Still the railroad machinists refused to give up. They voted almost two to one to carry on. When Johnston finally called the strike off six months later, he was denounced and reviled in IAM railroad lodges throughout the industry.

The Lizard's Trail

One of the most tenacious of Johnston's attackers was Carl Person, a hot-headed young militant from Clinton, Iowa who had written and circulated a series of fire-eating handbills during the strike. When it was finally called off, Person drafted an indictment of Johnston and other shop craft leaders, accusing them of double-crossing the members, leading them out on strike and then deserting them.

A short time later Person was lured into ambush by a company thug, a six-foot 200-pound former Clinton police chief. Person, a bantam of a man, not more than five foot five and 130 lbs., was in danger of being beaten to death when he pulled a gun and shot and killed his attacker.

In the murder trial that followed, other unions joining the IAM in raising funds for Person's defense. Despite the usual newspaper and employer efforts to prejudice the public and the jury, witnesses and the evidence clearly supported Person's plea of self-defense and he was acquitted. Despite the help he received from the IAM, Person continued to rage at the "sellout" of the strikers on the Illinois Central and Harriman Lines. He kept up the attack, going before a convention of the strikers by confiscating funds that were rightfully theirs. Johnston then suspended Person from membership with the approval of the General Executive Board. In Person's appeal to the 1916 Grand Lodge Convention in Baltimore he had many supporters. A resolution by a Louisiana lodge suggested "If we had about a dozen more Carl E. Persons . . . labor conditions would be much brighter."

The Appeals and Grievance Committee recommended the suspension stay in effect until Person gave the GEB written assurance that he would refrain from any such misconduct in the future. Following a long, heated debate in which delegates were assured Person would not be required to apologize for his past actions the Committee's report was approved on a division of the house. Person refused to accept reinstatement on the terms offered. He pursued his vendetta against Johnston by authorizing a vitriolic diatribe, purported to be a history of the Harriman strike, which he titled "The Lizard's Trail." Throughout the rest of Johnston's tenure his enemies used Person's volume to smear and slander him.

Although this particular strike was lost system federation bargaining became the norm in railroad negotiations for many years to come. The IAM's Arthur Wharton was one of the few who came out ahead in this long and dreary dispute. He led the Federation of Federations with such distinction he

was chosen to head the new department for railroad employees when it was created by the AFL. As will be seen he was later elected International President of his own union.

The IAM and the First World War

With the outbreak of the "Great War" in Europe in 1914, metalworking industries in America began a rapid buildup to meet an avalanche of armaments orders from the combatants. In Connecticut, for example, the Remington Arms Company was swamped with requisitions from the Czarist Government of Russia for small arms ammunition, artillery shells and weapons of every kind.

Companies not directly engaged in output of weapons worked night and day turning out machine tools and parts. The demand for machinists became frantic. To meet a growing shortage of skills employers began to install specialized machinery and hire inexperienced workers as operators, including great numbers of women. As employment skyrocketed union growth exploded. Between April 1915 and April 1917 membership almost doubled, going from 69,277 to 119,977.

In the spring of 1915 the IAM launched an all-out organizing campaign in armaments' plants throughout New England. In a report to the *Journal* on his activities in the summer of 1915 GVP Pete Conlon described the militancy of machinists in New England. The policy, he said, was to "1st. Strike the plant of any employer resisting our demands. 2nd. Immediately ship the men to other jobs [and] 3rd. Picket the plant and keep the employer shorthanded for help." Success came on a rush of worker sentiment for the eight hour day. The IAM caught the tide of this powerful and popular appeal. According to Conlon, "Everyone has the fever and all you can hear is eight hours. The sidewalks, the telegraph poles and even the office steps of the factories are chalked in large letters 'WE WANT EIGHT HOURS'."

IAM organizers and business representatives exhorted the membership to, "Talk eight-hours, write eight hours and work for the eight-hour day." Millions of gummed labels with the slogan "For The Eight-hour Day--A Movement Nearer To Justice" were distributed. Members were told to stick them on their letters, lunch boxes and anything else with a flat surface. In Cleveland the slogan became "A Cent a Minute, Eight Hours A Day." And in 1916 more than 5,500 members of District 54 joined a general strike for this goal. A nationwide shortage of skilled labor gave the IAM more clout at the bargaining table than it ever enjoyed in the past. The number of members working under eight-hour day contracts soared from 7,000 in early 1915 to 60,000 a year later.

With lush profits guaranteed from the munitions production, employer resistance to the eight-hour day crumbled. Where employers remained hard-nosed, IAM lodges did not hesitate to strike. Between the summer of 1915 and that of 1916, 28,000 Machinists were involved in 128 strikes in thirty-five cities.

After the eight-hour day was won in the munitions industry it began to spread, first to nearby civilian industries and then into the mines and on the railroads. The Adamson Act, establishing the eight-hour day for the operating unions on the railroads, was hastily enacted by Congress late in 1916 to avert a mass walkout.

The Battle of Cincinnati, 1915



Pete Conlon
(1928)

In September, 1915 Johnston sent Pete Conlon to Cincinnati with instructions to organize as he had in New England. Cincinnati was a major center of the metal trades industry. It was also one of the NMTAs primary strongholds. When Conlon arrived he found that news of the IAM's successful eight hour day campaign in New England had created a receptive mood among working people. A mass meeting brought out 1,800 journeymen five days after Conlon got to town. This was topped by even a larger rally five days later. Despite torrential rains machinists packed the meeting hall to suffocation.

The Cincinnati Metal Trades Association counter-attacked by notifying all machinists in the city that planned bonuses were being jeopardized by outside labor agitators. This was followed by a story in a local political smear sheet called *The Cincinnati Republican*. It accused Conlon of conspiring with the Austrian consul and a certain "Doctor Ludwig" to dynamite a local machine tool company. Copies of this scurrilous sheet, mailed to machinists throughout the city, called for Conlon's death.

Despite such tactics machinists streamed to IAM headquarters night after night to be initiated. In two weeks 1,200 were obligated. The Cincinnati Metal Trades Association issued a general announcement that it "would not concede the eight hours work day no matter what the consequences would be." This triggered a chain reaction. That same day machinists walked out of four shops and marched to IAM headquarters with their tool boxes. Over the next few days nine more shops went out and 800 machinists paraded down Walnut Street with signs and banners demanding the eight hour day. By the middle of October, 1,672 men at twenty-two firms were out. After Johnston came in from Washington and addressed a mass rally the strike spread to other shops in Cincinnati as well as Hamilton, Springfield and Dayton.

Employers continued to resist with time-tested tactics. Conlon reported to the *Journal* that thousands of dollars were being spent by foremen on bee busts and entertainments, police were breaking up IAM picket lines, plainclothesmen were escorting strike breakers from home to work, and judge sentenced prisoners to work in scab shops, local newspapers were only printing items detrimental to the strikers and, Conlon wrote "the scurrilous sheet call *The Cincinnati Republican* has been mailed to all the strikers weekly filled with the most sensational and libelous stuff."

By this time Conlon had been under heavy pressure for at least a year. While leading the fight for the eight hour day in New England two of his sons almost died of typhoid fever back home in Virginia. They were barely recovered when Johnston sent Conlon to stir up the eight hour day fire in Cincinnati. Non-stop tension finally took its toll. Conlon collapsed under a combination of flu and nervous indigestion. His doctor ordered him home to the Virginia hills. Within two weeks, however, he was back in Cincinnati, setting up a commissary to help get the strikers' families through the hard, cold winter to come. Conlon explained, "We can save 25 percent by bringing in wholesale quantities [which] together with savings on distribution and profit enables the strikers to get twice as much for the money." He also reported "Every striker in Cincinnati is guaranteed assistance as long as he will do picket duty."

As the strike dragged on, employers spurned offers of mediation by the U.S. Department of Labor. They called government efforts "outside meddling" and reaffirmed their determination to accept no settlement other than unconditional surrender. A number of employers secretly admitted to Conlon they were being held in line by threats to ruin their credit or otherwise run them out of business. Others made under-the-table deals but were too frightened by the Cincinnati Metal Trades Association to put anything into writing.

The employers had little trouble finding a judge to issue an injunction prohibiting strikers from interfering with the comings and goings of scabs. Machinists parading near the Niles Tool Works got into a cursing and shoving match with strikebreakers coming off the day shift. Insults soon turned into fist fights. Fifty-seven union members were arrested and charged with contempt. Handing down his decision on Christmas Eve, the judge released nineteen of the men, fining the other thirty-eight a total of \$320. After caucusing the men refused to pay the fine, saying they would rather go to jail. The judge offered to hold the case over the holidays so they could spend Christmas with their families if they would post \$250 bail. Again they refused and were ready to go to jail until Conlon persuaded them to put up the bond so they could spend Christmas with their families. Conlon himself stayed in Cincinnati through the holidays to see that striking families received Christmas baskets along with the toys for the children.

Employers in Hamilton were the first to compromise, conceding the nine hour day with a five percent wage increase but most in Cincinnati held out. From the original twenty-two shops and 1,672 men who went out in October, 1915 the strike spread to 113 shops and 3,680 men by May 1, 1916. By this time companies were offering strikers a \$1.25 an hour to desert and were paying out-of-town scabs premium wages plus hotel expenses. The IAM retaliated by shipping thousands of Cincinnati's most skilled journeymen to booming munitions plants starved for skilled labor in New England. In the June, 1916 *Journal* Conlon wrote that the employer's solid front was finally cracking. Agreements had been signed with twenty-four plants setting a forty-eight hour work week with no reduction in pay and time and a half for more than eight and one-half hours a day. He reported more agreements were pending with nineteen other shops and nine breweries.

Internal Feuds and factions--"Catholics" versus "Masons"

While Conlon was fighting for the eight hour day in New England and Cincinnati, two factions were struggling for control of the IAM. One drew its strength chiefly from the old-line Southerners, the traditional railroad machinists and grass-roots Populists in small town lodges. This faction, which supported Johnston, was called "The Masons" by their adversaries. The second faction included followers of Carl Person who were still blaming Johnston for the defeat on the Harriman Lines, but was made up mainly of big city lodges, job shops, construction and erection machinists and remaining packets of radicalism left over from the International Machinists Union. They were referred to as "the Catholics." At that time prejudices based on religion were far stronger and more prevalent than they are today. The revival of the Ku Klux Klan, following the filming of *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915, indicates the depth of racial and religious animosities in the early decades of this century. Though never in the open, as far as the *Journal* and other IAM records are concerned, sectarian rivalries certainly contributed to the divisions that wrenched the IAM during this period. At the same time it should be recognized that factions within the union were not formed strictly around religion. The leader of the so-called "Catholic" group, J. F. Anderson, was a Mormon, while Conlon, firmly allied with the "Mason" faction that supported Johnston, was a devout Catholic.

The schism between these contending factions was sharpened after members voted by referendum to put the five member General Executive Board on full time status and reduce the number of GVP's from seven to two--one from Canada and one from the United States. Though Conlon received the most nominations in the race for the American vice presidency he lost the election, 14,841 to 14,209. The victor, J. F. Anderson, had been a GVP since 1914.

A number of factors contributed to this razor-thin but nonetheless shocking result. During the nine months in which Conlon was tied down in Cincinnati, Anderson was politicking in lodges from Virginia to New England. His reports for the months running from September, 1915 to May, 1916 show that he spoke to and visited with lodges in Virginia, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

On the eve of the election Conlon seemed to realize that he would suffer from his failure to travel around and rebuild his own political fences. In his report to the May, 1916 *Journal* he expressed regret that the situation in Cincinnati prevented him from accepting many invitations to visit local lodges. Normally lack of time to go out and press the flesh would not have hurt Conlon. His reputation as one of the original boomers and the IAM's top organizer for so many years would have been enough to insure his reelection. But this was a period in which new members were surging into the union in unprecedented numbers. Between September, 1915 and June, 1916 the IAM grew from 71,000 to 113,000. One out of every three members was new to the union. While Anderson was traveling around

from lodge to lodge, meeting and shaking hands, most of these new members had never heard of Conlon.

Conlon was also caught in the backlash of the resentment Carl Person had generated against Johnston. Conlon's loyalty to Johnston undoubtedly eroded support from members who were still smarting over Johnston's decision to abandon the strike on the Harriman Lines.

Following his defeat Conlon went back to his home in Virginia to shed the months of exhaustion accumulated in hotel rooms in New England and Cincinnati. Johnston gave him little time to lick his wounds. Within a few weeks Conlon was back in harness as a General Organizer, appointed by Johnston to negotiate a new contract for machinists employed by the American Locomotive Works in Dunkirk, New York. He continued to serve without interruption for the rest of his life, first as an organizer, and after 1921, once more as a GVP.

The Removal of George Preston

Conlon was not the only long-time veteran to be swept up by internal dissension. Soon after George Preston was reelected General Secretary-Treasurer by the membership in the 1916 election, he was suspended from office by the General Executive Board.

Preston had many good qualities. As the IAM's chief financial officer his integrity was unquestioned. Following the fiasco of the disappearing treasurer, J. J. Lamb, in 1893, the IAM needed a GST who could establish a tradition of scrupulous honesty and competent accounting in the handling of IAM funds. In George Preston that is what they got. But in Preston these assets were offset by a prickly, disagreeable, thin-skinned personality. He was quick to take offense and impossible to work with. Even Conlon, who defended Preston's competency at the 1916 Convention, admitted he was "crabby" in his dealings with others.

Soon after being reelected in the 1916 election Preston seemed to go out of his way to alienate Johnston and various members of the General Executive Board. For example, he left the Canadian member of the GEB, James Somerville, stranded without funds in a remote town in Alberta because Somerville addressed his voucher to the Assistant General Secretary-Treasurer instead of Preston. Out of what seemed to be Preston's pure cussedness Somerville had to wire Johnston for enough train fare to get out of town. Moreover, after the members voted to hold a Grand Lodge Convention in 1916--the first since 1911--Preston dawdled and procrastinated until it was too late to make arrangements for a convention city more centrally located than the site finally selected, Baltimore. When he should have been making convention arrangements, Preston perversely left town on a junket of his own without informing Johnston. This gave the GEB an excuse they were looking for. Citing a constitutional provision prohibiting the GST from leaving Grand Lodge without the IP's authorization the GEB exercised its power to suspend Grand Lodge officers.

Preston appealed to the 1916 Grand Lodge Convention in Baltimore. The delegates went into executive session, selecting a general organizer named Emmet Davison as chairman. For three days they thrashed over the facts and issues in Preston's case. The suspended GST's own vinegary personality undoubtedly turned off some who might have supported him in recognition of his many years of honest and competent service. In the end the delegates passed the buck by referring the matter back to the membership. They ordered a special election.

The delegates also acted to reinstate regularly scheduled Grand Lodge Conventions after Johnston told them that the 1911 Convention's experiment in government by referendum alone was not working. He pointed out that:

It extends to every member of every lodge an invitation to send in proposed amendments to the Constitution, many of which are given but little thought, so that when the Law Committee meets they have so many amendments of such a varied character that it is an almost impossible task to present them in a condensed and comprehensive form, and there is a general complaint that the amendments approved and disapproved are so voluminous that the average member has not the time to properly consider the question he is asked to vote on.

Emmet Davison--Shirt-sleeve GST and "Mr. Mayor"



E.C. Davison
1917-1944

In the special election ordered by the 1916 Grand Lodge Convention Emmet Davison, the chairman of the executive session was Preston's opponent. Even with the endorsements and backing of the entire General Executive Board, he managed to unseat Preston by a margin of only 1,800 votes out of a total of more than 35,000.

Born in Virginia in 1878, Emmet Davison completed his apprenticeship and joined the IAM before enlisting as a cavalryman in the Spanish-American War. After mustering out he returned to the trade but was blacklisted for his highly visible role in the 1901 strike for the nine-hour day. Changing his name, Davison finally landed a job in a shop affiliated with the NMTA. Promoted to foreman, he was given a list of names of "agitators" who were not to be hired.

The first name he saw was his own. Within a few years Davison was elected business representative of Local Lodge 10 in Richmond--Creamer's old home lodge. In 1913, Johnston appointed him General Organizer. Though somewhat short in stature, Davison was robust, verging on plumpness, when he became GST at the age of 39. In later years he grew increasingly frail, in appearance but never

lost a sense of merry enthusiasm for life. He liked to chase fire engines and invariably rushed to his office window when a police siren or ambulance was heard on the street below.

At the time when prejudices were raw and anti-Semitism was rampant, he not only hired a young Jewish girl as his secretary but later insisted that she be promoted to supervisor on the basis of merit. Though blacks were technically barred from membership by the ritual during Davison's 17-year tenure as GST, he turned a blind eye to the many lodges outside the South, and especially in Puerto Rico and Hawaii, where the "white only" clause was routinely ignored.

Friendly and gregarious by nature, Davison's friendships extended far beyond the union. He mixed comfortably and easily with politicians and the press. He was, in fact, a politician himself. While serving as GST he was elected and served for many years as mayor of the city of Alexandria across the Potomac River in Virginia.

Unlike many southern mayors, he sympathized with those who earned their living in his city. When a group of women struck a shirt factory in Alexandria, the owner demanded that Davison send the police over to clear out picket lines and protect his scabs. Davison responded that these women had not only been working for starvation wages but were striking against sweat shop working conditions. He also pointed out that this particular employer violated city and state safety and sanitation laws. Summarily dismissing the demand for police protection, the IAM's GST-mayor said, "There is no reason why an employer who violated the law should escape the penalty of the law. An employer who robs the women employees in manufacturing shirts by taking from them that which they have honestly earned is guilty of embezzlement and should not be permitted to use the police power of any community to protect himself from the consequences of his own acts."

Despite his political connections and other interests, Davison never lost touch with the members, remaining first and foremost a shirt-sleeve machinist at heart. On one occasion, a political bigwig and an old-time IAM member were both waiting in his outer office. His secretary asked who he wanted to see first. Without hesitation he told her to send in the old-timer.

Although his relations with Wharton became increasingly strained over the years, Davison was warmly regarded by GVP Pete Conlon, *Journal* Editor Fred Hewitt and other employees and staff at Grand Lodge. Until he dropped in the traces in 1944, exhausted by twenty-seven years of continuous crises, he solidified the IAM's reputation for clean and honest unionism.

The "Indigestible Mass"

With the growing labor shortage brought on by the First World War, the IAM was caught in a dilemma. The potential for new organizing became greater than ever. In many places workers were practically beating down the doors to get in the union. But few met the IAM's traditional and cherished standards of craftsmanship. New kinds of automatic machinery had split the skills of old-time all-around

journeymen into fragments of simple, specialized tasks. Although the IAM reluctantly admitted specialists and helpers more than a dozen years earlier, the members were not eager to hand their union over to what the *Journal* called an "indigestible mass of unskilled handymen." Still, these unskilled and semi-skilled workers could not be ignored since they performed traditional machinists' functions.

Early in 1917 the *Journal* noted the influx of "thousands of men, who in the future will be a menace to us if left outside . . . a horde of unskilled men who, if not where we can control them, will create a condition which we contemplate with fear and anxiety." In the end the IAM had no alternative but to take the "menace" in where it could be watched and controlled. The gates to IAM membership swung open to admit more and more specialists. From April 1917, when the United States entered hostilities, to April 1919 when the IAM hit its World War I peak, membership skyrocketed from 119,977 to 323,134.

Many of these new members were fresh off the farm. Few had ever seen the inside of a factory. The critical shortage of labor increased their militancy in striking for higher wages and shorter hours but, as later events proved, their acceptance into the union did not make them trade unionists.

Women in the War Plants

The First World War propelled a vast migration of women from homes to factories. During the war some 27,000 Machinists Union members marched off to fight in France. As they left women flocked to take over their machines. Most of these women had never worked outside the home nor ever expected to. While the IAM had accepted women into membership since the early years of the century, the union, reflecting most of the railroads and job ships where the members worked, remained pretty much a male domain.

With women crowding into the work place, the men became increasingly concerned. An article in the February, 1918 *Journal* expressed fear that employment of women in factories and workshops might not be "conducive to their best interests, either mentally, physically or morally." However, the *Journal* went on to say that where women were employed "they should receive every protection at the hands of fellow male Workers" and "as a trade union it will be our aim to furnish this protection. Let employers pay women equally as well as they formerly paid men for the same class of work." The unknown writer of this 1918 commentary went on to declare "We demand 'equal pay for equal' service. This we shall insist upon. We shall not stand idly by and see women exploited by unscrupulous employers ready to take advantage of cheap labor." He was confident that "bringing women into industry" would not result in "keeping them there after the war."

The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919

In Canada, as in the U.S., union membership reached unprecedented heights during the First World War. When the war ended and the troops started returning home in 1919, jobs grew scarce and by the winter of 1919 unemployment was rising along with the cost of living all across Canada. While workers were being punished by rents and prices that had doubled in less than five years, landlords and employers were fattening off big profits.

Growing bitterness in the work force, which included thousands of recently demobilized soldiers, showed up in mass demonstrations and clashes with the police in Canadian cities from Halifax to Winnipeg. According to Canadian labor historian, Charles Lipton, when soldiers' wives, living in cramped quarters, contrasted their lot with that of the wealthy, and workers compared their pay envelopes with the profits of big business, "the flames of wrath against capitalism began to flare and the demand grew for redistribution of wealth."

In early months of the postwar era union membership continued to climb--increasing 50% in 1919 alone. Inspired by accounts of the revolution in Russia, where the Marxist Government had socialized factories, redistributed land and established the eight-hour day, large numbers of Canadian workers became radicalized. At a meeting held in the Walker Theater in Winnipeg in December, 1918, R. B. Russell, Secretary-Treasurer of IAM District Lodge 2, told a socialist rally, "Capitalism has come to a point where it is defunct and must disappear." A few months later Canadian railroad machinists followed with a repudiation of traditional bread and butter unionism by electing leaders sympathetic to industrial unionism. At the 1919 meeting of the Western Canada Labour Conference in Vancouver, delegates endorsed a strongly pro-socialist resolution submitted by IAM Lodge 456 of Victoria

"Full acceptance of the principle of proletarian dictatorship is sufficient for the transformation of private property into public or communal wealth."

The growing militancy and radicalism evident in this and other resolutions at the Vancouver conference climaxed in one of the pivotal events in the history of Canadian labor: The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919. The seeds of what became a workers' revolt were sown when the IAM and other metal trades unions formed a Metal Trades Council, elected Machinist R. B. Russell as Secretary and presented Winnipeg's metal working employers, including the Vulcan Iron Works, Dominion Bridge Company and Manitoba Iron Works, with demands for union recognition, the eight-hour day, overtime pay and hourly wage rates ranging from 25¢ for apprentices to 85¢ for journeymen machinists. In an action which originally included only the building trades and the metal trades, 12,000 workers walked off their jobs at 11 a.m. on May 15. The strike spread like wildfire as organized and unorganized workers followed them out in industry after industry, from telephone and telegraph exchanges, hotels, banks, stores, bakeries,

dairies, restaurants and even the newspapers. Within forty-eight hours, 35,000 workers were on strike in a city of 200,000--and police, firemen and postal workers were also ready to walk out.

As the strikers' numbers and confidence grew daily, union leaders stepped up their demand--reinstatement of all strikers without discrimination and recognition of the right to organize by employers and the government. Winnipeg's employers fought back, forming a Citizens Committee (to "provide milk for babies") and organizing a volunteer militia. In Ottawa, Canada's Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, proclaimed that "Law and order shall be maintained" and dispatched the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who, upon arrival in Winnipeg, began acting like a private strike-breaking agency for the employers. The RCMP was soon reinforced by a battalion of federal troops armed with machine guns.

This display of massive governmental force against Winnipeg's workers sparked reaction in union halls all across Canada. In Vancouver 60,000 workers walked out and the strike spread first across the prairies to Brandon in Manitoba, then to Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Kamsack in Saskatchewan and on to Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton in Alberta. In the East, workers began walking out, although not in such great numbers, in Toronto and worker unrest began to spread in Quebec. A plan by the Citizens Committee to recruit returning soldiers in Winnipeg backfired when a majority at a meeting of the Great War Veterans Association defeated an anti-strike resolution and adopted one declaring "full sympathy" with the strikers. As the strike wore on week after week into the middle of June, the government stepped up its repression. In the early hours of the morning of June 17 the strike leaders, including R. B. Russell and another IAM member, Peter Herenchuk, a veteran wounded twice at the battle of the Somme, were arrested, dragged out of their homes, hustled into waiting cars and sped to the Stony Mountain Penitentiary where they were held without bail. Intended to intimidate the workers, these measures infuriated them. In Toronto the Metal Trades Council proposed a national general strike, in Montreal the Trades and Labour Council protested and from Cape Breton the leader of the Canadian coal miners wired Ottawa pledging a strike by his members all across Canada. With protests pouring in from every direction the government released the strike leaders on bail within seventy-two hours.

A few days later the Winnipeg strikers scheduled a massive silent parade down the main street of the city to protest the arrests and the government's violence. The mayor read the Riot Act as a warning to the crowd of men, women and children. However, few expected the ferocity of the attack that followed. Fifty mounted police, swinging baseball bats, rode down upon the marchers--who parted silently to let them through. The riders swung around, drew their pistols and galloped into the crowd, firing as they came. They were followed by club-swinging police. When the crowd was scattered and the bodies counted, two workers were dead and thirty others lay in pools of their own blood. The city was put under martial law and all meetings and public gatherings were banned. As it became increasingly difficult to hold the strikers together, the Metal Trades and Building Trades Councils negotiated a settlement that included a reduction in metal trades hours from fifty-five to fifty a week with no reduction in pay, but little else. Thousands of the strikers were fired, blacklisted and otherwise discriminated against and the government continued to harass unions, raiding labor temples and seizing records not only in Winnipeg, but in Calgary, Saskatoon, Brandon and Montreal.

The clubs, bullets, arrests, raids and blacklists that finally ended the Winnipeg General Strike after nine weeks left a residue of bitter class militance in Canadian workers and radicalism in Canadian politics that continues to reverberate in the Canadian labor movement. In seeking to know why Canada as a nation is second only to Great Britain in the number of strikes each year, one can start with the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919.

Repression And Retreat 1920—1930

During the Great War 1914-1918 the Wilson Administration gave unions more recognition than they ever had before. From Colonial times state and federal governments usually helped employers fight unions. But President Wilson, seeking to grease the wheels of war production, believed unionized workers, with grievance procedures would be more productive than individual workers with grievances.

This unprecedented government encouragement, together with the rapid buildup at arsenals, armaments and ammunition plants, shipyards and other metalworking operations, swelled IAM membership to previously unimagined heights. By the end of 1918, the IAM was America's largest union.

Wages and working conditions were good and getting better. The future never looked so rosy. And when the government took over operation of the nation's railroads the outlook seemed even brighter. The IAM had advocated public ownership of public utilities since 1899. Now Johnston and other top IAM officers were confident that government operation would prove so efficient the railroads would never be turned back to private ownership.

The newly appointed Railroad Commissioner, William McAdoo, was Wilson's son-in-law and one of the leading progressives of his time. As railroad commissioner he banned discrimination against railroad workers because of union membership and established a system of National Adjustment Boards to settle grievances and disputes. With this protection the IAM's membership soared in the nation's railroad roundhouses. Even the most stubbornly open shop railroad in the country--the rich and powerful Pennsylvania--was organized. By 1919 IAM membership went over the 300,000 mark, almost triple what it had been when the 1916 Grand Lodge Convention was held in Baltimore.

At the war's end the IAM waged a vigorous but fruitless campaign to keep the railroads under government control. The union sponsored, and persuaded the rest of the AFL to support, a plan known as the Plumb Plan to transfer ownership of the railroads permanently to the federal government. Union spokesmen argued that railroads should be operated for the public interest rather than for private profit. Congress, in its infinite wisdom, voted for "normalcy." In January 1919, rail properties were returned to their private owners. At the headquarters of the American Association of Railway Executives, the first order of business was to roll back the gains won by unions during government operation. Industry chiefs began preparing for the showdown that came in 1922.

As shipyards and munitions factories closed one after another in 1919, the IAM's membership began a long, steady slide from the wartime high. Even so the organization entered the decade that has come to be known as "The Roaring Twenties" in a spirit of optimism. Johnston told delegates to the 1920 Convention in Rochester that despite increased employer opposition he was confident the membership would reach 400,000 or even 500,000 in the next four years.

In 1920 railroad unions still held the gains made during the war. Standard agreements had been negotiated and were in effect in both the United States and Canada. They provided for union recognition, the eight-hour day, an 85¢ hourly wage for journeymen, apprentice training and seniority.

In October, 1920 the IAM resolved a long-standing jurisdictional dispute with the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE). This was primarily a union of British machinists with headquarters in England. In the early years immigrating British journeymen brought their union with them and stuck with it even after the AFL gave the IAM exclusive jurisdiction over all employed in the machinist trade. The IAM and ASE crowded one another from the start. A temporary peace was established in 1904 but over the years bitter and continuing clashes made it clear the North American continent only had room for one union of machinists.

In 1919, *Journal* editor Fred Hewitt and the Canadian GVP, J. A. McClelland, traveled to Manchester, England to meet with delegates to an ASE Convention. Following this meeting the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (today called the Amalgamated Engineering Union) agreed to withdraw entirely from the North American continent and cede its American and Canadian "branches" to the IAM. This agreement helped to slow, but could not stop, the postwar erosion of IAM membership.

Home Sweet Home



With the dedication of a new headquarters on Mt. Vernon Square in 1920 the IAM achieved a long sought goal. In place of leased office space in the headquarters of the American Federation of Labor the members finally had a home of their own. After years of talking and dreaming of a "Machinists Building" the union erected a seven-story structure near the heart of the Nation's Capital. It cost less than \$375,000 including land.*

**After the "Old Machinist Building" served as Grand Lodge Headquarters for thirty-six years it was sold to AFSCME for \$525,000.*

The Grand Lodge staff, which now numbered about seventy, including officers, bookkeepers, stenographers, mail handlers, stock clerks, the strike desk, file clerks and the *Journal* staff, took over the two top floors. The rest of the building was rented out, mostly to other unions. The ground floor was leased to the Mt. Vernon Savings Bank and a printing plant. Both were owned by the IAM.

Business Unionism and Union Businesses

According to Johnston the IAM established the Mt. Vernon Bank so that the hard-earned wages of working men would not have to be deposited with bankers who would use them against unions. In addition to the dignity (and rent) Mt. Vernon Bank gave the Machinists Building, it was also intended to assure a higher return on the union's investments and to provide a source of loans for employers willing to deal fairly with the union. Loans were made to machine shops that other bankers blackballed because they were unionized at a time when the NAM was leading a concerted national campaign of union-busting.

The IAM was the first of many unions to enter what became known as "labor banking" in the 1920's. By 1926, thirty-five unions had established banks with total assets of more than \$126 million. In addition to the bank the IAM bought and operated a printing plant, various machine shops and a ship repair yard in Virginia. The printing plant was set up to take care of the union's own printing needs which were considerable by this time. The machine shops and shipyards were meant to give jobs to machinists who were out of work because of strikes or blacklisting.

The IAM's business ventures proved more idealistic than profitable. The machine shops, shipyard and printing plant all went broke within a few years. Few of the thirty-five labor banks in existence in the mid '20's survived the economic catastrophe of the 1930's and the Mt. Vernon Savings Bank was no exception. It never re-opened after the four-day "Bank Holiday" which President Roosevelt declared after taking office in March 1933. Assets were taken over by a successor entity, the Mount Vernon Mortgage Corporation. Following some rather complicated legal maneuvering in the mid and late '40's the IAM disposed of all interest and was freed from further liability. According to the 1948 Officers' Report, "All of those having had money on deposit with the Mount Vernon Savings Bank at the time of its closing have now been taken care of in full payment of dollar for dollar."

In the early 1920's the IAM tried to attract and hold members by offering benefits outside of collective bargaining. In addition to raising the maximum death benefit from \$200 to \$300, delegates to the 1920 Grand Lodge Convention mandated inexpensive life insurance for all IAM members. This was at a time when few working families could afford such protection, when workers in many hazardous industrial jobs often could not get insurance at any price. Although premiums for IAM policies were low and members did not have to pass a physical few new members were attracted and only a small fraction of the existing membership purchased the insurance.

The union also tried to get members involved in a "sales" campaign by offering a \$1.00 commission for every new member recruited. This netted a grand total of 4,000 members.

In another unorthodox effort to strengthen the membership base Johnston got the President of Mexico, and IAM member, to agree to channel all orders from his government through the union. Whenever possible Mexican orders went only to companies agreeing to union shop contracts with the IAM.

In a more traditional effort the Grand Lodge distributed two-million pieces of organizing literature and mailed out thousands of letters to try to build interest. More than 300 volunteers followed up with house calls.

Class Warfare in the 1920's

While the war lasted and America needed an unbroken flow of armaments, the federal government forced employers to recognize and deal with unions to insure labor peace. With the war over, big business began to drive unions from America's work places. While attending the Peace Conference in Paris, Wilson cabled home uplifting sentiments about the workers' right to share "in some organic way" in decisions affecting the work place. But "over here" the corporations grimly resolved to turn the clock back.

The opening offensive came in the steel industry. At the war's end the steel companies were swimming in profits. yet their workers remained among the most exploited in America. Largely first or second generations immigrants, the men who labored over the open hearths in the nation's steel mills were victimized by starvation wages and barbaric working conditions. In other industries the eight-hour day was fast becoming standard. In the steel mills workers were still forced to work twelve hours a day and six days a week. At least a third earned less than a subsistence wage and three-quarters were below a minimum standard of comfort.

In September, 1919, some 350,000 workers walked off their jobs in the belt of steel cities and towns that extends from Gary and Hammond to Cleveland and Youngstown and on to Pittsburgh, Johnstown and Buffalo.

In October, President Wilson called an industrial conference of representatives of labor, business and the public to try to find peaceful ways of dealing with this strike as well as others brewing on the railroads and other basic industries. As leader of the labor delegation, Sam Gompers offered a resolution asking the conference to name a six-member panel to arbitrate the steel strike, then in its fifth week. The president of U.S. Steel, Elbert Gary, flatly rejected this proposal. Gompers then offered another resolution affirming "The right of wage-earners to organize, without discrimination; to bargain collectively; to be represented by representatives of their own choosing in negotiations with employers in respect to wages, hours and conditions of employment." Gary also vetoed this second resolution. Gompers led the union men out of the hall, defiantly warning the employers,

You have defeated us in our proposition, but you have not broken one line of this movement of ours, nor have you crushed the spirit of that movement. The word you have spoken here means nothing. You have defeated the labor group in its declaration, but we will meet you again in conference and when we do . . . you will be glad to talk collective bargaining.

The steel strike went on. Over the next four months the steel companies, aided by state and local governments, waged merciless warfare on the workers and their families. State troopers rode down their picket lines and judges sent them to jail. Employers planted spies in union halls and sheriffs suppressed the civil liberties of union leaders. Twenty strikers were killed and countless others clubbed without mercy. The strike finally collapsed. Later an Inter-Church Commission of Inquiry found, "The United States Steel Corporation was too big to be beaten by 300,000 workers. It had too large a cash surplus, too many allies among business . . . government . . . the press and the pulpit."

The NAM and The American Plan

Encouraged by the victory of the steel magnates, other industries went on a rampage of union-busting. The new President, Warren Harding an empty-headed Republican machine politician from Ohio, campaigned on the slogan "Back to Normalcy." To employers this signaled federal approval of union-busting. Over the next few years the National Association of Manufacturers urged all employers to operate on what they called the American Plan. Quite simply the American Plan was the old-fashioned open shop. Most employers didn't need much urging. But the few who were willing to go on negotiating and dealing with unions were soon whipped into line. Banks called in their loans; customers cancelled orders and suppliers refused to make deliveries.

In the rush to return to their pre-war open shops employers brought out and dusted off all the old union-busting tactics: yellow dog contracts, injunctions, blacklists, labor spies and using thugs like Pearl Bergoff to pistol whip pickets and move scabs through picket lines.

The IAM's old enemy, the National Metal Trades Association, pushed the American Plan throughout the metal trades industry. The NMTA offered a complete line of blacklisting, spying and strikebreaking services. In 1921 their membership and income rose 400%. The effectiveness of the blacklist was described many years later by an old time member who served as president of Local Lodge 439 in Cleveland during World War I. He told how he went to apply for a job after the war "and was refused before I had a chance to open my mouth." When he asked for an explanation "the employer simply pulled my photograph out from inside his desk." With metalworking employers everywhere applying pressures such as these the IAM's membership went into a tailspin. In a span of four years membership plunged from more than 330,000 to less than 78,000.

As the IAM's membership melted so did many of the hard-won benefits gained during the war years. The president of the NMTA exulted,

"Thousands of employers . . . have decided to lengthen the basic week to fifty, fifty-four or fifty-five hours, being convinced that a shorter work week is uneconomic and that to work a longer week, paying overtime for all hours over the forty-four or forty-eight hour week is merely another way of increasing wages."

He sternly trumpeted "that the abnormally high wages which have recently prevailed must recede before we can expect to return to a normal basis." In thousands of work places, seniority clauses evaporated and workers were once again at the mercy of foremen. Workers who had fought for grievance procedures once more had to "take it or leave it."

Having failed to drive the Machinists out of Cincinnati in the winter of 1915-1916, the NMTA set out to do it in 1919. An NMTA official later admitted "It was not a question of wages or hours; it was a question of whether Cincinnati was going to be made an open shop town."

In the test of strength that followed, 8,000 Machinists were driven out on strike. While some of the smaller firms defied the NMTA and settled after three months, the IAM was under attack on several fronts. Between January 1, 1919 and June 30, 1920, the Grand Lodge mailed out more than \$1,750,000 in strike benefits, including \$240,000 to striking members in Cincinnati. After five months more than half the members in Cincinnati had either moved to other cities, taken out retirement cards or dropped out of the union. All the gains made during the war were lost.

The disastrous membership slide in the early '20's was hastened by a demoralizing defeat in a two-year strike against American Can Company. This was an all-out effort, formally endorsed by a \$1.00 per member assessment on all members, including specialists and helpers as well as journeymen, voted by the 1920 Grand Lodge Convention in Rochester and ratified by referendum.*The strike affected all the company's fifty-six plants. The primary issues were wages, union recognition and changes in the company's incentive system. American Cans counter-attack was designed and directed by the NMTA. Newspapers and politicians helped the company whip up public hysteria against "Reds", radicals and labor "agitators." Though the IAM launched a desperate secondary boycott the strikers finally faced the humiliation of going, hat-in-hand, for individual rehiring on a plant-by-plant basis.

**The assessment made in the American Can strike in the early 1920's was the IAM's last formal union-wide effort to assess the entire membership although voluntary collections continue to be made in response to circulated appeals made on behalf of specific strikes or natural disasters.*

When the strike was formally called off in January 1922 the union's reserves were badly depleted. As a result the IAM was unprepared for the massive blow about to be struck by the railroad industry.

The Great Railroad Strike of 1922

In the spring of 1921, with the economy in a deep slump and unemployment rising, the carriers decided the time was ripe to roll back the gains workers had made in the war years. They petitioned the Railway Labor Board for a reduction in wages. The Board, piously calling on workers to bear their share "of the burden of the general economic readjustment," ordered a five to eighteen cents an hour reduction in wages. For some journeymen machinists this amounted to almost a 25% drop in family income. The Board then added insult to injury by issuing a notorious decision wiping out time-and-a-half for Sundays and holidays, a benefit won long before the war. The conflict that followed became one of the most historic and long and bitterly remembered, in the annals of the Machinists Union. The roots went deeper than disagreement over wages and work rules. Railroad executives, like their counterparts in other industries, were seeking not only to roll back wages and working conditions, but to smash unionism totally and for all time in the shop crafts. They began with a coldly calculated strategy of contracting out the work of union employees.

During the winter of 1921, the Pennsylvania Railroad laid off 8,000 workers, paying subcontractors almost \$3,200,000 more than the work would have cost on their own premises. In a detailed report describing events leading to the Great Railroad Strike of 1922, GVP Pete Conlon told how such railroads as:

The New York Central and Michigan Central . . . contracted their locomotive and car repairs to outside contractors at prices that have been judged by the Interstate Commerce Commission as exorbitant, thereby throwing thousands of their own men out of employment, following which the shops were closed down for several months and then leased to dummy . . . contractors.

In what was clearly an employer conspiracy, this strategy spread quickly along the far-flung web of iron rails that laced America together--from the Bangor and Aroostock to the Chicago and Great Western, from the Katy Line to the Wheeling and Lake Erie, from the Seaboard Line to the Southern Pacific.

Throughout the nation the railroad bosses unilaterally violated working conditions that supposedly had been settled by collective bargaining agreements or decisions of the Railway Labor Board. Month after frustrating month the shop craft unions tried to get the Board to act. Finally in June, 1922 the Board responded by ruling that it "had no police powers to enforce . . . decisions." Faced with this abdication of government responsibility the Railway Employees Department of the AFL mailed strike ballots to members of the six shop craft unions. Ninety-five percent came back marked "Strike"! On July 1, 79,000 Machinists joined more than 300,000 other shop craft workers in the biggest walkout in American railroad history.

At that time the operation of the nation's railroads was crucial to the economy. They had a virtual monopoly on interstate movement of freight and passengers. In 1922 there were no airlines, no

interstates. The few narrow roads that connected one region to another were generally rutted and muddy. The age of the motor car had hardly begun.

Railroading was not only one of the largest and most powerful industries in America,* it was probably the most significant employer of labor. In working class neighborhoods railroad employees were envied. If there was an aristocracy of labor it surely included railroad workers.

**In Pennsylvania, for example, it is said that at one time the State Legislature did not adjourn until the speaker checked with the Pennsylvania Railroad's lobbyists to see if there was anything else they wanted done.*

When the shop craft workers laid down their tools on July 1, 1922, the operating brotherhoods remained on duty and the trains continued to move. The carriers immediately began to recruit a new work force, dispatching clerks, bookkeepers and college boys on summer vacation to the shops and yards. A nationwide call went out for strikebreakers. An article in the New York Times Magazine later reported "They came a-running, these strikebreakers. Train load after train load of recruits [were] dumped into railroad towns . . . thugs, gunmen, card sharks, second story men and ex-bootleggers." The Times further noted "The railroads have put their yards in a state of siege. At many shops . . . machine guns were installed."

The workers suffered through week after week of wageless paydays. By the end of the fourth week, on July 28, President Harding stirred himself enough to propose a settlement which would have given the strikers little except their seniority rights. While the unions were ready to snatch at this slender straw, the railroads turned down the President's proposal. They issued a mealy-mouthed statement that referred to the scabs as "our loyal employees," thus converting the strike into a lockout. As the summer wore on and increasing numbers of locomotives and cars broke down because of lack of maintenance, management's solid front showed signs of cracking.

At this crucial point Harding's Attorney General, Harry Daugherty* persuaded a federal judge to issue the most sweeping injunction ever imposed on workers before or since (or that anyone could have imagined in a free society). According to the terms of this appalling ruling union officers and members were not only prohibited from striking, advising others to strike and paying strike benefits, but from assembling, picketing, mentioning the strike in union publications or even talking about it in union meetings. Students of industrial relations in America generally agree that the "Daugherty Injunction" was, and remains, the most sweeping ever laid down in a labor dispute. Since it prohibited interviews to be published in newspapers it was too much even for the largely conservative, business-minded press. The New York Times called it "manifestly absurd and incapable of execution." The New York Evening Post termed it "a blow below the belt . . . that forbids the elementary rights of free speech." And when Daugherty blared that he was using "the power of the government to prevent labor unions from destroying the open shop." *The New York World* pointed out, "It is none of Mr. Daugherty's business as Attorney General whether shops are open or closed . . . If Mr. Daugherty thinks this threat will cause labor unions to abandon the lawful conduct of their affairs he has another guess coming."

**A sleazy small-time political hack from Harding's hometown in Ohio Daugherty was later driven from office in disgrace for his role in the infamous Teapot Dome Scandal. He undoubtedly would have gone to jail had he not burned his papers and records before he went on trial.*

The arrogance of Daugherty's injunction helped to build public sympathy for the strikers. But, when backed by the bayonets of the militia it broke the strike and destroyed the union shops. Many carriers, including the Pennsylvania Railroad, were able to keep unions off their premises for decades to come. Forced to accept the wage cuts the shopmen would not see another raise until 1941.

This debacle in the railroad industry, following so closely on the heels of the disaster at American Can Company plants, speeded the sharp drop in IAM membership between 1920 and 1924. It wiped out the little that was left of the financial cushion built up during the war years. Assaulted on all sides, by the NAM and NMTA, the federal government and a solidly anti-union front in the railroad industry, the IAM's membership was pounded down year by year. One Journalist observed at the time, "The wonder is not that the union now has less than 100,000 members but that it has survived at all."

With the membership increasingly demoralized by disappearing bargaining units and lost strikes, Johnston became increasingly convinced of the need for organized political action.

A Toe in the Political Waters

When delegates to the 1924 Grand Lodge Convention gathered in Detroit their mood was gloomy. Disillusioned by the failure of economic action they were ready to try political solutions. They repudiated the Presidential candidates of both major parties, denouncing the Republican candidate, Calvin Coolidge, as "The representative of special privilege" and deriding Charles Dawes, his running mate as "profane, labor-baiting demagogue." The Democratic candidate, John W. Davis, fared no better. He was dismissed with disgust as an errand boy of the Morgans, Mellons and other big money, Wall Street interests.

Historically, the IAM had banned discussion of "partisan politics" in local lodges. In the early '20's Johnston began to try to increase direct political action not only in the IAM and other railroad unions but in the AFL itself. Early in 1922 he headed a committee of railroad unions which held a Conference of Progressive Political Action (CPPA). He wanted this to be a launching pad for a third party, a labor party such as was developing in Great Britain. Failing to recruit support from the old line conservative craft unionists of the AFL, Johnston led the IAM to a third party outside the labor movement. For the first time Grand Lodge Convention delegates officially endorsed a Presidential candidate. A resolution urged all IAM lodges to support Senator Robert M. LaFollette of Wisconsin who was running as a Progressive Independent. Popularly known as "Fighting Bob," LaFollette had fought special privilege and corporate power all his life. More than anyone else he exposed the Teapot Dome scandal--the Watergate of the Harding Administration and the biggest steal of public resources to that time. LaFollette battled the giveaway of forest land and other public property and fought for direct

election of senators, women's suffrage and child labor laws. He pioneered workman's compensation in Wisconsin and sponsored the Federal Employer's Liability Act, the Seaman's Act and shorter hours for railroaders. Despite IAM endorsement LaFollette carried only one state, Wisconsin. The IAM made no further presidential endorsements until Franklin D. Roosevelt ran against Alf Landon in 1936.

The B&O Plan

Throughout the 1924 Convention Johnston was harassed by a militant minority which included some who had helped him unseat O'Connell little more than a decade earlier. Johnston became vulnerable to internal attack from diehards in the aftermath of the 1922 shop craft disaster. Trying to salvage a presence in the industry he met with the president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and agreed to a formula for labor-management cooperation which became widely known as the B & O Plan.

In essence the B & O Plan was a forerunner of today's quality work circles. It provided for joint committees of workers and supervisors to meet at least once a month to talk about production and efficiency. In return for the company's agreement to recognize the union and to give the workers a fair share of increased output, employees agreed to try to raise the amount and quality of their work, to conserve materials and to make suggestions for improved methods of production. The B & O Plan was first tested in the Glenwood shops outside of Pittsburgh. From there it spread gradually to other B & O shops and eventually to a number of other railroads throughout the United States and Canada.

The 1924 Grand Lodge Convention received three resolutions condemning such collaboration between Johnston and management. These resolutions endorsed the class struggle and censured Johnston for "consuming much of our organization's time and finances in furthering . . . an employer's scheme that will lead to the destruction of our union." In the debate on the resolution Johnston turned the chair over to Vice President Conlon so he could speak in his own defense. He argued with eloquence and at some length that he had agreed to the B & O Plan only to give members more control of the work place. He responded to those who advocated "getting all you can and giving as little as you can" by saying that while this might be the philosophy of Communists and IWW, it was not the philosophy of the IAM. After a call for a division of the house the Convention supported Johnston 126 to 33.

The Great Red Scare

The IAM's position on Communism and Communists changed dramatically between 1920 and 1924. At the 1920 Convention in Rochester the delegates authorized Johnston and the IAM's first general counsel, Frank Muholland, to visit Russia for the purpose of promoting purchase of American-made machinery. They were refused entry to the "worker's paradise" but Johnston affirmed his "great sympathy for Russia and her people in this period of struggle for something better than absolute

despotism." That was before the nation was swept by a hysteria that has come to be known as the "Great Red Scare." This period of mass panic was set off by Lenin's triumph over the Czarist regime in Russia. Millions of otherwise sensible Americans seemed to think their country was about to be taken over by Bolsheviks. Newspapers fanned public fear day after day with screaming headlines and sensational allegations of a great Red conspiracy. As early as 1920 Wilson's Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer, led a series of clearly illegal raids aimed at rounding up and deporting suspected radicals. For a time free speech was practically outlawed in America as local officials joined patriotic organizations, such as the American Legion, in enforcing the "American Way." The best known historian of the 1920's, Fredrick Lewis Allen, later wrote of the Great Red Scare, "It was an era of lawless and disorderly defense of law and order, of unconstitutional defense of the Constitution, of suspicion and civil conflict--in a very literal sense, a reign of terror."*

**It is interesting to note the parallel with the similar anti-Communist hysteria that led to the rise of McCarthyism following the Second World War.*

By 1924, known Reds were being driven from the union. In Toledo, seven members of Lodge 105 who joined a Communist front organization were convicted on charges of dual unionism. When Johnston rejected their appeal, the Executive Board upheld the conviction. The Convention ratified this action--thereby ruling in effect that Communist association was prohibited from dual unionism. The following year Johnston codified the ban on Communism in the IAM in an official circular which stated that the purpose of the Communist Party "is the destruction of the Trade Union Movement in America."

As revenues and membership continued their downward slide following the 1924 Convention, the factions opposed to Johnston gained strength. He had successfully beaten back challenges for the International Presidency in earlier elections. But the defeat of Pete Conlon in 1916 along with the election of a General Executive Board controlled by the anti-Johnston faction in 1922 indicated that this support was slipping. By 1925, GVP J. F. Anderson, who unseated Pete Conlon in 1916, decided to go for the top spot. Johnston now seemed to be as vulnerable as O'Connell had been in 1911.

When running against O'Connell, Johnston advocated a "progressive" platform and cooperation with the Socialist Party. By the early 1920's he had become more conservative. As the war-time gains melted under the heat of post-war employer resistance Johnston swung back toward the Gompers and O'Connell philosophy of craft trade unionism. This repelled some of his supporters. Others were alienated when he endorsed the B & O Plan. Still others were antagonized when he defined membership in Communist front organizations as dual unionism.

In the campaign Anderson criticized Johnston for spending union time and money on the Conference for Progressive Political Action, for leaving Grand Lodge to attend political conventions and for his travels to Mexico and Russia. He also exploited a nostalgic yearning among old-time journeymen for the craft-conscious unionism of earlier times. Anderson hit a nerve in campaign literature demanding that "the leaders quit offering the IAM as an asylum for all who have had machine shop soil on their hands. Let us maintain it for real machinists . . . We have opened our arms to everybody . . . we should give first consideration to ourselves."

According to the March 1925 *Journal* the lines between contending factions within the union were more sharply drawn than ever before. The campaign took a venomous turn when The Daily Worker denounced Johnston as a "tool of the bosses." The official organ of the Communist Party called on "militants" in the IAM to defeat Johnston and his slate. In fairness it should be noted that the Party did not get commitments it demanded from Anderson, namely to fight the B & O Plan, reinstate the Toledo Seven, stop persecuting "militants" (i.e. Communists) and to work for amalgamation of the metal trades (i.e. one big union). According to the long-time editor of the *Journal*, Fred Hewitt, the Communists tried to elect Anderson "not because they loved him more, but because they loved Johnston less." Throughout the campaign mud was slung from all sides. Hewitt described it as "the most vicious in our entire history" and reported "all sorts of ridiculous, trumped-up charges hurled at candidates for office . . . Locals were flooded with circular letters of such a vile character that in many lodges they were consigned to the wastebasket."

Johnston survived the challenge but just barely. He won by only 945 votes out of more than 35,000 cast. Before the dust settled Anderson circulated a paper titled "The Story of the Big Steal" to all IAM lodges. He charged GST Emmet Davison with election fraud, alleging the GST peeked at the tally sheets before Anderson's observer arrived for the counting of the ballots. Anderson claimed that when Davison saw Johnston's slate, including himself, was behind, he contacted a number of friendly business representatives and urged them to rush more Johnston votes to Grand Lodge.

A thorough investigation by a panel that included Anderson himself, demolished these accusations. Microscopic examination of postmarks which Anderson claimed were May 13 (which would have been after the official close of the balloting) proved they were actually May 3. Moreover, it was found that if Davison had chosen to be strictly technical he could have thrown out some 2,000 votes counted for Anderson while disqualifying only 100 of Johnston's ballots on the same ground.

Though Anderson's allegations did not hold up under scrutiny, his supporters pressed noisily on. They initiated a recall petition aimed at the entire Executive Council and set out to collect the needed number of endorsements. Some were sent in the name of lodges that had become defunct. Others were mailed without the knowledge of officers and members of local lodges.

During the summer of 1925 IAM lodges seethed with discord and dissension. Charges and counter-charges swarmed back and forth like angry wasps. The rupture threatened to tear the organization apart. Under constant pressure Johnston collapsed, felled by a stroke from which he never fully recovered. Vice President Pete Conlon took over as acting president.

Throughout the fall and winter Conlon and others moved to bind the union's wounds. When it came time for the Executive Council to choose a successor to the stricken IP, Conlon would appear to have been the logical choice. He was popular and, as resident GVP, had experience as Johnston's second in command at Grand Lodge. But with the Ku Klux Klan at its height in 1926 his religion may have been the factor that ruled him out.* In fact many years later Roy Siemiller recalled that when he came on the field staff in the mid-30's, Conlon's memory and influence were still fresh in the union and several members of the Executive Council admitted that Conlon would have been IP if he had not been a

Catholic. Having dedicated most of his life to the IAM, Conlon someone removed from the recent bloodletting could heal the wounds. When Johnston officially resigned on July 1, 1926, Conlon joined the rest of the Executive Council in asking Arthur O. Wharton to leave the Presidency of the Railway Employees Department and accept the leadership of the IAM.

**Today it is difficult to comprehend how powerful the KKK became in the 1920's. According to Frederick Lewis Allen its membership reached 4.5 million by 1924 and it wielded "Great political power, dominating for a time . . . Oregon, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Indiana, Ohio and California. Its chief strongholds were in the South, the Middle West and the Pacific Coast, but it had invaded almost every part of the country and had even reached the gates of the stronghold of sophistication . . . New York City."*

The Wharton Years



A.O. Wharton
1926-1939

Wharton had made his reputation not only in the IAM, but throughout the labor movement for his part in the 1911 strike against the Illinois Central and Harriman Lines. As the IAM's representative to this early stab at coordinated bargaining, he became everybody's choice to head the six shop crafts negotiating team--the so-called Federation of Federations. Later, when these six organizations created a formal Railway Employee's Department in the AFL, they elected Wharton as first president. When he agreed to be drafted to lead his own union, he took a substantial cut in salary--from \$10,000 to \$7,500 a year. He did so to halt the dissension which, as he said, "was wrecking the organization to a degree no outside agency had been able to accomplish." However, he made it clear, both to the Executive Council and the 1928 Grand Lodge Convention, that he would not uproot his family and would continue to consider Chicago his home. This meant daily reimbursement for "out-of-town" expenses whenever he was in Washington. It also made him vulnerable to sniping by verbal sharpshooters in the local lodges.*

**And led to a referendum in 1933 which cut off Wharton's daily out-of-town expense allowance by defining Washington, D.C. as the designated home base for the International President.*

Wharton was born in 1873 into a mixed Anglo-Indian homesteading family on a remote and windswept plain in Kansas. While still a young boy his mother was widowed when his father got lost in a blizzard and froze to death. At fourteen he began a machinist apprenticeship on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. Upon becoming a journeyman in 1890 Wharton joined the IAM and went to work for the Union Pacific soon after. There he helped organize several lodges and was a leader of a strike against that railroad in 1893. Over the next several years he remained active in union affairs and was elected to a number of local and district lodge offices. In 1903, at the age of thirty, he became general chairman of the district representing IAM members on the Missouri Pacific Railroad.

While President of the Railway Employee's Department Wharton also served as labor representative on a number of federal agencies, including the Railroad Labor Board. His scorching

dissents to the wage-cutting, rules-wrecking decisions that touched off the 1922 shop craft strike made him a hero to shop craft workers.

Wharton has been described as "short in stature with a broad forehead and piercing eyes." He was normally stiff, formal and correct in his relationships with others.* Old-time employees remembered him as somewhat distant and aloof. Reportedly Wharton rarely felt comfortable with the more friendly and outgoing Davison. Relations between the two became increasingly strained, so much so that people working for the two departments, the I.P. and the G.S.T., said that it was like working for two different organizations. Even so, Wharton continued to command enormous respect from his contemporaries in other railroad unions.

**However soon after assuming office Wharton took care of Johnston, who had no pension or other source of income, by arranging for a position with the IAM-owned Mr. Vernon Bank. As noted the bank went under following the '29 crash and Johnston died penniless at the age of 63 in 1937.*

Philosophically Wharton was a craft trade unionist in the Gompers and O'Connell mold. Rejecting the IAM's brief experimentation with direct political action Wharton told the members "We will be less visionary and more practical by concentrating our efforts in the direction of securing immediate and material benefits." This was the Gompers creed of bread and butter, or business, unionism in a nutshell. In laying out the policies that would guide his administration Wharton returned to the first principles on which Talbot had founded the union almost four decades earlier: "To reduce strikes to a minimum to establish cooperative relations with every employer who is willing to recognize our association and establish mutually satisfactory contractual relations." It was his fate to have to steer the IAM through the most terrible depression in history. In the beginning, though, he was fortunate in that the hemorrhaging of membership that began in 1920 had been staunch. By 1926 membership stabilized around 70,000. This is about what it had been in 1913 and this is where it stayed until the collapse of the American economy in the early 1930's.

The Railway Labor Act and Company Unionism

The IAM's survival, like that of the other shop craft unions on the railroads, was in no small part due to the Railway Labor Act of 1926. In essence it imposed upon employers and employees a general duty to make every reasonable effort to settle disputes by private negotiation aided by government mediation and recommendations. It prohibited either party, while statutory procedures were under way, to change the conditions out of which the dispute arose. Employers could not alter wages or working conditions and workers could not strike while negotiators were seeking agreement.

The Railway Labor Act helped to slow the spread of the American Plan in what was then one of America's largest and most important industries. More significantly the courts ruled that under its provisions railroad managements could not promote company unions if their employees wanted to belong to legitimate labor organizations.

In the 1920's, many, if not most, major railroads (and, in fact, many of America's largest corporations) forced their workers to join and pay dues to puppet organizations set up and controlled by management. Some of these company unions offered a wide variety of employee benefits such as profit-sharing and bonuses, company insurance and pensions, company magazines and many other sweeteners intended to make workers feel they were all part of "one big family"--service pins, veterans clubs, athletic teams, payroll propaganda slips, and even brass bands and country clubs. Company unions seemed to give employees a kind of pretend unionism, but actually tightened management's grip on the work force. Their object was to keep workers out of genuine unions. To a large extent they were successful. The section on organizing in the Officers' Report to the 1928 Grand Lodge Convention admitted that company unions hurt IAM organizing by offering workers some benefits they might otherwise try to get by joining the IAM. The report mentioned other factors then handicapping the IAM's organizing efforts. These have a familiar ring even in the 1980's. They were:

(1) Fear--"Widespread unemployment has struck fear into the hearts of workers."

(2) Technological Change--Improved machinery and power sources resulting in greater productivity meant "fewer men being employed per unit of production both in manufacturing and on the railroads."

(3) Illegal management conduct--Many railroad managements were disregarding both the letter and spirit of the Railway Labor Act and it was apparent "certain managements do not propose to permit employees on their properties to benefit . . . under this law."

(4) Outside distractions--"The motion picture, radio and automobile afford . . . relaxation from the daily grind of the factory . . . We are passing through a phase that might be termed frivolous . . . Arguments on serious topics are a drug on the market."

A report on the special problems of organizing in the fast-growing auto repair industry noted that it seemed to be harder to hold mechanics after they were organized than to organize them in the first place. Workers in automobile repairing were described as a "migratory set who changed jobs frequently." It was further noted that "the garage owners are urged, if not ordered, by [their industry association] not to allow their plants to become unionized."

The 1928 Grand Lodge Convention, held in Atlanta, to commemorate the IAM's fortieth anniversary was a trip down memory lane for many old-timers. At one point the entire delegate body made a pilgrimage to Talbot's grave. Two original charter members who had been with Talbot in the historic locomotive pit 40 years earlier, Henry Garrett and Mike Reilly, were honored guests. Johnston and O'Connell were both invited to speak, as was one of Talbot's daughters. By this time O'Connell was a silver-haired seventy-year old, but was still going strong as president of the Metal Trades Department of the AFL.

According to contemporary newspapers, business had never been better. But these delegates from America's work places had a different view of Coolidge prosperity. Resolutions and committee reports pointed to the steady increase in chronic unemployment. One committee attributed rising joblessness to "the introduction and installation of mechanical equipment of high producing capacity." The convention called for a five-day, 40-hour week and a system of unemployment insurance "in which employers, employees and society as a whole would share the responsibility of unemployment." These proposals were not realistically attainable in 1928. But the delegates were even more utopian in recommending "that each state in the union should have an old-age pension law." The idea of a Federal social security system was too far-fetched to even be suggested. When the fortieth anniversary convention adjourned delegates expected to meet again in 1932. But eight years were to pass before the IAM could afford another convention.

Boom and Bust

People who were young in the 1920's often recall the decade through a haze of golden nostalgia. It has been called everything from "The Jazz Age" to "the Era of Wonderful Nonsense." It was a time of rumble seats and bathtub gin, of flappers and flivvers, of wild and syncopated dances like the Black Bottom and the Charleston, of Stutz Bearcats and coonskin coats, a time of such larger-than-life heroes as the Sultan of Swat, the Manassas Mauler and the Galloping Ghost (otherwise known as Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey and Red Grange). It was a time of instant fads like Mah Jong and crazy phrases like "It's the Bees Knees." It was a time when families traded the piano in the parlor for a "wireless" and took turns at night listening through headphones as a time when anyone could get rich. Messengers played the market on margin and shoeshine boys put deposits on options to buy Florida land. The Republican candidate in the 1928 Presidential election, Herbert Hoover, pledged "A chicken in every pot and two cars in every garage."

As historian Frederick Lewis Allen pointed out the great majority of working families failed to get even a fingerhold on the prosperity bandwagon of the twenties. For working people these were years of tension, unrest, discontent and anxiety. It was a decade of economic chaos, breeding violence between labor and management. At least half the population lived in poverty. Farmers became the first to suffer with farm prices falling by half between 1920 and 1927. Farm families fled the countryside, flooding the cities by the tens of thousands. By increasing the competition for industrial jobs they further depressed the wages and working standards of city workers.

The Seeds of The Great Depression

With unions smashed in steel and on the railroads, management tightened the American Plan noose on what was left of the labor movement in the 1920's. Unions were shellshocked by a steady

barrage of court injunctions, yellow-dog contracts, professional strikebreaking services and company unions. The membership of the AFL melted from more than five million in 1920 to less than three million by 1930.

The legendary prosperity of the 1920's was limited largely to the moneyed classes. These were boom times for employers, bankers, landlords, professionals and speculators. Few wage-earners could demand a fair share of the general plenty. As employers freed themselves from unions they squeezed even greater production and profits out of workers.

During the decade of the 1920's worker productivity rose 51%. But with unions too weak to negotiate a fair share of this increased productivity, wages went up only 2% while the incomes of the employing class rose 41%! The end result was easily predictable. Industrial productivity outran the ability of working families to consume. As inventories piled up, factories began to lay off workers, reducing the purchasing power of the work force and leading to more layoffs. The economy was sucked into a downward whirlpool of accelerating unemployment. Economists tried to explain the catastrophe with pontifications about "overproduction." They were talking nonsense. The Great Depression was not caused by overproduction, but by underconsumption. While there may have been other contributing causes such as runaway stock and land speculation, inequitable taxes and business-minded monetary policies, the primary cause of the Great Depression was the unfair distribution of income brought on by government encouragement of big business greed. The seeds of the Great Depression were planted the day the NAM set out to destroy unionism with its so-called "American Plan."

The Great Depression and the New Deal 1930-1940

The Great Depression was to the 20th Century what the Civil War was to the 19th--a national trauma of unprecedented magnitude. It changed the society, the economy the government, and the American people. The Great Depression of the 1930's marked and scarred a generation. No one who lived through it was ever again quite the same.

From 1929, when the stock market crashed, to 1932, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President, national income fell by more than half. Banks came crashing down all over the country, taking with them the life savings of the middle class. Since there was no Social Security the loss of savings left many Americans face-to-face with a penniless old age. Month after month, year after year, unemployment mounted inexorably from 10% to 15% to 20% to more than 30%. Along with the loss of jobs, savings, homes, farms and businesses, millions lost faith in America.

The jobless were everywhere--on the highways, in cardboard shanty towns known as Hoovervilles, shuffling in long, shabby lines outside of locked factory gates, selling apples on city curbs, waiting numbly in soup lines. In *The Glory and the Dream*, William Manchester described them as ". . .

hungry, defeated, empty, hopeless, restless, driven by they knew not what, always on the move, looking everywhere for work, for the bare crumbs to support their miserable lives."

Through it all the big business President in the White House did worse than nothing. As millions faced hunger and homelessness, Herbert Hoover responded with a stern call for a "balanced budget." although he had made his reputation administering food relief programs for starving Belgians following World War I, Hoover stiffly resisted any effort to feed starving Americans. At one point this "Great Humanitarian" reluctantly agreed to approve a \$25 million appropriation to feed farm animals, but only if Congress would agree to kill a paltry \$120,000 fund intended to feed hungry people.

Hoover had plenty of company among the rich and mighty and powerful. The plump and well-fed president of the NAM primly proclaimed that "If this country ever votes a dole, we've hit the toboggan as a nation." Henry Ford declared that unemployment insurance would only guarantee more unemployment. And *Fortune* magazine, explained how the benign workings of the free market would be subverted if corporations tried to accept social responsibilities.

As factory gates clanged shut across the continent, machinists by the tens of thousands were thrown out on the streets, without jobs and with little hope. From the summer of 1929, just before the stock market crash, to the late spring of 1933, when the New Deal began taking hold, IAM membership dropped from a little more than 73,000 to less than 56,000. The number on unemployment stamps went from 2,400 to 23,200.

As early as April 1930, the *Journal* observed:

the spectacle of long bread lines, crowded employment offices, soup kitchens and hordes of hungry, heartsick, jobless men and women wandering aimlessly through our streets looking for work . . . and, on the other hand, a lavish display of riches by the few who are taking more than their share of the wealth.

By 1931 the *Journal* was warning members against the widespread wave of wage cuts sweeping the nation. It noted that industry was putting the screws to workers who were already among the most cruelly exploited--textile workers in New England and the South, coal miners in Appalachia, steelworkers and tobacco workers. The *Journal* told of one non-union factory in Williamsport, Pennsylvania in which wages were cut 70% and in which, when the workers walked out, the jobs were instantly snapped up by those even more desperate.

Requiem For a Heavyweight

The gloom of the long, dark depression winter of 1931 was deepened by the sudden and unexpected death of Pete Conlon. When struck down by a heart attack in March. Conlon was the best known and most widely beloved machinist in America. A big powerfully-built Irishman, Pete Conlon had

come to symbolize that quality of courage and conviction that is summed up by the phrase "The Fighting Machinists." he was a prolific writer, and eloquent speaker and a born storyteller. More than anyone else he preserved and passed on to later generations of machinists the legends and legacy of the early boomers who laid the foundations for one of America's great unions.

Though only 61 when he died, Conlon had been around so long he had become a father figure to younger members and was revered by the old-timers. He knew thousands of IAM members by name and his door was always open to them. It was later said that rank-and-file machinists always knew they had a friend when Pete Conlon was at Grand Lodge, someone always ready to talk to old-timers dropping by, someone always ready with a dollar or two for a machinist down on his luck.

When Conlon died tributes poured in from every part of the nation. Even Herbert Hoover sent a message of condolence from the White House. The sincerity and depth of the grief that swept the union can be seen in the eighteen full pages of the April, 1931 *Journal* in which Conlon was mourned by high and low alike. No other IAM leader, before or since, ever evoked such an outpouring of admiration and affection. Though largely forgotten today since it was not his destiny to be I.P., Pete Conlon's mark on the IAM was as great as any I.P.'s. He was one of the giants of his time.

The Winters of Discontent

Month after dismal month throughout 1931 and 1932, the *Journal* reported an orgy of wage reductions throughout the nation. To IAM members the worst was a 10% cut imposed by the railroads in January 1931; one of many actual or attempted wage cuts to come. The *Journal* vigorously protested wage-cutting in issue after issue. Union representatives tried vainly to persuade industry and government that the worst possible way to revive prosperity was to further squeeze the little purchasing power left among working families.

Union members were almost unanimously agreed that the massive joblessness at the root of the nation's economic misery was due to the extent to which machinists had taken over human jobs. They also agreed upon a cure--a shorter work week. By early 1933 the *Journal* was regularly featuring articles, reports and letters from members demanding, extolling and pleading for a six-hour day, five day, thirty-hour week.

With the rest of the labor movement the IAM beat the drums for unemployment insurance and federal emergency relief to help feed, clothe and shelter those made destitute by the depression. Early in 1931, for example, a *Journal* editorial noted that "millions of men and women are, and have been for months, without means of livelihood due to their inability to obtain work. Hundreds of thousands . . . are starving. They have neither food nor money."

In the comfort of the White House, President Hoover glumly dressed for dinner every evening and stubbornly stuck to his philosophy of self-reliance and private charity. At one point the great

humanitarian informed a delegation of Congressmen from drought-devastated states that "If the government gives money, individuals will decline to support charitable organizations and a bad precedent will be established."

The Norris-LaGuardia Act

Neither working people nor the labor movement had much to cheer about in the early '30's. Nevertheless in the spring of 1932 Congress passed, and Hoover reluctantly signed, a law restricting the power of federal judges to issue injunctions in labor disputes. Known as the Norris-LaGuardia Act,* it was a turning point in the industrial relations of the nation in that it declared as public policy the right of a worker to "have full freedom of association, self-organization and designation of representatives of his own choosing, to negotiated the terms and conditions of his employment."

*George Norris was a progressive Senator from Nebraska who later became known as the father of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Fiorello LaGuardia was a Congressman from New York who later became New York City's greatest and most popular Mayor.

Prior to the new law's enactment, a judge could, with the flourish of a pen, sign orders sweeping away a worker's freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and other constitutional rights. Hoover signed the Norris-LaGuardia Act only because both Houses of Congress had passed it by more than the two-thirds majority needed to override a veto and only after his attorney general all but guaranteed the courts would declare it unconstitutional. Having seen how the courts had distorted and misapplied anti-trust legislation twenty years earlier, the labor movement half expected the Norris-LaGuardia Act to be struck down. Surprisingly, however, when the question eventually reached the Supreme Court it affirmed this Congressional limitation on judicial jurisdiction. This meant that the labor movement was finally free from yellow dog contracts and other legal harassment--at least in the federal courts.

Hitting Bottom

With membership slumping throughout 1932 the IAM, institutionally at least, seemed to take little notice of the Presidential campaign that year. Wharton's monthly articles in the *Journal* continued to echo his philosophy of business unionism. He was mostly concerned with internal union problems, especially those of the railroaders. At no time did he indicate awareness of an election that was to revolutionize the role of government in American life.

Following the Republican Convention in Chicago, GVP Robert Fechner expressed what must have been a general sense of disgust in the labor movement, noting, "The platform was strangely silent

on the vital problems raised by the Depression. The plank on Labor was . . . meaningless . . . nothing to encourage hope that unemployment would be adequately dealt with or that the unemployed would be protected."

Later, after the Democrats had nominated Franklin Delano Roosevelt, GVP Harvey Brown cautiously ventured an opinion that:

We can be consistent non-partisans in politics and still contend that as between the two recent political conventions the Demmy [sic] platform contains the most worthwhile promises. In my travels I find that not Franklin D. Roosevelt the Democrat, but Franklin D. Roosevelt the Progressive, is a big favorite . . . and if [he attracts] the majority of the votes I trust that candidates who share his views will receive like support.

GVP Fred Lauderhann contemptuously dismissed the campaign as a "sham battle" snorting that it was being "staged by the two major political parties in an effort to control the votes of those who toil."

In November, 1932 Roosevelt was elected by more than seven million votes. The American people, seeking fresh answers to mass misery, also swept a Democratic Congress into power. When Roosevelt took the oath of office the country was paralyzed with fear. Responding and seeking to restore hope the new President assured the nation in his inaugural address that "We have nothing to fear but fear itself . . . our greatest primary task is to put the people back to work."

Only a little more than a month earlier Adolph Hitler throttled democracy in Germany and was preparing the foundation for the Second World War. In Russia Josef Stalin was gathering the last vestiges of total power into his own hands. The Red Revolution, born in the mud, blood and misery of the First World War, was being readied for export to the waiting faithful in other lands.

In May, 1933, before Roosevelt's New Deal had time to take effect, IAM membership scraped bottom at 55,767--with 23,204 on unemployment stamps. This was soon after the Mt. Vernon Savings Bank--which the Machinists so proudly launched thirteen years earlier as America's first labor bank--went belly up. Since most of the union's assets were tied up in the bank, the Grand Lodge scrambled to survive on a hand-to-mouth, month-to-month existence.

During the four day "Bank Holiday" which Roosevelt declared immediately upon taking office the IAM, unable to deposit or cash per capita checks from the local lodges, virtually closed down. The Executive Council wired all field staff not already on furlough, "Entire staff discontinued today. Return home. Explanation later." For several days Davison managed to keep the Grand Lodge afloat by cashing U.S. postal money orders which some lodges still used to remit monthly per capita payments.

In addition to personnel cutbacks and economies made earlier as a result of the stock market crash (such as reducing the *Journal* from sixty-four to forty-eight and eventually forty pages) the Executive Council was forced to cut costs to the bone, reducing their own salaries 10%, setting up a

system of rotating furloughs for GLR's and Grand Lodge auditors in the field and reducing Grand Lodge contributions to business agencies. Stenographers and other employees at the Washington headquarters were laid off for varying numbers of weeks (depending upon length of service).

Throughout this period Lodge 174, with members employed at the Washington Navy Yard in the Nation's Capital, was by far the largest and most solvent lodge in the IAM. In April, 1932, Lodge 174 alone accounted for nearly 6% of the total per capita received from the IAM's 533 lodges. Members at the Navy Yard were among the relatively few skilled journeymen to be steadily employed all through the Depression. Decades later, old timers at 174 meetings enjoyed reminding visiting GLR's and other dignitaries from Grand Lodge that "If it hadn't been for us there wouldn't be no Grand Lodge."

The New Deal

As the Roosevelt Administration began its legendary "First One Hundred Days" America seethed with class violence and hatred. In the Midwest grim-faced farmers poured milk on the highways and gathered, with shot guns unslung, to stop sheriffs from carrying out foreclosure sales. In the cities workers not only staged hunger marches, but strikes and picket lines began to multiply once more. In 1932 fewer than 250,000 workers dared to strike despite the epidemic of wage cuts that swept the nation. A year later, with yellow dog contracts and injunctions banned by the Norris-LaGuardia Act, more than 800,000 working men and women hit the bricks to protest intolerable wages and working conditions.

One of the new President's first initiatives was the national Industrial Recovery Act. Commonly known as the NRA, this was an attempt to stimulate the economy by drafting codes of fair competition for every major industry. The NRA codes sought to stabilize prices and end wage cutting. Each code, theoretically at least, guaranteed the right of collective bargaining while the law itself encouraged "mutual agreements" between employers and employees as to "maximum hours of labor, minimum rates of pay and other conditions of employment." In approving the National Industrial Recover Act, President Roosevelt said, "The law I have just signed was passed to put people back to work--to let them buy more of the products of farms and factories and start our business at a living rate again." On June 25, 1933, just five days after the NRA went into effect, Wharton issued an official circular informing the membership that under this new law "Workers of the United States, no matter where employed, now have the unqualified right to organize without fear of losing their jobs, or denial of employment." A follow-up official circular a month or so later urged all local lodge officers who had not already done so to initiate organizing campaigns without delay. The Supreme Court eventually stuck down the NRA, together with other New Deal legislation. By that time, however, the labor movement had picked itself off the floor and was back in the middle of the fight for economic justice.

The New Deal moved rapidly and in many ways to reduce the suffering the Depression inflicted. By May, Roosevelt's right-hand man, Harry Hopkins, sitting at a rickety desk amidst empty packing cases in the hallway of a government building, made emergency grants to "feed the hungry and house the

homeless" from a \$500 million appropriation just voted by Congress. A wide range of emergency home relief and work programs were hurriedly begun. These included the Public Works Administration (WPA) which put millions of Americans into useful jobs over the next several years. Though sneered at and ridiculed by the largely anti-New Deal press as "leaf-raking boondoggles" these programs put people to work building post offices, bridges, jails, airports, sewers, water pumping stations, recreational areas, power plants, roads, clinics, playgrounds and countless other public facilities, many of which are still serving America.

One of the most successful and widely acclaimed New Deal programs was the Civilian Conservation Corps--headed from the beginning by IAM GVP Robert Fechner. Under his leadership the CCC, as it was known, took 2.5 million youths, black and white, into the countryside to work on soil conservation, flood control and reforestation projects. By the time the CCC was disbanded, at the onset of World War II, Fechner's corpsmen had planted a shelterbelt of 200 million trees from Texas to the Canadian border.

With programs such as these putting people to work--and putting spending money in their pockets--private industry began to perk up. Beginning in June, new organizing finally reversed the three-year decline that almost put the union down for the count. By the end of the year the Grand Lodge chartered 116 new lodges and added some 20,000 names to the membership rolls. Responding to complaints about service Davison Explained that his office was "swamped" by applications for membership. From this point on the IAM never looked back.

The NRA and the Long Road Back

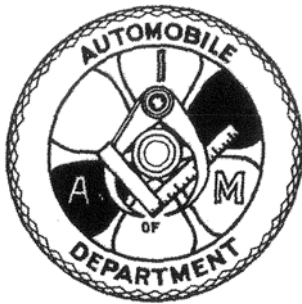
When Roosevelt took office industrialists and businessmen desperately looked to him to save the capitalist system from total collapse. But if there was a honeymoon for the new administration, it was one of the briefest in history. Within months business leaders were noisily protesting NRA codes requiring them to bargain collectively. Tom Girdler, president of Republic Steel, flatly stated that he would close his mills and retire to tend the apple trees on his farm rather than meet with union representatives. Eugene G. Grace, president of Bethlehem Steel, upon being awarded the Iron and Steel Institute's "Gary Award"* intoned his belief in company unions, declaring, "They do not provide for outside organizations foreign to our industry to dictate to men and management as to what constitutes proper relationships between them."

**Named for the unspeakable Elbert Gary, chiefly remembered today for his brutality in crushing 300,000 steelworkers striking against the twelve-hour day in 1919.*

At first organized labor was grateful to get even a small toe in the door. But working people soon realized that NRA head General Hugh S. Johnson was administering it for the benefit of big business. Such major industries as steel, rubber, petroleum and chemical were allowed to continue sponsoring company unions--effectively blocking real collective bargaining.

The code governing automotive repair was delayed for almost a year while the IAM tried to make NRA officials understand that auto mechanics should not be included in a general industry code covering cleaners, bootblacks, pressers and other service occupations. The IAM, which chartered its first automotive lodge, 442 in New York City, in 1912, organized auto mechanics where possible but with limited success until the establishment of an NRA code for the auto repair industry. Despite unrelenting opposition by the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) mechanics flocked to the IAM banner in Akron, Cleveland, Charleston, Chicago, Cedar Rapids, St. Louis, New York, Newark, Philadelphia, San Francisco and many other cities.

Lodge 701 reported that dealers in Chicago signed an NRA pledge to bargain collectively and immediately violated it by sponsoring and financing company unions. Spurred by the NADA Chicago area dealers fought grimly to keep the IAM out. They plastered their shops with anti-IAM propaganda and placards. Violations of the NRA Code were so blatant a federal judge in Chicago actually issued an injunction against the employers--an event so unprecedented Wharton dryly commented it was like a man biting a dog.



In Cleveland, automotive Lodge 1363, chartered in 1919, was down to about fifty members in early 1934. Less than a year later membership had surged to almost a thousand. The business representative reported that committees of volunteers were organizing throughout the area. But getting mechanics signed up was seldom easy. After an organizing meeting in Cedar Rapids one evening GVP Nickerson reported that sixty-seven mechanics asked for membership applications. By daybreak all but a handful were scared off by employer threats and pressure.

When a strike for union recognition in the Twin Cities closed down most garages, a so-called Citizens Alliance imported professional thugs to attack and intimidated pickets. As described in the *Journal*, "A couple of the garages made a pretense of operating their shops, with two or three scabs and an army of uniformed police, machine guns and tear gas bombs."

The Citizens Alliance attempted to frame the local business representative, Herman Husman, who was in the process of getting his citizenship papers. A fink was paid to lure Husman to a meeting at which young mechanics allegedly wanted to learn more about the union. The meeting was a trap, designed to get Husman to make pro-Communist statements. Later when the fink testified that Husman peddled communist propaganda at the meeting, cross-examination revealed him to be a bribe-taking perjurer. Husman got his final papers and garage owners in both Minneapolis and St. Paul came to terms with the IAM. According to the *Journal* these first contracts provided for union recognition together with wage increases for "75% of the men in the trade."

In San Francisco business agent (and later GVP) George Castleman of Local Lodge 1305 launched a comprehensive organizing drive in January 1934. Starting with approximately 300 members he put together a volunteer organizing committee that covered every auto shop and personally contacted every mechanic in the city. By the end of the year Local Lodge 1305 had almost 1,000 members with

more signing up every day. A strike-settling agreement with the dealers association in November 1935 covered 1,700 mechanics and apprentices. The contract provided for an eight hour day, forty-hour week, 90 cents an hour minimum and a \$25 a week guarantee. Mechanics paid by the month were guaranteed \$140. The contract also provided time-and-a-half for overtime, eight paid holidays and a grievance procedure. Flat rates and piecework were abolished.

Organizing the Office Equipment Industry

In the late spring of 1934, the IAM began a campaign to organize two major producers of office equipment, Underwood and Remington Rand. Because most Machinist lodges were still reluctant to accept unskilled members, GVP Harvey Brown arranged to have the unskilled workers in the various office equipment plants organized into "federal unions" directly affiliated with the AFL. He later expressed satisfaction on being able to avoid industrial unionism (the dreaded "one big union") by setting up metal trades councils of the Molders, the Metal Polishers, the Machinists and federal unions.

Underwood came to terms without a strike, but the president of Remington Rand, James Rand, Jr., stubbornly refused to sign any document containing the word "union." On May 8, 1934, 6,500 workers walked out of Remington Rand plants in several states. After four weeks the company tried to reopen with a back-to-work movement. It fell flat on its face when fewer than 200 employees went through the picket lines at Remington Rand factories in four states. In Syracuse the company came closest to a breakthrough when a hundred or so workers, mostly teenage females, entered the plant the first day. But no one else followed and by the third day only thirty-five were left in the shop. Faced with a solid front at all locations, Rand finally consented to sit down and bargain. Victory was sealed on June 18th with an agreement providing wage increases ranging from 8% to 16%, plus shop committees to handle employee grievances. The celebrations that broke out that night in towns and cities of the Mohawk Valley were said to compare with those on Armistice Day in World War I. Unfortunately the rejoicing was premature. The *Journal* later reported that James Rand treated his agreement with his workers as a "mere scrap of paper." Within two years the IAM would again be forced to meet this company head on in one of the classic labor-management confrontations of all time.

The Grand Lodge Research Department

During the New Deal union representatives were increasingly needed to sit on the advisory boards of federal agencies. Unions were being asked to provide the information needed in drafting NRA industry codes. At first Wharton brought GLR's in from the field for such duties. But early in 1934, as the issues and necessary data became more numerous and complex, the Executive Council hired AFL statistician David Kaplan to set up a Research Department at Grand Lodge. As a professional, trained in economics at the University of Wisconsin, Kaplan laid the foundation for the full service Research

Department that today provides IAM representatives in the field with a broad range of negotiating and organizing data.

Government FOR the People

Even with the protection of the Norris-LaGuardia Act and NRA codes, most working men and women remained vulnerable to employer exploitation. A study by a national religious committee reported in early 1935 that workers seeking to organize and deal collectively with employers

. . . are limited on every hand by the common law doctrine of conspiracy. Picketing, boycotts and strikes are subject to limitations. In contrast, no limitations are placed on the power of employers to lock out their employees or to discharge them. Laws prohibiting employers from blacklisting are ineffective. "Yellow dog" contracts . . . requiring employees to refrain from joining unions are legal in most states.

Congress passed and Roosevelt gladly signed a retirement act for railroaders but the great majority of Americans did not have, indeed did not even dream of, old age pensions, unemployment insurance, minimum wages or federal ban on child labor.

In May 1935, the Supreme Court dropped a judicial bomb on America's working people. The justices held both the National Industrial Recovery Act and the Railroad Retirement Act unconstitutional. Most of the Supreme Court justices, known as the "Nine Old Men," were holdovers from the Hoover, Coolidge and Harding Administrations and reflected the ultra-conservative biases of those Presidents.

In surveying the wreckage inflicted by these decisions, the *Journal* bitterly commented "A foreign foe could scarcely have wrought greater havoc on a disillusioned and suffering people . . . The Supreme Court can . . . now sit serenely. It is no concern of these elderly gentlemen what happens to the nation."

But Congress was concerned and reacted quickly. Within two months it passed the National Labor Relations Act (known popularly as the Wagner Act), the "Magna Carta" for which unionists had vainly dreamed for generations. It created a permanent National Labor Relation Board (NLRB) to promote equality of bargaining power between employers and employees. The new law validated collective bargaining as national policy and defined specific employer actions as unfair labor practices. These included interference and coercion toward employees seeking to organize, discrimination against union workers, financial support for a company union, firing workers for filing charges or testifying under the Act, and refusal to bargain collectively. The NLRB was given power to issue "cease and desist" orders against such practices.

GVP Harvey Brown had been transferred to Grand Lodge some months earlier to take charge of organizing activities. In a report to the membership he described the Wagner Act as a "signal for the opening gun of a membership campaign that will surpass any . . . throughout the history of our organization." The Executive Council hastened to get dispensations for local lodges to reduce the minimum initiation fee from \$5.00 to \$3.00 in organizing campaigns. In a July, 1935 referendum the members approved such a dispensation by a vote of more than two to one, paving the way for an all-out, union-wide drive to rebuild the union.

Hysteria in High Places

If the Wagner Act set off rejoicing in union halls it created hysteria in corporate board rooms. An editorial in *Business Week*, the mouthpiece of big business, was captioned "No Obedience" and openly advised employers not to obey the law. According to this publication, the National Labor Relations Act may have been passed by Congress but could be ignored because "nothing is law that is unconstitutional." The editors confidently predicted, "This is what the Supreme Court will ultimately decide about the Wagner Act."

This self-serving conclusion was promptly ratified by an "impartial panel" of fifty-eight of the nation's leading corporation lawyers meeting behind closed doors at one of Washington's swankiest hotels. When they emerged these corporate mouthpieces imperiously announced that the NLRA was "plainly unconstitutional."

The NAM was typically in character. Together with the American Liberty League* it launched a nationwide campaign to convince workers that the law was meaningless. NAM flacks planted canned editorials in friendly newspapers (and most were) declaring the Wagner Act unconstitutional.

**This was a 1930's version of the John Birch Society set up exclusively for millionaires--a kind of Ku Klux Klan for the rich.*

As seen by big business and its conservative press Roosevelt further assaulted traditional values when he signed legislation setting up a Social Security system which included unemployment insurance and a Railroad Retirement Act rewritten to take care of the Supreme Court's constitutional objections. Despite the wrath of business and industry this New Deal legislation and other statutes establishing minimum wage, maximum hour and child labor standards were eventually found to be constitutional.

John L. Lewis and the CIO

The Wagner Act presented the American labor movement with the greatest opportunity in history. Wharton and other IAM leaders exhorted staff and members to take full advantage of the law.

Nevertheless the IAM's leadership remained fearful of any organizing that was not along strict craft lines. Other AFL craft unions felt the same way. By the summer of 1935 production workers in the rubber factories of Akron, auto plants around Detroit, and steel mills in Pittsburgh were practically beating down the doors to get into the old AFL unions. They found they were more welcome in theory than in practice. The ghosts of the Knights of Labor, the American Railway Union and the IWW still haunted the leaders of the old line craft unions. In 1933 and 1934, 100,000 steelworkers applied for membership in the AFL-chartered steel union. But the mediocrity at the head of the union, a character aptly called "Grandmother" Tighe, was determined to keep his union to safe manageable numbers. In the auto industry the cautious and conservative AFL leadership actually managed to reduce union membership on the assembly lines.

At this point enter John L. Lewis--one of the most significant and charismatic of all the colorful characters who ever thundered and fought for the cause of organized labor. As president of the United Mine Workers Lewis was idolized by generations of men who dug coal in the bowels of the earth. In peace or war, for almost half a century, mines closed down all over America when John L. issued a strike call.

Lewis could be awesome. With little formal education but the self-taught eloquence of Shakespeare and the Bible, he skewered his opponents with righteous and wrathful rhetoric. He once described Vice President John Nance Garner as "a labor-baiting, poker-playing, whiskey-drinking, evil old man." He also dubbed AFL President William Green as "Sitting Bill", adding "I have done a lot of exploring of his mind and I give you my work there is nothing there."

In the heat of a parley with top management during the rash of assembly line sitdowns in the auto industry, Lewis gave voice to decades of suppressed working class hostility when he pulled himself to the full height of his impressive bulk and told a contemptuously scornful company official, "I am 99% of a mind to come around the table right now and wipe that damn sneer off your face."

By the time the AFL Convention met in 1935 Lewis was convinced that the AFL hierarchy was standing still, "Its face to the past." As a member of the Committee on Organizing he brought in a minority report urging an all-out campaign to organize America's mass production industries from top to bottom, by industry rather than by craft. He argued that this could be done with the Wagner Act but he could not dent minds that had been molded and set in the cement of Gompers' philosophy of business unionism. The debate became heated, so heated, in fact, Lewis actually punched Carpenter's President William Hutcheson in the nose.

Wharton was prominent among those who opposed Lewis' minority report. Appalled by the prospect of unions with what he called "unrestricted charters to organize workers without recognizing the jurisdictional claims of established internationals," Wharton defended the craft concept as realistic and dismissed industrial unionism as a pipe dream.

Voicing his doubt that workers in mass production industries really wanted to be organized, Wharton asked,

Who are the people on the outside who want to come in? Haven't they had the same opportunity to join . . . that we had? Don't you think we had to risk our lives in organizing . . . and conducting strikes? If you ask me I think it is a lack of will to organize, a willingness to accept the gains of organized workers without fairly contributing . . . to the struggle.

Recalling the IAM's unhappy experience with industrial unionism during the First World War, he added:

My organization increased its membership from about 100,000 to 335,000. We had several million dollars in the treasury when the War was settled. What went with it? What went with the members? Was there any fault with the organization, when we were trying to do the very best we could to protect the interests of those people? We paid out every dollar we had to protect them when wages were being reduced and hours were lengthened. We assessed ourselves. We spent all the money we had and we borrowed money to protect the interests of those workers, and they left the organization. Why?

Wharton, the old railroader, pointed with pride to craft unionism on the railroads saying,

The railroad industry . . . is scattered throughout the country, with hundreds of thousands of people employed in it, being represented . . . by twenty-one recognized railroad labor organizations. . . . It is the only industry that has gone through the six years of this industrial depression with its membership practically intact, maintaining all of its conditions of employment, maintaining its standards of wages and retaining its membership.

Wharton was apparently so carried away that he conveniently forgot the industry-wide wage cuts imposed in 1931, the universal layoffs and steep declines in union membership.

Having spent his life dealing with the problems of railroad machinists Wharton rarely tried to see beyond the roundhouses where he learned his craft. While he headed a union that now included a wide range of industries and occupations, Wharton's monthly "President's Page" in the *Journal*, seldom strayed from the concerns of skilled railroad journeymen. Only rarely did he address himself to matters of interest to the tens of thousands of auto mechanics, construction and erection machinists or tool-and-die makers in job shops who were a significant part of his union. To the end he remained suspicious of efforts to recruit members who had neither training, nor skills, nor any sense of pride in being machinists.

For a brief moment the IAM had a chance, never to return, to become as dominant in America's metalworking industries, as is I. G. Metall in West Germany.* The moment passed because Wharton failed to see the extent to which the Wagner Act shifted the balance of power in industrial relations. As Wharton faced the past, John L. Lewis and the Committee (later Congress) of Industrial Organizations moved into the future, organizing millions of eager workers in auto, steel, aluminum, electrical

manufacturing, rubber, glass, oil, chemical, textile, clothing, communications and other industrial occupations.

**The German union known as I. G. Metall is an all-inclusive umbrella organization of machinists and metalworkers in steel, electrical, auto and other metal-working industries*

From the passage of the Wagner Act in 1935 to the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, membership in America's unions exploded from 3.7 million to 10.4 million. Although the initiative started with the CIO, AFL unions soon moved with the times. Old guard craft unions, forced to protect traditional jurisdictions, responded to demands for union representation. The IAM may have been slow in recognizing and exploiting the possibilities opened by the Wagner Act, but once it began to move, no union organized more effectively. Between the enactment of the National Labor Relations Act and the onset of World War II, the Machinists Union registered a net gain of 277,000 members.

The IAM vs. the CIO

When CIO organizers began fanning out across the country in early 1936, the *Journal* fairly crackled with indignation. Articles and editorials warned against industrial unionism and condemned the CIO as "dual unionism." In a fervent defense of craft unionism, GVP Harvey Brown reminded IAM members that a skilled machinist was a skilled machinist whether employed in "a chemical plant, a rubber products factory, a washing machine factory, a tobacco factory or a textile mill, a newspaper or a brewery." He warned that industrial unionism would force skilled machinists to join different unions every time they changed jobs. Worse, wages and working conditions of skilled machinists would be determined by unskilled and semi-skilled laborers who would always be the majority.

CIO organizers nevertheless were at the gates. The fervor of unionism was spreading like wildfire into plants that had never before been unionized. In some companies IAM lodges were swept away by CIO raids. In others they were absorbed by CIO organizing victories in factories where IAM units had never won formal employer recognition. It became increasingly obvious, even to Wharton and Brown, that since machinists were employed in every industry, the IAM might have to organize everyone if they hoped to organize anyone.

Organizing the Aircraft Industry

The door to industrial unionism was opened for the IAM in 1934 when the AFL favored the IAM over the Carpenters in awarding jurisdiction in the emerging aircraft industry. The Carpenters were a factor because aircraft production in the 1920's required craftsmen with both wood and metalworking skills. The Carpenters established a beachhead in aviation when they chartered a local for mechanics

who repaired and overhauled the planes used by movie studios in Hollywood. Workers from the Douglas Aircraft Company, on loan for the filming of an early Howard Hughes production called *Hell's Angels*, saw for themselves what studio workers had been able to achieve through unions. Before long, about 1,000 workers at Douglas signed up with the Carpenter's local.

With each passing day, however, aircraft manufacturing became less of a woodworking and more of a metalworking industry. At its 1934 session held in Los Angeles, the AFL Executive Council decided the time had come to award jurisdiction in this new and highly promising industry. After hearings, the Council ruled that both aircraft mechanics and aircraft factory workers came within the IAM's jurisdiction. The Council called upon the IAM to enlarge and step up its organizing in this field and the Carpenters agreed to step aside.

When the IAM won jurisdiction, Wharton and most of the GVP's still thought that organizing aircraft machinists was the same as organizing railroad machinists. The business representative for Local Lodge 79 in Seattle, I. A. Sandvigan, was more in touch with reality. Known as Sandy, Sandvigan was a solid trade unionist and a mature, experienced organizer. For many years he had been directing his unemployed journeymen to jobs available at Boeing.

Boeing was then a comparatively small enterprise and relations between management and labor were relaxed. Workers in this glamorous new industry considered themselves lucky. Men had always wanted to fly and those who worked on flying machines felt themselves part of a certain mystique. While wages and working conditions were erratic and out of line, the men in the shops generally considered management as "good guys." Unlike most older basic industries such as auto and steel there was no deliberate, mean exploitation, no clear-cut anti-unionism at Boeing. In fact when an organizer from a federal union of aircraft workers in Buffalo came out to set up a spin-off local in Seattle the Boeing management gave him a room in which to meet with employees.

Before Sandvigan could charter a Machinists lodge at Boeing he had to convince the powers at Grand Lodge. Wharton hesitated for months before he finally agreed to ratify industrial unionism in aircraft by giving Sandvigan a go-ahead. The old railroaders on the Executive Council feared that if the IAM asserted an all-inclusive jurisdiction over aircraft workers, it would waive its traditional claim to craft unions of machinists in other industries. Wharton would have preferred to put the unskilled and semi-skilled workers at Boeing into a federal union, allocating the craft skills to their individual unions, with a council of crafts negotiating as a federation of unions. This was the way it was done on the railroads. Fortunately, Sandvigan persuaded Wharton that a different approach was necessary in the aircraft industry.

In September, 1935 the staid and conservative old IAM took one of the most momentous steps in its history by chartering what came to be known as Aeronautical Mechanics Lodge 751. In time it mushroomed into the largest local unit of organized labor in the country. And it gave the IAM its start toward becoming the largest union of aircraft (now aerospace) workers in the world.

In the spring of 1936 Local 751 notified the company and the recently established National Labor Relations Board that it had signed up 70% of the employees. Boeing recognized the union without

an election. In June Sandvigan helped the new and inexperienced committee of Local 751's officers negotiated their first contract. It consisted of two and one-half typewritten pages plus a page and a half of seven basic job classifications. It provided for minimum hourly wages (ranging from 40¢ to a \$1.00) and set an eight-hour day, five-day week, with time-and-a-half for overtime, weekends and seven named holidays. The first Boeing contract not only became the foundation for those that followed at Boeing, but for the predominant position the IAM has since won in the aerospace industry. When the UAW set out to organize aircraft workers on the West Coast, they skipped Seattle because the IAM's foothold was too secure. And when the IAM challenged the UAW at aircraft factories in Southern California the Grand Lodge recruited organizers out of Lodge 751. Wharton asked Sandvigan to go to Southern California for a couple of months to help organize Lockheed and Douglas but he was tied up in Lodge 79 negotiations with canning companies. He recommended two young Lodge 751 members, Tom McNett and E. L. Lynch.* McNett had been the first recording secretary of Lodge 751.

**Although this was supposed to be a temporary assignment, both McNett and Lynch remained on Grand Lodge staff for many years. McNett became president of District 727. In 1969 he was shot to death in a tragic and senseless shooting spree by a member who had been reprimanded by the company. A check of grievance records revealed the union had previously won six straight cases for this member.*

When McNett and Lynch arrived in Southern California they were met by a wall of anti-union hostility. Union-busting organizations of big business, like the notorious Merchants and Manufacturers Association, and labor-baiting newspapers, such as the Chandler-owned *Los Angeles Times* had made Southern California an open shop refuge for generations. In a letter to Sandvigan, McNett wrote that Machinists organizers were being arrested in Santa Monica for passing out leaflets under a city ordinance which made it illegal to distribute reading materials other than daily newspapers or company propaganda.

Initially it appeared that the UAW would become the predominant union in the new aircraft industry. Their organizers came bursting out of Detroit and into the aircraft factories of Southern California like gangbusters. UAW campaigns were powered with enthusiasm and emotion and featured songs, bands, marches and sitdowns. The IAM's methods were more traditional and less flamboyant, but IAM organizers had an ace in the hole, being able to counter the UAW's hoopla with the solid agreements and good relationships that had been developed at Boeing. While radical Journals and liberal intellectuals were hailing the CIO as the wave of the future, the IAM organized most of the aircraft plants in Southern California and the rest of the country.

On March 5, 1937, some 40 Lockheed workers, about one-third of the existing work force, gathered at what was then a popular local boxing arena known as Jeffries Barn.* Leadership was originally provided by three rank and filers, Max Stivers, Joe Washburn and Donald Stone. The workers voted to apply for an IAM charter. Washburn is said to have been primarily responsible for setting up that first organizing meeting. Though Stivers signed the first letter of agreement in which Lockheed recognized the IAM on March 8, Washburn was president and Stone business representative when the first contract was negotiated on March 30. The agreement called for a 6¢ an hour pay raise and brought average rates to slightly more than 50¢ an hour. A short time later negotiations were reopened and the

hourly rate for machinists was raised to 84¢. The work force at Lockheed remained fairly small until a flood of war orders, beginning with a British Government contract for 200 bombers (the largest single order ever received by a U.S. aircraft company to that time) sent employment soaring. Between 1939 and mid-1943 IAM membership at Lockheed went from 400 to more than 37,000. Negotiated wage rates rose from an average of \$1.00 an hour in 1939 to close to \$1.90 by the time the war ended

**This property was owned and operated by old-time boxing champion, Jim Jeffries. It was later bought by District 727 as the site for its present headquarters. The arena was dismantled and taken to Knott's Berry Farm where it was reassembled and where it stands today.*

James Rand and the Mohawk Valley Formula

When the IAM signed its 1934 contract with Remington Rand, union members were jubilant. But, as noted, the joy proved to be premature. Virtually from the day the contract was signed company president James Rand frustrated union efforts to enforce it. Plant managers were instructed to ignore complaints about contract violations and foremen were told not to discuss grievances with union representatives. In the resulting climate of suspicion and distrust, Remington Rand workers began to hear disturbing rumors. According to the grapevine the company intended to transfer many existing operations to a new central facility in Elmira, New York.

Union representatives, seeking a conference to clear the air, were rebuffed. Digging around for information the Grand Lodge learned that a so-called "industrial committee" in Elmira had purchased a defunct Willys-Morrow auto plant and offered it to Remington Rand free of charge. Probing deeper the union found that a dummy corporation, wholly owned by Remington Rand, was screening union attitudes of job applicants.

Rumors ran wild and uncertainty reigned in Remington Rand plants. IAM representatives were routinely lied to and given the runaround by plant managers. With the old contract about to expire the company refused to even discuss a new agreement. In desperation, a strike vote was taken in a number of plants. More than 75% of the returned ballots were marked "Strike." IAM locals, along with other unions, asked for federal mediation. But Rand, determined to force the issue, did so by firing the presidents of the federal unions in Tonawanda and Syracuse along with the president and fifteen other members and officers of the IAM lodge in Syracuse. With peaceful settlement impossible 6,500 Remington Rand employees walked off their jobs in late May. Picket lines were set up in Syracuse, Tonawanda and Ilion, New York, Norwood and Marietta, Ohio and Middletown, Connecticut.

The strike became one of the most savage, lengthy and memorable in the annals of the American labor movement. Having failed to break the earlier strike in 1934, Rand was now more determined than ever to break the spirit of unionism in his work force once and for all.

The company's first major attack came at Ilion where a sizable contingent of thugs and plug-uglies from professional strikebreaking agencies were imported to back up 300 specially sworn sheriff's deputies. The NLRB later reported:

The main road leading into the village was barricaded with a large chain. Squads of special deputies and the local police armed with shotguns--consisting of four to six deputies and one policeman in a squad--stood guard at the entrances to the village and patrolled the streets. Only persons with passes of the Association, those working at the Remington Arms plant, and others satisfactory to the guards were permitted to enter the village. Arms had been secured that night at the Remington Arms plant and were carried by many of the special deputies and police. Others carried clubs. Private cars were used to serve as police cars. The headquarters of the Ilion unions, where the pickets gathered, and which were across the street from the plant, were padlocked by the Village Board on the basis of one complaint.

With such tactics Rand was able to get the Ilion plant back into partial operation by the end of the first month. He applied the same tactics at other struck plants. The company got judges to limit picketing, landlords to raise rents and police to arrest picketers on the most flimsy charges. In Syracuse, for example, two girls were sentenced to thirty days for waving a rubber rat at scabs going through their picket line. In Elmira the mayor refused to permit circulation of the national labor newspaper, *Labor*, while in Syracuse the mayor assured the company unlimited police protection.

At the Middletown, Ohio plant police arrested peaceful picketers and judges hit them with long prison sentences. Every week the pressure increased. Rand devised diabolic strategies to demoralize and divide the workers. "For Sale" signs appeared in front of the factories. "Citizens committees" were formed. Workers and their wives were visited in their homes and urged to join highly publicized "back-to-work" campaigns. The company also leaned heavily on locally elected officials. On one occasion the mayor of Ilion met secretly with the strikers and tearfully confessed that he was being forced into actions he did not want to take. Although he was one of the wealthiest men in town the mayor had been warned by a citizens' committee that included his banker that if he defied the company he would be ruined and run out of town "with nothing left but his hat, coat and pants." Citizens committees visited merchants and warned them not to help or give credit to strikers.

At Tonawanda, Rand planted a rumor that the strikers were deserting and most were ready to go back to work. The National Metal Trades Association sent in eighty-five professional thugs to play the part of the alleged deserters. They arrived at the plant gate armed to the teeth with clubs and bricks and, as Rand hoped, a free-for-all broke out. He stood on the sidelines snapping pictures of the fighting and violence. The next day, after the thugs had been slipped quietly out of town, the newspapers printed Rand's pictures to show how picketing labor goons had attacked honest working men who wanted only to return to their jobs.

When Rand finally gathered enough scabs to reopen the Ilion plant on June 12, he gloated about his new formula for strikebreaking. At a victory celebration he trumpeted that "two million business men have been looking for a formula like this." and indeed the next day representatives of the NAM arrived in Ilion to study Rand's union-busting success. The next issue of the NAM's Labor Relations Bulletin immortalized the "Mohawk Valley Formula" as a classic blueprint for union busting. Neither Rand nor the NAM had taken the Wagner Act into account. When the NLRB handed down its decision in April, 1937, eleven months after the strike began, 4,000 of the original 6,500 were still on the picket lines.

In a monumental 120-page decision the Board found Rand had arrogantly place himself above the law, subjecting 6,500 workers and their families to the miseries of a prolonged strike, the people of six communities to extreme economic hardship, turning neighborhoods into warring camps and unleashing unreasoning hatreds. The NLRB ordered reinstatement with back pay of the union workers discharged prior to the strike, reemployment of the 4,000 workers still on strike, disestablishment of all company unions and recognition of bona fide unions in the six affected plants as well as in the new Elmira plant. Rand fought the order all the way to the Supreme Court but was eventually forced to recognize the union and make restitution to the workers.

The Mohawk Valley Formula

First: When a strike is threatened, label the union leaders as "agitators" to discredit them with the public and their own followers. Conduct balloting under the foremen to ascertain the strength of the union and to make possible misrepresentation of the strikers as a small minority. Exert economic pressure through threats to move the plant, align bankers, real estate owners and businessmen into a "Citizens' Committee."

Second: Raise high the banner of "law and order", thereby causing the community to mass legal and police weapons against imagined violence and to forget that employees have equal right with others in the community.

Third: Call a "mass meeting" to coordinate public sentiment against the strike and strengthen the Citizens' Committee.

Fourth: Form a large police force to intimidate the strikers and exert a psychological effect. Utilize local police, state police, vigilantes and special deputies chosen, if possible, from other neighborhoods.

Fifth: Convince the strikers their cause is hopeless with a "back-to-work" movement by a puppet association of so-called "loyal employees" secretly organized by the employer.

Sixth: When enough applications are on hand, set a date for opening the plant by having such opening requested by the puppet "back-to-work" association.

Seventh: Stage the "opening" theatrically by throwing open the gates and having the employees march in a mass protected by squads of armed police so as to dramatize and exaggerate the opening and heighten the demoralizing effect.

Eighth: Demoralize the strikers with a continuing show of force. If necessary turn the locality into a warlike camp and barricade it from the outside world.

Ninth: Close the publicity barrage on the theme that the plant is in full operation and the strikers are merely a minority attempting to interfere with the "right to work". With this, the campaign is over--the employer has broken the strike.

LaFollette Committee Hearings

Lawless disregard of the rights of workers was not confined to the top management at Remington Rand. During the late 1930's Senator Robert LaFollette, "Young Bob," son of the old Progressive from Wisconsin, headed a Senate Committee to look into labor-management relations. Its hearings produced shocking exposure of widespread corporate contempt for the legal and constitutional rights of America's working men and women.

LaFollette found evidence that 2,500 corporations, including many of America's blue chip companies, were spending millions to maintain a national network of thousands of labor spies. Stool pigeons and provocateurs were paid to report on internal union affairs, stir up dissension among union members and generally block labor organization. When the committee questioned a vice president of Chrysler about such clearly illegal practices, he said "We must do it to obtain the information we need in dealing with our employees."

GST Davison testified before the LaFollette Committee several times. In testimony describing the IAM's thirty-five year war with the National Metal Trades Association, he told of a certain Sam Brady who had been hired by the notorious Pinkerton Agency to infiltrate the IAM. According to Davison, Brady achieved:

positions of importance and trust in the IAM, holding office in different local unions. He used his position to cause union men to be discharged and to have them blacklisted. He slandered union officials and attempted to disrupt the organization by attacking the character and integrity of the leadership with forged documents. On several occasions he was expelled, only to reappear under different names in different places to resume his disruptive tactics.

"There are thousands of his kind," Davison added. The NMTA frequently planted spies in the union to incite violence for which the union could be blamed. The committee uncovered such a case at a Black & Decker appliance plant employing 450 IAM members in Kent, Ohio. In the Spring of 1936 the company announced that it would not renegotiate its contract with the local IAM lodge. The entire plant walked out. One of the most militant and active members, G. W. Bookhamer, was an NMTA plant. When the walkout began, Bookhamer tried to get others to dynamite the factory and block delivery of the mail, which would have been a federal crime. With none responding to these suggestions the company got an injunction limiting the number of pickets to three. Meanwhile the NMTA requisitioned a couple of thousands of dollars' worth of long-range gas guns and grenades. The NMTA also sent guards to protect the plant. When the guards arrived three picketers including one woman, were at the gate. Without warning these hired thugs opened fire with tear gas and shot guns. Within minutes some 350 union members came running, many carrying hunting rifles.

The strikebreakers took shelter in the plant and gunfire was exchanged for most of the morning. Finally the police arranged for the sheriff to enter the plant, disarm the strikebreakers and place them under arrest. Inside, the sheriff found a sizable arsenal of guns and ammunition plus enough food to last a week. When these so-called "guards" were booked, forty-three were found to have long criminal records. The unprovoked attack on unarmed workers so shocked the community the NMTA's violence boomeranged. Within two weeks the company signed a union contract.

The LaFollette Committee found that some companies literally kept their employees in their gun sights. When Richard Mellon, the billionaire from Pittsburgh, was asked why his security guards kept machine guns trained on workers at one of his mines, he airily explained "You cannot run the mines without them." LaFollette's probe into company conduct during a steel strike in 1937 disclosed that the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company had an arsenal of eight machine guns, 369 rifles, 190 shot guns, 450 revolvers, almost 10,000 rounds of ammunition, 109 gas guns and 3,000 canisters of gas. Republic Steel was found to be the largest purchaser of tear gas in the United States--not excepting state and local police departments.

As a result of the LaFollette Committee's findings, the NMTA was forced to stop furnishing spies, "guards" and other strike-breaking services to union-busting employers. With the enactment of the Wagner Act, which gave workers a clear right to organize and bargain collectively, it finally began to accept unionized companies into membership.

Sit Down! Sit Down!

Because of the kind of employer tactics uncovered by the LaFollette Committee workers sometimes turned to less traditional and more desperate methods to get to the bargaining table.

Instead of marching on picket lines, where the police could bust heads, some 500,000 sat down at their machines in the winter of 1936-37--where use of force would threaten the employer's property.

These sit-down strikes, in everything from dime stores to rubber factories and auto plants, set off a wave of frenzy among newspaper editors and apoplexy in executive suites. But working people who had been sat upon by employers all their lives now sang a different tune:

When they tie the can to a union man,
Sit down! Sit down!
When they give him the sack, they'll take him back,
Sit down! Sit down!
When the speed-up comes, just twiddle your thumbs,
Sit down! Sit down!
When the boss won't talk, don't take a walk,
Sit down! Sit down!

Sit-downs alienated public opinion but were an understandable response to industry's widespread refusal to obey NLRB cease and desist orders. Wharton abhorred the tactic not only because it laid the union open to legal reprisals but, more significantly, because it gave small groups of hotheads or dissidents a way to weaken internal discipline and the authority of elected leaders. As will be seen he strictly forbid IAM representatives to lead or take part in such activities. By the time the courts outlawed this tactic as trespass on private property, most of the big open shop, non-union corporations had been forced to negotiate with unions chosen by their workers.

The Memorial Day Massacre

One notable holdout was the Republic Steel Company. It was headed by Tom Girdler, the corporate cut-throat who once threatened to close his plants and retire to his apple orchards rather than deal with a union.

On Memorial Day, 1937 several thousand striking workers, many with their wives and children, gathered on an empty stretch of land near Girdler's mill in South Chicago. As they marched in ragged formation across the fields while singing "Solidarity Forever," a police captain bellowed "You dirty sons-of-bitches, that is as far as you go." The crowd slowed but a few people continued to edge toward the factory. Some of the police attacked a group of women, purposely digging clubs into their breasts. When one of the workers shouted "We've got our rights" the police yelled "You Red bastards got no rights." Suddenly and without provocation or warning (as newsreels later showed) the police exploded into a riot of mayhem and murder. Men, women, and children alike were targets of police brutality. Amid screams, vomiting and blood, the police chased retreating workers, clubbing all within reach with their night sticks and gun butts. Pistol shots rang out as frightened families fled in panic. Ten unarmed and defenseless workers were killed and ninety were wounded.

The following day the Chicago Tribune denounced the victims as a mob "lusting for blood" and Hollywood moguls suppressed ghastly newsreels filmed at the scene. Tom Girdler snarled "There can be no pity. The police were performing a hazardous duty. what were women doing there?"

The strike was broken and the defeated workers crept back to the conditions they had protested. Despite attempts to bury the evidence the films were shown at a dramatic session of the LaFollette Committee. Girdler's tactics created a backlash of public revulsion. The NLRB eventually compelled Girdler to bargain collectively with the union. He did not retire to tend his apple trees.

"Will You Support the Decision of this Convention?"

The IAM was too broke to hold its regular Grand Lodge Convention in 1932 but was able to report a spectacular comeback when delegates gathered for the 1936 Grand Lodge Convention in Milwaukee.* Wharton demonstrated great skill as a parliamentarian, using that skill to defuse a major assault on his authority and integrity at the Convention. This came in a debate challenging Wharton's revocation of the charter of Local Lodge 284 in Oakland, California. The depth of delegate interest in this issue was indicated in an early roll call on the Executive Council's appointments to the appeals and Grievance Committee. Delegate dissatisfaction with Wharton's action against Local Lodge 284 was reflected in the sizable vote against the council's appointments--307 nay, 440 yea. Literature urging support Lodge 284 had been mailed to lodges throughout the United States and Canada prior to the Convention. The Grand Lodge had responded with an official circular defending its action. The delegates were informed on the situation and both sides came prepared.

**Delegates to Grand Lodge Conventions today might be interested to know that room rates for delegates at the Milwaukee Convention in 1936 ranged from \$2 to \$4 a day. Club breakfast 35¢, blueplate lunch 50¢, dinner \$1.00.*

The real causes of this dispute can only be surmised. On the surface the issue was rooted in a strike called by a business representative without a proper strike vote or Grand Lodge sanction. The appeals and Grievance Committee found that after twice failing to get the constitutionality required three-fourths majority, members of Lodge 284 simply voted, by voice vote, to disregard the first two votes.

At that time many union members in the Bay area were still seething with the leftover hatreds of a general strike two years earlier. In 1934 employers demanded and received an all-out show of police force to break a longshoremen's strike. The result was a spasm of police brutality still remembered in San Francisco as Bloody Thursday. Two workers were killed and hundreds injured. The labor movement struck back with a general strike that paralyzed the city for four days--forcing employers to agree to arbitration in which most of the worker demands were met.

Bloody Thursday and the general strike left a residue of radicalism and militancy throughout the Bay area. The members of Machinist Lodge 284 were among the most militant. Most IAM lodges on the West Coast sympathized with and supported the lodge's position in this clash with the Executive Council.

The case for Local Lodge 284 was ably presented and eloquently argued by Edward Dillon, then recording secretary of Local Lodge 68 in San Francisco. Dillon described how Lodge 284 members were exploited and frustrated by a stubborn and willful association of open shop, anti-union employers in Oakland. He accused Wharton of withdrawing a conditional strike sanction after being visited in Washington by a representative of the employers.

Supported by statements of other delegates from lodges in the Bay area, Dillon also attacked the GLR, Walter Nash, who was assigned to the negotiations and who acted for Wharton in taking possession of Local Lodge 284's assets. Inferring that Nash was in bed with the employers, Dillon asked Nash, directly, if he had been in telephone communication with a representative of the employer's association of Oakland during the convention. When Nash responded by asking, "On what matter?", a chorus of boos swept the hall.

Another delegate, A. L. Wilson, financial secretary of Local Lodge 252 in Vallejo, California, asserted that because of Nash's actions in the Lodge 284 case "the members all wish not to have him in the jurisdiction anymore and that is my instructions in my lodge, 252." The matter was discussed and debated for two days. Delegates heard explanations from various GVP's and statements from individual members of the Appeals and Grievance Committee. In spite of protests and points of order, Wharton permitted GLR Nash to take the convention floor to defend himself. When the debate was over it appeared that Dillon had carried the day for Lodge 284. In an emotional summation Dillon asked the delegates, "What are you going to do for the machinists who have homes and families?" Adding that the choice was between the manufacturers and the machinists in Oakland, he ended with an impassioned plea, "I implore you that you vote for the machinists of Oakland and not for the bosses."

Realizing that the mood of the convention had swung toward Local Lodge 284 Wharton played his last trump before calling for a vote. He asked, "Brother Dillon, will you personally support the decision of this convention?" Dillon, in a flush of overconfidence carelessly answered, "It is according to what the decision is."

Wharton quickly adjourned the convention for lunch, giving delegates time to ponder and discuss Dillon's answer. In later years delegates to the 1936 Convention agreed that to that point Dillon had beaten Wharton and the Executive Council. He threw away his triumph when he suggested he might refuse to abide by a decision of a majority of IAM convention delegates. When the convention assembled for the afternoon session Wharton calmly reviewed the facts and assured the delegates that individual members of Lodge 284 would not be punished, that no more than seven members would be suspended. All others would retain membership and be invited to affiliate with another local chartered to take the place of 284. When the question was finally called the committee's recommendation upholding revocation of 284's charter was sustained by voice vote. The present Local Lodge 284 in Oakland was duly chartered in April 1937. Despite losing his fight at the Convention Dillon remained

popular with a militant core of rank-and-file members, especially on the West Coast. In the next election for Grand Lodge officers he received 104 nominations and 13,787 votes for GVP--the highest total of any unsuccessful candidate that year.

Raids and Reds

Shortly after the NLRB set up shop, it ruled that craft unions such as the IAM could carve separate units of skilled workers out of larger bargaining units. But with the CIO in the picture, this was easier said than done. The IAM was not only forced to fight CIO unions in new organizing campaigns, but often had to battle to keep long-established craft units from being absorbed into CIO industrial bargaining units.

The IAM's attitude toward the CIO was anything but fraternal. CIO organizers were called traitors, Communists or dual unionists and were usually described as power-hungry, misguided or recalcitrant. This rivalry, along with a generally improving economy, spurred intense organizing on all sides. Although the IAM Old Guard muttered sourly about Communists and dual unions, IAM organizers scrambled to get their share of the new organizing. At one point the pace of organization threatened to swamp Grand Lodge. GST Davison had to apologize because his staff could not get charters out quickly enough. In the first six months of 1937, 152 new lodges were chartered and membership increased by 42,000. The gains in large part reflected the IAM's progress in the aircraft industry in Southern California. In April, 1937, GVP Grow reported that he and GLR George Castleman had organized a majority of the employees at the Consolidated plant in San Diego and were waiting for the NLRB to order a representation election. That spring IAM Lodge 727, with 400 members, negotiated its first agreement with Lockheed.

While these were heady times there were also setbacks. In March, 1936, for example, James J. Matles led twenty-eight locals representing some 8,000 electrical and radio manufacturing workers into the IAM. The agreement provided full membership rights for these members even though production workers and helpers would pay only two-thirds of regular dues and per capita; women and apprentices one-half. Matles later claimed that Wharton agreed to accept blacks into the IAM lodges and also gave him the go-ahead for industrial organization.

Although Wharton appointed Matles as a GLR and assigned him to work directly with the lodges he brought into the IAM, the two were about as compatible as oil and water.* While Matles obviously came into the IAM intending to convert it to industrial unionism, Wharton plainly loathed anything that smacked of the CIO. In a letter to Matles he once expressed his revulsion for "Lewis, Hillman . . . and their gang of sluggers, Communists, radicals and soap box artists, professional bums, expelled members of labor unions, outright scabs . . ." Their alliance lasted a little over a year. Matles and his locals went to the 1936 Grand Lodge Convention determined to take the "White Only" clause out of the initiation.

Following a riotous session that had to be adjourned when fists and chairs started flying, the initiation remained intact and Matles' days in the IAM were numbered. The final break came when Wharton issued an official circular forbidding IAM representatives to engage in "sitdowns, sporadic disturbances, slowdowns and other Communist tactics of disruption and disorganization." Realizing that the IAM was not about to transform itself into an industrial union of all workers in the metal and machine industry, Matles resigned and organized UE. He was named Director of Organization and later became General Secretary, holding that post long after the UE was expelled from the CIO as Communist-dominated.

**Subsequent events suggest Matles was probably a Communist. He regularly referred to the Communist Party as "The party of the working class" and the only party to represent "the interests of the entire working population." At the height of the McCarthy era he was scheduled to be deported for falsely swearing he was not a Communist when he was naturalized in the 1920's. He escaped deportation when the Supreme Court overturned his denaturalization in the late 1950's.*

During this same period a feisty Irishman named Mike Quill became the leader of an organizing drive aimed at every large and small transit line in New York City. While Quill later renounced Communism and the Party, he either held a Party card in the 30's or was as close as one could get without actually joining. According to Quill's biographer,* the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in Moscow in 1935 ordered the affiliation that brought Quill into the IAM. Against the advice of IAM District 15, Wharton issued Quill a charter for Lodge 1547, which soon numbered 10,000 members. The charter was issued before John L. Lewis broke with the AFL to form the CIO. Unlike William Green and other AFL leaders, Lewis had no qualms about letting Communists into the labor movement. Welcoming them as tireless organizers, Lewis was confident he could control them. "Red Mike", as Quill came to be known, got a charter from Lewis (giving him jurisdiction over all transportation throughout the United States and Canada) and took his transport workers out of the IAM and into the CIO.

**L. H. Whittemore, The Man Who Ran the Subways.*

The IAM suffered another serious loss in Minneapolis-St. Paul when a certain William Mauseth led three large IAM locals into the UE. Known as "Whispering Bill", Mauseth had been expelled from the IAM prior to the Milwaukee Convention. Mauseth persuaded the directing business representative from Minneapolis to argue for his reinstatement before the Convention's appeals and Grievance Committee and his sentence was reduced to six months probation. Mauseth later admitted his Communist connections and the *Journal* reported that as soon as his membership was restored, he began a campaign to subvert the IAM from within. With the help of a tightly disciplined cadre of party members who mixed parliamentary skill with "muscle" Mauseth's followers won influence far out of proportion to their numbers. The C. P.-led group packed local lodge meetings, heckled opposing speakers and tied up their opponents in parliamentary knots. GVP Nickerson reported that as a result of Mauseth's treachery, the IAM lost 3,000 of its 6,000 members in the Twin Cities. After moving these members to the UE Mauseth was rewarded with a business agency and later headed the CIO's Political Action Committee in Minnesota.

These and other raids, plus a serious economic downturn (a recession within a depression) sent IAM membership into a tailspin in late 1937. From September 1937 to October 1938 membership fell from 174,334 to 151,541 while the number on unemployment stamps rose from 10,850 to 27,649.

Negotiations and a New Generation

Despite organizational battles with the CIO, the work of the IAM went on in hundreds of local lodges. Throughout the nation scores of rising young business representatives and Grand Lodge representatives were negotiating day-to-day improvements in wages and working conditions. Toward the end of the decade reports coming to the *Journal* began to bear the names of those who would soon begin moving into positions of top leadership in the union.

From Jersey City, GLR Sam Newman reported a 15¢ an hour wage increase plus improvements in hours and overtime provisions at Air Reduction Company. From Youngstown, GLR Eric Peterson sent word that a union shop had been achieved and a 16¢ an hour wage increase won for machinists employed by the Municipal Railroad.

In St. Louis, Business Representative Elmer Walker negotiated an hourly minimum of 85¢ for machinists and 90¢ for tool and die makers at Peerless Enameling and Stamping Company.

In Albany, New York, GLR Fred Coonley signed a union shop agreement with the Ready Mix Corporation which provided 15¢ an hour raises, thus bringing the minimum for auto mechanics to 85¢ and further providing one week vacation and six paid holidays.

Up in Wisconsin, GLR Al Hayes checked in with a wide range of contract improvements in negotiations with employers in Wisconsin Rapids and La Crosse, while in Watertown, Business Representative Gil Brunner negotiated a union shop agreement with the Otto Biefeld Company that brought a forty-two hour week with time-and-a-half for Saturday afternoon, Sundays and holidays.

In Houston, GLR Earl Melton signed agreements with twenty garages setting a journeymen rate of 90¢ an hour.

In Spokane, Business Representative Joe McBreen helped to organize the first state machinists council. The place Kelso, Washington. The date August 7, 1937.

In Illinois, GLR Joe Ramsey reported settling a three-week strike at National Sewing Machine Company with raises ranging from 20% to 50% for "employees in the lower brackets."

Out in San Pedro, California, Business Representative Roy Brown negotiated a union shop with a \$1.00 an hour minimum for journeymen at the Santa Catalina Island Company.

From Tampa, GLR Jesse McGlon reported a union shop agreement with Tampa shipbuilding and Engineering Company that included an 18¢ an hour wage increase and brought journeymen up to 88¢ an hour.

In Carnegie, Pennsylvania, Grand Lodge Representative P. L. Siemiller reported an agreement with the Pittsburgh and West Virginia Railroad raising hourly rates by amounts up to 14¢, providing a minimum of 82¢ an hour for journeymen machinists.

Wharton's Last Stand

In the late 1930's--and for many years to come--shop workers on the railroads remained among the lowest paid skilled craftsmen in the nation. Adding insult to injury, the carriers, in March, 1938 seized upon the severe recession of 1937 as an excuse to propose a 15% across-the-board wage cut for all railroad employees.

Wharton was visibly beginning to fail physically. Never robust, he seemed to become a little more stooped and drained each day. When management launched this frontal attack on his beloved railroaders, he was already up to his neck in a fight with the Carpenters' Union. For years the Carpenters' Union had refused to honor long-standing AFL resolutions and directives giving the IAM clear jurisdiction over the erection and repair of machinery wherever machinery was used. This struggle was beginning to heat up when the carriers made their demand for a 15% wage reduction. All that summer, in the broiling heat and humidity of a Washington summer (before air conditioning) the failing IAM chief stretched his energies to the limit. Meeting with other railroad union representatives he drafted a carefully constructed union rebuttal to the carrier's proposal. An Emergency Board appointed by President Roosevelt to head off an industry-wide strike eventually reported favorably for the workers and recommended that the carriers "withdraw and cancel the notices which put [wage] reductions into operation." Once Wharton felt the wages of the railroaders were safe, he collapsed with fatigue. He took a leave of absence and went to Arizona with his wife, who had been his secretary at Grand Lodge, to rest and recover his health. He never returned. The following year he resigned and five years later, in 1944, died at the age of 71.

Wharton can be summed up by saying that what he may have lacked in charisma he made up in character. He gave the IAM strong leadership when it was needed. In 1926 he took over a union fractured by feuds and factions. Twelve years later, when he left for Arizona, the IAM was probably more cohesive than at any time since it was a small exclusive fraternity of skilled craftsmen in Atlanta. Moreover, Wharton brought the IAM through the worst depression America's working people ever suffered. At times neither he nor Davison knew where money for the next payroll was coming from. In manner Wharton may have kept others at a distance with stiff formality. On some issues, such as organizing industrial workers, he was slow to admit that the Wagner Act had made his craft outlook obsolete. But he bristled with integrity. He never doubted himself. He left the IAM bigger, stronger and much more united than he found it.

Harvey Brown--The Old Fashioned Machinists



Harvey W. Brown
1939-1949

Wharton's successor, Harvey Brown, had served as Resident GVP at Grand Lodge for a number of years. This position had become (and remains even today) the IP's chief of staff. It was no surprise, then, that the Executive Council chose Brown as acting International President. This choice was confirmed a few months later by a margin of almost four to one in a vote of the membership. As noted Harvey Brown had to search for someone to endorse his application for IAM membership some thirty-five years earlier. After completing his apprenticeship at Bethlehem Steel he boomed around the country, belonging to no fewer than fourteen different lodges in five years. In 1910, at the age of twenty-six, Brown was elected business representative by members of a lodge in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. A year later he was a delegate and chairman of the Officers' Report Committee at the 1911 Grand Lodge Convention in Davenport. In 1915 Johnston appointed him to the Grand Lodge staff. A year later members of a newly organized district lodge in Newark, New Jersey, petitioned Johnston to let Brown resign to become their business representative. For the next few years he held various union positions including president of the Essex County Trades Council and IAM delegate to AFL Conventions. He was elected GVP in 1921 and Wharton brought him to headquarters as resident GVP in 1934.

An old line journeyman machinist, Harvey Brown, like Wharton, had little use for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. It will be recalled that in the early organizing stages at Remington Rand he carefully segregated production workers into their own federal union. Gordon Cole, who was to serve as editor of *The Machinist* newspaper for more than thirty years, has described Harvey Brown as the most honest--and stubborn--man he ever met. Having sipped generously of the juice of the grape in his youth, Brown was a sternly strait-laced teetotaler by the time Wharton brought him to Grand Lodge. A plain, blunt, old-fashioned machinist, unencumbered by finesse, tact or the other arts of diplomacy, Brown usually reacted like an enraged bull when opposed. To those who bored or irritated him he displayed the charm and grace of an un-tipped waiter. During his ten years as IP, Brown was constantly in conflict with other unions and, often, his own membership. Incapable of compromise Brown rubbed raw jurisdictional sores Wharton was trying to heal before his health failed. It was hardly surprising that with Brown at the helm the IAM's quarrel with the Carpenters became an open breach with the entire labor movement.

On the Eve of War

When Hitler's legions invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, IAM membership was 164,597. As America tooled up to become the "Arsenal of Democracy" new membership rose from a relative trickle to a roaring cataract--from monthly gains measured by the hundreds in the late 1930's to increases gauged by the thousands and even tens of thousands by the early and mid 1940's.

The massive flood of new workers into war industries, and especially the aircraft plants, sucked members of every political stripe into IAM lodge halls. There were progressives, socialists, populists, Wobblies and other old-time radicals. But there were also Communists subservient to the Party line as laid down by Moscow. Hitler had signed a mutual non-aggression pact with Stalin before he sent his panzer divisions smashing across the plains of Poland. And until he turned his savagery on the Soviet motherland in June, 1941, the official Party line was isolationist.* Communists in the U.S. vigorously opposed the war and tried to subvert U.S. production intended for Hitler's enemies. In keeping with Moscow's directives Communists in the labor movement actively fomented strikes, exploiting real and imagined grievances. The party liners were especially active in aircraft plants.

**In France the Communist Party played a major role in the French defeat by a combination of psychological warfare and outright sabotage in munitions factories.*

The IAM was better equipped than many unions to deal with internal subversion. Communists were barred from membership after the early 1920's. The Grand Lodge could thus move swiftly against any local or district lodge to investigate suspected Communist activity. The IAM trial procedure was effective in ridding local lodges of internal subversion.

The IAM's experience at the huge, sprawling and fast-spreading Boeing plants in Seattle is a good example of the problem and how the Machinists handled it. As the war in Europe heated up Boeing began recruiting heavily. Workers streamed into Seattle from all across the country, many from the older industrial centers with memories of the big organizing drives and sitdown strikes in mass production industries still fresh in their minds. A few were Communists who openly supported Party objectives. But the Party also sent undercover organizers with instructions to get control of the union at Boeing.

In addition, Boeing had a Nazi problem. After the First World War the company imported a cadre of German engineers trained at Fokker. Many retained pro-German sympathies and some belonged to the pro-Nazi German-American Bund. During the early stages of the war Reds and Nazis were united in opposing American help for the beleaguered Allies.

The Nazis were a recognizable threat to national security and were eventually taken care of by the FBI, but the Communist menace was more indirect and subtle. According to surviving records and

the memories of old-time 751 members the Communist presence became unmistakable in every lodge activity--at membership meetings, in rank-and-file briefing sessions, in the editing of the lodge paper, even the lady's auxiliary. Communist issues and tactics turned lodge meetings into chaos and friends into enemies.

Lodge 751 had become so large even relatively small turnouts, in terms of percentages, produced sizable crowds. Using classic Communist tactics party members prolonged meetings with endless debates, motions, amendments and amendments to amendments. They diverted support for U.S. aid to the allies by their mastery of parliamentary procedure. They could usually camouflage their interest in proposals consistent with party objectives. But if their objectives were suspected they would throw up a smokescreen of delaying tactics until most of the rank-and-file wearied and went home. When few except committed Party members remained, they introduced and carried motions that furthered Communist objectives.

Since Boeing was operating day and night shifts, lodge meetings were divided into day and night sessions. This meant no motion could be passed finally without the approval of both. While this gave the non-Communist faction a check on Communist maneuvering, it also permitted the Communists to tie up lodge business in parliamentary knots. To maintain legitimate union functions the anti-Communists adopted Communist methods. They met secretly to plan strategy, contacted loyal unionists individually to get them out to meetings and persuaded them to stay to the bitter end.

As divisions widened and the issues became more ideological, Lodge 751 was nearly torn apart. Finally Harvey Brown sent GLR (later GVP) Roy Brown to Seattle to investigate and put Lodge 751 under suspension. The trials that followed exposed a large Communist network. Nearly fifty members, including the vice president, were fined and permanently expelled. Nine others were fined but allowed to keep their membership while thirteen were cleared. Since the IAM had a union shop agreement with Boeing those expelled from membership were also fired.

As a result of this experience, the Grand Lodge reorganized the unwieldy Boeing local into a district with members divided by occupation into smaller and more manageable lodges. This restructuring gave individuals more influence over local lodge affairs and more opportunity to be active in the union. The Boeing pattern was later repeated at other large aeronautical industrial districts such as those now in place at Lockheed, McDonnell Douglas and elsewhere.

Organizing on the Airlines

Regularly scheduled airline flights began in the United States in 1926. But the industry did not reach its first million passenger year for at least a decade. Unionism was non-existent in the airline industry in the open shop '20's and remained weak well into the depressed '30's. The pilots were the first sizable group of airline employees to try seriously to organize. The Airline Pilots Association (ALPA) was a direct response to an industry-wide pay cut forced on all pilots in the spring of 1931.

Individual IAM members were fixing flying machines even before a couple bicycle mechanics named Wright got man's first heavier-than-air craft off the ground at Kitty Hawk. Fred Hewitt, editor of the *Machinist Monthly Journal* from 1915 to 1945, worked in the machine shop where Samuel P. Langley nearly perfected a flying machine as early as 1900. Langley failed but machinists were needed to repair planes from the time they were little more than flimsy motor-driven kites.

During the era of heart-stopping, barn-storming aerial circuses in the 1920's, journeymen machinists were among the few with the training and skills needed to keep the early prop planes flying. But they were too few and too scattered to form a nucleus for collective bargaining and with most other airline workers they remained unorganized for some years to come.

The first organizations of ground personnel emerged during the NRA years. Mostly locally based they usually were company-sponsored efforts to head off legitimate unions. Companies held out promises of pilot ratings and pie-in-the-sky to tempt mechanics to work for less than the going rate. But as commercialism replaced glamour and romance mechanics began to look for unions capable of enforcing demands for decent wages and fair treatment. Seeking to head off bona fide unionism carriers set up dummy "unions" headed by handpicked stooges. As reported by the *Journal* "the officers of the company-dominated unions had the free run of the system [and] . . . became the outlet for company-sponsored propaganda and messengers of management-inspired threats."

In fighting unions management resorted to both the carrot and the stick. One airline, the *Journal* reported, tried to instill company loyalty by issuing fancy shoulder patches to favored employees. Another passed out buttons honoring five or ten years' service. When the carrot failed the stick was applied. IAM organizers in Kansas City reported twelve employees were fired by TWA for union activity. In Chicago, seven were sacked by United because of union membership.

In February, 1933 Easter Airlines tried to chill unionism at the Atlanta Airport by firing several mechanics. While this did not stop the chartering of an IAM lodge it was too weak to survive a premature and unauthorized strike. The Executive Council did not sanction this strike but Grand Lodge paid victimization benefits to at least two members who were later blacklisted.

As previously noted the AFL Executive Council gave the IAM jurisdiction over airline mechanics in October, 1934. For the next two years the IAM, along with the ALPA and the railway brotherhoods, lobbied to have airlines brought under the Railway Labor Act. This effort paid off in 1936 when President Roosevelt signed legislation giving airline workers collective bargaining rights and protections for which railroad employees had fought more than fifty years.

By the late 1930's twenty-six airlines were based in the United States. The Grand Lodge Research Department estimated that between 2,000 and 2,500 mechanics were employed in ground repair and maintenance work. Four out of five were concentrated on the bases of six major carriers--United, American, TWA, Easter, Pan American and Western Air Express.

Despite the Railway Labor Act, air carriers were no more anxious than the railroads had been to deal with legitimate unions. But like the railroads in the 1890's, the airlines desperately needed skilled

mechanics in the 1930's and could not freeze out all union members without cutting themselves off from a source of journeymen essential to their operations. In this industry, as in others the IAM survived because the employers' need for machinist skills outweighed their antagonism to the Machinists Union. The 1936 Officers' Report to the Milwaukee Convention indicates that some carriers tried to keep the skills but stop unionism by transferring men and work from one base and city to another. Mechanics suspected of responding to an IAM organizing pitch in Chicago might be transferred west to Milwaukee or shipped east to Cleveland. The 1936 Officers' Report also showed the eight lodges of aircraft mechanics with a total of 378 members had been chartered and a nucleus existed for at least six others in various parts of the country.

The first known report of an actual IAM agreement with an air carrier appeared in the October, 1938 *Journal*. GLR E. C. Yeager reported an agreement with Pan American covering mechanics at an airfield in Brownsville, Texas. It set hourly wage rates ranging from 80¢ to \$1.10 with time-and-a-third for overtime and "payment in full for holidays, but employees are not required to work on holidays."

The first system-wide breakthrough came in 1939 when GLR (and later GVP) Jesse McGlon contacted and organized a key group of mechanics at Eastern Airline's main base in Miami following the collapse of a strike by an independent union known as the Airline Mechanics' Association (ALMA). Leaders of this independent organization lacked the resources and know-how to coordinate a system-wide walkout. ALMA officers apparently confused their members by sending contradictory information and instructions to different stations. Easter was headed by a legendary hero of World War I, flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker, who had the usual military attitude toward unions and who fought them vigorously. Rickenbacker boasted that he beat the ALMA at its strongest point, the Newark Airport, by setting up tents and cots and bringing in food for the scabs. The strike collapsed in March, 1939. Spokesman for 130 Eastern mechanics at the Miami airport wired Grand Lodge asking the IAM to come in and pick up the pieces. Unwilling to sabotage a strike in progress, even by an independent union, Harvey Brown took no action until the president of the ALMA advised his members to return to their jobs.

By June, 1939 GLR Jess McGlon signed up enough of the mechanics at Eastern's base in Miami to charter IAM Lodge 702. In a matter of weeks Lodge 702 petitioned the National Mediation Board for a representation election. The IAM received 239 of 260 valid votes and was duly certified as bargaining agent for Eastern's 347 mechanics, specialists, helpers and apprentices. In his autobiography, Rickenbacker described his reaction to the negotiation of the first contract signed between the IAM and Easter Airlines on December 30, 1939. Speaking from an employer point of view he wrote:

Our mechanics and maintenance men had been particularly neglected. Many of them wanted a union to come in and fight their battles for them. Others believed that I was doing my level best to improve their working conditions and increase their salaries and remained loyal. Conflict between the two groups developed to the point at which there were fist fights on the job.

Rickenbacker realized that in beating the independent he had not ended friction in the work place. The fast buildup of IAM membership among Eastern's employees indicated, he later admitted, that "Some men would honestly feel more secure with a union negotiating for them."

The IAM's first contract with Eastern was signed in Miami on December 30, 1939. It included wage increases ranging from \$5.00 to \$33.00 a month with hourly rates ranging from 53¢ to 65¢ for helpers and from 85¢ to \$1.10 for journeymen. Standard working hours were eight-a-day and forty-eight-a-week, with time and a half for overtime and holidays. It established a seniority system along with one week's vacation after six months and two weeks after a year.

The drive that resulted in the IAM's first system-wide collective bargaining agreement in the air transport industry in the United States was paralleled in Canada. In November, 1937 Steve Lyons, the secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Railroad District 2 (and later GVP for Canada) sent Wharton a report on the organization of mechanics working for Trans-Canada Airways (now Air Canada), noting the carrier was jointly owned by the Canadian National Railroad (CNR) and the Canadian Government. Many Trans-Canada mechanics had been recruited directly out of CNR's shops and held IAM membership.

Lyons warned of a move among a group of non-IAM "engineers" to bring back the British-based Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) which had ceded its North Americans locals to the IAM in 1920. The AEU apparently decided against a return to the North American continent because a year later, in November, 1939, Harvey Brown received word that an agreement had been negotiated with Trans-Canada. The pact covered "the maintenance shop at Winnipeg and airports all across Canada from Halifax to Vancouver."

These two contracts, negotiated almost simultaneously at the end of 1939, set the stage for the IAM's emergence as the largest union of airline employees in the United States and Canada. Like the Boeing contract in the aircraft industry, the agreements with Eastern and Trans-Canada opened the way to IAM organization in the rest of the industry. With these contracts IAM representatives were able to demonstrate the IAM's ability to get results at the bargaining table.

The IAM's influence and presence in the airline industry increased slowly but steadily throughout the war. In mid-1945 the Executive Council assigned some thirty representatives to an all-out nationwide airline organizing campaign. Grand Lodge issued a press release proudly announcing an historic bargaining breakthrough in the industry that September. Negotiations with Eastern produced a reduction in the work week from forty-eight to forty--with no reduction in pay. By the time delegates to the Grand Lodge Convention met in New York in October the Executive Council could report signed agreements with Pan American, Continental, Northeast and several other major airlines in addition to Eastern. More significantly the IAM's thirty airline organizers were applying a full court press on at least eight other carriers.

World War II and Postwar Reaction 1940~1950

America Goes Back to Work

The war in Europe put America back to work. By mid-1940 unemployment lines began to disappear. From all over the country workers flocked to the aircraft factories of California. In a reference to the westward migration of penniless Okies and Arkies during the dust bowl days of the early '30's, GVP Castleman described the influx as a re-enactment of "The Grapes of Wrath." he tried to discourage IAM members from coming to California in search of employment. In a report to the *Journal* Castleman warned company propaganda was luring so many workers to aircraft plants, management could get all the help needed at 65¢ an hour.

Labor generally remained plentiful at the war's beginning but skills quickly became scarce. During the hard times of the 1930's apprentice training in metalworking industries became almost extinct. Industry and government were soon desperate for machinists, tool and die makers and other journeymen metalworkers critically needed in shipyards, arsenals, munitions plants and other defense industries.

Time magazine glowingly described a crash program in New York which used facilities at vocational schools for intensive all-day ten-week training courses in various metalworking skills. The report suggested similar programs in other cities could quickly turn out 150,000 machinists, lathe operators, welders, aviation mechanics, electricians and radio technicians, The *Journal* dismissed this suggestion with true machinists scorn, characterizing it as "harebrained."

As manpower shortages appeared, big business tried to bomb organized labor behind a smokescreen of national defense. Prominent senators and beribboned generals demanded the junking of "restrictive and punitive" New Deal legislation, such as the Wage-Hour law and cessation of NLRB and Labor Department "quibbling regulations."

Newspapers reported certain federal "preparedness officials" as saying the "40-hour week must go and not less than a 60-hour week substituted." Earlier in the year, when Roosevelt called on Congress and the nation for an all-out effort the IAM Executive Council immediately pledged full support by union Machinists. But when big business publications began talking about sixty-hour work weeks and repealing the New Deal, the *Journal* countered with a call for drafting factories and profits as well as men and labor.

Unloading An Albatross

As noted earlier, the 1920 Grand Lodge Convention put the IAM in the business of selling low-cost insurance to the membership. This was in addition to the long standing death benefit that built up to \$300 for members with twenty years of continuous service. Through its insurance program, the union tried to give members protection many needed at a price most could afford to pay. Insurance was also meant to be an organizing tool, but it was dead weight from the start. Before the program was adopted, many members expressed interest but once it was launched relatively few signed up.

The Grand Lodge struggled for years to put the program on a sound footing. GLR's and business representatives regularly touted IAM insurance at membership meetings and organizers used it to try to sell the union. The plan was carefully explained to new members and financial secretaries were paid commissions on premiums collected. The Grand Lodge prepared and mailed out tons of literature explaining insurance largely appealed to older members--those in their 50's, 60's and 70's. By 1928 the program was an actuarial disaster and by 1940 a potentially bankrupting liability was building up.

Delegates to the 1928 and 1936 Grand Lodge Convention recognized the danger, the rank and file stubbornly refused to ratify discontinuance by referendum. Following the 1940 Grand Lodge Convention in Cleveland, they finally consented to get rid of this albatross when the Law Committee devised a complex but acceptable formula for paying off existing claims.

IAM vs. The Carpenters

When Harvey Brown took over from Wharton he inherited a Carpenter challenge to IAM jurisdiction. The issue was not new, being rooted in events that had occurred some twenty-five years earlier.

At the century's beginning, Carpenters and Machinists universally agreed that one should work with wood and the other with metal. This sensible arrangement shattered in 1913 during a Metal Trades Department boycott against a notoriously anti-union company in York, Pennsylvania. Following the IAM's refusal to handle or install the company's machinery, the Carpenters decided to try and take over this part of the IAM's jurisdiction. When Anheuser-Busch in St. Louis hired Machinist members to erect and dismantle machinery the Carpenters set up picket lines and announced a boycott against Anheuser-Busch beers. The IAM appealed to the 1914 AFL Convention and its traditional jurisdiction over "building, assembling, erecting, dismantling and repairing of machines" was affirmed.

For the next quarter of a century, when the issue arose, the AFL routinely informed employers that such work belonged to the IAM. But by the late 1930's the AFL executive Council came under the

domination of building trades unions. In the spring of 1938 Carpenter President William Hutcheson* threatened to end per capita payments unless AFL President William Green ceased sending a standard telegram in response to employer queries concerning jurisdiction over "building, assembling, erecting, dismantling and repairing of machines." As president of the federation, Green had a clear duty to enforce convention resolutions and mandates. But he quickly backed down in the face of Hutcheson's bluff. Encouraged by Green's spineless capitulation two other unions, the Operating Engineers and the Street Carmen, revived and reasserted old jurisdictional claims against the IAM.

**The same Hutcheson whose nose John L. Lewis had punched at the 1935 AFL Convention.*

The Machinists felt betrayed. The IAM Executive Council was still mostly made up of journeymen who had apprenticed on the railroads. They had trained and worked in shops where half a dozen unions could peacefully co-exist because they scrupulously respected one another's jurisdictions.

IAM lodges, already busy defending themselves against CIO raids, found themselves battling other AFL unions as well. Brown was unable to get redress from an AFL Executive Council dominated by officers of building trades unions. According to the *Journal*, "350,000 Fighting Machinists were fighting mad."

Brown sought to counter Hutcheson's bluff with one of his own. He suspended the IAM's per capita--amounting to some \$100,000 a year but this only brought yawns from the building trades. Brown changed course, resuming per capita payments to assure the IAM delegates would be seated to present the IAM's case at the 1941 Convention in Seattle. This attempt to win redress was also fruitless. The Convention passed the buck by referring the controversy back to the AFL Executive Council, in effect, asking the Council to pass judgment on itself.

The following year the Carpenters twisted the knife further at a Weyerhaeuser plant in Klamath Falls, Oregon, where the Machinists had organized the machine shop and helped the Carpenters organize a unit of woodworkers in the sawmill. As the IAM contract neared expiration, CIO organizers served notice of interest in the machine shop. Instead of supporting the IAM against the raid, the Carpenters filed for a place on the ballot. While the IAM won the NLRB election by a comfortable margin, this back-stabbing by another AFL Union widened the wedge between Harvey Brown and the rest of the AFL Executive Council.

In April 1943, the IAM Executive Council conducted a referendum asking membership approval for withdrawal from the AFL. The result appeared to be a vote of confidence for Brown; the members approved disaffiliation by almost three to one. But the count was deceptive, fewer than 20% of the members voted and the Canadian lodges lined up against disaffiliation almost two to one. Pockets of opposition also showed up in areas where lodges had close ties to city central bodies, including the big Chicago automotive Lodge, 701.

When the Council voted to disaffiliate, GST Davison registered his disapproval, saying he believed the referendum was contrary to the IAM Constitution. Steve Lyons, the Canadian GVP, also voted against withdrawal, pointing out that it would not change the AFL's position and would only

jeopardize the IAM's affiliations with the Metal Trades Department, the Railroad Employees' Department and local federations.

These views were more widely shared in the IAM than the referendum vote indicated. To old line IAM craftsmen the AFL had always been "The House of Labor." By 1943 the IAM had been part of the AFL for almost fifty years, supporting it loyally in battles with the IWW and the CIO. Disaffiliation created more of a trauma than Brown had anticipated. Despite the referendum vote Brown realized that withdrawal from the federation would cause serious problems within the IAM. He swallowed his pride and reopened negotiations with Green who promised to try to resolve the problem with the Carpenters. Brown paid the IAM's per capita and the Machinists remained in the House of Labor. As soon as the Machinists were safely back in the fold, "Sitting Bill," as John L. Lewis called Green, reverted to form, kowtowing to the building trades, as impotent and ineffectual as ever. While the IAM stayed in the AFL throughout the war, the fracture did not heal. With the support and connivance of other building trades unions the Carpenters became even more blatant in laying claim to the IAM's jurisdiction.

Pearl Harbor and Patriotism--Corporate Style

The IAM Executive Council was meeting in Washington when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. They immediately wired President Roosevelt that more than 340,000 Machinists were rolling up their sleeves. Within ten days the President called representatives of industry and unions together to map out labor-management cooperation during the national emergency. Both sides agreed to a tripartite board to mediate disputes threatening war production. Assured that workers would have a voice in their own conditions of employment, unions gave a no-strike pledge for the duration.

While workers and their unions lined up in support of the war effort a special Senate Committee, headed by an obscure Missouri Senator named Harry S. Truman, found evidence of widespread profiteering and greed in war production. While the Truman Committee began by searching for waste and inefficiency it soon found that some of America's largest corporations were literally engaged in sit-down strikes against the national interest. Many industrialists refused to convert their factories to war production until guaranteed large profits. Even as American soldiers marched to their death in Bataan, Navy officials, appearing before the House Ways and Means Committee, testified that American industrialists were holding up more the 30,000 contracts. A Congressman from Illinois was quoted as saying these businessmen were determined to force legislations that would "facilitate tax dodging in corporations making fabulous profits."

In Detroit the auto industry dragged its heels to the last possible moment. Companies stockpiled cars (and future profits) until Roosevelt personally ordered a halt to further auto production.

Rosie the Riveter

Defense factories from coast to coast were soon operating around the clock. Few IAM members worked less than forty-eight hours and many worked even longer. As more and more men and women left for military service, a shortage of civilian labor grew increasingly severe. Recruiters from defense plants fanned out, seeking workers wherever they could find them. With so many of the men off to training camp, women of all ages poured into the nation's mills and factories. Some infiltrated IAM lodge halls that had always been exclusively male. In Houston, for example, Local Lodge 12, chartered in 1888, had gone fifty-four years without ever having a woman as a member. The lodge president was so delighted and astonished to obligate a "lady member," that he wrote to inform the *Journal* of this historic first. A few months after the war started, Emmet Davison appealed to local lodge officers to identify new women members by Miss and Mrs. Apparently many of the women coming into the union resented receiving letters from Grand Lodge that started out with the ancient and honorable union salutation "Dear Sir and Brother."

As in the First World War, defense plants began hiring women who had never seen the inside of a factory. They came from every walk of life. Some left their ironing boards, others their typewriters; some were grandmothers, others fresh out of classrooms. From kitchens and colleges they went into shipyards, aircraft factories and other heavy metal working industries. At first they were mostly put into lighter jobs--sewing, storekeeping, inspection, and other semi-clerical operations. Soon they were cutting their hair,* putting on hard hats and creating the legend of "Rosie the Riveter." Thousands of women started banging rivets into airplane bodies and ship hulls. They learned to operate milling machines, drilling presses, lathes and shears. In January, 1943 Editor Hewitt's long-time assistant, Florence Hoagland, proudly wrote in the section of the *Journal* reserved monthly for the "Woman's Sphere" that:

Women today do everything. They ferry bombers and build them, too. They perform important work for the Armed Forces. They have replaced men in the scientific laboratories and hospitals. They are oilers and wipers on the railroads, brakemen on the trains . . .

The policy of the War Labor Board and the War Manpower Commission is that women receive the same wages as men when they can do the same work. Wage rates, according to this policy, including the entrance rate, is to be determined for all workers on the basis of work performed, irrespective of sex.

**Because of the danger of working around machinery with long or loose hair, the War department got a then-popular movie star named Veronica Lake to make a well-publicized sacrifice for the war effort. In*

newsreels shown throughout the country, she cut of the long-flowing "Peekaboo" hair style that had been her trade-mark.

Splitting at the Seams

It is difficult to imagine the sweep of the changes that transformed the country, as well as the IAM, in that first year of the Second World War. Literally overnight, factories sprung up where corn fields had been. Sprawling new Army camps turned sleepy villages into bustling boom towns. In Washington the IAM saw a multiplication of agencies dealing with labor relations, war production, prices, wages and other matters of critical interest to unions.

IAM membership soared. For almost two years a dozen or more new lodges were chartered every month. Relatively small aircraft companies became corporate giants almost overnight. Officers and business representatives of IAM lodges servicing aircraft workers scrambled to keep up with sudden surges and leaps in membership. At Lockheed, for example, Lodge 727 went from 491 in April, 1941 to 741 in May, 3,873 in June, and 5,493 in September. That was only the beginning. Hal Shean, now a retired GLR, says that when he was a shop steward at Lockheed early in the war, he received a \$1.00 defense stamp for each new member signed up. Shean recalls, "In one three-month period I made \$700." The lodge also assembled a bevy of beautiful and shapely female shop stewards, calling them "The Unionettes." Clad in short shorts and tight sweaters the "Unionettes" added a decorative touch to union rallies and organizing drives.

The Executive Council authorized many more business representatives and Harvey Brown added new Grand Lodge Representatives in the field and at Grand Lodge to provide essential services and deal with war time agencies. In the fall of 1942 the membership approved a referendum adding two more GVP's to share the overload of organizing and contract negotiations weighing down members of the Executive Council. Harvey Brown filled the new vacancies by naming Roy Brown, one of the new breed of dynamic young GLR's on the west coast and Sam Newman, a veteran GLR in the east.

The massive influx of new members put a severe strain on the ability of many local and district lodges as well as the Grand Lodge to provide an adequate level of service. There was little time to train the new representatives suddenly assigned throughout the United States and Canada. In most cases, they learned by being thrown directly into action. In later years some told of being given their credentials, a yellow pad and a pencil and told to go to work. Similarly, at scores of huge defense installations and aircraft factories, teams of stewards had to be created almost overnight out of a membership whose experience with unionism often ranged from slight to none.

As the work force expanded, so did the ranks of first-line supervision. In many plants few of the foremen had ever managed people. With raw foremen on one side and green stewards on the other,

the potential for production-delaying conflicts was enormous. Nonetheless, actual man-days lost because of strikes fell from 23 million in 1941 to 4.1 million in 1942. And despite a couple of headlined coal mine walkouts led by John L. Lewis, total time lost because of strikes in defense production during the war averaged about one-tenth of one percent of all the time worked. This was the equivalent of each workers striking one day during the entire four years of the war.

FDR: "Labor's Cooperation--Splendid"

Considering the strain of long hours, the "stabilization" of wages and the general rationing and scarcity that aggravated daily life the record was amazing. When strikes did occur, they usually were unauthorized quickies that let workers blow off steam while letting management know that frustrations were reaching the danger level.

Much of the credit for uninterrupted war production is clearly attributable to thousands upon thousands of unknown IAM and other union stewards who served quietly and effectively throughout the war. Like the members they served, many of these stewards were new to industry and learned by doing. In IAM lodges from Long Island, New York, to Long Beach, California, officers designed and taught crash courses on the ABC's of the steward's job. Every steward at Lockheed, for example, was provided with a loose-leaf reference manual prepared by now retired GLR Dale Reed who served as President of Local Lodge 727 (not yet a district) during the war. The manual explained the contract in clear and simple language, discussed the grievance procedure and told how to prepare for the various steps leading to settlement. Cited by the U.S. Department of Labor as a superb tool for training union stewards Reed's manual became the standard text used in training the more than 1,375 stewards needed to handle the grievances of some 37,500 IAM members at Lockheed at the peak of production. Recognizing labor's role in the crusade against Hitlerism Franklin Roosevelt told the 1942 AFL Convention, "Labor's cooperation speaks for itself--it is splendid."

The War Labor Board and the Union Shop

When America was attacked employer groups eagerly accepted organized labor's "no-strike" pledge. The employers also agreed to a tripartite agency to settle disputes that might hold up war production. But when the War Labor Board (WLB) was established corporate America choked at the thought of approving agreements that included union shop clauses. In the early months employer organizations cranked out tons of propaganda denouncing the union shop. In the summer of 1942, the *Journal* reported that the National Association of Manufacturers "bought costly ads in the newspapers, had taken time on the radio and flooded the schools with anti-union booklets in a desperate effort to arouse the public against labor." The Board's four employer members lined up solidly against union

security in any form. This led the *Journal* to comment that "the bosses want unions kept as weak as possible during the war so they can more readily be smashed afterwards."

The showdown came in a case involving the Ryan Aeronautical Company of San Diego. The public members accepted the union's offer to forego its demand for a union shop in exchange for Board approval of maintenance of membership. The compromise formula did not require workers to join the union, but it required those who joined to retain membership for the period of the contract. The employer members grudgingly accepted this compromise but only on condition that all members be given a fifteen-day grace period to resign, assuming an escape clause would trigger a mass exodus from the union. Experience proved that few members dropped out during the grace period while many non-members signed up.

Rising Prices and the Little Steel Formula

With so much of America's production going to the military, shortages of consumer goods developed at a time when many people had money for the first time in years. Despite government efforts to cool the consumer economy prices began to soar. In many communities, especially in and around aircraft factories and war plants, housing shortages became critical and rent became outrageous. In crowded defense towns, stories were heard of beds in rooming houses and apartments rented by the shift, with a night shift worker crawling between still warm sheets as a day shift worker left for the plant.

Rising rents and prices ate away the purchasing power of worker dollars and unions had no alternative but to insist on wage increases to offset rising living costs. After months of deliberation the War Labor Board came to grips with this issue in a bargaining impasse involving steel producers collectively known as "Little Steel." The Little Steel formula recognized that rising prices justified wage adjustments, but limited inequity increases to no more than 15% of the January, 1941 wage rate.

During the war years almost every single IAM family regularly bought War Bonds and every issue of the *Journal* carried such exhortations as "For Victory and Peace Buy U.S. War Savings Bonds and Stamps Now!" Despite long hours of overtime on the job, many IAM members served as neighborhood air raid wardens. Almost everyone had someone--a son, daughter, brother, father, or close relative--in uniform in one or more of the theaters of operation. The patriotism of America's workers was self-evident. And yet tensions and frustrations sometimes boiled over into strikes and near strikes.

The IAM and the War Labor Board

When the War Labor Board (WLB) was created in January, 1942, IAM leaders quickly recognized that the rules of the game had been changed: for the duration the WLB would be a party to every agreement negotiated between labor and management. To assure the IAM members received the best possible representation in Board proceedings, the Executive Council decided to train certain staff members to handle WLB cases in the twelve cities with regional boards. A carefully selected group of GLR's and special reps were brought to Grand Lodge and put through a cram course in preparation of WLB cases. Throughout the war they assisted business reps, GLR's and local lodge officers in presenting wage cases.

As an organization with many skilled craftsmen, relatively few IAM members worked at substandard wages when the war began. This meant the IAM had more difficulty than other unions in justifying wage increases under the Little Steel Formula. In 1943, however, the board ruled that wage adjustments would be permitted if they were necessary "to the effect prosecution of the war." Both before and after the 1943 interpretation the IAM's WLB representatives fought to maintain equity for IAM members.

The WLB's final postwar report showed that the IAM brought more cases than any other union--more the 8,000 altogether. These included some of the largest cases handled by the board, such as one affecting 56,000 Consolidated-Vultee employees in plants at Ft. Worth, Nashville, Allentown, New Orleans, Miami, Elizabeth City and Tucson. In another noted case involving 42,000 IAM members at Curtiss-Wright plants in Buffalo, St. Louis and Louisville the record filled more than 4,000 pages.

WLB work was in addition to cases handled by IAM reps before the NLRB and other government agencies. A few months after the Japanese surrendered, the *Journal* reported that during the war years IAM reps filed an average of one NLRB case a day.

Protest March in Seattle

In January, 1943 a monstrous mass meeting of IAM members at Boeing erupted into a spontaneous march protesting repeated WLB delays in long-promised wage adjustments. The officers called the meeting to give a progress report on the Board's long awaited decision. Separate meetings were planned for the different shifts, but so many members left the plant to come to the first meeting the production line had to be shut down.

Some 15,000 agitated IAM members crammed into every corner of the large specially-rented hall to hear a report from the directing business representative (and later GVP), Harold Gibson. In a carnival spirit someone made a motion from the floor to march on City Hall. Clad in white coveralls, "Gibby" led 15,000 flag, placard and banner carrying Machinists in an impromptu parade through the streets of downtown Seattle. When Hizzoner the mayor looked out of his third floor window he saw the largest demonstration in Seattle history, with traffic blocked in all directions. City Hall was surrounded by Machinists as far as the eye could see.

After the mayor made some friendly and properly sympathetic remarks Gibson called upon everyone to return to work--which they did. Although the crowd was good natured and orderly the press denounced the demonstration as sabotage, sensationalizing it in flaming headlines from coast to coast. From Washington a desk-bound Air Force general added his two cents worth of inflammatory rhetoric with a wire to Gibson characterizing the protest as near treason. In his return wire Gibson told the general where he could go. The War Labor Board got the message. The award finally handed down for the Boeing workers broke the Little Steel formula ceiling for the first and only time.

Slowdowns and Strikes in San Francisco

Throughout the war members of Local 68 outraged public opinion with a series of strikes and slowdowns affecting war production. Lodge 68's business representatives were Harry Hook and the Ed Dillon who had challenged Wharton and the Executive Council at the 1936 Grand Lodge Convention. Oldtimers recall Hook as a talkative, two-fisted tough who could belly up to the bar with the best. His sidekick Dillon was a loner, a non-smoking, non-drinking, church-going bachelor who seemed to have no friends or interests outside the union hall. When Dillon mounted the rostrum at union meetings he would slam his coat to the floor, snap his suspenders and unleash a stream of fire-eating, boss-baiting oratory, bringing the members to a pitch of frenzied fury. Together Hook and Dillon were a formidable team. Hook was the muscle, Dillon the brains.

Local Lodge 68 was crucial to the war effort in San Francisco and Northern California. Its 5,000 highly skilled machinists were not only essential to many metalworking companies in San Francisco--the "up town shops"--but Lodge 68's maintenance machinists were the key to uninterrupted production in so-called "fringe shops"--can companies, sugar refineries, clothing factories, newspapers and food processors.

Working as a team Hook and Dillon negotiated some of the highest pay scales in the nation for San Francisco's machinists. When West Coast shipyards began to gear up for all-out production early in the war, Hook and Dillon got most of the employers to accept a master contract that provided Lodge 68 members with still better wages and benefits.

One large shipyard, Bethlehem, refused to go along. After more than a month of futile negotiations Hook and Dillon asked for, and received, strike sanction from the Grand Lodge. Since Bethlehem was producing shipping bottoms critically needed at that particular moment in history, Lodge 68's walkout set off a nationwide furor in the press. In Washington the Senate set up a special panel headed by a little known Senator from Missouri, Harry Truman, to investigate the situation.

Hook and Dillon flew to Washington but the committee refused to hear Dillon because of suspected Communist connections. According to the *Journal*, Hook was given a hard time when he tried to explain the union's position. The committee also subpoenaed Harvey Brown and AFL President William Green. Characteristically, Green poured gasoline on the fire by describing these working men,

striking one of America's most notoriously anti-union corporations, as "outlaws entitled to no consideration at the hands of organized labor."

Neither the Senate's investigation nor the committee's browbeating was enough to get Lodge 68's members back to work. With a crisis building in the shipyards, Roosevelt appealed directly to Harvey Brown. Under such pressure the Executive Council withdrew the strike sanction and ordered Lodge 68 to call off the strike. In a highly charged meeting a majority of the members defied both the government and the Grand Lodge, voting 385 to 370 to stay out until Bethlehem accepted the master agreement. The strikers finally did return to work but only reluctantly and not until they got assurance from the federal Office of Production Management that a list of unresolved grievances would be taken care of. And not before Emmet Davison himself went to San Francisco to personally appeal to their patriotism.

The walkout at Bethlehem set a pattern that continued through the rest of the war. Hook and Dillon violated the IAM's no-strike pledge in 1943 by pulling the pin on a company that refused to agree to a cost-of-living escalator on the ground that it would violate federal wage policy. Since the walkout involved production essential to the war, the Navy eventually seized the plant, fired the strikers and barred Hook and Dillon from the premises. The two retaliated by announcing that no Bay Area machinist would work more than forty-eight hours a week no matter how dire the emergency. Hook and Dillon also advised their members to slow down with such tactics as "spreading out" vacations. This directive came when most plants in the area were struggling to catch up with backlogs of war orders.

Both the War Labor Board and the Executive Council ordered Hook and Dillon to drop the ban on overtime, but they thumbed their noses at the government and the Council. The FBI was brought in to investigate reports of members harassed for defying "arrogant union bosses." As expected, adverse findings were extensively reported and widely circulated in the press. Ultimately the Navy seized 102 metalworking plants in San Francisco area. Other federal agencies mopped up remaining resistance by applying penalties developed a year earlier against striking coal miners. Workers who refused overtime were fired and blacklisted from wartime industries, had their gasoline ration cards lifted and often found their draft status reclassified. Lodge 68's closed shop certifications were cancelled.

Temporarily beaten, Hook and Dillon warned employers they would return after the war. When the showdown came in 1946, Hook and Dillon were ready to act as a law unto themselves. In addition to the employers they took on Harvey Brown and the Executive Council, a mistake that proved to be their undoing.

Notes On A Union In Wartime

Throughout the war, letters, reports and articles in the *Journal* reflected worry about what would happen to workers and unions when the war was over. To the hundreds of thousands of middle-aged and older machinists holding down the home front, memories of the open shop '20's and the dirty

'30's were like open wounds. And it didn't help when former President Herbert Hoover came out of retirement to inform a raucously cheering wartime NAM Convention that "to secure maximum production" all "rules of Labor" should be swept aside except those "which safeguard health." Nor were the fears of organized workers eased by the stream of anti-union laws that flowed from state legislatures throughout the war. In 1943 Florida became the first state to outlaw the union shop, thus becoming the model for an epidemic of right-to-work-for-less laws in other Southern and farm-dominated legislatures.

In June, 1943 a group of union research directors met to discuss postwar economic planning. The IAM was represented by Paul Hutchings who later served many years as research director for the Metal Trades Department of the AFL-CIO. The union economists noted that with 12 million Americans in the armed forces and 33 million in war industries, the war's end would require a shift of some 45 million workers to peacetime occupations. Fearing that as many as 30 million could be left jobless the union research heads warned that without planning, the postwar world would be grim, with "ex-soldiers selling apples in the street, masses of workers idle in war production centers, people starving in one part of the country while food surpluses rot in other parts."

When France collapsed and the British were driven into the sea in May 1940 President Roosevelt delivered one of his famous fireside chats to the American people. Citing the clear and present danger to American democracy FDR called on industry and labor to produce 50,000 planes a year, a goal many people considered preposterous. Isolationists snickered and conservative newspapers ridiculed the possibility of achieving such production. Even working families, where sentiments toward the President usually ranged from admiration to reverence, thought it probably couldn't be done.

In March 1944 Harvey Brown reported in the *Journal* that U. S. aircraft factories were turning out 9,000 planes a month with another plane rolling off the assembly lines every five minutes, day and night, seven days a week. This output was in addition to 424,000 artillery pieces, 1,160,000,000 shells, 1,200,000 trucks and 148,000 tanks produced in 1942 and 1943.

By August, 1944, the Normandy beachheads had been secured, Paris liberated and Allied troops were closing in on the Third Reich from both east and west. With the end in sight cutbacks were ordered in war production and for the first time since 1940 workers began to receive layoff notices. The AFL Research Department predicted four million would be jobless by the end of the year. With some bitterness the *Journal* noted that Congress had "taken care of business through generous 'contract termination' legislation", but "the men and women who performed the 'miracles of production' faced the bleak prospect of wholesale unemployment.

Meanwhile, in Canada, employer groups attempted to use the war as justification for severing traditional ties between Canadian locals and U. S.-based internationals. They charged that as long as international links were allowed, Canadian workers would be under "foreign control" with agitators from across the border fomenting strikes and other disturbances. Rebuttal came from Canadian GVP Steve Lyons before the Canadian War Labour Board. In a widely reported statement as valid today as then, Lyons noted that:

International unions developed on the North American continent as a result of a community of interest, of similar economic conditions, of geographic propinquity, of the interchange of labour from one side of the border to the other, of the close connection of employing interests in both countries and . . . the enormous and inescapable influence the [U. S. industry] exercises in our country.

Lyons went on to point out that:

The industrialists and financiers of Canada betray no such national jealousy when dealing with their own interests. Capital knows no frontiers. Labour has never sought to interfere with the international affiliations, interlocking interests and common policies of their employers on both sides of the line.

Jack and Heintz: "The Workers' Paradise"

The Jack and Heintz company of Cleveland became nationally celebrated during the war for high productivity and generous employee benefits. Though it had a union shop contract with District 54 and its 4,000 production workers were members of Local Lodge 439, Jack and Heintz symbolized the ultimate in company paternalism. The founder, Bill Jack, had been a business representative for District 54 during the First World War. But, as the Reader's Digest and other widely circulated publications told their readers, he now headed a company in which employees, called "associates," earned between \$7,000 and \$8,000 a year at a time when half as much was considered good money.* Jack's "associates" also had a range of benefits that made the company seem like a workers paradise. They received free medical care at a time when few workers did. They were served free meals at company cafeterias each day, got free saunas and massages at the end of each shift and received two-week paid vacations without cost at company-leased resorts in Florida for married workers and in Quebec for singles.

**During the war the IP's annual salary was \$7,500*

There was, of course, a flip side to this joyous relationship. While workers took home fabulous wages they also worked twelve hours a day, seven days a week with only one day off a month. Moreover, the employee benefit booklet bluntly stated that any benefits not negotiated by the union were purely voluntary on the part of management and that the company reserved the unequivocal right to cancel or change any benefit in any way without advance notice. And while the starting wage for men was 95¢ an hour that of women was 75¢ an hour. Even so, Bill Jack was undeniably a hero to most of his workers. Retired District 54 business representative, Harold Swan, worked at Jack and Heintz during the war. He recalls that Bill Jack's door was always open and that he made a point of knowing hundreds of his "associates" by their first name.

The cozy relationship, between Bill Jack and his worker's led to problems for District 54. His influence over members of Local Lodge 439 meant that he personally handpicked the officers. Moreover Bill Jack thought he could run the district better than Directing Business Representative Matt DeMore. During one district election for new officers, Jack shut down and sent several thousand workers to the lodge hall in specially rented buses to vote for his candidates. Eventually the district changed its bylaws and the Executive Council place Local Lodge 439 under suspension to neutralize the influence of this "model" employer.

When the flood of wartime orders slowed to a trickle in 1945 *Time* magazine reported "Trouble in Paradise." Workers who had been getting what *Time* described as "sky high wages" no longer enjoyed Jack's Turkish baths, or free insurance or Florida vacations. After the war Bill Jack sold out for several million dollars and retired to California. The "associates" became ordinary workers again and incentives once more ended in speedups. By the early '50's Jack and Heintz was paradise lost. Members of 439 were forced to fight speedups with strikes as the company's identity was lost in a maze of corporate mergers. Once again workers learned the difference between rights and benefits won through union negotiations and those bestowed by a benevolent employer.

Nibbled by Minnows

Jurisdictional encroachments on the IAM's turf continued throughout the war. The IAM's transition from craft to industrial unionism worsened longstanding hostilities with the Carpenters and Operating Engineers while opening new animosities with other building trades unions of the CIO.

With almost 700,000 members the IAM was one of the AFL's largest affiliates by the end of 1944. But with so many smaller unions ganging up against it in the AFL Executive Council, Machinists felt the rising irritation of being nibbled by minnows. While jurisdictional squabbles might have been eased by patience and flexibility, Harvey Brown was more pugnacious than patient, more prone to fury than flexibility.

By the end of 1944 the IAM's relationship with the AFL was at an all-time low. After returning to the "House of Labor" in the fall of 1943, the Machinists had received little more than insults for their per capita. It was a thoroughly frustrated Executive Council that met in November, 1944 to deal with the problem. The Council called for a membership referendum to authorize an emergency convention to chart a response to the AFL's shabby treatment.*

**The convention which normally would have been held in 1944 had been postponed due to the difficulties of travel in wartime.*

The End of an Era

The meeting took place without Emmet Davison who was lying in Doctors Hospital in Washington, the victim of a massive heart attack. He died two weeks later after serving longer than most members could remember: Twenty-seven years as GST and before that seven years as a local business representative and Grand Lodge organizer. More important than mere length was the quality of his service.

In the longest term ever served by a GST in the IAM Davison dealt with three proud and strong-minded international presidents. He served quietly, conscientiously and with good humor through the desperate open shop 1920's and the dismal depression 1930's. While his relationship with Wharton became increasingly strained he did not let personal feelings interfere with official duties. Although J. F. Anderson, the loser in the 1925 election for IP, attacked his character in the pamphlet entitled "The Big Steal" he was wholly vindicated by an investigative panel which included Anderson. The records prove that he was scrupulously honest, correct and fair throughout the twenty-seven years he was chief custodian of the IAM's finances. From Preston he received a tradition of strict financial integrity. He passed that tradition on intact and strengthened to his successor, Eric Peterson. An activist and a joiner Davison enjoyed friends in every walk of life. As a popular mayor of Alexandria, Virginia he defied the anti-union Byrd political machine that controlled the state. Knowing he had little chance of winning he ran for Congress against the primitive but powerful reactionary who represented Northern Virginia on Capitol Hill. Davison's funeral was one of the biggest ever seen in Alexandria.

Eric Peterson--The Quiet Man



Eric Peterson
1944-1959

When the Council tapped Eric Peterson to fill out Davison's term he had been a GVP since 1937. Like most of the other members of the Executive Council he was a railroader.

Born in Sweden in 1894 Peterson came to Rawlins, Wyoming with his

immigrant family at the age of ten. His father was the town shoemaker. After completing grade school young Peterson went to work on the Union Pacific, first as a call boy,* then as an apprentice machinist. Before completing his apprenticeship and becoming eligible for IAM membership Peterson found himself in the thick of the legendary 1911 strike against the Harriman lines. When the shopmen walked out Peterson walked with them. This was the strike that touched off the Person case and brought Wharton to prominence in the labor movement. Peterson became a member two years later, moving to Deer Lodge, Montana where he went to work as a machinist on the Milwaukee road. In later years, he recalled that the IAM had just negotiated a 41¢ an hour wage rate for machinists.

**Unlike a call girl a call boy's job was to get train crews out of bed.*

Though reserved in manner and reticent in speech Peterson projected a sense of unruffled calm and dignity that inspired confidence. He held numerous union offices in Deer Lodge and was among the first out on the picket line in the disastrous 1922 shopmen's strike. Later, when the shopmen returned to work he was elected as a delegate to the district lodge.

Peterson attracted favorable notice from the union's top officers while serving on the Resolution' Committees at the 1928 Grand Lodge Convention. Within a few months Wharton recruited him for a special organizing assignment on the Pennsylvania Railroad. Less than a year later he was appointed to the Grand Lodge staff and posted to the Great Lakes territory. In 1937 he succeeded to the seat on the Council left vacant by the unexpected death of GVP Bowen and was sent to head up the Northwest territory. He was immediately plunged into the IAM's long and bitter struggle against Remington Rand in the Mohawk Valley. In 1940 Harvey Brown brought him to Grand Lodge as Resident GVP.

At least fifty years before the health food fad hit the rest of America and joggers cluttered every highway and byway Eric Peterson was out running early every morning and urging coarse ground whole wheat flour on his friends.

During his fifteen years as GST, Grand Lodge annual receipts rose from \$5.5 million to \$12.9 million a year. When he took charge of GST operations many of the procedures for keeping the organization's books and records were almost quaintly old-fashioned. On payday, for example, Grand Lodge employees still received their wages in cash, as had the railroaders years before, in little brown pay packets. Peterson shook the cobwebs out of the GST's Department, bringing in modern office machines and introducing more up-to-date methods.

In his contacts with the members Eric Peterson understood that the appearance of rectitude was as important as its practice. Once, when being hosted by business representatives of a large urban district, an evening at the local race track was proposed. Peterson reacted gently but firmly. "It wouldn't look good," he said, "for members of the Machinists Union to see their GST gambling at the horse races."

What Price Affiliation?

As the war wound down government restrictions on travel eased. By early 1945 Harvey Brown itched to get on with the Grand Lodge Convention which should have been held in 1944. Increasingly irritated by Green and the AFL Executive Council, Brown felt he could now muster membership support for disaffiliation. Sentiment for withdrawal from the AFL had solidified on the IAM Council, especially among such younger members as GST Eric Peterson and GVP's Sam Newman, Elmer Walker, Roy Brown and Al Hayes. Apparently, the straw that broke the camel's back was an AFL Executive Council action

awarding the Operating Engineers jurisdiction over mechanics and machinists employed in the repair or rebuilding of excavating, hoisting, road-building and other power-generated machinery. IAM members as well as IAM leaders saw this as a gratuitous slap in the face.

The convention was scheduled to begin in New York in late October. As the delegates were literally packing their bags Eric Peterson got word that the Pacific Fleet was putting into New York for two weeks of R & R and the Navy would be commandeering enough hotel rooms to house some 35,000 officers and men. Since it was too late to call off the IAM Convention, Peterson somehow managed to scrounge up enough accommodations, although the last few dozen delegates ended up sleeping four or more to a room. The wartime influx of females into the union was reflected by the presence of six women delegates at the Convention. In debate on a resolution to limit immigration, delegate Elma Morgan of Local Lodge 1600 rose to say:

I am speaking against this resolution. It is a disgrace to this Convention that such a resolution would be here. This country was built by immigrants and foreigners. I am an immigrant myself and a citizen of this country by preference. You go down here and look at the harbor. A beautiful woman stands there. Across her breast are the words: "Give me your huddled masses yearning to breathe free". The "huddled masses" came to this country. Go to Scranton, go to Chicago, go in this great city and see what they have done. The soil of this country has been wet with their blood. They built the buildings. They worked in the mines. We certainly owe them something. The United States is a land of freedom and liberty. Surely this resolution can never pass in this convention of the Fighting Machinists.*

**After further debate the Convention agreed with Sister Morgan's position, defeating the anti-immigration resolution by voice vote.*

When Sister Morgan sat down Harvey Brown commented on the significance of her appearance at the mike:

Before proceeding, I want to advise the delegates that you witnessed something that has never happened before. You have listened to the first lady addressing a convention as a delegate of the International Association of Machinists.

Although per capita payments to the AFL had been suspended for almost a year, William Green was invited to present his view of the IAM's jurisdictional problems in the Federation. He carefully skirted the fundamental source of the conflict, i.e. his own week-kneed response to assaults on established jurisdictions. Instead Green delivered a long-winded lecture on loyalty and patriotism and the IAM's historic ties to the AFL. Seeking to flatter Harvey Brown with references to the IAM president's uncompromising courage Green pleaded with the convention to pay back per capita so it could "fight it out like men within the movement and not on the outside."

In a polite but steely response Brown declared,

I may be presumptuous, but I want to make a statement, even at the penalty of some criticism. President Green: There is not one delegate in this convention who would take action to willingly walk out of the American Federation of Labor. But I want to add to that statement, and especially with reference to what you said about per capita tax. It is a fact that there are some payments that have been deferred, possibly some overdue. When we sit down with the fellow to deal with differences that arise out of jurisdiction, we don't want the opposing organization to be in a position to play a card that was not dealt from the deck.

According to the *Journal* this set off a spontaneous reaction. Delegates rose, applauded, whistled and shouted "Go to it, Harvey! We're with you."

The delegates appointed a special committee to study the problem, hold hearings and make appropriate recommendations. The report was presented by Don Burrows, directing business rep of Lodge 701 in Chicago, a significant power in the union whose previous opposition had been enough to back Brown away from disaffiliation in 1943. This time Burrows credited the Executive Council with trying to seek a fair settlement and recommended the IAM's per capita to the AFL be deferred "pending fair treatment from the AFL."

Green did not wait for this recommendation to be ratified by referendum of the IAM's membership. Immediately upon his return to Washington Green sent a letter to all IAM local lodges notifying them that their international was suspended. In January the membership voted, four to one, to defer per capita payments until the AFL agreed to recognize and enforce the IAM's jurisdiction over the machinists trade. To ease membership anxiety at being isolated from the "House of Labor", Brown called a staff conference in St. Louis in early June. He made it clear that whenever possible IAM lodges would continue to maintain cooperative relationships with the other unions. This would include "joint organizing campaigns, joint strike actions and strikes." Brown announced that a committee of four IAM GVP's (Peterson, Carr, Hayes and Nickerson) had already been appointed to meet with AFL representatives to try to settle the dispute. In the heat of the first few angry weeks, the president of the AFL's Metal Trades Department urged IAM members to transfer to federal unions. And William Green ordered the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress to expel the IAM. When the Canadians informed him that they had autonomy over their own membership cooler heads appeared to prevail. Although the IAM remained out of the AFL for several years, both sides were careful to avoid actions which might have made the split permanent and irreversible.

In many local communities throughout the country the IAM's traditional ties with other AFL local unions remained strong. In May, for example, the IAM's new weekly newspaper, *The Machinist*, reported on the results of joint IAM-Teamster bargaining covering thirty-three shops in St. Louis. In June,

AFL unions of the Bradford (Pa.) Trades Assembly staged a half-holiday sympathy strike and paraded through town in support of IAM members picketing Dresser Industries.

Public Relations and the Weekly Machinist

For nearly sixty years the *Journal* was the organizations' main channel of communication and for most of that time the channel was two way. All *Journal* editors started in the shop as working machinists. All were elected to the editorship by vote of the membership. Within limits of time and space the *Journal's* pages were open to any member with something of interest to say to other members. Over the decades the contents ranged from the technical to the trivial, from homespun humor to pure corn, from thoughtful analysis of economic and political issues to pep talks on unionism, from routine announcements to instructions to local lodge officers. Until the 1920's every issue carried a complete roster of local lodges, a practice begun to let traveling journeymen know where local lodges could be found and who to contact in each city or town.

Many early machinists were self-educated in subjects ranging from theology and philosophy to economic and political theory. They tended to be serious readers in an age in which information and ideas were mostly spread through the written word. In his formal study, *The Machinists*, Professor Mark Perlman judged the *Journal* to be "One of the country's finest union publications", saying that at one point it had developed into "Something akin to a machinist's version of *Harpers*," high praise indeed.

At the end of World War II the organization was greatly changed. Starting with the campaign to organize aircraft workers from wall to wall at Boeing in September 1935, the IAM was steadily transformed from a relatively tight fraternity of like-minded skilled craftsmen to an industrial union that included everyone from floor sweepers and assemblers to tool and die makers and erection machinists.

By the time Hewitt retired in 1945, after serving as editor of thirty years, the *Journal* had lost a significant share of its readership. The new editor, Lee Thomas, a former business representative from Grand Rapids, tried to get the attention of the new breed of members by redesigning the format and making the *Journal* easier to read. By that time, however, the Executive Council felt they needed more than a monthly magazine to keep in touch with the IAM's far-flung membership. By the end of World War II serious reading was being replaced by less demanding forms of communications. Even before television revolutionized everything from family life to the political system, IAM members were getting their information less from traditional books and magazines and more from radios, movies, picture magazines such as *LIFE* and easy to scan condensations such as *The Reader's Digest*.

Local and district lodes began to edit weekly papers for their members. The president of the New York State Council, a militant leftist named Robert Schrank, launched a weekly publication for members in that state. Suspecting that Schrank had Communist leanings, Harvey Brown feared that

publications such as his might undermine the International. To keep internal union communications under Grand Lodge control the Executive Council recommended, and the 1945 Convention authorized, a weekly newspaper to be known as *The Machinist*. Although ostensibly intended as a supplement to, and not a substitute for, the *Journal* the introduction of Volume I, Number 1 of *The Machinist* on April 4, 1946 was the beginning of the end for the *Journal*. After a short break-in period under an acting editor, the Executive Council chose Gordon Cole as permanent editor. Cole was a solid professional with experience that ranged from the labor beat on *The Wall Street Journal* to a liberal New York daily known as *PM*. He was also president of the Washington chapter of the Newspaper Guild. Over the next thirty years Cole gave the IAM one of the most readable and widely honored labor newspapers in America.

Postwar Turmoil and Trouble

Japan's surrender in August, 1945 uncorked the genie of industrial discord. Over the next year-and-a-half labor and management slugged it out across picket lines in almost every industry. FDR's successor in the White House, Harry Truman, desperately tried to keep a lid on wages and prices, urging workers to continue the no-strike pledge given at the war's beginning. But when the shooting stopped, the backlog of pent-up grievances could no longer be contained. Workers were in a testy mood; most had been working at least forty-eight hours a week, many sixty or more. For four years worker complaints about conditions on the job were met with the snide response, "Don't you know there's a war on?" Even more important, prices began to outpace wages. Many commodities were still subject to federal price controls but, as Truman's Secretary of Labor, Lewis Schwellenbach, pointed out, the buying power of the dollar dropped 16.6% from April 1945 to September 1946.

Between Hiroshima in August, 1945 and Election Day in November, 1946, more than five-million Americans marched on picket lines. Strikes closed such crucial industries as coal, auto electric, steel maritime and railroading. In June, 1946, GST Eric Peterson reported that in the first ten months following the war the IAM paid out an average of \$100,000 a month in strike benefits. This included \$273,000 to members striking Consolidated-Vultee in San Diego and Ft. Worth. The IAM's \$10 a week strike benefits were then paid directly out of the general fund.

Most of today's older workers recall Harry Truman with affection. And over the long run he proved to be a friend of labor. But Harry Truman sometimes shot from the hip. When two railroad brotherhoods, the Locomotive Engineers and the Trainmen, pulled the pin on the railroads in May 1946, Truman went before Congress and demanded the strikers be drafted into the Army.* Harvey Brown angrily denounced this as an attempt "to put labor under the yoke of militarism."

**Actually the brotherhoods had agreed to a settlement shortly before Truman made his "Draft the strikers" proposal. Evidence is strong that he knew it and was grandstanding for purposes of public opinion.*

While Congress rejected the idea of drafting free workers, it quickly enacted legislation, known as the Case Bill, viewed by organized labor as almost as repressive. The Case Bill outlawed strikes during a sixty-day cooling off period, authorized employers to sue unions for contract violations, took away worker bargaining rights in case of picket line violence and outlawed secondary boycotts. Truman regained his sense of fairness by the time this measure hit his desk and to organized labor's great relief he vetoed it.

While quick to publicize and condemn strikers, newspapers paid less attention to businesses that profited by exploiting shortages of food, housing and other commodities,* some of which were clearly artificial. On the eve of the 1946 Congressional elections, cattle growers stopped shipping and meatpackers held back inventories in a coordinated--and eventually successful--effort to discredit and destroy the Office of Price Administration (OPA). By the time Election Day 1946 rolled around, the American people were in a sour mood, directing their anger at the Democrats who had controlled both houses of Congress since 1932.

The new editor of the *Journal*, Lee Thomas, sensed that a catastrophe was impending. Over the years he had created a column of home-spun, shop-talk philosophy for the *Journal*, which he called "The Old-Timer Beats His Gums." A month before the election the "Old-Timer" predicted that in the upcoming election, "The average working man will beat his brains out figuring an alibi for keeping away from the voting booth." Unfortunately, the "Old-Timer" was right. The IAM's new weekly, *The Machinist*, reported the ". . . most intensive effort in history to elect the friends and defeat the enemies of labor at this year's Congressional elections." The effort proved to be too little, too late. As chronicled by the banner headline across the first page of the November 14 issue of *The Machinist*, the 1946 Congressional election was a political disaster for working people. Many of labor's staunchest friends in both the House and Senate were engulfed by a reactionary avalanche. Anti-union conservatives also gained control of most state legislatures, setting the stage for anti-union legislation at both the federal and state level, including the federal Taft-Hartley Act and a wave of state right-to-work-for-less laws. The 1946 election brought young Richard Milhous Nixon to the House of Representatives on the wings of the first of the mean and dirty political campaigns that became his trade mark. This was also the election in which the Wisconsin Senate seat, so long honored by the name LaFollette, fell to an odious practitioner of fear and smear, the infamous Joe McCarthy.

Hook and Dillon Meet Harvey Brown

After VJ Day, plants seized by the government to avert and end war-time strikes were rapidly returned to private hands. In San Francisco, where the Navy had checkmated Lodge 68's business representatives, Hook and Dillon, in 1943, the stage was set for a classic postwar collision between labor and management. By the summer of 1945 Hook and Dillon were once more free to lead their members out on strike. The two lost little time in presenting metalworking employers with post-war contract demands. Contemporary reports indicate that as a team they were always affable and polite, neither

threatening nor blustering. But, in effect, employers were told, "Gentlemen, the Navy is out and the time has come to pay up." In other West Coast cities, including Oakland, San Jose, Los Angeles, Stockton, Seattle and Portland, IAM negotiators had set a wage pattern of 18%. In San Francisco Hook and Dillon demanded a 30% wage increase, two weeks vacation with pay plus nine paid holidays and a weekly guaranteed wage. Hook and Dillon orchestrated their negotiations with a United Steelworker local formed from the nucleus of the membership of old lodge 284, which Wharton had expelled prior to the 1936 Grand Lodge Convention. Such collaboration with the CIO was normally considered dual unionism. In this case the Executive Council considered it near treason.

When Lodge 68 applied to Grand Lodge for strike sanction, Harvey Brown asked for assurances that Hook and Dillon would not only stop negotiating jointly with a dual union but that they would abide by the IAM Constitution in taking a strike vote and giving notice required by federal law. The War Labor Disputes Act (also known as the Smith-Connally Act), passed in 1943, still required unions to give the Department of Labor thirty days notice before going on strike. Unable to get such assurances from Hook and Dillon, both the IAM Executive Council and the San Francisco Central Labor Council withheld strike sanctions.

Negotiations broke off when Hook and Dillon rejected the industry's "final offer" of 10%. Management dug in for a long strike. The result was a stalemate that tied up Bay Area industry throughout the fall and winter of 1945-46. Although consumer shortages soon developed, Hook and Dillon refused to compromise, saying there was nothing to negotiate.

In February, 1946 the Executive Council held its regular winter meeting in Washington. By then per capita for Lodge 68's 8,000 members was several months in arrears and rank-and-file members were charging flagrant violations of the IAM's "Little Green Book"--the Grand Lodge Constitution. According to reports filtering back to Washington, Hook and Dillon were telling employers "to take it or leave it" while refusing to submit counter offers to membership vote.

Since this affected not only the 8,000 members of Local Lodge 68, but thousands of other IAM members throughout the Bay Area, the Executive Council decided to go to San Francisco to check out the situation on the spot. The train trip across the country took five days. Upon arrival Harvey Brown called a special membership meeting, intending to present the employers' latest offer of 15%. When he tried to preside at a mass meeting in San Francisco's Civic Auditorium, he and the rest of the Executive Council were greeted with catcalls and boos. Hook and Dillon had carefully packed the hall with their supporters, and efforts to conduct the meeting were drowned in Bronx cheers, points of order and general bedlam. For thirty-five minutes Harvey Brown tried vainly to establish order. Seething with rage he adjourned the meeting, deciding the time had come to break the power of Hook and Dillon on their home ground.

Brown knew it would not be easy to loosen the grip Hook and Dillon had on Lodge 68. Their militance in bargaining had built a powerful core of support in the lodge. More significantly they had in their possession the lodge records, the keys to the lodge hall and control over the lodge checkbook. But Brown had prepared himself for a showdown. Before the Executive Council boarded the train in

Washington he arranged to have Eric Peterson bring some 8,000 envelopes addressed to the homes of Lodge 68 members. These were mailed to poll the members' response to the employers' latest 15% offer. While the ballots were still in the mail the Executive Council summoned the officers of Lodge 68 to show cause why their charter should not be suspended. When the summons was ignored the Council lifted Lodge 68's charter.

Harvey Brown followed through by petitioning the district court for a writ ordering Hook and Dillon to turn over the lodge books, keys and accounts. Meanwhile the ballots on the employers' 15% offer produced a majority in favor of acceptance. The Executive Council then met with the employers and negotiated an even better deal--an 18% wage increase plus six paid holidays and two weeks' vacation.

Hook and Dillon fought back. They called a mass meeting attended by diehards who voted to secede from the IAM and continue the strike. A few picket lines were set up, but within days the rebellion petered out for lack of support. Charges were then served on Hook and Dillon. Refusing to respond they were tried in absentia and fined and expelled. Embittered, Dillon dropped out of the labor movement altogether but Hook went with the CIO Steel Workers local (the offshoot of old IAM Local Lodge 284). Many years later, in the 1960's Roy Siemiller readmitted Hook as part of a membership swap with the USW. GVP Stan Jensen says that when Hook died he had his IAM due book in his pocket.

The Taft-Hartley Act

The Congress that was swept into Washington by the 1946 Congressional elections is remembered as one of the most reactionary in history. While Harry Truman later tagged it as a "do-nothing" Congress the description was charitable. The new Congress inflicted significant and permanent damage on the American labor movement. With their first majority in both the House and Senate since 1932 Republicans came to Washington determined to repeal as much of the New Deal as possible.

A pair of union-baiters, Representative Fred Hartley of New Jersey and Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, assumed the chairmanships of committees with jurisdiction over legislation regulating labor-management relations. In less than three months a comprehensive anti-union bill zipped through the House. *The Machinist* described it as "the most monstrous anti-labor measure ever proposed." One Congressman called it "the Republican scab labor bill", while another termed it "a vindictive crucifixion of American labor." According to the *Journal* much of this House bill, up to and including the finishing touches, was directly written by lobbyists and lawyers of such infamous Wagner Act violators as Allis-Chalmers, Fruehauf, J. I. Case and Inland Steel. *The Machinist* noted that for every witness favorable to labor, chairman Hartley invited seven known to be anti-union. Harvey Brown asked for, but was denied, time to testify on behalf of IAM members.

As passed by the House, the Hartley bill included all the crippling restraints Truman had vetoed in the Case bill the year before. In addition it proposed to fragment the labor movement by outlawing industry-wide bargaining and removing the authority of international unions over their own locals.

Fortunately, these sections were defeated in the Senate although only by the frighteningly thin margin of one vote.

A contagion of post-war anti-union reaction was spreading throughout the country. While the House and Senate were debating and passing legislation stripping away Wagner Act protections, right-to-work-for-less laws were being introduced in no fewer than thirty-five states. Together with other mean-spirited laws designed to cripple unionism in America, fifteen of these laws mandating compulsory open shops, were passed that year--and five others have been enacted since.

This attack, from all sides, reminded old-timers of Sam Gompers' warning, "What government gives, government can take away and once it starts taking it can take more than it gave." Since it was too late to get government out of industrial relations, the Executive Council decided to try to strengthen the IAM's influence on Capitol Hill. To serve as the IAM's first full-time lobbyist, they named an old-line machinist who had spent much of his career in politics and government. Joe Tone joined the IAM in 1909 and within ten years had become a GLR. In the 1920's and '30's he left the staff but retained his membership while holding a number of political and government posts, at various times serving as a member of the Connecticut Legislature, Connecticut's labor commissioner, a candidate for Congress and a federal mediator. When Tone retired in 1954 Hayes delegated his duties to George Nelson, a member of Local Lodge 1558 since 1936 and a former business representative for District 65 in Jamestown, New York. Originally brought to Grand Lodge in 1946 for general duties Nelson lacked Tone's legislative background and experience when plunged into the merry-go-round of Congressional lobbying. Camouflaging intuitive political shrewdness with an aw-shucks just-an-old-country-boy personality, Nelson carefully nurtured a host of friendships with influential members of key committees and their staffs. In a career that eventually spanned more than two decades on Capitol Hill, he became known as the dean of labor lobbyists and was acknowledged as a journeyman in his mastery of the legislative process.

To strengthen grassroots membership support for the legislative and political objectives that would be advanced by Tone and Nelson the Council also hired Tom Tippet to establish and conduct a union-wide program of membership education. Tippet was a brilliant, largely self-taught intellectual who started as a coal miner, but who became active in workers' education early in life. During the '20's he taught at the then well-known (and highly controversial) Brookwood Labor College. During the 1930's, he headed the Worker Education Division of the New Deal Works Progress Administration (WPA).*

**As a writer Tippet produced lucid and graceful prose. His published works include a study of early textile organizing called "When Southern Labor Stirs" and a novel on coal mining, "Horseshoe Bottoms." Brown, and later Hayes, came to rely on him increasingly as a speech writer. When he reached the mandatory retirement age at Grand Lodge he was hired by District Lodge 751 to conduct education programs for members employed at Boeing in Seattle.*

Less than a month after the Hartley bill passed the House, Taft succeeded in ramming a similar, though slightly less damaging, version through the Senate. The new law, known as Taft-Hartley, was a

many-sided attack on the workers' right to organize and bargain collectively. It effectively annulled the right of workers to choose union representation without interference from management. Under the guise of "free speech" the bosses were now licensed to conduct vicious anti-union campaigns in the work place.

Taft-Hartley also revived injunctions and banned hiring practices that helped to stabilize employment in construction, maritime and entertainment industries. It took away a union's right to protect itself against infiltration by criminals, extremists, spies and scabs by limiting grounds for discharge under a union shop contract to non-payment of union dues. The law also forced union members to work on struck goods by prohibiting "secondary boycotts". It grudgingly permitted employers and unions to negotiate union shop contract clauses only if approved by a two-thirds majority in a secret ballot election* but authorized state legislatures to ban all forms of union security under so-called "right-to-work" laws. Taft-Hartley established highly technical strike notice requirements with stiff penalties for unions failing to comply. By requiring union officers (but not employers) to take a loyalty oath, the law presumed communist domination of the labor movement. This provision was eventually ruled unconstitutional.

** This requirement was repealed when its sponsors were thoroughly repudiated and embarrassed by the results of the balloting in union shop election. In the first four years 5,336,971 workers voted in government supervised elections in 44,587 shops and plants in every state. 4,886,141 voted for the union shop, 450,830 against. 97% of these elections went overwhelmingly in favor of the union.*

Contrary to labor's first fears, the act did not immediately cripple unions in industries and areas where they were strong, but it chilled union growth in Southern and agricultural states. It also cleared the way for such anti-union phenomena as runaway shops and later, for the modern version of Pearl Bergoff's thugs--labor-management consultants specializing in throttling union organizing campaigns.

The Machinist summed up Taft-Hartley by saying it gave "employers powers which an earlier Congress recognized as vicious and took away from employers because they were used to destroy the right to organize." Even *Business Week*, which had opposed the Wagner Act more than a decade earlier, admitted "the Taft-Hartley Act went too far." It not only predicted the new law would be "hell for labor, purgatory for business and paradise for lawyers" but accurately foresaw that "given a few million unemployed in America, given an administration in Washington which was not pro-union--and the Taft-Hartley Act conceivably could wreck the labor movement."

Even before the Taft-Hartley Act hit Truman's desk, the IAM joined the rest of the labor movement in a nationwide letter-writing campaign urging him to veto it. In less than two weeks more than one-half million anti-Taft-Hartley messages flooded the White House mailroom. A Machinist delegation from New York, led by State Council President Bob Schrank, personally delivered petitions signed by 25,000 of New York State's 55,000 IAM members. This was but one of many delegations of machinists and other trade unionists who came to Washington to try to kill Taft-Hartley. Truman did, indeed, veto the Taft-Hartley Act, saying:

It would reverse the basic direction of our national labor policy, inject the government into private economic affairs on an unprecedented scale and . . . cause more strikes, not fewer. It would contribute neither to industrial peace nor to economic stability and progress . . . it contains seeds of discord which would plague this nation for years to come.

The Machinists Non-Partisan Political League

Truman's veto message brought a storm of fury from the GOP leadership. In less than an hour a coalition of anti-labor Northern Republicans and Dixiecrats in the House of Representatives whooped through a vote overriding Truman's veto. Both the President and Senator Taft went on nationwide radio that evening. Truman defended his veto and the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively. Taft naturally attacked those rights and three days later the Senate followed the House's lead. Truman's Taft-Hartley veto was overridden by a large margin.

This assault on labor's right to organize and bargain set off a surge of political awareness in union halls everywhere. Before Taft-Hartley political issues tended to be rather low key in the IAM. The Grand Lodge Convention endorsed Robert LaFollette in 1924 and the Executive Council urged support for each of Roosevelt's re-election bids. But from the very earliest days machinists tried to avoid the divisiveness of political dissension in conducting local lodge affairs. Under the Grand Lodge Constitution, members could discuss "subjects of political economy under the heading of 'Good and Welfare' providing such discussion does not occupy more than twenty minutes . . . and does not include matters sectarian in religion or partisan politics.

While Taft-Hartley specifically prohibited unions from making "any contribution or expenditure in connection with an election to federal offices," Harvey Brown called on all IAM local and district lodges to set up programs of political education. As a start he urged members to visit and talk with candidates and directed lodges to sponsor voter registration drives. Shortly thereafter *The Machinist* announced the formation of a new political arm, the Machinists Non-Partisan Political League (MNPL). Its purpose: to help working people cast their votes more effectively; Its initial goal in the 1948 presidential election: to replace the pro-employer Taft-Hartley Congress with Senators and Representatives more friendly to unions. The MNPL's founding meeting, on November 24, set a goal of \$1 million in voluntary contributions to be used to educate union members and publicize voting records.

Organize, Educate, One Million by '48

IAM membership reached a wartime peak of 675,000 in May 1944 but then slipped to a little less than 492,000 by January, 1946. Layoffs at arsenals, shipyards, aircraft plants and other war

production centers hit tens of thousands of wartime members. Many experts predicted 1919 all over again--with huge wartime gains in union membership melting away in peacetime. But 1946 was not 1919. The expected and dreaded postwar depression did not materialize because workers piled up lots of overtime at good wages during the war years. With nothing to buy, millions put their cash into war bonds. This backlog of accumulated purchasing power, plus a massive pent-up demand for consumer goods, fueled a postwar boom. When hiring in consumer industries began taking up the slack left by cancelled war orders, IAM membership again increased. Between January 1946 and June 1947, membership rose steadily, going from 491,924 at the beginning of 1946 to 549,515 by mid-1947.

The unforeseen membership gain created a rosy sense of optimism throughout the union. In early 1947 the Executive Council unveiled an ambitious organizing campaign, announcing the IAM aimed to celebrate its 60th Anniversary, in May, 1948, with at least one-million members. The slogan was: "Organize And Educate A Million Members by '48." A war chest of \$2 million was earmarked for local and district lodge organizing campaigns and Harvey Brown urged every member to go out and personally sign up at least one other worker. The new education director, Tom Tippet, was appointed overall national coordinator. For the next several months the *Journal* and *The Machinist* beat the drums for the million by '48 campaign.

Despite exhortations and a better than average record of success in NLRB elections total membership could not be pumped up by slogans. After reaching a peak of 549,500 in June 1947, membership rolls hovered between 500,000 and 545,000 throughout the rest of the decade.

The Battle of Seattle

The IAM's first contract with Boeing, signed in 1936, was followed by more than a decade of good relationships with the company. During the war years, the first simple agreement was expanded and improved in several negotiations without the hint of a work stoppage. By 1947, however, the climate for collective bargaining at Boeing, as in the rest of the nation, had deteriorated. Mounting layoffs foretold new kinds of problems, such as increased conflict over the rights of foremen to bump back into the bargaining unit. It soon became clear that labor and management were going to clash over fundamental issues of job security. Moreover, by 1947 District 751 realized it was negotiating with a new breed of management.

The passing of the founding generation of master builders at Boeing was symbolized by the death of company president Phil Johnson, who had led Boeing to greatness. For years Johnson personally negotiated with the union. When the company was small he dealt with employees in the shop in an easy man-to-man way. But with his passing a new generation took over, with lawyers replacing engineers and bureaucrats displacing builders. In 1947, for the first time, the company's negotiations were conducted by professionals and technicians.

When the union presented its initial proposals--none of which were unusual or extreme--it expected counter proposals from which bargaining could then proceed. Instead the company's new director of industrial relations rejected each proposal as "too costly", "not workable", or "we couldn't do that". When management refused the usual understanding that any agreement would be retroactive the bargaining committee realized these negotiations were going to be different. Despite the company's unexpected stonewalling no one anticipated a strike. Only much later, when weeks of stalled negotiations dragged into months, did the workers realize they might be headed for their first walkout at Boeing.

The final sticking point was the company's demand for complete control over a total number of employees equal to 10 percent of the union's membership without regard to seniority. Boeing adamantly insisted on the right to unilaterally hire, fire, transfer, lay off or recall any 10 percent of the work force. No self-respecting union could accept such a proposal. Pointing out that seniority is the basic union right from which other rights flow the union stressed that giving the company such arbitrary power over seniority would all but cancel the collective bargaining agreement. Control of seniority meant control over layoffs, recalls, promotions, vacation rights, shift preferences, and practically every other condition of employment. For more than a year the district and the Grand Lodge sought a reasonable solution through negotiations and the help of federal conciliators. Harvey Brown traveled to Seattle to meet personally with Boeing's top man, William Allen. But an agreement could not be reached.

Meanwhile the country was coming down with a bad case of anti-unionism. The infection showed up in Congress in the headlong rush to enact the Taft-Hartley Act. Emboldened by the prevailing political climate Boeing continued to demand union surrender on the seniority issue.

Throughout the negotiations the company seemed to be goading the union into a strike. On the eve of Harvey Brown's arrival in Seattle, for example, it announced a pay raise for guards and firemen. Shortly thereafter it upped the wages of some 3,000 non-union office and supervisory employees.

With months of fruitless talks leading nowhere, members in the plants became increasingly restive. The Grand Lodge tried to keep the lid on. The Executive Council was not eager to have so many members on strike in one place at one time. At one point, negotiations were suspended while the NLRB took a poll under the recently enacted Taft-Hartley Act to determine whether Boeing's workers wanted to continue the union shop clause that had been in their contract from the beginning.

For a union security clause to be approved, the law required a two-thirds majority of all those in the bargaining unit, not merely those actually voting. This meant any eligible employee who failed to vote would be counted against the union. When the election was held, early in 1948, 12,824 Boeing employees cast ballots. 12,136 voted for the union shop. Even when non-voters were counted against union security the union shop won by 94.9 percent vote. During the first year of Taft-Hartley the IAM was involved in 2,522 union shop elections and won 2,472 of them--an astounding 98%. As previously noted the workers' desire for union security was so universally overwhelming that even Senator Taft

was finally forced to agree that union shop elections were a waste of time. This section of Taft-Hartley was repealed in 1952.

By April 1948, negotiations between District 751 and Boeing reached the end of the line. The company dismissed the union's final proposal out of hand and refused to arbitrate. A last minute effort by a committee of GVP's--Al Hayes, Roy Brown and Joe McBreen--collapsed when Boeing President William Allen refused to see them. The GVP's recommended that strike sanctions be granted immediately.

Throughout the long and exhausting months of frustrating negotiations, union members and leaders alike were baffled by management's apparent desire to force a strike. When the strike began, the motivation became clear. Mr. Allen was aiming for nothing less than District 751's total destruction.

At first, the picket lines, manned twenty-four hours a day, seemed peaceful enough. But, when the company started bringing supervisors and scabs through to do the work of the strikers, flurries of fist fights and name calling broke out. The company sought and got a court order limiting pickets to no more than three at each gate. In retaliation, the union mounted loud speakers in moving cars and began taking pictures of scabs and strike breakers. A few homemade bombs were set off around town. After a hole was blown in the roof of union headquarters a twenty-four hour guard was set up. At no time were efforts made to damage company property or interfere with the comings and goings of company officials. Although the IAM was not affiliated with the AFL at this time, other unions in Seattle were quick to line up with offers of help on the picket line, with money and other support.

District 751 Meets Porky Pig

There was, however, a notable exception. As the dispute dragged into the second month, the strikers were caught off guard by evidence the Teamsters had joined Boeing in a union-busting conspiracy. Until then District 751, like the IAM as a whole, generally had a good relationship with the Teamsters in the Pacific Northwest. Despite battles with CIO unions, respect for jurisdictional boundaries had not yet disappeared entirely in the labor movement. Because aircraft manufacturing was not even remotely within the jurisdiction of the trucker's union, District 751 members were shocked to learn the Teamsters were operating a strike-breaking hiring hall for Boeing. It was hard to believe that even the most corrupt union would serve as a recruiting agency for scabs. The Teamsters told new hires it was okay to work in the plant and even began to sign up former IAM members who had given up and crossed the picket line.

District 751 was stabbed in the back by Dave Beck, one of the slimy characters who occasionally manage to worm their way into positions of power in the labor movement. Beck, who later became IBT President, wielded enormous power in the Teamster hierarchy. A paunchy, porcine figure, he wallowed in luxurious perks, including a millionaire's mansion for a residence, provided gratis by the IBT's executive board. He later went to prison for income tax fraud but at the time of the Boeing strike he was

fawned upon by the press and politicians as a "labor statesman" who knew how to get along with businessmen. Always prepared to sign a sweetheart contract, always ready to sell out workers, Beck was a regent of the University of Washington and hobnobbed with all the best people at exclusive watering holes. This was the creature with whom Boeing President William Allen preferred to deal.

The strike dragged on through the spring and summer. An NLRB trial examiner--and later the full Board--found the company guilty of unfair labor practices. Boeing was ordered to reinstate the strikers with back pay and negotiate in good faith. Although the decision favored the union it put the strikers on the horns of a dilemma. They had to go back to work to get retroactive back pay. But as long as they were on strike they couldn't go back to work. The situation was further muddled by the company's open desire to replace the IAM's Aero Mechanics Lodge with the Teamsters' "Aeronautical Workers" Local in a new representation election.

Under the recently enacted Taft-Hartley Law, the only workers eligible to vote in a representation election were those on the payroll and at work on the day of the election. Obviously, the longer the walkout lasted the more Teamsters hires there would be when the election was held.

To protect their representation rights the members voted to call off the strike and go back to work. After five months on the picket lines they still had no contract. The company refused to recognize the IAM's business representatives or deal with its stewards in the shop. The grievance procedure ceased to exist. For the next several months the company and the union waited for the courts to rule on the NLRB order. When the ruling came, it was a disaster, totally reversing the Board's order. Unlike the hearing examiner who was presumed to have special expertise in labor relations and who heard and weighed the testimony first hand, the court found that under the Taft-Hartley Act the union was guilty of an illegal strike. By ruling that the IAM had forfeited its rights as bargaining agent, the judge gave the Teamsters an open shot at the IAM's bargaining unit at Boeing.

Accepting the challenge district lodge president Harold Gibson immediately petitioned for a new election. By this time the work force was a mixed bag of Machinist, Teamsters and an unknown quantity of workers identified with neither. Most of the latter, as well as the Teamster recruits, had gone through IAM picket lines. All were eligible to vote.

The IAM's future at Boeing looked bleak. Allen plainly preferred Dave Beck's brand of sweetheart unionism and his company's influence pervaded the State of Washington. The Teamsters were primed to pour in as much money and manpower as necessary to take the unit away from the IAM. The odds were further tilted toward the Teamsters by the sad state of District 751's finances. For five months it had supplemented Grand Lodge strike benefits with extra cash and groceries for members with large families or who had been especially hard hit. Nevertheless the district, with full support from Grand Lodge, came out fighting.

Their Finest Hour

By the time District 751 went toe to toe with the Teamsters in an NLRB election in November 1949, almost three years had passed since the first meeting opened what union members assumed would be a normal round of contract negotiations in January 1947. During many long and nerve-racking months IAM members and leaders suffered sacrifices and setbacks. Through it all a dedicated inner core retained a kind of blind faith that they would win in the end. Tom Tippet, the IAM's education director, in an unpublished history of District 751, wrote "this was their finest hour."

As the campaign developed the Teamsters published a weekly newspaper featuring smear and fear. It attacked the IAM as a dual union outside the AFL, unworthy of support from true trade unionists. The Teamster publication accused 751's officers of illegal acts and predicted the company would win a multi-million dollar damage suit against the IAM, making individual members liable for damages. Resorting to the Hitler "big lie" technique the Teamster's propagandists repeated, over and over, that an IAM victory would mean no more defense contracts for Boeing and Seattle would become a ghost town.

District 751 and the Grand Lodge were not without resources of their own. They fought fire with fire. Teamsters and company propaganda were countered not only by the weekly *Aero-Mechanic* newspaper, but also with twice-a-week radio programs and paid ads on both radio and in the daily newspaper.* Billboard space was bought along well-traveled highways and placards were placed in bars, barber shops and other businesses. Letters were mailed. Meetings were held. Speakers were sent throughout the community to talk to schools, clubs, churches and anyone else who would listen. Top GLR's from around the country were brought in to serve as a fast-moving squad of house-calling organizers. These included some who had started out at Boeing as well as old-timers who volunteered to come out of retirement and work the neighborhoods.

**Seattle was Beck's hometown and his power and influence there were enormous. Neither newspapers nor radio stations would carry ads which they feared he might find offensive. Thus a double standard prevailed. The Teamsters could write or say just about anything they wanted while the IAM's ads were heavily censored.*

Once again William Green injected himself into a Machinists fight. Old "Sitting Bill" recorded a radio broadcast in which he delivered a script written by the Teamsters. He also posed with Beck in a picture publicizing the speech, the two grinning side by side, Green's hand placed affectionately on Beck's shoulder.

Green's remarks repeated the bugaboo about Seattle becoming a ghost town if the IAM won. While the charge was ridiculous it seemed to alarm many who feared such reprisal. District 751's officers looked for someone with sufficient prestige and substance to rebut the nationally known president of the AFL. They called on the IAM's newly elected president, Al Hayes, who prepared a dignified and polished speech for broad cast in Seattle. While he did not stoop to personal attacks, vulgarity or gutter language, he pulled no punches in linking Beck and the Teamsters to strikebreaking. Fearful of Beck, the radio station red-penciled Hayes remarks to a state of innocuousness. District president Harold Gibson stormed through the station, with the red-penciled version in his hand, threatening to submit it as

evidence of censorship to the FCC. He also warned the Machinist would finance and sponsor a campaign to lift the station's license. Through such persuasion Hayes' speech was carried in its original form.

This was the first time most IAM members and other workers at Boeing heard Hayes. A superb public speaker, he came across as a leader with intelligence, dignity and character. In the final days of the campaign men and women employed at Boeing were able to compare Hayes and Beck in person. The contrast between Hayes' trade union integrity and Beck's oily opportunism was clear.

Hayes also brought off a last-minute master stroke with a letter from White House Assistant John Steelman (who was also a former Secretary of the Air Force) confirming that Boeing would continue to be used for Air Force production regardless of the outcome of the election. Hayes read the letter to a mass meeting of several thousand Boeing employees and overnight Gibson papered the town with thousands of reprints.

With one of the largest single bargaining units in America at stake, the Machinists and the Teamsters threw all their chips into the battle. Though the outcome was uncertain until the final count, the Teamsters were cocky with confidence. They not only spent more money but were given kid glove treatment by the newspapers and radio stations. They also enjoyed the all too obvious support of Boeing's top management. On election night they rented a large hall so all could come and help celebrate their victory.

At IAM headquarters, the leaders crossed their fingers and simply told the members the results would be announced the next day when the final vote was counted. That night, despite the uncertainty, the faithful came from all over the city to keep a kind of vigil. Hour after hour they came wandering into the district hall. By midnight the overflow eddied out to the sidewalks and into the surrounding streets. Tom Tippet later wrote:

The crowd was somber. Hope was in the air, but nobody knew for sure. A lot of water had passed over the dam since the strike. Thousands of new workers were in the plant and they had voted. Now the crowd, in and around the union headquarters could do nothing but wait. Sometime after midnight GLR Jack Bentley walked in and as he went past a staff member he whispered "We've won by 3 to 1".

Within seconds the word was out and hundreds of men and women broke into an exultant mixture of cheers and tears. Months of strain and tension dissolved into roars of triumph. But while one fight was over, another was just beginning. The road back to a good collective bargaining relationship with Boeing was long and hard. When District Lodge 751 originally opened negotiations for a new contract in January 1947, it had the best contract in the aircraft industry. Three years later the best it could hope for was a foundation from which it could rebuild for the future. It took District 751 members years to regain the confidence and conditions that were lost in this historic collision.

"Give 'Em Hell Harry"

The IAM jumped into the 1948 political campaign with both feet. The Machinists threw themselves enthusiastically and energetically into the election to reward Harry Truman for vetoing the Taft-Hartley Act. They were determined to defeat Congressional and Senatorial candidates who voted to override the veto. Political pundits and pollsters agreed unanimously that Truman had no chance to be reelected but the IAM, with the rest of organized labor, rolled up its sleeves and set out to beat the odds.

In addition to being a Presidential election year, 1948 was the IAM's 60th Anniversary and a Grand Lodge Convention year. The recently formed Machinists Non-Partisan Political League (MNPL) opened 1948 with a campaign to get members and their families registered for the primaries. This was the first political campaign in which federal law prohibited use of union dues in federal elections. But Harvey Brown assured members they could voluntarily contribute time and money to the MNPL. Originally, MNPL memberships ranged from \$2.00 a year for honorary members to \$25.00 a year for sponsoring members.

Republicans went into the campaign supremely confident of recapturing the White House. Having swept Congress two years earlier the GOP gleefully looked forward to the prospect of repealing the New Deal. It appeared that anyone they ran would slaughter poor Harry Truman at the polls. All the experts said so.

In June Harvey Brown took the front page of *The Machinist* for an open letter to the membership. In large, attention-getting type he stressed the urgent need for IAM members to register and play an active role in the election. The following month, the Democratic Party platform cemented union support for Truman by pledging to repeal Taft-Hartley.

The Republican candidate was a former racket-busting district attorney and governor of New York, Thomas E. Dewey. He had a toothbrush mustache and a plastic quality that reminded people of "the little man on the wedding cake." Throughout the campaign he postured and posed and generally acted as though the American people had already given him the keys to the White House. Harry Truman was almost the only person who didn't think Dewey was going to win. Always a scrapper, Truman ignored the polls and went on the attack. In an old-fashioned coast-to-coast campaign he went out and talked to the people directly and bluntly. Truman tore into the Republican Congress as the "awful 80th." He reminded working men and women of the Taft-Hartley Act.

District 751 was battling for survival at Boeing when Truman arrived to speak in Seattle, Hundreds of striking IAM members were in the crowd that jammed the Civic Auditorium to hear him rip the Republicans and the "Do-Nothing 80th Congress." As he launched into a typical rip-snorting attack a voice in the back of the balcony boomed, "Give 'em hell, Harry!" "That's what I'm doing," he said. From

then on, wherever he went, from the smallest whistle stop to Madison Square Garden, he was greeted with cheerful shouts of "Give 'em hell, Harry!"

When the Grand Lodge Convention met in Grand Rapids in September, Truman sent warm greetings. The delegates responded with an official endorsement of his candidacy, making it clear, however, that they were not giving a blank check to any political party. As that week's *Machinist* carefully pointed out, "Mr. Truman is endorsed as an individual, under the traditional Machinists Union's non-partisan policy of supporting its friends and opposing its enemies regardless of their political affiliation."

All through that long summer and right up to the eve of the election, the nation's press missed the real story of the campaign. Newspapers confidently predicted that Truman would lose votes in the South to Dixiecrat Strom Thurmond and in the North to Progressive Henry Wallace. Editors and reporters failed to notice that in thousands of union halls the Machinists and other unions were quietly registering and mobilizing labor's vote. Day after day the daily press kept repeating itself "Big Victory Seen For Dewey" and "Gallup Poll Forecasts Victory By Dewey" and "Dewey Sweep Forecast." When *The Machinist* reported "Truman Closing Gap" in late October many people thought it was merely whistling in the dark.

The results justified the IAM's first all-out, nationwide leap into politics. Truman scored the most stunning upset in history. Labor's vote not only returned him to the White House, but changed the complexion of Congress. Of 212 House candidates endorsed by the MNPL, 160 were elected. Of seventeen Senate hopefuls receiving MNPL support, fourteen took office. In recognition of the role machinists played in Truman's reelection, the IAM was one of two unions invited to march in the presidential parade on Inauguration Day. On January 20, 1949 an elaborate float depicting various aspects of the machinists' trade and manned by ten journeymen from Lodge 174 rolled proudly down Pennsylvania Avenue and past the official viewing stand.

After the hoopla and the hollering died down, the labor movement learned once again the vast chasm between promise and performance. Despite organized labor's delivery of the vote in the 1948 election, Democratic leaders in the House and Senate were unable (or unwilling) to deliver on their party's platform pledge to repeal Taft-Hartley. With some later amendments it remains the basic law of industrial relations in America to this day.

The Flying Billboard

As part of the industry-wide organizing campaign begun on the airlines in 1945 the Executive Council gave IAM representatives an organizing tool no other union had ever had. It was a twin-engine, five-seat Cessna which whisked organizers rapidly from one airport to another and ferried them into landing field areas that might otherwise have been out of reach. For two-and-a-half years the IAM's plane played a major role in building the IAM's membership at landing strips throughout the nation.

The pilot was a Grand Lodge Representative named Claude Hauser. He was a life-long trade unionist as well as a journeyman aircraft mechanic. He learned to fly while working on ground crews in the Army during World War I and perfected this skill as a pilot in the barnstorming '20's. The IAM's plane became known to the members as "The Flying Billboard." It served a wide range of functions including organizing, picketing and moving representatives rapidly to wherever trouble was brewing. In one organizing campaign, for example the boss at a ground service facility called the employees together to tell them why they didn't need a union. With the wind in his favor, Hauser buzzed the meeting and tossed out a batch of "Vote IAM" leaflets. They glided gracefully down to the delighted captive audience. This attack from the air totally disconcerted the employer mouthpiece and the workers voted overwhelmingly for IAM representation.

When the IAM conducted an early strike against National Airlines, management tried to operate with scab mechanics. The "Flying Billboard" went from airfield to airfield to let airline passengers know: "National Airlines On Strike, Skilled Machinists Not Working." The plane was put up for sale in November, 1948 when the IAM's membership in the airline industry became too large and far-flung to be served by a five-seat twin-engine aircraft.

Rewriting and Righting the Ritual

As the decade of the 1940's wound down it became increasingly impossible to continue sweeping the issue of "color" under the rug. A controversy boiled up at the 1940 Convention in Cleveland when delegates from New York and Pennsylvania lodges reported that recent legislation in their states made discrimination by unions punishable by fines and prison sentences. In a debate more emotional than rational the delegates argued on the issue for most of an entire day.

Some suggested removing the word "white" in the ritual only in states where discrimination was prohibited by law. Others wanted to set up "auxiliaries" for black members. Still others supported a proposal that each lodge be free to decide the question of color for itself. Most of those who spoke in favor of keeping the word "white" in the ritual were from Southern lodges. The strongest demand for change came from members in the East and on the West Coast. But there were exceptions on both sides.

The issues that divided the delegates have long since been settled by legislation and litigation. But even later than the 1940's much of the country was still subject to "separate but equal" laws and Jim Crow traditions. While legislators in "liberal" states like Pennsylvania and New York might prohibit discrimination by unions, they saw no contradiction or hypocrisy in condoning and even financing lily-white regiments in their National Guard. And even in the 1980's issues such as school desegregation continue to trouble the nation.

Ironically, even as the delegates debated most knew the ritual was often honored more in the breach than in reality. By 1940 IAM membership included not only blacks, but browns, reds and yellows.

GST Emmet Davison, a born and bred Southerner, tried to cool emotions by pointing out that no one at Grand Lodge really knew the color of members of lodges chartered in Puerto Rico, Hawaii or along the Mexican border. He gently reminded the delegates that lodges in Philadelphia, Boston, New York, San Francisco and other Northern cities were known to have black members. Such arguments were fruitless and the proposal to strike the word "white" from the ritual was defeated by voice vote.

The issue of race came back even more strongly at the 1945 Convention in New York. For the first time the Ritual Committee recommended concurrence with a resolution to delete all references to race and color from the membership obligation. Again the delegates went to the mat in two long and exhausting days of supercharged argument. Delegates from aircraft lodges cited specific instances in which CIO unions used the race issue to get blacks to vote against the IAM in representation elections. And more states, including Connecticut, Massachusetts and California, had either enacted or were ready to pass new laws banning discrimination. With these new arguments and added pressures the issue went to a roll call vote for the first time. Though the vote was off the record retired GVP George Watkins recalls that out of more than 4,000 votes cast the color bar was barely sustained by 200 votes.

The issue came before the delegates for the last time at the Grand Rapids Convention in 1948. By then fair employment practice regulations were becoming commonplace not only in states, but in cities and counties as well. Moreover, various federal agencies, including the NLRB, were questioning the IAM's right to use their services while discriminating against some citizens. In fact, a trial examiner in Virginia and another in Texas ruled that since the IAM did not admit blacks to membership it had no standing to petition for bargaining units in which blacks were employed. The full Board later rejected this interpretation on the ground that the record failed to show the IAM would not represent members and non-members equally. But the initial rulings by these trial examiners were enough to move the Executive Council to act. At their Fall, 1947, meeting a majority of the GVP's decided that excluding blacks was potentially harmful to the membership as a whole. In early December they issued Official Circular 487 explaining that because of recent state and federal legislation a new ritual was being substituted for the old.

When the delegates reached Grand Rapids some of the old die-hards were prepared to challenge the Council's official circular. Again the Ritual Committee recommended deletion of the word "white". This time debate was briefer and more reasoned than at the two preceding conventions. A business representative from Connecticut told of being called to testify before that state's Fair Employment Practices Commission. He reported that he responded to charges of IAM discrimination by pointing out that his lodge not only accepted black members from the time it was chartered but had black officers who were very helpful in organizing.

After some huffing and puffing by a few bitter-enders the Council's action deleting the word "white" was ratified by voice vote. The 1948 Grand Lodge Convention finally righted the wrong that was slipped into the ritual when the color bar was removed from the IAM Constitution.

Reds, Witch Hunts and the IAM

In some ways the anti-Communist hysteria of the late 1940's was even more virulent and far-reaching than the Great Red Scare of the 1920's. The delirium of the post World War II era was aggravated by the realization that America was no longer protected by oceans on both coasts. The Cold War began almost as soon as the shooting stopped. In Eastern Europe the Soviet Union either perverted or ignored agreements made with Roosevelt at Yalta and Truman at Potsdam. In Asia the Red Chinese Army, led by Mao Tse-tung swept American-backed forces of the Kuomintang into the sea. Communism seemed to be on the march everywhere. Then, when the Soviets developed an atomic bomb, Americans were shocked and frightened by evidence that the Russians had been helped by internal subversion and espionage here at home.

Throughout these postwar years, and on into the '50's and '60's, arch-conservatives in Congress, the media and elsewhere whipped fear of communism to a state of near hysterical paranoia. They not only set out to lynch actual Communists, but anyone who was suspected of progressive ideas, New Deal sympathies, left-wing associations or even overly intellectual tendencies. The net of suspicion caught many trade unionists. During the desperate '30's America's work places had bubbled with the ferment of Socialist, Wobbly and other left-wing ideas. Now, such ideas had become a crime.

The late '40's became a time of loyalty oaths and Congressional investigations, of secret informers and unknown accusers, blacklists and security clearances. This was a time when jobs, careers and lives could be ruined by unconfirmed allegations, malicious gossip and unfounded suspicions. In the early '50's a demagogue from Wisconsin, Senator Joseph McCarthy, became a power in the land by recklessly and without proof accusing individuals selected almost by whim of being Communists, fellow-travelers or Soviet stooges. McCarthy's name has entered the language as a synonym for unprincipled character assassination and kamikaze attacks on the Bill of Rights.*

** In discussion of a resolution condemning McCarthyism at the 1952 Grand Lodge Convention delegates of Celtic heritage took issue with linking such a fine old Irish name with "un-American character assassination." The secretary of the Resolutions Committee responded that the committee meant no offense but "The Thing" had to have a name. He quipped "We apologize even to the Hooligans and the Mulligans who have had their names attached to certain Shenanigans." The resolution passed.*

When the IAM barred Communists from membership in the early 1920's it was the first union to do so. But in the 1940's Communists were being seen under every bed. Schools, the press, unions, government, churches, businesses and other institutions all scurried to rid themselves of any hint or suspected taint of Communism. Harvey Brown was not the worst of the rabid breed of witch-hunters who were seeing Reds everywhere. But in a lifetime of battles with the IWW and CIO he developed a loathing for Communism more genuine and justified than the political opportunism of a Joe McCarthy or Richard Nixon. Brown decided that rather than wait for a congressional probe he would root out any Communists that might have infiltrated the union.

His first target was Robert Schrank, a handsome, dynamic and brilliant young business representative of Lodge 402 in New York City. At the age of 28 Schrank was president of the New York State Council of Machinists. The youthful Schrank joined the IAM while working as a journeyman in a small machine shop in New York City. A born leader, he was soon masterminding organizing campaigns at far larger companies, including Cutler-Hammer.

As president of the New York State Council Schrank built the Machinists organization in that state into a political powerhouse. Harvey Brown viewed Schrank's success with some apprehension. As background it should be noted that state councils had grown like Topsy in the IAM. No one ever really planned them or at the start even thought much about them. But when some of the state councils began to meet prior to Grand Lodge Conventions to coordinate positions and strategy on upcoming issues the Executive Council began to perceive a threat, realizing, correctly, that state councils could become independent and competing power centers.

With a leader as charismatic as Bob Schrank in control of a council as large and powerful as New York, Harvey Brown and the Executive Council decided to write some new ground rules. An official circular, issued in May, 1944 stressed that state councils and conferences had no legal standing in the IAM, but would be tolerated if they limited themselves to legislative action and membership education. A year later a follow-up circular noted that in one state council, "An attempt has been made by usurped authority to . . . authorize a representative to perform a duty affecting the entire membership and a function that rests within the Grand Lodge." While this circular named no names, it was clearly aimed at Bob Schrank and the New York State Council. The "usurped" authority referred to the New York State Council's decision to send an observer to a left-wing World Labor Congress in Paris. The AFL was boycotting the meeting because invitations had been issued to representatives of organizations not considered bona fide trade unions (i.e. state-controlled worker organizations in countries behind the Iron Curtain).

The IAM's Executive Council accused the World Labor Congress of being a dual movement that subverted the International Federation of Trade Unions with which the AFL was affiliated. The Council voted to prohibit any IAM member or affiliate from participating in the World Labor Congress in Paris either as a delegate or observer.

When the 1945 Grand Lodge Convention met in New York a month later, Schrank raised Harvey Brown's hackles and suspicions even further. At issue, and the subject of lengthy debate, were a series of resolutions on the IAM's international labor affiliations. Schrank challenged the Executive Council's support for the International Federation of Trade Unions, urging the delegates to affiliate the IAM with the World Labor Council. Old-timers recall Schrank as a spellbinding speaker, but he failed to shake delegate confidence in Brown's leadership. The convention defeated Schrank's pro-World Labor Congress resolution and endorsed the Executive Council's support for the International Federation of Trade Unions.

The Schrank Case

Following the convention FBI agents came to Brown with information that Schrank was once a member of the Young Communist League. Brown confronted Schrank at a meeting in New York. Schrank recalls that he told Brown, "Harvey, I signed a non-Communist affidavit under the Taft-Hartley Act. I am not now a Communist, okay? But what you need to know is that I'm not going to recant, cooperate with the witch-hunters, or be intimidated . . ." In later years Schrank observed that though he became anti-Soviet when the "workers' paradise turned into a huge torture chamber" he refused to engage in Red-baiting.

The upshot was that Brown suspended Schrank from office and ordered a trial board. Rather than respond Schrank went to court and got an injunction restraining Brown from action against himself or Lodge 402. Although the injunction was granted on the narrowest of technicalities Brown was temporarily checked.

Schrank was a persuasive pamphleteer as well as an inspirational speaker. Early in 1948, he published a furious broadside against the Taft-Hartley Act. It was titled "This Is Aimed At You--An Expose Of The Taft-Hartley Plot To Break The Union and Hi-Jack The American People." The cover showed a startled worker with a gun pointed at his head. This fire-eating booklet sold for 15¢ and went into at least two printings of 25,000 each. It made a point-by-point attack on what Schrank and others branded the "Slave Labor Act". In a stinging indictment Schrank condemned AFL and CIO leaders, which included IAM officers, for signing the anti-Communist affidavits required by the law. Upon reading Schrank's incendiary tract Harvey Brown saw red in more ways than one.

Following Brown's earlier attempt to suspend him, Schrank openly mailed circulars attacking the IP throughout the union. He also traveled around the country to meet with dissident groups such as partisans of Hook and Dillon in Lodge 68. Schrank's response to Brown's trial-by-convention ploy was a mass walkout by his supporters. When the convention expelled him and suspended Lodge 402, Schrank returned to court where he successfully argued the IAM Constitution did not authorize turning a Grand Lodge convention into a trial committee. After a series of frustrating and time-consuming legal maneuvers, the Executive Council authorized an out-of-court settlement in which Schrank kept his membership and the lodge was released from suspension. Having won every battle against Brown and the Executive Council Schrank finally went too far during the Korean War when he opposed and voted against a District Lodge 15 resolution condemning Communist aggression against South Korea.

Until then he could always count on the unshakable support of his own membership in Lodge 402. But at this even they gagged. With American boys dying in Korea, the membership of Lodge 402 repudiated their delegates to the district. Schrank's enemies in the district, who had grown in number, seized this opportunity to refuse to seat him at the next district meeting. Charges were then filed against Schrank in his own lodge. With his enemies closing in on all sides he left the IAM and took his considerable talents to the openly left-wing Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers.

Later in life Schrank became well-known and widely respected as an author, teacher and consultant. During a long and distinguished career Schrank served with the New York City Mayor's Productivity Council, the National Academy of Science, the U. S. Department of Labor and many other governmental boards and universities. In 1981 he retired from the Ford Foundation where he had written extensively on the world of work. In his autobiography, *Ten Thousand Working Days*, he recalled fond memories of his days in the labor movement:

Being an elected union official was one of the most exciting jobs I ever held. It was full of challenges, not from things or to tolerances of hardness, but from concern for people, their needs, wishes and dreams. Imagine, working to fulfill dreams . . . In those burgeoning union days we sang of our solidarity . . . The people who worked in the labor movement . . . were the dreamers of change.

Bob Schrank may or may not have been a Communist with a capital C. But as a street-wise kid from New York, who had been taught reverence for the tradition of Eugene Debs by a Wobbly father, he was certainly too radical for the conservative railroaders who still dominated the IAM's Executive Council in the 1940's. IAM leaders were not alone in their implacable opposition to anything or anyone suspected of Communist leanings. CIO President Philip Murray opened his 1949 Convention with the declaration, "There is enough room within the CIO to differ about many subjects, ideas, questions, economics and social and trade union policy but there is no room within the CIO for Communism." The delegates responded by expelling ten unions accused of Communist domination. These included the United Electrical Workers (UE), Mine and Mill and Smelter Workers and the West Coast Longshoremen.

Harvey Brown Meets Mandatory Retirement

Sixty-one years after the IAM's founding Harvey Brown became the first International President forced to leave office by a constitutionally mandated retirement age. Talbot and Creamer stepped aside voluntarily while still young. O'Day and O'Connell failed reelection. Johnston and Wharton broke under the strain of the office.

As his retirement neared Brown was as energetic and pugnacious as ever. Given a choice he undoubtedly would have stayed on until he was carried out. But the 1945 Convention set sixty-five as the age of retirement in the IAM. Brown cheerfully applied this new rule to GVP Carr in 1947 although there was some question that the delegates meant it to become effective until 1949.

Some old-timers suspect Brown wanted the 1948 Convention delegates to make him an exception to the sixty-five-year limit. If so, he was disappointed. His closing remarks were tinged with regret that he would never again participate in a Grand Lodge Convention. His retirement was marked with appropriate banquets, ceremonies, honors gifts and tributes from the powerful and famous throughout the land, including the President of the United States.

Harvey Brown did his part to transform Tom Talbot's little union into one of the largest and most powerful on the North American continent. Unready for retirement, Brown soon went to Germany to head the Office of Labor Affairs of the U.S. Occupation Forces. His mission was to help make German unions more independent and less subservient to authoritarian German tradition. The Germans appeared to like his brusque, authoritarian manner. Before he left to return to the States they named a 10,000 unit worker's housing project in Luebeck after him. Harvey Brown died in Washington in 1956 at seventy-two years of age.

Progress And Prosperity 1950-1965

Al Hayes--A Man For the Times



Al Hayes
1949-1965

In many ways the 1950's were like the 1920's. Americans generally were weary of the idealism and sacrifices required by war. Most wanted little more than to forget the troubles of the world and get on with their own lives.

The fat '50's were a time of fads, of Davy Crockett hats and hula hoops, bobby sox and flapping shirttails for girls, crew cuts or duck tails for boys, gold toothpicks and whiskey-flavored toothpaste ("for the man who has everything"), Howdy Dowdy and the "\$64,000 Question".

This was the decade in which millions of families left traditional working class neighborhoods to practice "Togetherness" in burgeoning suburban Levittown's. It was also the decade in which the nation's young people turned inward, onto themselves, in retreat from "Cold War" tensions. In the face of McCarthy's anti-Communist hysteria the youth of the '50's became known as the "Silent generation".

Eisenhower was the perfect President for the times. To a nation seeking to forget depressions and wars he offered a sense of serene confidence. Although far removed from the roots of his small town Kansas boyhood and most comfortable in the company of the rich and powerful, he was seen as a decent human being. Most importantly, he rocked no boats and issued no clarion calls.

He could say, in all sincerity, that "only a fool would try to deprive working men and working women of the right to join the union of their choice." And yet while the nation's steel workers were on strike, he would not hesitate to go on a golfing vacation with the magnates who ran the steel industry. Seen as a father figure Eisenhower became the first Republican President in the century to serve two full terms.

Just as Eisenhower was the right man for the time for America, Albert John Hayes was the right man for the time for the IAM. Like Eisenhower, Hayes radiated a sense of calm confidence. Unlike Harvey Brown, who charged head-on into every real or suspected challenge Hayes preferred conciliation to controversy.

Al Hayes was 49 years old when he succeeded Harvey Brown. Except for the UAW's Walter Reuther he was the youngest chief of any major union in America. Two pictures on his office wall symbolized the convictions that guided him to the IAM's highest office. The first was Bob LaFollette the elder, the great Progressive from Hayes' home state of Wisconsin. The other was Franklin D. Roosevelt whose New Deal rescued America's working people from the worst depression in history.

Born on Valentine's Day, 1900, to immigrant German parents in Milwaukee, Hayes was the seventh in a family of ten children.* Like so many first generation children in those days, Al Hayes grew up speaking two languages. He was an exceptionally bright student and a highly competitive third baseman who remained a fierce competitor throughout his life. Hayes apparently hoped to be the first of his family to graduate from college. But this hope ended abruptly when his father was permanently and totally crippled by a freak accident in the coal yard where he worked as foreman. In his early teens Hayes had enrolled in extension courses in economics and history at the University of Wisconsin. But with his help desperately needed at home he was forced to go to work. Settling on a machinist apprenticeship as his best choice for a lifetime career he got a job with the West Milwaukee shops of the Milwaukee Railroad. Though only 17 years old Hayes leadership qualities soon emerged. He became the chosen spokesman for the other apprentice boys. When they formed a committee to protest failure by foremen to provide proper journeyman training they elected Hayes to go and present their grievances to higher management.

**He Americanized the original German spelling, Haese, to the identical sounding Hayes.*

Hayes joined Lodge 234 as soon as his journeyman papers made him eligible for IAM membership. According to the custom of the time he boomed around to get wider shop experience in various skills of the trade. In 1921 he returned to Milwaukee where he went to work for the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. Transferring his membership to Lodge 1052 Hayes was settling into the life of a newlywed when 300,000 railroad shopmen, including 79,000 IAM members, hit the bricks in the Great Railroad Strike which began on July 1, 1922. For the next three months, he walked the picket line by day. With his young bride, Lil, expecting, he also hustled from door to door selling brushes by night. When the strike was called off in the middle of October he returned to the Chicago and Northwestern. After gaining experience as shop chairman in several shops he was elected president of District Lodge 7 two years later. When the National Recovery Act (NRA) opened the way for a resurgence of union organizing in 1934, Arthur Wharton tapped him for the Grand Lodge staff. During the next decade Hayes organized and negotiated throughout an area stretching from Port Huron in the east to Rapid City in the west, from Minot in the north to St. Joe in the south. Throughout those fast moving years, he negotiated many of the IAM's first contracts with such large midwestern companies as American Brass, Nash-Kelvinator and the Simmons Company. In 1944 he moved up to the Executive Council and a year later Harvey Brown brought him to Grand Lodge as resident GVP.

Though of average height Hayes was so powerfully built in the torso and shoulders, he seemed, at first glance, to be larger than he actually was. Conscious of his image as the IAM's IP he dressed carefully and conservatively and carried himself with dignity. Calm and unruffled by disposition he could, when challenged, be as hard as nails. If angered Hayes could freeze an adversary with an icy glare. On the whole, however, he was completely comfortable with himself and communicated a sense of serenity to others. As a speaker he was poised and polished, preferring to make his points through reason rather than emotion. As a parliamentarian he was peerless. The four Grand Lodge Conventions he chaired were long remembered as models of democratic trade unionism in action. While smoothly steering proceedings past pitfalls set up by union hall "lawyers" he would leave even those who opposed him feeling he had been completely fair.

Called to serve ever more frequently on various governmental boards and advisory commissions he developed many friendships among the nation's business and political leaders. Though he moved easily among the rich and powerful, Hayes never lost touch with the rank-and-file in his own union. Representatives of other unions were sometimes surprised by the ease with which he was approached and the informality with which he was treated by IAM staffers. On the whole the IAM members considered Al Hayes a very classy guy. And they were proud to have him at the head of their union.

Politically progressive and steeped in the tradition of old-fashioned Milwaukee socialism, Hayes nevertheless believed labor and management in America have more in common than contention, more on which to agree than disagree. His economic philosophy could be summed up simply and briefly: A nation's prosperity begins with its work force. Throughout his long career Al Hayes tried to persuade government and business that higher wages, being the essential spur to higher consumption and productivity, lead to greater prosperity for everyone. Having personally suffered the hardships of the disastrous shopmen's strike of 1922 he was convinced that unions should try to win higher wages and better working conditions through negotiations, not strikes. As a long-time member of the inner councils of the labor movement, first in the AFL and later the AFL-CIO, Hayes was dedicated both to greater unity within the labor movement and greater understanding between labor and management.

Return to the House of Labor

Throughout the period of the IAM's disaffiliation from the AFL, Machinist organizers more than held their own in recruiting new members and winning representation elections. An especially gratifying victory was scored in the Fall of '49 in an organizing drive directed by GVP Earl Melton, when several thousand machinists on the Pennsylvania Railroad voted for the IAM two to one over a contending CIO union. This recaptured the last of the units that were destroyed on the railroads in 1922. Equally encouraging was a hard-fought win at Republic Aviation on Long Island the following year. Republic was one of the last major holdouts against unionization in the air frame industry. A number of previous organizing attempts by the IAM as well as other unions had all failed. Altogether the IAM won 397 NLRB elections--an average of more than one a day--in Hayes' first year as International President.

Undoubtedly the sweetest victory was the stunning upset over the combined opposition of the company and the Teamsters at Boeing.

Despite this success in going it alone Hayes intended, from the minute he took office, to take the IAM back to its traditional home in the AFL. Like most craft trade unionists of his generation Hayes was emotionally attached to the memory of the incomparable Gompers. He had not only grown up in the House of Labor but, man and boy, had fought side by side with other AFL union against enemies ranging from the NAM and the NMTA to the IWW and the CIO.

With Harvey Brown gone and the Old Guard at the AFL passing from the scene the time was ripe for re-affiliation. Hayes was too cunning, however, to return without getting solid guarantees for the future. For months he played it cool in parleys and correspondence with Green. At one point he bluntly made it clear that Green's radio speech in support for Teamster's scabbing in the Boeing strike had soured many IAM members. The anti-affiliation mood was especially strong in the Pacific Northwest. Hayes warned Green "Unless a way can be found to compose our differences within a reasonable time the passing years will make it more difficult to find a solution." He also assured Green that the IAM was not suing for peace because of any internal financial or membership problems but solely because of "a sincere desire to contribute to a united labor movement."

The IAM's bargaining position during these months of negotiation was strengthened by a series of favorable NLRB calls in cases involving jurisdictional disputes with the Carpenters. In Redondo Beach, California, for example, the Carpenters struck Westinghouse Electric to force replacement of IAM erection Machinists with Carpenter millwrights. In a precedent-setting decision the Board officially denied the Carpenter claim. This decision was soon followed by similar rulings--and back pay awards to IAM members--in cases ranging from Buffalo and Syracuse to Decatur, Portland and Fort Worth.

The IAM's success in enforcing its jurisdiction pushed the AFL toward significant concessions. In March 1950, Green agreed to withdraw a letter giving the Operating Engineers jurisdiction over certain work on ships which traditionally belonged to the IAM. He also agreed to notify the Building Trades Department, in writing, that it had no authority to render decisions in jurisdictional disputes affecting unions not affiliated with it. The Federation further agreed that the IAM could return without payment of back per capita.

With these and other favorable terms in hand, Hayes called the IAM's field staff of 484 GLR's, business reps and general chairmen to Chicago. He told them he would recommend that the members approve re-affiliation in a union-wide referendum. In December 1950, after five years as an independent, the members voted by a four to one margin to return to the AFL.

The IAM in the Korean Conflict

In June 1950 Communist armies overran South Korea. When President Truman committed U. S. forces to a United Nations "police action" in Asia Hayes and Peterson reacted exactly as Harvey Brown and Emmet Davison did on December 7, 1941--immediately and patriotically. They wrote Truman, endorsing his action and noting that "sixty years of collective bargaining have taught us that there is a point beyond which compromise and inaction mean the loss, not only of the immediate issue but of freedom itself." Local lodges from New York to California soon passed similar resolutions.

The first flush of patriotic ardor cooled somewhat when the *Machinist* began headlining stories of widespread wartime profiteering. Less than two months after the Hayes-Peterson message to the White House *Machinist* readers learned that:

In the first month of the Communist invasion . . . the index by which BLS economists measure wholesale prices on food and industrial raw materials jumped about 15% . . . Quick killings by middlemen boosted the price of basic raw materials and average of 22.9% on copper, steel, scrap, tin, zinc, lead, rubber, cotton, wool and shellac.

To woo labor support, Truman established a blue ribbon committee of top union leaders to advise the government on questions of labor policy. He appointed Hayes together with Green of the AFL and Murray of the CIO. Over the next couple of years, IAM officers and representatives were recruited for a number of high level government positions. Hayes was named Special Assistant on Manpower to the Assistant Secretary of Defense. GVP Elmer Walker was appointed labor member of the Wage Stabilization Board and GVP Roy Siemiller became Director of the Manpower Division of the Defense Transport Agency. Many GLR's and business reps in such cities as Richmond, Milwaukee, Chicago, and Los Angeles also served on various boards and agencies created to regulate manpower, production and wages.

Despite the federal government's efforts to hold prices in check, inflation spiraled under wartime pressures. By the early '50s a housewife needed \$10 for the same groceries she could buy for \$5 ten years earlier. The spreading gap between wages and prices touched off a number of serious strikes. Despite the conflict in Korea, thousands of workers walked out on the waterfront, in the mines and in the steel industry.*

**Truman tried to seize and operate the steel mills, declaring "The Constitution does not require me to endanger our national safety by letting all the steel mills close down." The Supreme Court ruled such seizure an unconstitutional exercise of executive authority.*

Early in the war a shortage of machine tools created a bottleneck in defense production and the federal government gave machine tool manufacturers top priority on men and materials. These

manufacturers were also guaranteed liberal profits under a straight cost-plus pricing procedure. Brown and Sharpe, the nation's oldest and biggest producer of machine tools, decided the time was ripe to drive the IAM out of its seventeen plants in Providence, Rhode Island. For three months, spanning much of the summer and fall of 1951, almost 5,000 members of Local Lodge 1088 and 1142 walked the picket line.

Founded in 1833, Brown and Sharpe was viciously and violently anti-union from its earliest beginnings. The firm was founding member of the National Metal Trades Association and for generations routinely called upon NMTA to supply armed union busters whenever union organizers were thought to be in the vicinity. Former IP William Johnston tried to organize Brown and Sharpe at the turn of the century, but the company successfully maintained a strict open shop until 1941 when the workers finally gained union representation under the protection of the Wagner Act. By the time of the Korean War many protections guaranteed by the Wagner Act had been erased by Taft-Hartley.

After three months the company agreed to some minor concessions, apparently confident the strikers would come running back with gratitude. When members of both locals overwhelmingly rejected the offer Al Hayes offered to sit down personally with the company's top negotiators. According to the *Machinist* he hammered out an agreement which established the highest wage rates in the area and seemed to signal a new acceptance of unionism by the company. However time proved this was not the end of the deep-seated animus against unions at Brown and Sharpe; this was but one more battle in a hundred years' war.

As the presidential campaign between Dwight D. Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson peaked in the late summer of 1952 more than 53,000 IAM members at Lockheed and Douglas plants in California picked up picket signs and walked. This first strike at Lockheed became inevitable when 99% of the members participating in a strike vote rejected a company offer of 7¢ an hour plus a 2¢ cost-of-living adjustment. According to the *Machinist* this would have left their wage scaled below rates approved by the Wage Stabilization Board for the other companies in the air frame industry. The walkouts shut Lockheed and Douglas down tight. The various local and district lodges involved kept morale high by setting up committees to insure that pickets were fed and needy families received groceries, clothing and other necessities.

The strike at Lockheed, which began about the time delegates were gathering for the 1952 Grand Lodge Convention in Kansas City, was "recessed" two weeks later and then settled a week later when the company offered raises ranging from 10 to 16 cents an hour plus a health and welfare plan (which cost Lockheed almost a nickel an hour per employee), two weeks vacation after one year, six days sick leave and six paid holidays. The settlement at Douglas, some weeks later, was roughly similar. Interestingly, while Lockheed members were striking in California, Lockheed members at Marietta, Georgia repelled a CIO raid by a vote of 5,310 to 2,145.

Health and Welfare and Other Fringe Benefits

The late '40s and early '50s were years when unions pioneered the first bare-bone prototypes for the comprehensive health care and pension plans most workers take for granted today. Later generations of workers find it hard to believe that as late as the 1930s and 1940s employees usually received nothing more for their labor than pay for hours actually worked. Such fringes as paid holidays, sick leave, vacations, health and welfare plans and pensions all had to be won by years of patient negotiation or, more often, weeks and months of sacrifice on picket lines.

One of the IAM's earliest health and welfare plans was developed by DBR Lloyd Weber of District 9 in St. Louis in 1949. As reported in the *Machinist* the plan required an employer payment of \$4.85 a month for each IAM member. It provided \$1,000 life insurance, plus \$1,000 for accidental death, loss of limb or sight, \$25.00 a week accident and sick benefits for thirteen weeks, hospitalization of \$5.00 a day for thirty-one days plus \$100 for special charges and \$150 for surgery. Today this seems pitifully inadequate but at the time it represented far more than anything most workers had. More importantly, it provided a base upon which more comprehensive plans could be built. The St. Louis plan became a pattern for other and, as time went on, even better plans developed by districts in Cleveland, New York City, Chicago, Minneapolis-St. Paul and other centers of IAM strength. By 1951, the GVP's in the Great Lakes and Midwest territories announced that health and welfare plans were in operation and available to all locals and districts under their jurisdiction.

In April 1955 the IAM became the first union to adopt a detailed code governing the establishment and administration of health and welfare plans. A circular letter to all staff and local and district lodge officers laid down strict standards. It warned that any IAM officer or representative who took any kind of payment from an insurance company would be removed. The standard also required lodges to press charges before appropriate state or federal agencies if an insurer or employer acted improperly. Complete records and regular audits were mandated. Investment of welfare fund reserves in the business of the employer or any other party of interest was strictly prohibited. As a result of this early preventative action, health and welfare funds negotiated by the IAM have been remarkably free of corruption or misuse.

Boomer Jones Sings a Song of Labor

For generations IAM officers and members communicated with one another mainly through the pages of the *Machinist Journal*. As previously noted, the weekly *Machinist* was launched shortly after the second World War to give a far larger and more diverse membership more sprightly, more frequent and more concise information about the union and its activities.

In the early years the *Journal* could assume that it was speaking to members emotionally committed to union principles in general and the IAM in particular. By the late '40s the *Machinist* was addressing a different breed of membership. The rock-ribbed loyalties of the past had been diluted by numbers and diversity. Moreover, by the 1950's a union could not be content merely to keep its own membership informed. A new age of public relations had begun. When the Public Relations Society of America was founded in 1948 there were about 100 PR firms in the entire country and fewer than 50 PR departments in all industry. But with new kinds of media and increasing competition for favorable notice corporations and organizations became increasingly concerned with "image". No longer was it enough for a company to make a good product. The age of marketing arrived and with it the need for professionals specializing in advertising and public relations. In the early 1950s more the 1,000 public relations firms sprang up in New York City alone.

Like their counterparts in industry union leaders became conscious of a need to do better in reaching both their own members and the general public. In the 1930's and '40s unions had eliminated most of the worst abuse and exploitation in the workplace. As the post-war generation took over, unions had to "sell" themselves to new members who had little or no memory of the past. Having successfully organized most major industries in smoke-stack America unions had to move against hardcore targets in traditionally hostile areas. In the face of such anti-union roadblocks as Taft-Hartley and right-to-work laws in almost half the states, unions had to try to convert a mass of apathetic members into political activists. Continuously smeared by charges of crime, corruption and communism in the big business press labor turned to public relations to try to show the ways in which unions were necessary and beneficial to society.

Unlike Harvey Brown, who had viewed the IAM as a semi-secret society whose business was of no damn concern to anyone else, Al Hayes realized it was time to open some windows to the world. The responsibility for fostering a more favorable image both in and out of the union fell to Gordon Cole, the energetic and imaginative editor who made the *Machinist* one of the most readable and attractively laid out of all institutional publications. Cole was not only ready but eager to expand his audience and spread the union story.

Among other things he began sending the *Machinist* to every member of Congress and key members of most state legislatures. When Hayes or other IAM officers spoke at universities or before business groups the IAM's public relations department informed the media through timely press releases. Cole also fed upbeat items on bargaining breakthroughs to the press as they developed. He began inviting reporters from the labor press to drop by for interviews, backgrounders or to get acquainted with key IAM people. Later he arranged for local and district lodges to put the *Machinist* into the libraries of hundreds of high schools. At one time he published a series of "Pamphlets-of-the-Month" giving the union's view on timely issues. Searching further for new ideas Cole recalled that the IWW had stirred many a worker's heart with rousing, rollicking tunes and lyrics from their "Little Red Songbook". He took a train to New York where he met with two commercially successful pros from Tin Pan Alley, a composer named Gerald Marks, who had written top pop hits in the '30s and '40s, and a lyricist, Milton Pascal, who had musical credits on Broadway. Both came from union families. Sensing a

sincere feeling for the labor movement, Cole contracted with Marks and Pascal for eight original songs for a Machinist songbook.

The tunes were unveiled in songbooks and records. They dealt with issues instantly familiar to working families. One satirized the plight of a worker without a pension, "A Pin For Your Lapel," another laid down a warning to two-faced politicians, "The Guy I Send to Congress," still another spoofed managements too miserly to pay a living wage, "Let's All Shed a Tear." While these and other songs in the set said the right things, they never really caught on. The *Machinist* faithfully plugged them for months and tried to get local and district lodges to push them on their local radio stations, but they sank with hardly a trace and have long since been forgotten.

Though the effort was worthy it proved only that union songs can't be ground out commercially, that they must spring spontaneously out of the trials and triumphs of those fighting for social and economic justice. That is why those who sing union songs today still sing "Solidarity Forever," "Joe Hill," "Pie in the Sky" and the other bittersweet classics of Labor's past struggles.

Cole had somewhat greater success with another non-print media effort. For Labor Day, 1950, he produced a first class radio docu-drama based on the IAM's early beginnings. He called it "Boomer Jones." It was written by one of the top script writers in radio and directed by Mel Ferrer. Major roles were played by three of the top Hollywood stars of that time: William Holden, Marie McDonald, and Brian Donlevy. It was broadcast coast-to-coast on the Mutual network the Sunday before Labor Day. Later it was available on records and for years many IAM lodges used it to introduce the union to new members and the public.

Hands Across the Sea

As noted earlier the IAM became an "International" with the chartering of Local Lodge 103 in Stratford, Ontario in 1890. In the early years the organization also had several locals of machinists working on the Mexican railroads and at one time the president of Mexico held IAM membership. As also noted *Journal* editor Hewitt and Canadian GVP McClelland sailed to England in 1919 to persuade the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) to relinquish their "branches" in the U.S. and Canada.

Prior to World War II, however, the IAM's contacts with labor movements in other parts of the world were scanty and intermittent. Although metalworking unions from Britain, France, Germany and other major industrial nations in Europe set up an International Metalworkers Federation in the 1890's, the IAM turned down early invitations to affiliate. From Talbot to O'Connell the leadership rejected such a link with foreign labor because of the strong Socialist leanings of European unions. By 1915, however, the IAM had a Socialist IP who appreciated the value of ties with foreign workers. By forging connections with European metalworking unions, William Johnston hoped to make the IAM the union of choice for machinists immigrating from Europe. Moreover, through such links the IAM could warn European workers against recruiters seeking strikebreakers to work in the United States. With IMF membership,

the IAM could also push the sale of union-made tools to European craftsmen. And, finally, IMP affiliation would validate the IAM's jurisdictional claims in the United States against such European-based metalworking unions as the British Amalgamated Society of Engineers.

The IAM's early affiliation with the IMF was barely established before it was ruptured by the First World War. After the war it was resumed at the direction of delegates to the 1920 Convention in Rochester. Due to the sharp drop in membership following the 1922 railway shop strike the IAM could not afford to send delegates to IMF meetings in the 1920's. However, Johnston met with IMF officers during his aborted mission to Moscow. And the IAM remained affiliated until the Depression forced a lapse in per capita payments in the early 1930's. Even without formal ties Wharton kept in touch with IMF Secretary Konrad Ilg, continuing to send reports on the economic situation in the United States, receiving in return first hand information on the plight of unions under Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy.

At the end of World War II Europe's industries lay in ruins. Many leaders of pre-war unions either died or barely survived in Nazi concentration camps. But even as Allied troops swept into Berlin, representatives of American labor were meeting with European workers on the waterfront, in the streets and around what was left of the factories of Europe. As the Marshall Plan took shape and Europe's economy gained momentum, American labor moved to revive the European trade union movement.

While Harvey Brown's vision centered mainly on bread and butter issues at home he recognized that without money and support from American labor, unions struggling to survive in post-war Europe would be destroyed by Soviet-backed subversion. Together with others on the Executive Council Brown also foresaw that as American industry became more international, the wages and working condition of American labor would be increasingly affected by those of foreign workers. Though still outside the AFL, Harvey asked Irving Brown, the head of AFL operations in Europe, to represent the IAM as well as the Federation in dealings with European labor. Irving Brown, in fact, later became a member of the IAM.

The first serious effort to reestablish ties between the labor movements of various countries grew out of a wartime alliance between British labor and Soviet "unions." An organization known as the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) came into being in Paris in October, 1945.* The WFTU attracted a broad membership worldwide, including the CIO in the United States. The most notable holdout was the AFL. George Meany, then Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL, went before the Trades Union Congress of Great Britain and bluntly told them the AFL would not associate itself with the WFTU because, "We do not . . . concede that the Russian workers groups are trade unions. The Soviet worker groups are . . . actually instruments of the state." Meany was roundly booed and jeered but stood his ground. His position was later vindicated when the WFTU tried to sabotage the Marshall Plan to rebuild the devastated nations of Western Europe, clearly revealing Soviet domination of the WFTU. Most British unions and nearly every other noncommunist labor group in the WFTU eventually withdrew. Many of these disillusioned trade unions, including the CIO, then joined with the AFL in setting up the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

**This was the organization that Robert Schrank supported, and the Executive Council opposed, at the 1945 Grand Lodge Convention.*

By the 1950's the IAM not only reestablished its tie to the IMF, but also affiliated with the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF). The growing importance of these international links demanded more than part-time, hit-or-miss attention. In April 1951 Al Hayes appointed GLR Rudy Faupl as the IAM's first full-time international representative. Born of German stock in Hungary, Faupl came to the United States as a youth and mastered his machinists skills in Milwaukee. Before his appointment to the IAM's Grand Lodge staff he was an AFL organizer in Wisconsin. Though his roots were solidly in the working class, Faupl was a sophisticated cosmopolite who spoke several languages fluently. Over the next twenty-one years he became one of the most widely-traveled, well-known and deeply respected trade unionists in the world. While serving as the IAM's delegate to two decades of IMF and ITF Conventions, he also served as the United States worker delegate to the International Labor Organization (ILO) from his homeland (and other Eastern European countries) by Soviet rule he was inflexible in his loathing for Communism. Unfailingly courteous in human relationships, Faupl was considered a personal friend by thousands of trade unionists world-wide.

Moving Toward the Merger

In the course of steering the IAM back into its traditional affiliation with the AFL, Al Hayes also eased friction between the IAM and other unions. Almost as soon as he became IP, Hayes let UAW President Walter Reuther know that he would welcome a no-raiding agreement to end the long and costly organizing battles between the two unions. At one point hardly a week went by without a raid by one union against the other. The years of ugly fights on the organizing front were punctuated with personal animosity. IAM staffers dubbed UAW organizers as "CIO-ski's"--inferring a UAW communist link. IAM records do not reveal what UAW staffers called IAM organizers, but it was probably unprintable. Inevitably, organizing campaigns sank to levels of mudslinging that discredited both sides.

Hayes realized that raiding was self-defeating. As he later told an audience of academic economists he was appalled when he realized the enormity of the damage the labor movement was inflicting on itself. One study showed that over a three-year period AFL unions tried to raid 791 CIO units while the CIO attempted to displace the AFL in 936 shops. After the two sides spent almost \$11.5 million smearing one another, 44,000 CIO members switched to AFL unions and 40,000 AFL members went to CIO unions. And, when the smoke cleared, it was found the labor movement suffered a net loss. No less than 4,000 former union members ended up in shops in which the majority chose no union.

In addition to recognizing the futility of raiding, Hayes wanted closer ties with the UAW because he personally admired Walter Reuther and shared Reuther's concept of trade unionism as a dynamic social force. The two got along well while serving on a number of blue ribbon panels, including President Truman's Commission on the Health Needs of the Nation.*

**This produced one of the first comprehensive studies proving the inadequacy of private health insurance.*

Within six months after Hayes became IP and almost a year before he led the IAM back into the AFL, he and Reuther signed an historic agreement not to raid shops where the other had a bargaining relationship. They further agreed that in contesting for unorganized plants, their organizers would "conduct themselves in a manner that built trade union loyalty . . . and not seek advantage by tactics detrimental to the labor movement."

When CIO President Phil Murray wrote to a number of top AFL leaders appealing for greater unity, Hayes warmly assured Murray the IAM was ready to sit down at any time to discuss ways and means. While nothing seems to have come from this exchange, Hayes worked quietly and steadily over the next few years to improve the IAM's relationships with other unions. In June, 1953 the no-raid pact with the UAW was strengthened by agreement to exchange information on contracts and wage rates where the two unions bargained for employees at different plants of the same company. Hayes and Reuther also took the first steps toward coordinating bargaining in the aircraft industry. In September, 1953 top brass and negotiators from both unions met to plan strategy for upcoming contract talks at United Aircraft in Connecticut.

In September, 1954 the IAM and the Carpenters signed a peace pact finally ending the oldest and stormiest jurisdictional dispute in American labor history. The agreement set up a procedure for arbitrating future conflicts over job rights. By the time the AFL and the CIO finally merged, in December, 1955, the IAM had not only signed no-raid agreements with the UAW and the Carpenters but also with the Plumbers, Printing Pressmen and the Teamsters. In working out these agreements, Hayes displayed the same firmness and tact that characterized his relationships in his own union. He built a network of friendships as well as great respect throughout the labor movement. While Harvey Brown had cared little for what other unions or the public thought of the IAM, Hayes was zealous in his concern for the Machinists Union's reputation for integrity and his own image as its top officer. Without seeking personal publicity--in fact tending to shy away from it--he enjoyed the trust of labor and management alike.

Long before the AFL-CIO merger was achieved both sides were more than ready to unite. The problem was personality, not principle. It was generally felt in labor circles that while Bill Green headed the AFL and Phil Murray led the CIO, it was impossible to get beyond the discussion stage. Green seemed to think the CIO unions "should return to their room in the House of Labor" like naughty runaways. Murray felt the old craft unions that dominated the AFL were waiting to swallow the CIO.

This impasse was finally broken late in 1952 when Murray and Green died within a couple of weeks of one another. George Meany, who had been AFL secretary-treasurer for some years, was Green's unquestioned successor. The *Machinist* described the new AFL President as "A plain-talking, heavy-set man with a powerful constitution." Accurately capturing the essence of Meany, editor Gordon Cole said "He doesn't believe in wasting time by speaking in vague terms. He wants people to know what he means. So he speaks very plainly, very frankly."

In the CIO Murray's death touched off a power struggle between Reuther and the Steelworker's prima donna President, David McDonald. When Reuther beat out Allen Haywood, a CIO vice-president backed by McDonald and his Steelworkers (by a surprisingly narrow margin), McDonald made it plain he despised Reuther and was considering taking his union out of the CIO. The possibility increased pressure for the merger. Within weeks serious unity talks were underway and the two sides made a start toward formal merger with a no-raid pact modeled on that between the IAM and the UAW.

As the AFL and the CIO began to move closer, Bill Hutcheson of the Carpenters tried to bully George Meany as he had Bill Green in the past. At a meeting of the AFL Executive Council he made a motion to suspend further negotiations with the CIO until all jurisdictional problems were worked out--which would have been never. Hutcheson got one vote, his own. That afternoon his son, Maurice, sent word the Carpenters were withdrawing from the Federation. Without hesitation Meany snapped up the withdrawal and promptly named a replacement for Hutcheson and the Council. The Hutcheson's were stunned. "Big Bill", as he liked to be called, had always been able to throw his weight around in the AFL. But he was no longer dealing with Bill Green. Within days his bluff began to backfire as Carpenter locals all over the country wired AFL headquarters for federal charters. The Kentucky State Carpenters, meeting at the time, voted to leave their international and affiliated directly with the Federation. Within a week Maurice asked Meany for re-admittance.

By June 1954 *The Machinist* reported that ninety-four unions were on record as signing the no-raid agreement. Excerpts of many letters written to Grand Lodge by rank-and-file members reflected a widespread sense of relief and enthusiasm for the merger. Conventions of both organizations formally ratified the new AFL-CIO in December 1955. When AFL-CIO council committee assignments followed, the IAM's Al Hayes was named chairman of the new Federation's Ethical Practices Committee.

The Expanding Role of Women

Rosie the Riveter was extolled in song and speech during World War II. But with the war over women were expected to go back to the kitchen and leave the real, wage-earning work to the men. Most women returned and most were clearly content, at least at first, to slip back into the role of wife and mother. But war and its paychecks changed traditional attitudes. Many women soon missed the freedom and independence that came with money of their own. And despite popular misconceptions relatively few women worked merely for "pin money." Studies by the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor proved what most women already knew: most who work do so to support themselves or their dependents. In fact women have always worked in fields or factories. Records indicate that almost 60% of all hands in the textile mills of early New England were female. From Mother Jones to the multitudes of operators who toiled for Ma Bell, women have been among the most militant

of trade unionists. Women made up the majority of woolen mill strikers in Lawrence in 1912. The banner carried by a young girl striker inspired this verse by a poet who saw it:

Our lives shall not be sweated
From birth until life closes
Hearts starve as well as bodies
Give us bread, but give us roses

Though women were admitted to IAM membership almost from the beginning the union, like the machinist trade, remained almost exclusively male for many years. Until World War II awareness of women in IAM affairs was pretty much limited to social notes sent to the *Journal* by various ladies' auxiliaries.

The Boeing strike in 1947 foretold the larger significance of women in the IAM in the years ahead. When the strike began women made up 13% of District 751's bargaining unit. When the first picket line was thrown up, shortly after midnight, women from the second shift put down their tools and picked up their picket signs. Within a few days a member to the shop committee, Bernadine O'Sullivan, took charge of a special morale-building detail. With the help of a volunteer squad of women members she made sure the pickets were supplied with hot coffee and arranged for house calls to buck up members thought to be wavering. She and other women passed out leaflets on the street to explain strike issues to the public. O'Sullivan and her committee also took over much of the new clerical work that was piled on the staff at the union office. According to Tom Tippet "The women were excellent pickets, as effective as the men, and in special situations they were even more effective."

By the summer of 1951 *The Machinist* saluted the increasing importance of women in the IAM. It reported that 376 women held elected offices in local lodges and thousands of others were active as stewards and committee members. In words and pictures the *Machinist* detailed the accomplishments of three outstanding women members in District 9, St. Louis--Mary Helen Krausz, recording secretary of Lodge 1345; Mamie Parker, trustee of Lodge 1654 and Doris King, shop steward and bargaining committee member of Lodge 1345. Other lodges soon bombarded Gordon Cole with pictures and stories lauding their women members. These included District 776 (Gertrude Archer), District 727 (Irene Myers, Josephine Harmer, Lottie Milliken, Marian Johnson, Dorothy Enlow) and District 751 (Alice Benn, Evida Johnson and the indefatigable Bernadine O'Sullivan).

In 1952 Martha Olinger became the first woman to head an IAM district when she was elected president of the 3,000-member District 101 in Rockford, Illinois. In terms which feminists would undoubtedly consider offensively patronizing today *The Machinist* described Sister Olinger as "vivacious, slender, blue-eyed and America's best dressed machinist." Stories detailing the exploits of women members continued throughout the decade, including one on Ada Messerschmidt, "mother of four", who was named organizer of the month by District 720 at Douglas after turning in fifty-four membership applications.

While increasing numbers of women members strengthened the union, collective bargaining created new rights and protections for women in the work place. In March 1955, for example, *The Machinist* reported on a grievance at the American Can Company in Geneva, New York. Local Lodge 1838 charged that one of its members, Eunice Morrow, had been refused the job of production tracer because of her sex, being passed over for promotion by a male employee with less seniority. *The Machinist* reported that after the local lodge processed her grievance Sister Morrow was promoted and received \$892 in back pay. The GLR handling the case, Clark Goodrich, termed the outcome "an important step forward in our fight to win equal jobs rights for women in industry."

Shortly thereafter, women provided the IAM's margin of victory in a representation election at the Clary Corporation in San Gabriel, California. An account in *The Machinist* reported the women voted for IAM representation because they were denied the same pay and job classifications as men doing the same work. The principle of equal pay for equal work had not yet been established in the legislatures or the courts and for some years equal pay had to be enforced by unions if it was to be enforced at all.

The IAM and the Breakup of the UE

Following the sharp declines that took place in the late '40's the IAM's membership took off again in the early '50's, climbing from 498,000 in January 1950 to 810,000 by February 1954. The growth was due chiefly to the buildup of military production needed for the "police action" in Korea. But after a truce was negotiated in June 1953, the stage was set for another postwar membership decline. From February 1954 to February 1955 membership fell from 810,000 to 751,000. Undoubtedly, the loss would have been even greater except for an influx of new locals and members from the rapidly disintegrating United Electrical Workers Union (UE).

When James Matles and William Mauseth left the IAM in 1937 they took more than 10,000 members with them into the UE. In the early 1950's the tables were turned when great numbers of workers left the UE not only for the IAM but for the IUE, the UAW, the Steelworkers and the IBEW.

While the UE was (and remains even today) one of the most militant unions on the North American continent, some of its leaders were more devoted to Moscow than to their members. During the Hitler-Stalin non-aggression pact in the early 1940's the UE officers refused to sign the non-Communist affidavits required by Taft-Hartley,* some locals looked for ways to rid themselves of Communist domination. In Camden, New Jersey a large local of RCA employees broke away, stating "The UE has followed every twist and turn of the Communist Party since 1940." In Pittsburgh anti-Communist forces at Westinghouse plants developed a manual on "How To Decontrol Your Union of Communists." It advised:

Place your people carefully in the meeting hall. Try to have a good-sized bunch down front . . . Place others on each side and place a nice contingent in the

back. This is called the Diamond, the oldest meeting strategy in the world. It makes it look as if the entire meeting is filled with your people.

**These were affidavits which New York State Council of Machinists President Robert Schrank criticized Harvey Brown and the IAM Executive Council for signing.*

In the late '40's Phil Murray decided to rid the CIO of the dozen or so unions controlled by Communists. The UE was by far the largest of these, claiming 600,000 members engaged in manufacturing everything from aircraft and marine equipment to gauges, aerial cameras, motors and munitions. The UE was the dominant union in electrical manufacturing.

The showdown came at the CIO's 1949 Convention. Murray charged the UE leadership with "dedication to the purposes and program of the Communist Party, contrary to the overwhelming sentiment of the rank-and-file membership who are loyal Americans." Charging the UE was "the Communist Party masquerading as a labor union", the delegates expelled it. The UE's charter was given to a new union, the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (IUE) headed by James B. Carey. The slow unraveling which began with the refusal to sign the Taft-Hartley non-Communist affidavits gained momentum and most of the breakaway locals went directly to the newly chartered IUE. However more than 50,000 UE members elected to go to the IAM over the next few years. The IAM gained sizable units at Sunbeam in Chicago, Monarch Machine Tool Company in Sidney, Ohio, Whirlpool at Benton Harbor, Michigan and smaller units at such places as Kidde Precision Tool Corp. in Bloomfield, New Jersey, Onsrud Machine Works in Chicago, and Air Products, Inc. in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Many Canadian workers also repudiated the UE's Communist leadership and switched to the IAM. By the time of the merger in 1955, the UE's membership had dropped from over 600,000 to fewer than 80,000.

Some years later GLR Bob Brown, who was a member of one of the UE's largest locals, discussed the reasons that he and others opted for the IAM. He said "We preferred the IAM to the IUE because the IUE seemed weak and ineffective in its dealings with hard-nosed companies like Westinghouse and GE. We rejected the UAW because it had harassed and undermined us with raids. But more important, we knew the IAM was a democratic union with a high degree of local autonomy and we felt the leadership would be open to our ideas."

Many of those who left the UE went on to positions of leadership and influence in the IAM. While freeing themselves from a union dominated by Communists, they lost none of their militance or dedication to trade union principles.

Eight Millionaires and a Plumber

In the final days of Eisenhower's 1952 campaign for the presidency he appealed directly for labor's vote by promising he would "defend the working man against any action to destroy his union or his rights." And when he named Martin Durkin, president of the Plumbers, Secretary of Labor, it

appeared he might even mean what he said. However, all the other members of the cabinet came straight out of the executive suites. Reporters soon started to describe Eisenhower's cabinet as "eight millionaires and a plumber" and Adlai Stevenson suggested that since Truman's Administration had been called the "Fair Deal," Eisenhower's should be named the "Big Deal."

The IAM supported Stevenson throughout the campaign. Yet there is little doubt that many working men and women liked Ike. His enormous popularity as supreme commander in Europe strengthened his credibility when he made statements like "Only a handful of reactionaries harbor the ugly thought of breaking unions . . . I have no use for those who . . . dream of spinning the clock back to days when organized labor was huddled, almost as a helpless mass."

Despite this disclaimer Ike appointed just such a reactionary to his cabinet. Interior Secretary Douglas McKay owned the largest Chevrolet-Cadillac agency in Oregon. His mechanics had been represented by Local Lodge 1506 in Salem since 1948. When negotiations for a new contract opened in March, 1954, the union asked for no more than wages, hours and conditions of work already in effect in organized auto dealer shops in Portland just forty-seven miles away. The McKay management flatly refused, demanding instead that the workers surrender the union shop, seniority rights, overtime rules, forty-hour week guarantee, three paid holidays and other benefits which had long been in the contract. Hoping to avoid a strike the local negotiated patiently for fourteen months. To break the impasse Al Hayes went to see McKay at the Interior Department. Hayes suggested impartial arbitration but McKay curtly refused. Throughout the negotiations the company's response was simply "take it or leave it!" Some of the members had worked for McKay for thirty years and since they didn't want to strike the lodge finally offered to settle for a simple renewal of the old contract. The company countered by demanding the mechanics accept a compensation system based on commissions."

The objective was to break the union. Later it was learned that McKay was the front runner for a wider attack. Before the fight was over two other unionized dealers in Salem also forced their mechanics into the street. The strike that followed was bitter and long-lasting. As a former mayor of Salem and governor of the state McKay's political clout became obvious when the courts limited the number of pickets at each entrance and the police swarmed in to enforce court orders. Nevertheless the state supreme court rejected the dealers' demand for an injunction prohibiting strikers from taking down license numbers of cars driven through the picket lines. Overturning a twenty year-old ruling, the judges said that recording license plates was not coercive since the letters sent to customers merely explained the strike and were free of any threat of intimidation.

The strike continued for fourteen months, but McKay finally broke the union with scabs and strikebreakers. With a fortune of millions he was able to starve out his workers and beat the union picket line. But when he ran for the U.S. Senate the following year the IAM was waiting at the polls.

The Oregon Story

When Douglas McKay announced that he was returning to Oregon to run for the U.S. Senate on the Republican ticket in 1956, it was generally assumed he would win in a walk. Oregon was then one of the most conservative states in the country. In a postwar best seller called *Inside U.S.A.*, John Gunther characterized Oregon as "the Vermont of the West." For generations a Republican nomination in Oregon was tantamount to election. Oregon's labor movement was both small and politically ineffectual. Most unions accepted what they felt they could not change. Some, like the building trades, played ball in exchange for a share of the state's public works projects.

As former governor, McKay not only enjoyed instant name recognition within the state, but his cabinet status made him a national celebrity. To top it off he would run with Eisenhower at the head of the national ticket. He had everything going for him. The only cloud on the horizon, the Oregon State Council of Machinists, appeared no bigger than a man's hand.

McKay's arrogance in refusing to negotiate with his employees was decisive in crystallizing IAM opposition to his 1956 Senatorial bid. But other factors were also at work. The election of a liberal Republican, Wayne Morse, in 1950 to the U.S. Senate was the first crack in the state's solid conservative front. The reactionaries who controlled the party machinery mobilized to unseat Morse in 1956.* They would have surely succeeded but for the labor movement. At a meeting of the Oregon State Machinists Council, shortly after the 1952 Grand Lodge Convention in Kansas City, a small group of IAM business representatives agreed that re-election of the most pro-labor Senator in Oregon history would depend on the votes of working people. Recognizing that getting those votes to the polls on election day would take more planning, organization and hard work than they had ever given to politics in the past, they rejuvenated the state MNPL, which became dormant after Truman's 1948 victory failed to produce desired amendments in Taft-Hartley.

**The political Neanderthals drove Morse out of the party in 1952. He became an Independent and shifted to the Democratic side of the Senate in 1955.*

In challenging the conservative Republican power structure, the Oregon MNPL began with no money, no voter lists and no experience in political pamphleteering. However, the Republican-controlled legislature gave them a good issue in 1953 when it enacted one of the most restrictive anti-picketing laws in the country. Oregon's unionists initially viewed the anti-picketing statute as a disaster, but later realized it was the catalyst needed to ignite a political turnaround. As a result of the new law a number of Oregon unions formed a United Labor Committee and targeted one Portland district for an experiment in political action in the 1954 campaign.

To help elect labor-endorsed candidates for federal and state offices rank-and-file union members were recruited for such committees as primary screening, finance, voter registration, get-out-the-vote, car pool, and "blitz" distribution. Most of these rank-and-file members had no previous experience in political campaigning. When some building trades leaders hesitated to join in, for fear of jeopardizing their cozy arrangements with the Republican power structure, the IAM representatives decided to

bypass them and go straight to their members. A "blitz" campaign was unleashed in the final weeks. More than 100 volunteer crews blanketed 60,000 homes in 330 precincts with brochures and sample ballots for each of the candidates. Other unionists distributed some 30,000 pieces of campaign literature outside factories, stores and public buildings. The outcome not only stunned the press and politicians but even surprised many union members. They helped to elect the first Democratic Senator from Oregon in forty years, the first Democratic candidate to Congress in eighteen years and the first Democratic labor commissioner ever.

By 1956 the IAM was ready for a statewide effort. Early in the campaign an MNPL Committee sat down with Morse's campaign manager and talked strategy. Again committees of rank-and-filers were set up throughout the state. And again hundreds of IAM members and their wives assembled sample ballots and other pieces of literature, 1,316,000 pieces in all, into packets for distribution crews. Hundreds of others dropped these packets on more than 135,000 doorsteps, covering more than 80% of the precincts.

McKay realized his union-busting in Salem would cost him votes in working families. Seeking to limit the damage, he denied any connection with the agency, stating he had sold the company to his sons-in-law. The IAM responded by producing records proving McKay was majority shareholder when the union was busted.

Three weeks before the election the MNPL and the State Labor Council blanketed the state with 250,000 fact sheets on the McKay strike. A rank-and-file member of Local Lodge 1506 penned an eloquent and devastating account of the strike that was widely read in working class homes. It began, simply, "This is the story of how Douglas McKay wrecked our union." It demolished McKay's claim that he had nothing to do with the wrecking job. "Yes," this worker said, "McKay was 3,000 miles away in Washington. But I know he could have saved me fourteen months on the picket line by making just one phone call. He could have done it by saying just five words: 'Deal fairly with the union.' Instead he called our leaders 'goons'."

In the presidential election of 1956, Eisenhower swept Oregon together with most of the nation. But the campaign that began with a small meeting of IAM business representatives in 1952 paid off, after four years of dedication, belief and hard work, with what *The Machinist* called "Labor's Sweetest Victory." While Eisenhower carried the state by 77,000 votes, Morse outpolled McKay by 60,000. Oregon was no longer the Vermont of the West. In addition to Morse, the Oregon labor movement elected three members of Congress, a Governor, a Democratic majority in the legislature and a former union president as mayor of Portland. As the result of that historic 1952 meeting of a small band of IAM stalwarts, politics in Oregon would never be quite the same again.

The Ivory Tower

When the Grand Lodge moved into the newly constructed Machinists Building on Mt. Vernon Place in 1920, *Journal* editor Hewitt described it as "beautiful and commodious" and "one of the finest and most modern office buildings in Washington." By the mid-1950's these quarters were clearly inadequate, too cramped and crowded for the many more employees needed to serve a far larger membership. Hallways that may have been considered "commodious" in 1920 now seemed dark and narrow. Offices that Hewitt may have thought beautiful became dingy with age. The once respectable neighborhood declined during the depression and became rundown and shabby after World War II. As prostitutes and pimps began to move closer Al Hayes looked around Washington for a more suitable site. In 1954 Hayes purchased a prime corner lot on Connecticut Avenue, Washington's most fashionable commercial thoroughfare. It was with easy walking distance of the White House and was once the site of the British Embassy.

In December, 1954 ground was broken for a new ten-story building and in March 1956, fifteen months later, the staff moved into the new quarters. The new Machinists Building included such amenities as an underground garage, an auditorium seating 250, a wood paneled Executive Council room and even softly piped-in music for stenographers to type by. Compared with the old building it was indeed sumptuous and, as expected, some members and even a few representatives sometimes refer to it as "The Ivory Tower," usually in jest but often disparagingly. Union-built, the new headquarters had the lowest construction cost per square foot of any modern office building in Washington and by the 1980's was probably worth twenty or thirty times the original cost.

Lloyd Weber--The Spirit of St. Louis

The 1956 Grand Lodge Convention in San Francisco opened on a somber note. Al Hayes announced that Harvey Brown died that morning. The previous week the organization was stunned by a loss that far more directly affected most delegates. Lloyd Weber, long-time chairman of the Law Committee and veteran directing business representative of District 9, died in St. Louis. When he succeeded Elmer Walker as directing business representative, in 1937, District 9 had only 2,500 members. In less than 20 years Weber built the district into one of the most vigorous, dynamic and democratic regional labor units in the country. While he was DBR, Weber acquired a fine headquarter building in uptown St. Louis, complete with offices, meeting halls and a tap room. He also pioneered one of the best union-sponsored health and welfare plans in the nation.

Weber grew up in the "Kerry Patch", an Irish working class neighborhood and became a fervent trade unionist through a combination of on-the-job experience and hours spent in the reading rooms of the city's public libraries. His trade union career began in the worst year of the depression, 1933, when

he helped organize Cutting Die Lodge 787. By the time he died he not only chaired the Law Committee, but also was the moving force in the founding of both the Missouri State Council and Midwest Conference of Machinists. During the war years Weber served as worker representative on a number of federal boards and agencies. His friends in public life included mayors, governors and senators. But no matter how easily he hobnobbed with politicians, he remained a plain-spoken trade unionist to the end. In a long and heart-felt tribute, the *St. Louis Labor Tribune* described him "as a man who thought and talked straight" and who deeply believed in the members' "right to know." Although Weber pioneered many of the fringe benefits enjoyed by District 9 members, he often said that if he had achieved nothing more than the district's health and welfare program he would have considered his life in the labor movement worthwhile.

Statements and resolutions recorded in the Convention Proceedings clearly indicate the void created by Weber's passing. More importantly he left a legacy that is still felt. For many years old-timers in District 9 spoke of him with reverence, often recalling the early days when he walked the workers' neighborhoods, literally organizing from door to door. Fortunately, Weber's legacy both in St. Louis and on the Law Committee, was carried on for many years by his chief lieutenant and successor as DBR, Larry Conners.

The Selling of a Strike Fund

A number of events made the San Francisco Convention memorable. For the first time a major presidential candidate came to directly address and IAM Convention. Adlai Stevenson, once more running against Eisenhower, received thunderous applause when he blasted "leap year liberalism" and noted that "every four years the Republican candidates talk like Democrats." Another significant first was a group picture of black delegates that appeared in *The Machinist*. It included Herman Blackshear, Miami; F. T. Sanders, Memphis; A. F. Holmes, Atlanta; Henry Langdon, Montreal; Marcus Todd, Santa Monica and Julius Moon, Herb Ward, Stephen Glass and John Cummings, Los Angeles.

In his keynote address Hayes put the convention's most controversial issue squarely before the delegates when he urged establishment of a strike fund. Historically the Grand Lodge paid strike benefits directly from the general fund. Weekly benefits were minimal--\$5.00 in the early years and still as little as \$10.00 in the 1950's--but could push the organization to the edge of bankruptcy during prolonged strikes and were a steady drain on the general fund even in the best of times. Arguing the time had come to set up a separate strike fund, Hayes pointed out that in the first four months of 1956 alone strike donations pointed out that in the first four months of 1956 alone strike donations from the general fund devoured almost 7% of the IAM's total assets. He claimed that with a separate strike fund the IAM could pay benefits more in line with the modern cost-of-living and "not based on a cost-of-living set some thirty odd years ago."

When the Law Committee reported on the wide range of proposals sent in by almost 100 lodges, it recommended a weekly strike benefit of \$35 payable from a separate "Grand Lodge Defense

and Emergency Fund." The four-hour debate leading up to a roll call vote clearly indicated that most of the delegates yearned for some method of assuring a more adequate system of strike benefits. Many who spoke in favor pointed to lost strikes and lodges that ended up broke because the international lacked a strike fund. Some pointed enviously to unions that could pay decent strike benefits because they did not hesitate to assess high monthly per capita. Others argued that if employers knew IAM members were backed by a solvent strike fund the result would be fewer, not more, strikes. And, of course, the traditional appeals were made to the spirit of the "Fighting Machinists."

The debate proved most delegates wanted a strike fund that could pay decent weekly benefits. The rub was in trying to figure out how to finance it. The Law Committee's proposal included raising minimum monthly dues from \$2.00 to \$4.00 and increasing per capita 70¢, of which 50¢ would be earmarked for the strike fund. Don Burrows, the powerful DBR of the huge automotive lodge in Chicago, reminded the convention that the membership had voted down \$3.00 minimum dues following the Kansas City Convention. He bluntly suggested it wasn't likely they would accept \$4.00 minimum dues four years later.

Burrows was right. Though the Law Committee's proposal carried handily in a roll call of the delegates--3,770 to 2,635--it was vetoed a few months later--73,000 to 70,000--in a referendum of the membership. A year later the Executive Council resubmitted the proposal to the membership without the \$4.00 minimum dues. The members then went along, voting 110,000 to 65,000, to authorize a 70¢ per capita increase of which 50¢ was earmarked for a separate strike fund which would pay weekly benefits of \$35.

Jettisoning the *Journal*

When Fred Hewitt retired, at age seventy in 1945, after more than three decades as editor of *The Machinists Monthly Journal*, his successor, Lee Thomas, made the mistake of challenging Harvey Brown over a relatively minor matter involving editorial policy. As an elected officer, Thomas assumed he would be able to exercise as much independence as Hewitt had enjoyed. But time had changed and Thomas' challenge gave Harvey Brown one more reason to favor a weekly newspaper more in tune with the times and an editor who could be kept on a tighter leash. Once the *Machinist* began publishing, Thomas must have realized that sooner or later the leadership would choose between it and the *Journal* since even an organization as thriving as the IAM could not afford both weekly and monthly publications. Thomas was at a disadvantage in the fight for survival. As a former business representative from Grand Rapids he was bright enough. However, he had no particular qualifications for editing a major union magazine. Long before he came to Grand Lodge he showered Hewitt with folksy articles expounding his philosophy on life, trade unionism and other weighty subjects. But Thomas was more prolific than talented and when it came to putting out a publication for a modern day readership he was little more than an earnest amateur. This became apparent when Gordon Cole, and experienced and

talented professional, became editor of *The Machinist*. Cole soon created one of the best written, best-laid-out labor papers in America.

Thomas did his best to keep the *Journal* in the running by modernizing the layout, expanding the page size, adding color and generally trying to put more zip into the sober old *Journal*. But he never quite made it. Possibly no one could in the face of radio, television, movies and other diversions that decreased the reading time of most Americans, including most union members. The old-time craftsman may have had the patience to study pages of closely set type and time to digest a *Journal* that mixed economics and philosophy with shop notes and technical information. By the mid '50's, however, the IAM had many more specialists than journeymen. The proud railroad machinists, once the backbone of the union, were disappearing as rapidly as the industry they served. The younger and more transient aircraft mechanics, auto mechanics and airframe workers who replaced them in the ranks were more likely to glance quickly through the *Machinist* than sit down for hours with the *Journal*.

When Thomas died, after a long bout with cancer, in November 1954, Hayes tapped GLR William Dameron to take his place. Dameron was soft-spoken former business representative from Philadelphia who was warned at the start that he was merely a temporary stand-in, that the Executive Council intended to recommend the *Journal* be abolished at the '56 Grand Lodge Convention.

By the time the delegates got to San Francisco the *Journal* had been cut back to six issues a year. When word got out that the Publication Committee was planning to recommend that it be discontinued many delegates were dismayed. Some went to Dameron and begged him to lead a fight to save the *Journal*. Since he had known the *Journal's* days were numbered even before he took over as editor he refused to join the challenge that was being planned.

In its report the Publications Committee noted, "Changing times requires different tools and . . . we are convinced that more of our members and more of the wives and husbands of members read our newspaper than read the *Journal*." In the debate that followed the hall was drenched with nostalgia. Delegates wistfully remembered how the *Journal* had laid "in a place of honor" in machinists' homes, how members had kept it "in the libraries of their homes for their children" and how it had been passed on to friends and relations. Finally Hayes asked the convention's consent to make a statement. Indulging in a little nostalgia of his own, Hayes pointed out that he had been a member for almost 40 years and fully understood that the *Journal* "was one of the sentimental sign posts in this organization." But he went on to explain matter-of-factly, that while the *Journal* "served a good purpose during its lifetime, in today's United States and Canada the media . . . have changed." He explained that even as a bi-monthly the *Journal* was costing the IAM \$500,000 a year. He concluded that despite emotional and sentimental attachments such an expense was difficult to justify from a practical standpoint. In the voice vote that followed the delegates permitted the *Journal* to die.

For many years it had served the union well. Under Hewitt the *Journal* had substance, a tough, gritty, honest, dirt-under-the-fingernails quality that validated it as a publication by machinists, of machinists and for machinists. But in its last decade and a half, beginning with the wartime rationing of newsprint, the *Journal* slowly declined both in quality and influence.

Members were assured *The Machinist* would fill the void left after the *Journal* was killed off. And though a weekly newspaper could not achieve the depth the *Journal* once achieved under Hewitt, *The Machinist* continues to be one of the most respected and widely honored union publications. Unfortunately it, too, eventually fell victim to changing times. Due to skyrocketing postage and publishing costs it had to be converted to a monthly tabloid in the early 1970's.

Checking the Right-to-Work Plague

In 1944 Florida was the first state to legislate the compulsory open shop. Since the NLRA authorized union security clauses in collectively bargained contracts there was initially some doubt as to the validity of the Florida statute. But the Taft-Hartley Act included a section--14(b)--that settled the doubt by giving states the right to outlaw the union shop. By hamstringing unions in states where they were weakest and most needed Section 14(b) proved to be the part of Taft-Hartley most damaging to the labor movement.

When the validity of state bans on union security was certified by Taft-Hartley, a fever of anti-unionism swept the South and spread to a number of farming states in the Midwest. Although the purpose of right-to-work laws was to cripple unions by requiring every shop to be an open shop this motive was concealed by fraudulent mislabeling. Someone with a flair for false advertising termed the compulsory open shop a "right-to-work." While union representatives tried to explain the phoniness of the label industry flacks equated right-to-work laws with motherhood and apple pie.

By 1955 seventeen states had compulsory open shop laws though none were in the industrial states where union members could vote in sizable numbers. Despite the best efforts of big business lobbyists, these laws were limited to rural and southern states.

In February 1955 *The Machinist* reported that a group of corporate executives had established a Nation Right-to-Work Committee (NRTW). Former Congressman Fred Hartley, of Taft-Hartley notoriety, was named president. In the following months *The Machinist* kept a watchful eye on right-to-work developments in sixteen states--California, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Ohio, Utah, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Business and industry lobbyists put pressure on legislators in all these states but the labor movement was better prepared than in the first right-to-work blitz in 1947. Along with the rest of the labor press *The Machinist* made sure IAM members fully understood the magnitude of the threat to their wages and working conditions. Editor Gordon Cole asked a priest, minister and rabbi to measure so-called right-to-work laws against the moral standards set by the nation's three major theologies. The result was a series of memorable studies exposing the fundamental immorality of compulsory open shop legislation. The IAM distributed thousands of reprints, in the form of a fifty-five page booklet called Right-to-Work: Three Moral Studies, the state legislators, clergymen, newspapers and other opinion-

makers. The Three Moral Studies also armed IAM GLR's and business representatives with arguments refuting open shop advocates in public debate or letters to the editor.

The American Civil Liberties Union warned "that 'right-to-work' laws may be interpreted as an invitation to continue the denial of free speech and assembly to labor unions." After starting out strong early in the year the National Right-to-Work Committee's campaign generally fizzled. Once the unions got their members aware and roused, Utah became the only state to enact a compulsory open shop law in 1955. The Kansas legislature, dominated by the Farm Bureau, passed such a law, but lacked the votes needed to override Governor Fred Hall's veto.

The National Right-to-Work Committee's failure in 1955 showed that where union members formed the nucleus for an aroused voting bloc, most state legislators were reluctant to stir them up with the right-to-work issue. Open shop advocates had to look for a different strategy. Since they couldn't get right-to-work laws through state legislatures, they decided to go directly to the voters by way of initiatives and referenda. They set out to test this strategy in Washington State early in 1956. In February *The Machinist* reported that the state's right-to-work committee had asked the Attorney General to approve the title "Protecting Freedom of Employment" for their proposed initiative. He dealt them an early setback by ruling such a title misleading. He re-titled it "Restricting Employer-Employee Agreements."

When the campaign opened the Right-to-Work Committee was confident of success. The labor movement was relatively strong in the state--the Machinists alone had some 20,000 members at Boeing--but in a referendum of all the voters union members would be a decided minority. The open shop advocates also expected Eisenhower to sweep the state and were sure most Eisenhower voters would be anti-union.

With the largest contingent of organized labor in the state, District 751 was crucial to the counter-attack. President and DBR Harold Gibson learned the Right-to-Work Committee planned to collect 50,000 signatures (needed to put the question on the ballot) by mailing out 800,000 petitions with postage-guaranteed return envelopes. When these petitions were in the mail the Washington State Machinists Council ran large newspaper ads headed "DANGER!" The ads explained that the underlying purpose of the Right-to-Work petition was to weaken unions and destroy union protections. This was followed by a second ad labeled "BEWARE THE MONSTER IN YOUR MAIL BOX."

Though the AFL and CIO had recently merged at the national level, in many states, including Washington, AFL and CIO unions were still operating separately. The 1956 open shop referendum served as a catalyst for unity. The Machinists, Longshoremen, Carpenters, Railroad Brotherhoods, Woodworkers, and other AFL and CIO unions formed a United Labor Advisory Committee to plan and coordinate strategy statewide. The labor movement set out to show that the so-called right-to-work would hurt everyone, not just union members. Unions distributed more than 200,000 bumper stickers--"Don't Wreck Your State: Reject 198"--along with tens of thousands of lapel buttons. The slogan blossomed on billboards, posters and placards placed in the windows of homes and businesses. A group called The Committee for the Preservation of Payrolls prepared a speakers' manual titled "Brother It's

Up To You," which addressed legal, moral, political, economic, social and historical issues in the right-to-work debate. Every union in the state directed educational programs to their own members. In this effort District 751 profited from lessons learned in repelling the Teamsters 1949 raid at Boeing. The district set up seminars for members, trained speakers and distributed thousands of pamphlets from door to door.

Shortly before election day the Right-to-Work Committee blanketed the state with an expensive, last-minute advertising blitz. Newspaper ads, telephone calls and radio spots were all part of a professionally orchestrated campaign to persuade Washington voters that the right-to-work initiative would help union members without hurting unions. District 751 countered with a huge, televised get-out-the-vote rally in Seattle.

Most of the state's political establishment, including Senator Henry Jackson and candidates for governor and Congress from both parties, paraded to the dais to denounce the right-to-work fraud. As one of the principal speakers, Al Hayes stressed that the initiative's sponsors were not concerned with anyone's right to work either decently or at all. He warned they were using a fine-sounding phrase to camouflage a proven method of union-busting. He assured listeners that the purpose of the right-to-work campaign was to limit the gains unions make for union and non-union workers alike.

During the balloting tens of thousands of union members stood or marched outside polling places bearing placards that repeated the slogan "Don't Wreck Your State, Vote Against 198." Washington's voters buried Initiative 198 by more than two to one--704,000 to 329,000. The right-to-workers failed to achieve their main goal but succeeded in deflecting union energies from collective bargaining to costly, time-consuming defensive action. Two years later they would be back for another try.

Women Must Weep

The National Right-to-Work Committee had little to show for time and money spent in 1955 and 1956 but it continued to tap its corporate financial angels for more money in 1957. Having amassed a bureaucracy of professional propagandists, the committee had to justify its existence. As long as the committee could find legislators to serve as errand boys in the state houses they could milk corporate America for funds.

In February 1957 *The Machinist* reported the introduction of open shop bills in eight state legislatures with further submissions expected in at least twenty others. Failure to penetrate beyond Dixie and the Farm Belt had the National Right-to-Work Committee desperate for a breakthrough in an industrial state.

Indiana seemed to be the most tempting target. Though dotted with unionized factories spreading from huge steel complexes in Gary and Hammond in the North to such electrical and

automotive manufacturing centers as South Bend, Ft. Wayne, Terre Haute and Evansville to the East and South, Hoosier politics were frankly conservative. The daily newspapers distributed widely out of Indianapolis were notoriously reactionary. The Ku Klux Klan controlled the state house in the 1920's and conservatives dominated Indiana's Congressional delegation in the 1950's.

Despite this favorable climate the NRTW's compulsory open shop bill was going nowhere in the 1957 session of the Indiana legislature until unknown night-riders unleashed a hail of bullets at a lonely trailer on the outskirts of the little town of Princeton in Southern Indiana in February 1957.

At the time the town was bitterly divided by a four-month old strike which pitted IAM Lodge 1459 against a company called Potter and Brumfield. The center of an old coal-mining region, Princeton had a tradition of bloodshed and violence in labor-management confrontations. In this case most of the strikers were women and the absentee owner, AMF, decided to continue operations with scabs. Even so violence remained relatively slight and sporadic throughout the winter, being pretty much limited to such isolated acts of vandalism as some broken windows and a few slashed tires.

On the night of February 12, literally hours before the right-to-work bill was scheduled for debate in Indianapolis, all hell broke loose. Someone fired shots into a trailer where a young couple and their four-month baby were sleeping. The baby was hit. When reporters learned the father had gone through the unions picket lines, wire services hummed with lurid accounts of the shooting of an infant by labor goons. By the time the news came over television that evening the nation vibrated with shock.

In Indianapolis right-to-work lobbyists celebrated. This senseless shooting, thirty-six hours before their bill came up, transformed a dead horse into a sure thing. Though no one knew who fired into the trailer, the media were quick to blame the union. Newspapers ignored Al Hayes' instant denunciation of such violence and the large rewards offered by the Grand Lodge, Local Lodge 1459 and the State Federation of Labor. In Cleveland Plain Dealer readers were treated to a swarmy statement that "whatever the IAM may say, it is significant that before the strike began babies could sleep in their pink blankets with a pretty fair chance of waking up alive."

With the merits of the issue lost in a wave of anti-union hysteria the right-to-work bill sailed through the Indiana legislature, clearing the Assembly 54 to 42 and squeaking through the Senate 27 to 23.

The next day a crowd of 10,000 angry union members from all over the state gathered before the Capitol to demand that Governor Handley veto the bill. He assured the unionists that he opposed the bill but once he was safely out of sight he allowed it to become law without his signature. Later investigations disclosed right-to-work forces spent \$360,000 to pass a compulsory open shop law in Indiana. The shooting in Princeton turned the tide though no one knew, or ever found, who fired the shots. In the heat of the moment few paused to consider that someone wanting to insure enactment of the right-to-work law could hardly find a better way to do it.

Anatomy Of A Lie

After converting the Princeton shooting into a compulsory open shop law in Indiana, the National Right-to-Work Committee set out to parlay the tragedy into a general indictment of trade unionism. During the strike they discovered an unexpected ally. Almost from the start the Reverend Edward Greenfield of the First Presbyterian Church in Princeton appointed himself leader and spokesman for a back-to-work movement. He interjected himself into the strike early, calling upon union members, urging them to go back to work, organizing and chairing meetings of a dissident group that came to be known as "The Splinters" and personally escorting scabs through the picket lines.

When the strike was settled, a few days after the shooting, Reverend Greenfield left Princeton for a well-paying position as a propagandist with a right-to-work organization in California. He penned a fictionalized version of his experiences in Princeton called ". . . And Women Must Weep." By this time the baby was fully recovered, happy and healthy, having been only slightly grazed, but Greenfield's diatribe "waved the bloody diaper" in all directions. Widely circulated by the National Right-to-Work Committee, first as a pamphlet and then as a motion picture, ". . . And Women Must Weep" achieved the potency of dynamite in the anti-union arsenal. It was available to any employer fighting to keep unions out or undermine existing bargaining units. A slickly expensive Hollywood production, complete with technicolor and professional actors, ". . . And Women Must Weep" was presented to captive audiences as a true story. And it was effective.

Soon Al Hayes was hearing form IAM representatives in the field. They were being crucified by Greenfield's fable. Where IAM organizers went ". . . Women Must Weep" invariably followed. Realizing it must be answered, Hayes sent Gordon Cole to Princeton with instructions to talk to the people, find the truth and record it factually on film. Cole applied a reporters' scalpel to Greenfield's fabrications. Without actors or props or phony settings he let the people of Princeton speak for themselves. The resulting film, "The Anatomy of a Lie", exposed and dissected Greenfield's lies.

In ". . . Weep," the union president, played by a professional actor, was portrayed as a big, burly, blustering bully who bellowed throughout a staged "union meeting." The Cole film showed the real union president, a half-blind, soft spoken, little fifty-nine-year-old lady.

In "Weep," the "union boss" called a strike because he was fired for taking too much time off. In the "Anatomy Of A Lie" union members testified that when new absentee corporate owners bought Potter and Brumfield they "started to change everything," introducing time study, violating the contract and forcing the lodge to arbitrate almost every grievance.

In "Weep," the strike was shouted through on a voice vote at what seemed to be a meeting of ten or twelve people in a small room. Cole proved, through personal, on-the-spot interviews, that some 400 of Potter and Brumfield's 500 workers attended a mass meeting in the National Guard Armory and only nine votes were cast against the strike in secret balloting.

In "Weep," the strike was presented as a wildcat walkout that came as "a complete surprise to everyone," Workers coming to the plant were supposedly mystified to find picket lines. Actors milled about mouthing such lines as "Nobody said we were going on strike." In "Anatomy" members told Cole all members had notice of the strike vote both through the lodge and announcements on the radio.

In "Weep," officers and pickets were all portrayed as strong-arm toughs. In filmed interviews with the people of Princeton Cole learned that 80% of the workers and seven of ten local lodge officers were women.

In "Weep," the union engaged in mass picketing and perpetrated acts of violence. On-the-spot witnesses told Cole that number of pickets was strictly limited by law and the sheriff testified on camera that "the union gave us no trouble." Cole capped his presentation by interviewing the father of the wounded baby. In "Weep" the narrator claimed, "A bullet passed through the brain of the baby." In "Anatomy" the father informed Cole that his daughter, now five years old, was in perfect health. Though employed in a town some miles away the father voluntarily returned to Princeton to set the record straight. His statement on camera made it clear there was never any evidence of involvement by the union or its members.

As a factual refutation of Greenfield's fiction "Anatomy of a Lie" was devastating. But, in the words of the old saying, "A lie can race around the world while truth is pulling on its boots." Greenfield's lies inflicted immeasurable harm on the labor movement. While Cole's film served as an antidote, it could only be effective if it was shown along with ". . . And Women Must Weep." Naturally, it was usually kept from workers who were brought in to view right-to-work propaganda on company time.

The enactment of the compulsory open shop law shook the Indiana labor movement, stimulating grass roots political action to a level of intensity that paid off within a few years. GLR Bob Brown was in Indianapolis, lobbying for the state Machinists' Council, when the tragedy in Princeton triggered the right-to-work stampede. He later said that when he returned to his home in Princeton that night he immediately began to screen possible candidates for the next election.

The McClellan Committee and Landrum-Griffin

While trying to check open shop laws in the state capitols, the labor movement was set up for punitive federal legislation in January 1957 when the Senate funded a select committee to probe "criminal or other improper activities in the field of Labor-Management relations." The AFL-CIO did not object to an impartial investigation of union and employer corruption. Prior to the merger the AFL and CIO both supported legislation regulating health and welfare funds. But the make-up of the select committee roused apprehension. Al Hayes was one of the many union leaders who suspected that such notoriously anti-union Senators as Goldwater of Arizona and Mundt of South Dakota would be more interested in weakening unions than cleaning out corruption. Chairman John McClellan of Arkansas was a rock-ribbed segregationist who normally lined up with the Dixiecrats. While expressing solicitude for

the democratic rights of workers in unions his political career was dedicated to blocking democratic rights for black citizens in Arkansas. Upon taking the helm of the Senate select committee he quickly showed his true colors by offering a right-to-work amendment to an early civil rights bill.

When the McClellan Committee opened its probe AFL-CIO Ethical Practices Committee Chairman Al Hayes was already conducting the labor movements' first internal investigations. He was exploring uncharted territory. Before the merger the AFL had neither the power (nor under Gompers or Green the inclination) to dig into the seamy side of affiliates.* Individual unions were considered autonomous, answerable to no one except their members. In drafting the new AFL-CIO Constitution Meany and Reuther agreed on language establishing the Executive Council's duty to keep the Federation "free of any taint of corruption or Communism."

**Meany was the first to call affiliates to account. In 1952 he took action against corruption in the Textile Workers Union, the Longshoremen and some racketeering locals in New York.*

With technical assistance from one of America's leading labor lawyers (and later Supreme Court Justice) Arthur Goldberg, the Hayes' Committee drafted codes of ethical practices setting standards for issuing union charters, administering health and welfare funds, guarding against crooks, racketeers and political extremists and avoiding conflicts of interest.

With these codes the AFL-CIO Executive Council soon proved it meant business by stripping Teamster President Dave Beck of his seat on the council, suspending a number of unions and putting others on probation. When the AFL-CIO Convention met later that year it expelled the Teamsters, the Bakery Workers and the Laundry Workers. Despite this evidence of good faith, the labor movement, unlike professional organizations of lawyers and doctors, was not given a chance to clean house. The Ethical Practices Committee internal probe was shouldered aside by the McClellan Committee. Armed with subpoena powers, Senate staffers could demand and leak any raw or incomplete information the Hayes' group might be trying to develop.

In establishing the McClellan Committee the Senate directed it to investigate management as well as labor corruption. It could hardly avoid evidence of the illegal methods by which supposedly reputable corporations violated the nation's labor laws. Among the unsavory characters paraded before the committee were one Nathan Shefferman and his son. Testimony showed the Sheffermans received retainers for rendering illegal union-busting services to almost 500 companies, including such household names as Sears-Roebuck and Whirlpool. When questioned about the use of goon squads, threats, bribery and phony worker "vote no" committees in representation elections, Shefferman pleaded the Fifth Amendment twenty-six times, his son thirty times.

While showing little interest in management corruption the daily press reveled in any dirt the McClellan hearings uncovered in the labor movement. While the misdeeds of such as the Sheffermans were usually buried in the inside pages, the sins of union officers were emblazoned across front pages day after day. With so much time and space devoted to the committee's exposés, much of the public began to believe the labor movement was corrupt from top to bottom. Al Hayes tried vainly to set the record straight, stumping the country, speaking to audiences at universities, civic organizations,

management conferences or whoever else would listen. He pointed out that more than 100 AFL-CIO unions were served by more than 16,000 full-time officers and representatives. Despite years of probes verging on witch-hunts that started long before the McClellan Committee, fewer than thirty individuals in no more than a half-dozen unions had been implicated in wrong doing. He pointed out that while top officers of many of America's largest corporations were found guilty of a gigantic price-fixing conspiracy that cost U. S. consumers millions of dollars, the McClellan Committee, did not find a single instance of corruption or wrong doing by such major industrial unions as the IAM, the UAW, Steelworkers, IUE or Communications Workers. Appeals to reason were futile. With the help of the media, the McClellan Committee created an image of a labor movement honeycombed with corruption, paving the way for a legislative assault second only to Taft-Hartley.

The original bill sponsored by Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts was a straightforward disclosure and reporting measure aimed directly at corrupt individuals and practices. This was acceptable to the labor movement, but as Kennedy's measure moved from subcommittee to full committee to the floor of the Senate, anti-union forces added malicious amendments designed to weaken collective bargaining by crippling unions. When the bill finally cleared the Senate, the IAM's veteran lobbyist on Capitol Hill, George Nelson, warned it was "full of fishhooks for local unions." The Senate version was bad enough, but the House made it worse by transforming it into a tough "Labor Reform" bill severely limiting traditional union rights to picket and boycott. Harsh penalties were established to enforce a so-called "Bill of Rights" for union members.

Unions tried to rally opposition, but were literally bowled over by what *The Machinist* described as "the most high pressure, big business lobbying campaign ever seen in Washington." George Nelson later recalled that he and other union spokesmen were literally elbowed aside by swarms of lobbyists for the NAM, U. S. Chamber of Commerce, local business associations, corporations and utilities. Eisenhower jumped in, huckstering the big business line on a nationwide radio and TV hookup. Nearing the end of his second term, Ike no longer tried to hide his affinity for--some say awe of--the nations monied interests. The drumbeat of anti-union propaganda continued to build in the press. As the bill was rushed to enactment in the House, *Machinist* editor Gordon Cole described the lynch mood in the Nation's Capital.

Hysteria is running high in Washington, fanned by one of the most massive propaganda campaigns of modern times. The television networks have joined in. As have the *Reader's Digest*, *Life* and *Newsweek*. Any bill enacted in the heat of vindictive hysteria will be another burden for labor to bear, another obstacle to overcome, another expense to meet.

The legislation that Eisenhower signed, known as the Landrum-Griffin Act, was radically different from the original Kennedy bill that started out in the Senate. Along the way it was tailored to the dictates of big business. The NAM News reported those "who had advocated a stronger measure were greatly pleased". The National Right-to-Work Committee termed it "highly encouraging". *U. S. News and World Report* predicted "small business will benefit". One widely syndicated conservative columnist, David Lawrence, saw it "only as a start." In surveying the damage in *The Machinist*, Gordon

Cole predicted, "union members will pay the price at the bargaining table and in grievance settlements for years to come."

Back to the Barricades

With the labor movement reeling under daily attacks by the McClellan Committee the National Right-to-Work Committee prepared to launch its biggest offensive in January 1958. Fresh from success in Indiana, right-to-work strategists apparently believed other industrial states were ready for compulsory open shop legislation.

Right-to-work bills were introduced in two state legislatures--Delaware and Kentucky--but the real push was made in right-to-work referendums submitted to the voters in five states. Two of these states, Idaho and Kansas, were logical targets, being agricultural states in the Midwest where right-to-work usually prevailed. But the other three, California, Ohio and Washington, were traditional centers of union strength. If the National Right-to-Work Committee could win in these states they could probably win anywhere.

At first blush the revival of the right-to-work campaign in Washington seemed to defy logic. Only two years earlier, in the 1956 election, the labor movement buried Right-to-Work Initiative 198 by more than two to one. But in 1956 Boeing was more or less neutral. While some of the company's top people were known to favor 198, President William Allen did not lend Boeing enormous prestige to the initiative. In 1958 he ordered foremen and supervisors to collect signatures needed to put the issue on the ballot, contributed \$35,000 to a "Minute Man" radio campaign and saturated the state with company-sponsored newspaper, TV and radio advertising supporting right to work. Allen's turnaround carried a lot of weight in Washington. Another factor was the difference in the election itself. Since 1958 was an off-year, the presidency was not at stake and fewer voters were expected at the polls. One of the truisms of American politics is the smaller the turnout, the more conservative the vote. The Right-to-Work Committee was banking on a small vote.

In Ohio the Machinists' Council was tipped off early by a series of ads in various campus newspapers around the state. The State Right-to-Work Committee was offering \$100 a week for "Neat, personable college men to travel in small groups with supervisor." More than 150 college students were hired at \$18 a day to collect the signatures needed to put a right-to-work proposition on the ballot. The anti-labor forces had no trouble raising money. Before the year was over the Ohio State Chamber of Commerce spent more than \$500,000 in an all-out push for a compulsory open shop law.

In California the *Los Angeles Times* noted that the supporters of the right-to-work proposition "were cloaked in anonymity. The . . . birth place was a post office box from which it finally emerged furtively." Though furtive the sponsors were well supplied with cash. In the drive to get enough signatures to put the question to the voters, solicitors were paid piece-work--40¢ a name. A number of the paid solicitors were later arrested and charged with forging signatures.

The National Republican Policy Committee unveiled its campaign strategy early in the year by releasing a 216-page election manual titled "The Labor Bosses--America's Third Party." This manual, a frank declaration of war on the American labor movement, was sent to thousands of precinct workers throughout the country. Certain in their belief that the McClellan hearings had soured the public on all unions, Republican strategists counseled GOP candidates to aim their campaign rhetoric at "big unions." A number of leading politicians followed this advice into political oblivion.

In California the Democratic and Republican candidates for governor were on opposite sides of the right-to-work issue. As attorney general, the Democrat, Pat Brown, refused to okay the "right-to-work" title in the California initiative. The Republican candidate, William Knowland, was frankly anti-union. In floor debates on Landrum-Griffin in the Senate he teamed up with Barry Goldwater of Arizona to make the Senate version of the law as tough on unions as possible. As minority leader in the Senate and publisher of the Oakland Tribune, Knowland was a political powerhouse. Winning the governorship of California in 1958 would make him a serious candidate for the Republican presidential nominations in 1960. In the anti-union climate created by the McClellan Committee, Knowland planned to ride the right-to-work issue into the White House.

In Ohio, the Republican candidate, John Bricker, was a pompous, Northern Senator Claghorn. In a classic study of postwar America, *Inside USA*, author John Gunther wrote that intellectually Bricker was ". . . like interstellar space--a vast vacuum occasionally crossed by homeless, wandering clichés." Nevertheless Bricker was a three-term governor, had run as vice president on the Dewey ticket in 1944 and was generally considered unbeatable in Ohio. He, too, hitched this wagon to the right-to-work star.

As the campaign heated up on the West Coast the California Conference adopted many of the techniques that proved successful in Washington in 1956. IAM members festooned their cars with bumper stickers urging voters to reject the right-to-work proposition. Signs and billboards repeated the message along the highways.

Big aerospace, automotive and air transport districts from San Diego to San Francisco sponsored rallies and organized committees to insure that every IAM member was registered to vote. Like the Washington State Council of Machinists, the California Conference published and distributed thousands of pamphlets exposing the right-to-work fraud. GVP Roy Brown stumped the state, rallying union members with stem-winding denunciations of the compulsory open shop.

In the midst of the right-to-work battle in California, three members of Lodge 727E betrayed the obligation they took when they were initiated into IAM membership by agreeing to serve as a dummy front for the California Right-to-Work Committee. All three once served as local lodge officers and district delegates but joined the right-to-work cause when defeated for re-election.* Calling themselves Union Volunteers for Voluntary Unionism the three clearly identified themselves as IAM members and were highly visible mouthpieces for the compulsory open shop over radio, TV and in the newspapers.

**Proving that the old-time financial pirate known as Jay Gould was not far off the mark when he boasted that he could always hire half of the working class to kill the other half.*

Their lodge brought charges against them and they were expelled by membership vote for conduct unbecoming a member. This did not affect their employment or rights on the job and some old-time members recall the company seemed to give them preferential treatment thereafter. Nevertheless the press raged and Representative Phil Landrum of Georgia blasted Hayes during a special hearing of the House Labor Subcommittee for denying the right of union members to express views in conflict with union policies. Carrying bitter memories of times when unions were as directly threatened by saboteurs and spies in the union hall as by club-carrying gorillas on the picket line, Hayes bluntly told Landrum that while these right-to-work advocates had a right to try to destroy the union, they did not have a right to remain members while doing so.*

**Among other things the Landrum-Griffin Act severely limited a union's right to determine its own membership. The courts eventually overturned the lodge's order of expulsion.*

In Ohio the labor movement carried out a record-breaking voter registration drive throughout the state. More than 1,000 members and their wives turned out in July for a meeting chaired by DBR Matt DeMore of District 54 in Cleveland. Many of the wives were recruited for a drive to get every IAM member registered and to the polls on election day. Scores of volunteers checked the name of every union member against voter lists in a monumental state-wide drive to contact every union member at least once before registration closed. Those not registered were immediately called and told where and when registration was open. Rides were offered to anyone needing transportation to register or get to the polls on election day. Follow ups were made in person or by mail. As election day neared union members handed grocers, clothiers, dry-cleaners and other merchants a little printed message reminding them "this purchase was made with union-negotiated dollars."

On election day the result was a catastrophe for Republicans and the right-to-work advocates. *The Machinist* noted "the Republican Party rode the anti-union issue to bitter defeat." When the votes were counted Knowland's campaign for governor in California lay in ashes along with his hope for a presidential nomination. In Ohio the previously unbeatable Bricker was buried under a blizzard of union votes.

Record numbers of voters turned out all over the country. They rejected right-to-work by more than two to one in Ohio, almost two to one in California and Washington and three to two in Colorado.

Considered a sure winner in Idaho, political experts were stunned when labor managed to defeat right-to-work by some 5,000 votes. The compulsory open shop forces salvaged a win in predominately agricultural Kansas, but the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* summed up labor's sweep nationwide with its post-mortem of the Ohio results: "The voters rejected right-to-work by the biggest margin ever recorded on any issue on the ballot in the state's history. The results exceeded the wildest hopes of union members."

Though not directly on the ballot in Indiana in 1958, right-to-work was the crucial issue for union members in the primary and general elections. After the law was rushed through, in the hysteria of the 1957 tragedy in Princeton, union activists wasted no time in laying the groundwork for repeal. Every union began with its own members. The IAM, UAW, Steelworkers, Teamsters, building trades, CWA,

Mine Workers and others coordinated a local-by-local, shop-by-shop, door-to-door voter registration drive. Comparisons of wages and working conditions between unionized and right-to-work states were distributed to newspapers, ministers, high schools and colleges. Union speakers fanned out, speaking to civic and social action groups and demanding time on radio and TV. Union leaders screened political candidates for every elected office from dog-catcher to Governor.

The 1958 election in Indiana was the kick-off for one of the greatest political turnarounds of all time. The labor movement led a record outpouring of union voters to the polls. By defeating thirty-two of forty-six right-to-work supporters, union-endorsed candidates became a majority in the lower House and narrowly missed taking over the state Senate. Indiana's Congressional delegation, which consisted of nine Republicans and two Democrats in 1956, became nine Democrats and two Republicans in 1958. The labor-supported mayor of Evansville, Vance Hartke, wiped out Governor Handley in the race for the United States Senate. The process begun in 1958 culminated with a clean sweep and repeal of Indiana's compulsory open shop law in 1964.

The election of 1958 proved America was not ready for legislated union-busting. Despite the corrupt creeps who crawled out from under rocks turned over by the McClellan Committee, American voters recognized the need for strong unions as a counterbalance to powerful corporations.

Elmer Walker--The Bull of the Woods

After serving as GST for fifteen years Eric Peterson retired at the constitutionally mandated age of sixty-five in 1959. When Peterson was initiated almost fifty years earlier the IAM was a secret order. Information about local lodge membership and finances was not given out to the government or anyone else. By the time Peterson retired the records and internal operations of local and international unions were open to annual inspection by a multitude of federal and state agencies under Taft-Hartley, health and welfare fund regulations and tax legislation. To help local lodge financial officers shoulder the new burdens and responsibilities imposed by law Peterson developed a Financial Secretaries' Reference Manual and pioneered a union-wide training program for the mostly unpaid financial officers who serve voluntarily at the local level. These and other innovations were continued and improved in later years.



Elmer E. Walker
1959-1965

Peterson's successor, Elmer Walker, was born in Louisville, Kentucky in 1900, and began his machinist apprenticeship with Swift and Company at age sixteen. After joining Local Lodge 121 in East St. Louis in 1918, Walker knocked around the Midwest as a tool and die maker for the next twelve years. When the Depression hit, he returned to East St. Louis and was soon elected president of Lodge 121. As he sometimes proudly told friends in later years he had nothing to offer the union in the beginning except two big fists and a willingness to use them.

Evidently that was enough to get him elected as one of District 9's two business representatives in February 1934. His first report to the *Journal*, six months later, announced a union shop agreement with the General Fire Truck Corporation.

In 1936 Walker made his mark as a member of the Resolutions Committee at the Grand Lodge Convention in Milwaukee. A few months after the convention, the Resolutions Committee secretary, Pat King, submitted a light-hearted account of his adventures as a delegate to the *Journal*.^{*} He told how the committee decided to let Walker handle the situation when one of its recommendations was angrily denounced by a powerful business representative. According to King "Our committee went into a huddle and gave the ball to our star plunger, Walker, to crash the line. Walker, who is about six foot three, and weighs around 235 pounds of solid bone and muscle, ran the ball in great style." Later at the traditional banquet of the Mutual Alliance King himself seated at a table with this same, still simmering business representative. He recalled "I looked around for dependable aid, if required. To my relief I saw Walker a few tables away exhibiting bull doggedness, as though he would love to pin down someone's ears just for the fun of it."

**King was one of many highly literate journeymen who periodically wrote for the Journal. He later served for many years as a Grand Lodge auditor. One of his most memorably poignant submissions detailed his emotions during the long journey home to his wife when he received new, while on assignment, that his soldier son had been killed in World War II.*

After being appointed to the Grand Lodge staff in 1942, Walker was elected GVP and was assigned to the Great Lakes territory in 1945. When Hayes became IP in 1949 he transferred Walker to Grand Lodge to serve as resident GVP. Ten years later, at age fifty-nine, Walker became the IAM's fifth GST.

In contrast to the quiet and courtly Peterson, Walker was a rumbling, limbering mass of crude energy. He was built like a bull and at time literally snorted and pawed the ground like one. At a time when few machinists would utter even such mild expletives as "hell " or "damn" in front of "ladies" his speech was liberally laced with obscenities and profanity. To Walker this was "shop language." And if it offended anyone, male or female, that was just too bad. He could be hard as nails and, claiming the IAM staffers were on duty twenty-four hours a day, was known to call an auditor, or even a district lodge financial officer, at one or two o'clock in the morning. But he was usually gentle in his dealings with rank-and-file members.

Elmer Walker viewed the IAM Constitution as a kind of holy writ--the final word on any question of controversy--and he was fanatic in his devotion to the letter of the law. To him the "members' money" was a sacred trust. Despite his gruff manner and profane shop talk most IAM members seemed to like him. To many he typified the old fashioned "Fighting Machinists". Though he served as GST for only six years, he made a permanent contribution when he became the first chief financial officer of any union to foresee the potential of data processing. His willingness to invest in the latest technology gave the IAM a head start in electronic record keeping. For some years the IAM was the only labor organization with computer capability.

"Working Class heroes" and "Disillusioned Liberals"

During the mid and late 1950's Local Lodge 113 in Chicago was the center of a controversy focusing on a union's right to protect itself against subversive infiltration. The episode is worth recounting in some detail because of the great stir it roused among media and institutional liberals, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Lodge 113, chartered in 1914, was one of the IAM's most proudly militant tool and die lodges. Its original headquarters at 113 South Ashland Street inadvertently served as the site of the founding of the Communist Party in the United States in 1919. This came about when the Socialist Party, holding an emergency convention in Lodge 113's Machinist Hall, barred a group of Soviet sympathizers led by a radical newspaperman named John Reed.* Reed's group took over another part of the building and proceeded to found what became the Soviet-sanctioned Communist Party in the United States.

Reed later wrote a sympathetic history of the Russian Revolution called **Ten Days that Shook the World. He is the only American buried in the Kremlin and was played by Warren Beatty in the 1981 film "Reds."*

By the 1950's Lodge 113's 2,600 members turned out tools, dies, gauges, jigs, fixtures and precision instruments in more than one hundred job shops and captive tool rooms throughout the Chicago area. They were highly skilled craftsmen capable of machining to within 50 millionths of an inch, on fortieth of the thickness of a single human hair. They were among the best paid workers in American industry. Their skills were crucial to defense industries throughout the country. Thus, when the Korean War began, the Communist Party sent one of its top organizers from the West Coast to Chicago to infiltrate and disrupt Lodge 113. Obtaining employment in an IAM shop, he was initiated into membership and quietly began to form a cadre of supporters. Their excuse for disruption leading to a takeover was provided by a Grand Lodge audit which revealed that Lodge 113's business representatives had been grossly careless in handling lodge funds. Though failing to find intentional dishonesty, the auditor uncovered a number of financial irregularities and recommended that certain specified bookkeeping procedures be brought in line with Grand Lodge policy. He also suggested that if the officers do not follow through "the lodge [should] consider making some changes at your next election". Before that election could be held or corrective steps taken, Lodge 113's internal problems were broadcast to the world at large in a slickly produced, professionally written publication called *The Tool and Die Makers Appeal*. Over the next several months, succeeding issues continued to spread the lodge's dirty linen before employers and the public. The publication was far too skillfully edited and lavishly financed to be a rank and file effort. Only later, much later, was it learned that the organizer sent by the Communist Party from the West Coast had a background which included experience as a professional Journalist. Maintaining a steady drumbeat of charges against the BR's, the *Appeal* not only damaged the IAM's credibility in organizing but also in warding off employer-led decertification. Continued public airing of the lodge's problems also brought large turn-outs to monthly meetings. GLR's sent by GVP Siemiller to assess the situation reported that lodge meetings generally ended in chaos. Robert's Rules of Order were being twisted out of shape by a small but disciplined group drilled in classic Communist tactics. At a number of meetings parliamentary procedure gave way to shouting arguments and even fist fights. In the course of one heated exchange, an elderly member became so agitated he had a heart attack and dropped dead in the front row.

As the time for lodge elections neared, the BR's, realizing they were about as popular as skunks at a garden party, decided to cut and run. They resigned as a group, pausing just long enough to clean out the lodge files on their way out the door. The DBR, a former school teacher, who had come into the lodge while employed at a defense plant during the Second World War, showed his true colors by taking a job with the state director of personnel in a Republican administration--where he used his knowledge of labor relations to help break a strike by Illinois highway workers.

With the vacuum left by the hasty exit of the BR's all of the feuding factions in the lodge joined in petitioning Al Hayes to take Lodge 113 under "supervision, direction and control". Appointed to serve as administrator, GVP Siemiller assigned GLR's Joe Ramsey and Paul Burnsky to direct day to day operations.* Moving quickly to put the lodge back in order, Burnsky and Ramsey reduced dues, brought financial procedures into line with Grand Lodge practice, and began to revise the bylaws so that elections could be held for a new set of officers. Though monthly lodge meetings were temporarily

suspended, the deputies continued to hold regular steward meetings and kept the members informed through frequent mailings. They also administered and enforced the lodge's contracts with employers.

**Ramsey was later elected the IAM's GVP for Transportation and Burnsky became President of the AFL-CIO's Metal Trades Department in 1971.*

The strength of the faction that was being quietly directed from the sidelines by the infiltrator from the West Coast remained strong. In the elections held for new officers his candidate for the lodge presidency was narrowly defeated, but a number of his other followers were elected to lodge office. With the stage thus set for the continuation of internal strife, Hayes kept 113 under suspension, direction and control. At a time when the threat of Communist subversion was uppermost in the minds of Americans everywhere, Hayes was determined to keep the IAM free from any possible taint of Communist influence.

About this time certain left-wing journals began picking up on themes taken directly from the Tool and Die Makers Appeal. The problems in Lodge 113 were portrayed as a fight between a group of underdog "working class heroes" on one-hand and a stodgy, overbearing union bureaucracy on the other. In a rebuttal to such charges in one of the more esoteric publications catering to liberal "intellectuals", a group of five rank-and-file members of Lodge 113 attempted to set the record straight in a letter to the editor.

Have you ever come to a local meeting, hoping to transact business, and then see the meeting torn apart by the tactics of an organized minority? Have you witnessed the situation where every letter, bill, motion, recommendation of the officers was distorted and questioned until the meeting seemed like one long brawl? And then, after many members left in disgust, did the self-made "heroes" come up with motions which wouldn't have a chance in a vote of all the membership? That's the story of what [these "heroes"] were doing to our union.

In accordance with long accepted trade union practice the new bylaws tried to guard against internal subversion by prohibiting members "from conveying unauthorized union information to the management of any shop or circulating printed material detrimental to the best interests of the IAM." These bylaws were ratified by majority vote, but two stewards who enjoyed the notoriety that came with being lionized as "working class heroes" continued to pepper the membership, the press and George Meany with petitions, resolutions and appeals. In a grandstanding bid for newspaper headlines these two "rank and filers" somehow raised enough money to finance a round trip flight to Puerto Rico where they demanded a meeting with Meany during AFL-CIO Executive Council sessions.

In October, 1958 the two were elected to go to Peoria as members of 113's delegation to the special merger convention of the AFL and CIO in Illinois. They asked for authority to submit a resolution censuring supervision as a "Gimmick . . . used by corrupt officialdom for the purpose of preventing an effective rank-and-file movement." Their motion was ruled out of order, but when they reached Peoria they immediately began to handbill delegates of other unions despite objections from the majority of

their own delegation. Insisting on bringing their resolution to the floor, they were again ruled out of order on the ground that the merger convention, being set up for a special purpose, had no jurisdiction over internal disputes of affiliates.

That night they exchanged hot workers with other Lodge 113 delegates in a hotel barroom. This led to a scuffle involving a Special Representative named Ray Christoffel. According to eye witnesses, no one was bruised or shed blood or needed medical attention. But the next day one of the stewards, who had not been touched in the altercation stormed onto the convention floor to denounce "physical violence . . . perpetrated against myself and a fellow delegate." He called Christoffel a "slugger and thug on the payroll of Siemiller . . . who masquerades as an international representative."

Upon their return from Peoria the two were charged with violation of Article K of the IAM Constitution. In those pre-Landrum-Griffin days Article K prohibited IAM members from circulating false and malicious statements which reflected upon the conduct, attacked the character, impugned the motives and questioned the integrity of other IAM members and officers.* They were tried, convicted and expelled from membership. When Hayes upheld the penalty a firestorm of protest was set off among the sort of intellectuals and academics who get teary-eyed when they sing "I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night . . ." but who have little experience and less understanding of the hard realities of everyday unionism. From one end of the country to the other such "liberal" publications as *The Progressive* and *The Reporter* (now defunct) romanticized "self-educated radicals" and flayed Hayes as a hypocrite and tyrant. One writer sneered that Hayes, as chairman of the AFL-CIO's Ethical Practices Committee, was merely a "symbolic enemy of corruption."

**This charge was developed some fifty years earlier as a defense against IWW subversion.*

According to Paul Burnsky, who was on the spot (in more ways than one) throughout the time of Lodge 113's troubles, the root of the problem was eventually uncovered with information provided by the FBI. The individual sent in by the party during the Korean War to disrupt defense industries (by creating chaos among a group of workers whose skills were essential to those industries) was expelled and the lodge could finally begin to recover from the wounds that had been inflicted from within. As soon as the lodge's finances were rebuilt and new officers and business representatives were chosen in a free election, Hayes lifted "suspension, direction and control" and he did so even without the forced coercion of a Landrum-Griffin Act.

Today, the Landrum-Griffin Act gives any member a license to harass elected officers and sabotage the union from within. But Hayes had lived through the atrocities that shocked the LaFollette Committee. He knew that in the unequal and never-ending struggle between labor and capital the survival of the group must sometimes take precedence over the rights of individuals. He believed that a democratic union, like a democratic nation, must be able to protect itself against internal spies and saboteurs. Intellectuals, academics and organizations such as the ACLU and the so-called Association for Union Democracy applauded when the Landrum-Griffin Act curtailed union rights. But the experience of America's unions since 1959 proves that Hayes was on target when he accused Landrum-Griffin backers

of "attempting to encourage irresponsible minority dissent as a means of obstructing effective action on behalf of the majority."

Showdown in St. Louis

When Hayes succeeded Harvey Brown in 1949 his support on the Executive Council was by no means unanimous. All of the Council members had strong egos. Few found it hard to see themselves as IP. The most serious contender, other than Hayes, was the forty-three year-old GVP of the Southwest territory, Roy Brown (no relation to Harvey). He had first-rate credentials. Though younger than Hayes he had seniority on the Council. After he became a GVP, membership in the Southwest territory grew rapidly. Though largely due to the explosive growth of the air frame industry in California during the war, Roy Brown could justifiably claim credit for the dynamic organization the IAM became in his territory. Over the years he assembled an exceptional corps of tough, smart GLR's who were fiercely loyal to him. At the 1948 Grand Lodge Convention in Grand Rapids they tried to start an undercover groundswell of support for a "Roy Brown For IP" movement at a caucus called for delegates from the Southwest and Northwest territories. But when noses were counted on the Council Hayes got the nod. Some of the older GVP's may have felt that Brown, at forty-three, was too young. Or he may have been passed over because he was not a railroader. By 1949 railroaders were a fading minority of the total membership but still held a firm grip on the Executive Council.

Throughout the 1950's Roy Brown's territory continued to grow and prosper as workers from other parts of the country streamed to California's burgeoning industries. In directing operations in the Southwest territory, Brown became increasingly restive and resentful of Grand Lodge. He flaunted his defiance by ignoring convention resolutions directing GVP's to name education representatives. In fact he barred the Grand Lodge education department from his territory. At staff meetings and state Councils he did not bother to disguise his disapproval and disdain for Hayes' service as Chairman of the AFL-CIO's Ethical Practices Committee. Having worked closely with the Teamsters from his early years as a business rep for a lodge of auto mechanics Brown was disgusted that Hayes had played a key role in their expulsion. He admired and emulated the IBT's brand of brass-knuckles unionism. A number of his GLR's packed pistols and were proud to be known as Roy Brown's "muscle."

At the 1960 Convention in St. Louis the schism between Brown and the rest of the Council became apparent in a number of reports and recommendations submitted and pressed by delegates closely identified and allied with him. Many of the delegates were oblivious to maneuvering on and off the floor aimed at curtailing the IP's power and authority. But discussion and debate on a number of committee reports alerted more experienced and sophisticated delegates to Brown's challenge.

The attack opened during debate on a case before the Appeals and Grievances Committee growing out of the tangled financial affairs of District 727 in California. The DBR, John Snider, one of

Hayes' staunchest allies, had been accused by a disgruntled and defeated challenger, Joseph Addison, of embezzling district lodge funds. Following an exhaustive audit Snider was cleared of criminal conduct, but Hayes had ordered him to repay certain funds for which he could not account. This did not satisfy Addison. After losing heavily in an attempt to unseat Snider he kept up a campaign of harassment which culminated in a trial and his expulsion from membership. When a majority of the Appeals and Grievances Committee upheld Addison's expulsion at the St. Louis Convention, the two members representing Brown's territory on the committee filed a dissent. This set off a lengthy debate in which a number of delegates from California raised questions about the work that Addison's charges and Snider's handling of District 727's finances had been fully investigated over a period of two and a half years, not only internally by Grand Lodge auditors and two special trial committees, but by investigators from the Labor Department (under the recently enacted Landrum-Griffin law) and even the FBI. With this assurance the convention affirmed the report of the Appeals and Grievances Committee.

The second attack came when the Automotive Committee reported on a resolution from a group of California lodges censuring Hayes and other Executive Council members for terminating IAM agreements with the Teamsters.* The wording seemed deliberately insulting, accusing the Council of "glossing over factual considerations" and sneering that their decisions "are renowned for scarcity of information and facts." Though the resolution was easily defeated after Hayes and Walker explained actions taken toward the IBT, it was plainly calculated to sabotage Hayes' leadership.

**As was required of all affiliates when the Teamsters were expelled from the AFL-CIO.*

The third and most direct assault came in a proposal before the Law Committee to elect GVP's by territory. This issue rises regularly at Grand Lodge Conventions, usually being introduced and argued by Canadian lodges. In St. Louis the push for territorial election came as much from California as from Canada. While Canadian advocacy of territorial election reflects a spirit of nationalism, West Coast supporters in 1960 were obviously seeking to limit one of the main sources of the IP's authority, i.e., the power to define and assign territories.

Hayes and the rest of the Executive Council knew that so much support for such a radical change in the IAM's structure could not come from Brown's territory without active connivance on his part. His motive, like his maneuvering, was clear. Brown had a large and loyal following in his own backyard. If the convention could be persuaded to adopt territorial election, Brown would be free to run his territory as Teamster chieftains ran theirs, without restraint from the national body. After lengthy debate, the delegates in St. Louis, as at other conventions before and since, recognized that territorial election of GVP's would fracture the IAM, turning it into a loose federation of independent baronies incapable of coordination and cooperation on a national scale. They rejected it without a roll call.

In deflating Brown's challenges Hayes presided calmly, impartially and fairly, emerging with even more stature in the eyes of the average delegate. While many were unaware of the power struggle taking place on the convention floor, Hayes and the rest of the Council prepared for the day of reckoning.

A different kind of showdown at the St. Louis Convention matched campaign speeches by the two major presidential candidates, John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon. By 1960 greetings or appearances by Democratic candidates at Grand Lodge Conventions were almost routine. But this was the first personal visit by a Republican candidate and was totally unexpected. While both candidates were issued invitations Nixon's had been sent merely as a token of the IAM's traditional "non-partisan" political stance.

When Kennedy and a large entourage of radio, television and newspaper reporters swept into the convention hall, it was packed to the rafters. In addition to 1,500 delegates on the convention floor, at least 10,000 screaming St. Louis area Democrats filled every seat in the galleries of cavernous Kiel Auditorium. Kennedy's speech was brief--less than fifteen minutes-- and brisk. In his clipped, aristocratic Boston accent he raced through the text of the standard speech he would repeat often before the campaign was over. But what he said didn't really matter. The delegates were clearly with him all the way. As he finished they swarmed into the aisles, surged toward the podium and for the next 15 minutes paraded with banners, chanting "We want Jack."

When an army of reporters escorted Nixon and his party into the auditorium the next morning it was again filled to overflowing. This time the balconies were jammed to bursting with cheering Republicans. Before adjourning on the previous day Hayes briefed the delegates, reminding them Nixon had been invited and was entitled to respect and courtesy as a guest of the Machinists Union. The general feeling was probably best summed up by one grizzled old machinist who was heard to say "Al can make me listen, but I'll be damned if he can make me clap for that sonofabitch."

Unlike Kennedy, Nixon spoke informally off-the-cuff, developing his themes directly from the IAM slogans--Justice on the Job, Service to the Community, Security for the Family--emblazoned on banners spread around the hall. He was relaxed and ingratiating but displayed his essential phoniness when he tried to milk sympathy from the audience by describing poverty in his youth in terms of not being able to afford strawberries out of season and having to substitute hamburger for steak. Many of the delegates thought this conception of poverty, which most would have considered affluence in the Depression, was funny rather than sad. While they sat politely through his forty-five minute discourse there was never the slightest doubt that Kennedy would get their endorsement. Over the years many Democratic presidential candidates have spoken before IAM delegates, but Nixon was the first and only Republican presidential nominee to ever address a Grand Lodge Convention.

Freezing the Death Benefits

In other business the 1960 Convention defused a financial time bomb that was ticking away in the general fund. This consisted of a liability for death benefits which began to snowball after World War II. IAM death benefits, payable to individual members out of the general fund, were initiated at the Kansas City Grand Lodge Convention in 1897. Originally the benefit was limited to \$50 and was payable after six months good-standing membership. At a time when few members could afford commercial

insurance and fewer foresaw a nationwide system of Social Security or Railroad Retirement the IAM's death benefit was looked upon as burying money. By 1960 IAM members not only enjoyed burial and survivors' benefits under Social Security or Railroad Retirement, but many also had life insurance under collectively bargained contracts.

Having been gradually increased through the years the death benefit ranged up to \$300 by 1960. At the end of World War II death benefits cost the organization less than \$250,000 a year. From 1897 to 1945 only \$4.8 million was paid out altogether. After 1945 yearly outlays for death benefits began to head for the stratosphere. By 1960 the Law Committee reported the total liability for the IAM's 823,462 good-standing members had reached \$132 million. The liability for twenty-year members alone was more than \$72 million. The Law Committee recommended death benefits be discontinued for new members and frozen at existing levels for everyone else. This was an emotional issue and set off a great deal of wailing and gnashing of teeth. Sensing the convention was ready to reject the Law Committee's recommendation, Hayes asked permission to make a report from the chair. He explained that "actuaries have told us . . . unless we supplement the income of this organization we will be forced to reduce our operating activities." Since the delegates were not ready to "supplement the income" they approved the motion to drop the death benefit for new members and freeze it for all others. The move came barely in time. By the mid '70's death benefits cost over a million dollars a year and by the end of the decade total outlays rose to \$30 million. They began to taper off in 1978, but the final death benefit will not be paid until sometime around 2029.

In one of the last actions taken before adjournment the delegates established the IAM's college scholarship program. As originally introduced the scholarship resolution proposed a monthly \$5.00 assessment against every local lodge. The Resolutions Committee withheld concurrence on the ground that such an added burden should not be put on local lodges in this manner. In referring the question back for further consideration the delegates made it plain they wanted some kind of program that would give young people a better understanding of the labor movement. A substitute resolution adopted in the final moments provided for voluntary funding. Over the years the IAM's scholarship program has financed four-year grants of \$1,000 a year to children of members and \$2,000 a year to members. By the early 1980's as many as 30 scholarships were being subsidized each year.

Roy Brown vs. Elmer Walker

Having isolated himself from Hayes and the rest of the Executive Council at the St. Louis Convention, Roy Brown forfeited their support in the 1961 election for Grand Lodge officers. When he was dropped from the endorsed slate he decided to run against it. After so many years he might have won re-election as a GVP without the endorsement of the rest of the Council. Many of his GLR's urged such a course. However, he realized that re-election as a vice president would put him at the mercy of an IP he had gone out of his way to alienate. As long as Hayes had the power to draw territorial boundaries and make GVP assignments, Brown could as easily end up in Northern Alaska as Southern

California. He was realistic enough to know that he could not beat Hayes in a head-to-head contest. But he thought the comparatively new GST, Elmer Walker, might be vulnerable. As a vice president in the Great Lakes territory and at headquarters, Walker was known neither for tact nor diplomacy. And he hadn't improved as GST. If he thought a business rep was wrong, he didn't hesitate to say so in a very loud voice. If an auditor or full-time financial secretary needed chewing out Elmer knew all the choice terms. Over the years he managed to insult and offend a lot of people, including a number of influential business representatives and GLR's.

Brown's bid for GST opened a free-for-all on the rest of the ballot. The only two unopposed offices were international president and the IAM's delegate to the Canadian Labour Congress. All of the other eighteen offices were contested. By challenging the endorsed slate Brown created a dilemma for most of the GLR's on his staff. Though assigned to his territory they were ultimately answerable to Hayes and the Executive Council. In past elections brown's GLR's, like those in the rest of the country, routinely supported the Executive Council's endorsements. Now they were torn. Their jobs belonged to Hayes, but their hearts were with Brown.

Hayes understood and was prepared to make allowances for this dilemma. He could accept neutrality. But he was not willing to overlook the open opposition he got from nine of Brown's GLR's. In the heat of the campaign they openly challenged the Council by signing and circulating an appeal in support of Brown's candidacy. It had little effect on the election and was, in fact, a hopeless gesture. When the votes were counted the Council-endorsed slate carried easily. Of more than 85,000 votes cast for GST, Walker got almost 63,000. Brown obviously miscalculated in believing that Elmer's abrasiveness made him unpopular. The magnitude of Walker's majority indicates that most business reps and members interpreted his brusqueness as evidence of a kind of prickly integrity.

After the tally was officially certified, Hayes made what was probably the most serious misjudgment of his career. He summarily fired the nine GLR's who openly endorsed Brown. He did not doubt his right to do so. To him the issue was clear. They were his employees. They were disloyal. Therefore, they had to go. As he saw it every IP from James O'Connell to Harvey Brown was free to hire and fire field staff at will. As far as he was concerned nothing had changed. The problem was, of course, that something had changed. Union elections now came under the scrutiny of the Federal Government.

When the Landrum-Griffin Act became law two years earlier, the Executive Council denounced it in a long policy statement which predicted, in part, that it would protect "disruptive and divisive minorities against any internal discipline." The "Bill of Rights" included in the new law specifically gave union members the right to "express any views, arguments, or opinions; and to express at meetings . . . views, upon candidates in an election of the labor organization." In Hayes' opinion this provision was not meant to protect representatives who were hired to carry out Executive Council policies. Seven of the nine fired GLR's decided to challenge their dismissal in court. The issue was argued for seven years in a legal battle that was eventually settled in the Supreme Court. Hayes' theory was rejected and the GLR's were upheld on the ground that nothing in the Landrum-Griffin Act indicated Congressional intent to

exclude "Officer-Members" from its protection. The Court said that "to exclude officer-members . . . would deny protection to those best equipped to keep union government vigorously and effectively democratic." In the end Hayes' miscalculation cost the organization substantial damages and legal fees. It also sowed the seeds from which the IAM Representatives Association germinated.

Cloud Over Camelot

With the passage of time John F. Kennedy's years in the White House have been transmuted into the misty sentimentality of the Broadway musical, *Camelot*. The Machinists wholeheartedly endorsed Kennedy's candidacy and continued their support to the last day of his brief presidency. The new president tried to keep this campaign promise "to get America moving" by submitting a series of legislative recommendations to Congress--i.e. redevelopment of depressed areas, speeded-up highway construction, channeling defense contracts to depressed areas, reduced interest on FHA mortgages, and special job seeking services to those unemployed because of age, automation, or depressed local conditions. Reports from the field indicated IAM members were beginning to feel the effects of deep and fundamental changes in the work place. In a series of interviews with business representatives attending the 1961 MNPL's National Planning Conference the *Machinist* found rising anxiety about loss of jobs to automation and low wage foreign competition.

Apprehension about job-destroying technology was not new. The fears that drove 18th century textile workers in England to destroy Cartwright's spinning jennies have never completely died out. Such fear was at the heart of machinist John Morrison's testimony, cited earlier, bemoaning the fragmentation of machinist skills in the 1880's. It flares with each new advance in technology. In 1900 the *Journal* complained that

Human labor is being rapidly replaced by machinery, electricity, compressed air, etc. The displacement is more in evidence in the U.S. than elsewhere because here is the storm center of mechanical inventions and discoveries of the resources and forces of nature.

Dread of mechanization peaked in the Great Depression. In 1932 the *Journal* reminded its readers that "technological unemployment resulting in displacement of men by machinery was causing grave concern even before the depression" and warned that with "the ever increasing introduction of labor-displacing machinery it will be an absolute impossibility even in so-called normal times to find employment for all." Editor Hewitt's prescription in 1932, like O'Connell's in 1900, was a shorter workweek. By the 1960's a new wave of postwar technology, variously known as automation, computerization and cybernetics, was creating a revolution that demanded wider responses in collective bargaining. In March 1961, the *Machinist* told of an automated, multi-purpose machine tool "that can

interchange thirty-one different cutting tools and hundreds of operations in sequence without a touch from a machinist". Describing what it called "the revolution in your life" *The Machinist* marveled,

There are machines that see, hear, and feel. There are machines that have memory units. There are automated machines that inspect the product they are turning out, reject substandard units, and correct the errors they make. There are machines that change their own parts when they break down or wear out and lubricate themselves.

While a number of doomsday economists began predicting a world in which humans would be completely displaced by machines, Hayes refused to succumb to such gloom. Having seen great advancements in the living standards of working people during his own lifetime, he was convinced that over the long run rising living standards depend upon advancing technology. His position, stated many times, before many audiences, was summed up in 1963 testimony supporting a Senate resolution to establish a Presidential Commission on Automation.

The American Labor movement is not opposed to automation . . . We welcome technological advance because . . . it can release mankind from mind-numbing, back-breaking labor, [as well as] the toils of traditional scarcity . . . Unlike the desperate and unhappy men who roamed the English countryside more than a century ago smashing the machines that were destroying their jobs . . . we do not want to destroy the machines, but we do not want the machines to smash our society.

Like O'Connell in 1900 and Hewitt in 1932, Hayes believed the ultimate solution was a general reduction in hours. However, he recognized that the difference between automation and earlier forms of mechanization would require more than a shorter working day or shorter workweek. In speeches, articles, letters and debates with employers, politicians, reporters and professors, he repeatedly stressed the need to reduce the total number of hours individuals worked in their lifetime through negotiations for longer vacations, more holidays, worker sabbaticals and earlier retirement.

The IAM was one of the first unions to draft collective bargaining clauses designed to cushion automation's impact on individuals. Responding to resolutions and reports of the 1960 Grand Lodge Convention, the Research Department prepared a booklet, *Meeting the Problems of Automation Through Collective Bargaining*, to help IAM representatives deal with problems of technological change. Along with actual case studies it contained suggested language for contract clauses requiring advance notice, transfer rights, restraining, relocation, income preservation (rate retention, supplemental unemployment benefits, severance pay), early retirement, continued insurance and fringe benefit coverage, job classification renegotiation and "equitable distribution of gains resulting from greater productivity through general wage increases, more leisure and other socially desirable ways."

In 1962 Hayes and John Snyder, president of U. S. Industries, Inc., a manufacturer of automated equipment, agreed to set up a "Foundation on Automation and Employment" to try to "develop ways to ease automation's impact on displaced workers." Snyder was a rarity among corporate executives, and

Adlai Stevenson Democrat with a social conscience and a good record of collective bargaining with his employees. His company produced a mechanical worker, called a TransfeRobot, capable of performing such routine tasks as oiling clock movements, finishing typewriter parts, assembling electronic switches and packing chocolates. This device, which rented for \$25 a week, was being built for the sole purpose of replacing human workers. Snyder recognized the catastrophic implications of wholesale unemployment and felt a responsibility to try to find answers to the problems created by his TransfeRobots. As he told delegates to the Grand Lodge Convention in Miami Beach in 1964 his concern sprang at least partially from self-interest.

I want to sell the automation machines that my company makes but if our economy turns sour, if the unemployment problem is not solved, I will have difficulty selling them and no reason to make them. To my way of thinking, all businessmen should share this view--that the unemployment problem and the automation problem are as serious for business as for labor.

Having worked with Hayes on a foundation set up to study collective bargained health and welfare plans in the early 1950's, Snyder suggested a foundation to study and seek solutions for problems caused by automation. He offered to fund the proposed Foundation on Automation and Employment with royalties from each sale or lease of USI's automated equipment. Over the next few years the Foundation subsidized a number of conferences and publications. Despite the sincerity of Snyder's concern, this approach produced little except a source of grants for academic research. When Snyder died in 1965 his successor at U. S. Industries immediately withdrew the company from further participation.*

**Hayes tried, but failed, to find another corporate sponsor. Eventually his successor, Roy Siemiller, recruited a vice president of Essex Wire, Frank Gallucci, to serve as co-chairman. They later spun off an Institute of Collective Bargaining to study ways in which bargaining techniques could be applied to other areas of human conflict..*

The anxieties caused by automation were compounded by a rising tide of low-wage foreign imports in the early '60's. By the time Kennedy entered the White House America's postwar dominance in world markets was already eroding. Having rebuilt their war-shattered industries with generous American aid, Japan, West Germany and much of the rest of Europe were clamoring for free access to American markets. As the *Machinist* began noting with increasing frequency more and more of America's largest corporations were exporting jobs by closing factories in the United States and reopening overseas.

Membership worries about "loss of work due to imports from foreign countries" and "export of American jobs to foreign countries" surfaced in a series of resolutions at the Grand Lodge Convention in St. Louis. The resolutions committee recognized the legitimacy of this concern. It cited recent reports in the *Machinist* of Remington Rand transferring manufacturing overseas and noted that similar situations existed in "sewing machines, transistor radios, plumbing supplies and other industries where IAM members are employed." Though recognizing the problem, the committee was reluctant to concur in

resolutions advocating restrictions on foreign trade. Noting "the complexity of world trade problems and the limited and often conflicting information available to our members" the committee urged Hayes to call a union-wide conference on world trade "as soon as practicable."

When the conference was held in Washington the following year, the Kennedy Administration was preparing to negotiate what came to be known as the "Kennedy Round" of tariff reductions. The President sent a warm message of greetings which noted Europe and Japan's need for stable and expanding export markets. The administration also sent two of its big guns--Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles and Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg--to champion free trade and warn against protectionism. With help from George Meany and the IAM's own international representative, Rudy Faupl, a glittering array of authorities from industry, government, universities and the labor movement persuaded the delegates to endorse a "continued national policy of liberal trade."

The final recommendations called for federal aid to communities hurt by foreign trade as well as government help for workers whose jobs were eliminated by exports. Neither Hayes nor anyone else foresaw the extent to which America's so-called trading partners would set up quotas, export subsidies, barter arrangements, licensing fees, local content requirements and a long list of other direct and indirect restrictions to bar American-made goods while systematically destroying America's industrial base. With the rest of the labor movement the IAM went along with the Kennedy round of tariff reduction, learning too late that 19th century theories of free trade were not relevant to 20th century realities. While multinational corporations received a license to export U. S. technology, jobs and capital, American workers received unemployment and poverty from countries practicing protectionism overseas.

The ultimate crisis of widespread joblessness due to automation and the destruction of America's industrial base by so-called free trade policies was delayed for more than a decade by the military buildup in Viet Nam. Hayes was not alone in failing to foresee that collective bargaining would not be adequate to protect workers against the degree of unemployment inevitably generated by a lethal combination of twentieth century technology and nineteenth century trade theories.

Canadian Machinists and the NDP

In August 1961 Canadian GVP Mike Rygus led a sizeable delegation of IAM members into the founding convention of the New Democratic Party (NDP) in Canada. Meeting in Ottawa's Coliseum, affiliates of Canadian Labour Congress unions joined with delegates representing Canada's Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)--an agrarian protest movement that swept the prairies during the 1903's Depression--to launch a challenge against the two existing major parties.

In reporting on the NDP's founding, the *Machinist* explained to U.S. readers "that the Canadian parliamentary system makes working through existing parties fruitless. The system requires members of the House of Commons to vote, not their own views, but the official position of their party." Lacking

influence in the older parties, Canadian unions decided to form a broadly-based people's political movement embracing farmers, workers, consumers, professionals and others seeking basic social reform. Although the NDP failed to achieve majority status in the national Parliament, it became the most influential of the third parties in Canada, consistently winning between 15 and 20% of the popular vote. NDP pressure from the left has influenced policy decisions by both major parties. The NDP has also won elections in British Columbia and Saskatchewan, where it launched a health insurance program that became a model for the rest of Canada.

A New Day for Federal Employees

The IAM's first lodge of federal employees, Local Lodge 174 in Washington, D.C., was organized in 1891, but federal employees did not have a right to join unions prior to enactment of the Lloyd-LaFollette Act in 1912. Even then, unions of government workers had no power to bargain collectively. A few agencies, notably the Interior Department and the Government Printing Office, agreed to informal consultation with employee organizations, but for the most part unions of federal employees had to seek improvements in the working conditions of men and women employed by Uncle Sam through legislative action.

With so many members at Navy yards, Army arsenals and other military and civilian agencies, the IAM began early to lobby Congress on behalf of its members. As previously noted, delegates representing government employees at a District 44 Convention in Denver in 1909 picked William H. Johnston to serve as a full-time lobbyist in Washington. Over the next half century he and succeeding presidents of District 44, notably Nick Alifas and William Ryan, helped to bring about the Eight-Hour Work Day Law, the Federal Employees Injury Compensation Act, increases in Government wage rates and laws governing such other benefits as sick leave, health and life insurance, annual leave and pensions.

Though unions of skilled craft workers could demand management's attention on projects of the Bureau of Reclamation, the Corps of Engineers and similar federal activities around the country, labor relations were usually something of a joke in the federal service. For many years employees had a right to join unions, but supervisors could ignore them at will. In January 1962 John F. Kennedy changed the course of labor relations in the Federal Government when he issued Executive Order 10988 establishing the right of federal employees to form and join unions without "interference, restraint, coercion or discrimination." Although denying recognition to any union asserting a right to strike against the government. Kennedy's order was a milestone in that it directed federal agencies to recognize unions representing a majority of employees. By providing for negotiated contracts between unions and agency heads it removed employees from the mercy of arbitrary supervisors. In time the order's basic flaw, lack of effective enforcement procedures, became clear. However, by legitimizing collective bargaining in

federal agencies it encouraged union growth in the federal sector and cleared the way for the statutory protections that came later for federal unions.

Sweet Times and Sour Notes

On the surface America's economy bustled with prosperity in the Kennedy years. Shiny new gas-guzzlers jammed a spreading network of interstate highways. At the edge of every city miles of new detached housing--"the American dream"--sprouted like mushrooms, transforming farmlands into burgeoning suburbs. The stock market boomed as production, profits and dividends soared. The gross national product rose steadily toward the \$600 billion a year mark. Yet in the midst of this apparent prosperity unemployment and poverty persisted. As automation increased output per man hour in steel, autos, mining and other basic industries fewer workers were needed each year. With the tidal wave of the post-war baby boom about to break upon the job market, unemployment continued to hover between 5.5% and 6.5%. While there were more millionaires than ever studies found that 20 million families earned less than the \$6,000 a year needed to achieve minimum standards of health and decency in the Kennedy prosperity. The persistence of unemployment in the midst of plenty, together with rapid advances in technology, increased the importance of job security in union negotiations. In preparing for the 1962 round of negotiations with the aerospace industry in February, the IAM and UAW made a second attempt to set common objectives in a joint "price tag" conference. Leaders from both unions put employment security at the top of the list.

In actual negotiations this priority was often submerged by other issues. As long as rank-and-file members remained employed they tended to be more interested in tangible immediate rewards than theoretical future safeguards. Given the choice between better wages at once and less severance pay or supplemental unemployment benefits later, most were willing to let the future take care of itself. This gap, between leadership perceptions and rank-and-file preferences was minor compared to the far more serious, and unexpected, gap revealed by the 1962-63 round of aerospace negotiations.

After months of hard bargaining on both sides, punctuated by a couple of strikes in which the President invoked Taft-Hartley's cooling off provisions, negotiations remained deadlocked in much of the industry. The major sticking point was the union shop. With militant unionists already printing picket signs and preparing to close down the aerospace industry from Cape Canaveral to Vandenberg the President appointed a blue ribbon mediation panel to keep America's space programs in orbit.

In its report the panel recommended that the companies agree to the union shop if it won approval by a vote of no less than two-thirds of the bargaining unit. When top aerospace executives scoffed at this solution reporters asked Kennedy to comment at this next press conference. He defended the panel and the union shop, noting that unlike aerospace "most industrial companies in the United States accepted the union shop many years ago--the steel industry, the auto industry, the aluminum companies, other basic industries. The union shop is part of collective bargaining." Soon thereafter General Dynamics/Convair and North American agreed to let their employees vote on the union shop.

When the ballots were counted, both the IAM and General Dynamics Convair and the UAW at North American failed to muster the necessary two-thirds majority. Though the 55% margin in favor of the union shop in both elections would have been considered an easy victory in a political contest, the outcome was a shock to the labor movement. It was an early warning of a fundamental change that had taken place since the time when unions routinely won union shop elections by margins of 90% or more. It signaled the arrival of a new generation of working men and women, a generation with dim recollections of the Depression and no remembrance of work places without unions. It also indicated the extent to which the McClellan hearings had damaged the image of unionism in America.

By 1963 the IAM was running hard to merely stand still. New shops were still being organized. Few issues of the *Machinist* failed to note the success of at least one organizing campaign or representation elections. However, the units were generally small, seldom adding more than fifty or a hundred new members. With a few notable exceptions, like IBM and Dupont, most of American's large corporations were either organized by this time or able to hide behind union-restricting legislation in right-to-work-for-less states.

The impact of automation and foreign imports, compounded by a slump in aerospace and continued disappearance of jobs in railroading could not be offset by new organizing. The membership gains of the '50's began to evaporate in Hayes' final term. Membership plunged from 852,000 to 800,000 between June 1961 and January 1964.* However, as the union prepared to celebrate its 75th Anniversary in May 1963 the IAM was widely recognized as one of the world's largest, strongest and most respected trade unions. The IAM's 75th year was marked by proclamations, banquets, speakers, dances and other ceremonies sponsored by local and district lodges and state councils throughout the country. The high point in these commemorative exercises was reached on the evening of May 5 when an overflow crowd of 2,500 gathered in Washington's largest hotel ballroom to celebrate the IAM's Diamond Jubilee.

**It began to bounce back in Hayes' final year, reaching 828,000 by the time he retired in June, 1965.*

Governors, mayors, congressmen, senators and cabinet members were there along with business reps, Grand Lodge reps, local and district lodge officers and a host of retired officers and old-timers including an 88-year old member of Local Lodge 432, in continuous good standing since 1898. George Meany was there along with Claude Jodoin, his counterpart in the Canadian Labour Congress. The evening climaxed in the whistling, shouting, standing and foot-stomping ovation that greeted the entrance of the President of the United States.

In a graceful tribute to the union begun by a little band of railroaders in Atlanta, Kennedy said, "The Machinists, organized 75 years ago in Georgia, today represents one of the most powerful forces for progress, one of the most powerful forces for stability, one of the most powerful hopes for the future that we now have." Less than six months later, he was shot in Dallas and America was never quite the same again.

Radio and the Radical Right

In an open letter reminding members of the importance of registering and voting in the 1964 Presidential election Hayes noted the multiplication of "extremists, hate mongers and fascist elements trying to impose their ideas . . . on the American people". While every generation must fight to preserve freedom against extremists on both the right and left, Hayes was responding to an unusually strong surge by the radical right in the early '60's.

Parading under such names as the John Birch Society, Americans for Constitutional Action, Christian Crusade, Conservative Society of America and the Liberty Lobby, hate groups saturated the air waves with suspicion and fear. A former head of the USIA in the Eisenhower Administration, Arthur Larson, found that these and similar groups were bankrolling more than 700 regularly scheduled radio and television broadcasts each week. According to Larson they aimed to undermine democracy by convincing the American people that "four successive presidents were traitors, most of the judges on the highest court should be impeached and most of the major legislation by Congress is unconstitutional or socialistic, or both."

Seeking and antidote to this steady drumbeat of reaction from the far right, the *Machinist* staff developed a radio program, "The World of Labor," for sponsorship by local and district lodges. It was initiated in April 1964 and originally provided a weekly ten-minute look at the positive side of trade unionism. It featured stories of contracts negotiated and benefits won without strikes, told the human side of injustices corrected through the grievance procedure, described ways in which union projects contributed to public welfare, explained why most working families were supporting Medicare, provided a forum for friendly members of Congress and generally projected a positive, upbeat view of the IAM and the labor movement. Tapes were made available to local and district lodges for sponsorship in their home communities. Editor Gordon Cole suggested that scheduling "The World of Labor" on small independent stations during early morning drive times could limit costs to as little as \$6.50 a week in Biloxi or \$35.00 a week on Long Island. Within six months the program was sponsored by local and district lodges in forty-eight communities. Within a few months the format was changed, from ten minutes once a week to five minutes twice a week, to make "The World of Labor" acceptable to more stations. At the peak of the five years during which the program was produced before falling victim to hard times it was heard twice a week in seventy-five cities and towns from New York to California.

In Your Guts You Know He's Nuts

The Republican Convention that met in San Francisco's famed Cow Palace in July 1964, provided self-evident testimony to the strength and success of the ultra right wing in America. Although always frankly the party of big business, past GOP platforms usually made some small bow toward organized labor. The 1964 Platform Committee, tailored to the ideology of candidate Senator Barry Goldwater,

ignored recommendations presented by Meany, Hayes and other union spokesmen. Goldwater could hardly be as kooky as some of his followers on the lunatic fringe. But the intensity of his opposition to unions was almost frightening. A millionaire department store owner from Phoenix, his political career was launched some years earlier when he agreed to head the merchants' section of a right-to-work campaign in Arizona. His biography, *Conscience Of a Conservative*, described labor's "enormous economic and political power . . . as the real evil in the labor field". Goldwater suggested remedies ranging from the compulsory open shop and prohibition of all union political action to state control of labor-management relations and outlawing industry-wide bargaining.

During his first two terms in the Senate Goldwater registered two right votes on sixty key issues selected by the IAM's Legislative Department as important to IAM members. He opposed Social Security as a form of welfarism, was against health care for the aged and consistently fought federal aid to education and national standards for unemployment insurance. When he condemned graduated income taxes a columnist asked if he thought it fair for someone making \$5,000 a year to pay the same rate as someone earning \$5 million a year. He responded "Yes I do."

He campaigned for the presidency under the slogan, "In your heart you know he's right." Machinists and other union members looked at some of his more bizarre proposals--to sell TVA for a dollar, to saw off the Eastern Seaboard, eliminate rural electrification and replace the Supreme Court--and in their guts they thought he was nuts.

All The Way With LBJ

The IAM's enthusiasm for Goldwater's opponent was heard in the explosion of cheers that rocked the hall when Lyndon B. Johnson strode into the 1964 Grand Lodge Convention at Miami Beach. The convention hotel, including the hall, was so heavily damaged by Hurricane Cleo two weeks earlier the Executive Council faced the possibility of postponement. But when city and state authorities learned the President was scheduled to speak at the Machinists' Convention, they scrambled to expedite the craftsmen and materials needed to put the Deauville Hotel and its convention hall back together in a hurry.

Johnson's appearance was a first for IAM Convention delegates. Many candidates had come in previous campaigns to present themselves and their programs at Grand Lodge Conventions, but LBJ's stop was the first by an occupant of the White House. With half the population of Southern Florida competing for tickets with spouses and guests of delegates, the convention hall had to be reset; delegate tables were moved out and 4,000 chairs moved in.

Preparations for the President's arrival began ten days earlier when an advance party, including a Secret Service detail, arrived to check security and communications. To insure that the President could be instantly reached by Washington in a national or international emergency, direct telephone lines to

the White House were set up in the limousine he would be riding, in the Deauville lobby, just inside the convention door and on the podium. According to the *Machinist*, LBJ's entourage included

A press plane from Washington with . . . 60 reporters and photographers, and a total of 72 other writers and cameramen from Miami and other nearby Florida cities. A special platform was erected in the convention hall for 12 TV, newsreel and motion picture cameras that photographed the session. Six bands played for the President along the route. The crowds cheered. A block from the hotel the President stopped his car to walk the rest of the way and shake hands. The Deauville Hotel lobby was decorated with signs welcoming LBJ. The hall was packed with more than 4,000 people, many of them standing. A ten-piece band played "Hail to the Chief" as the President entered. It was completely drowned out as the delegates roared their greeting . . .

Johnson's remarks were anti-climatic, being mostly a rehash of past triumphs and a call for future progress. He spoke at length about the need for unity, peace and prosperity without once mentioning Viet Nam. But, as was true of Kennedy's speech at the 1960 Convention four years earlier, it really didn't matter what Johnson said. The delegates were with LBJ all the way, interrupting with applause thirty-two times--the loudest response greeting his call for Congress to provide hospital care for the aged under Social Security.

During the convention the delegates debated propositions to increase GLR and Executive Council salaries (the first in eight years), to increase per capita by 50¢ a month and, the old perennial, to elect GVP's by territory. Though the salary increases were approved by voice vote the propositions to increase per capita and elect GVP's by territory were both shot down by wide margins in roll call votes.

In other noteworthy actions the delegates changed the name to International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, abolished the requirement that one GVP be assigned solely to railroad matters and raised minimum monthly local lodge dues from \$3.00 to \$4.00. When these and all the other actions taken at the convention were submitted to a referendum of the entire membership in December, the proposed increases in salaries and per capita were voted down.

14(b)--Part of the Way With LBJ

Union votes contributed mightily to Johnson's 61.1% share of the popular vote in the 1964 Presidential election. Analyzing the returns, MNPL Coordinator Jack O'Brien estimated that following organized labor's most successful registration drive, 79% of the union members who voted cast ballots for the Johnson-Humphrey ticket. Volunteer cash contributions to the MNPL were also the highest to this point. LBJ's coattails were wide enough to add between twenty and twenty-five liberal votes in the House* and two or three in the Senate.

**Including IAM member John Race, chairman of the bargaining and grievance committee of Local Lodge 1420 in Fond-du-Lac, Wisconsin.*

Undiscouraged by memories of legislative failures after union votes elected Harry Truman in 1948, the labor movement looked forward confidently to enactment, finally, of Medicare, improvements in the wage-hour law, federal standards for unemployment insurance, creation of a poverty program and federal aid to education. Most of all organized labor set its sights on repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act.

The battle for Medicare, which began with Truman in 1945, brought Johnson into direct confrontation with the mighty American Medical Association. The doctors' lobby had checkmated both Truman and Kennedy. In the battle with Johnson they spent \$5,000 a day to keep 23 high-powered lobbyists on Capitol Hill full time. Johnson, the master politician, not only knew how to twist arms, but which arms to twist. In a little more than six months he was able to go to Independence, Missouri, and lay a Medicare bill for the aged before Harry S Truman. By the time the first session of the 89th Congress adjourned, LBJ had pushed through most of the rest of his program including a stack of education, civil rights, jobs, and poverty bills.

The only bill Johnson did not push was the one organized labor considered most crucial: repeal of Section 14(b). In May, when Congress was already loaded down with the rest of the President's program, he briefly mentioned repeal of Section 14(b) in a message recommending amendment to the wage-hour law and unemployment insurance laws. In what seemed almost an afterthought he appended the "hope" that repeal of Section 14(b) would reduce "conflicts in our national labor policy that for several years have divided Americans in various states."

Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz did better with a strong statement before the House Labor Subcommittee, calling right-to-work laws "a disruptive competition between the states carried on in the form of efforts to attract industry by representations of a political climate less conducive to unionism and union wages and working conditions." But that was almost the extent of the Administration's support. When the House voted 221-203 to repeal Section 14(b) that was as far as it got. In the Senate GOP Minority Leader Everett Dirksen marshaled a small band of Northern Republicans and Southern Democrats to filibuster the repealer to death. Dirksen was a small-town politician from down state Illinois who was known as "the Wizard of Ooze" for his oily manner and unctuous speaking voice. A majority of the Senate agreed with Tennessee's freshman Senator Ross Bass that "if you ride the buggy, you ought to feed the old mare" and were pledged to vote for repeal. But they never got the chance. With Dirksen calling the signals, the Old Guard-Dixiecrat minority was able to fight off cloture, a motion to end debate and bring the question to a vote.

In the post-mortem, friendly senators told union lobbyists that despite Dirksen's filibuster, 14(b) could have been repealed if LBJ had expressed serious interest in the legislation and if rank and file union members had shown more support through the mail. While John Birchers and other right wing groups generated stacks of mail in favor of compulsory open shop legislation, few workers bothered to write and tell senators how they felt about laws that protected free riders.

The Go-Go Years 1965-1969

In June, 1965, Hayes and Walker retired together with great fanfare amid flourishes of banquet oratory and showers of gifts. In retrospect the Hayes' years seem to have been a golden era for the IAM. Under his leadership the unions' prestige and influence reached a peak both in the AFL-CIO and in the halls of government. These were years of great progress for both the union and its members. Between 1949 and 1965 membership grew from 518,000 to 875,000, from 1,734 lodges to 1,942 lodges, from total assets of \$6.5 million to \$29.5 million. More importantly the percentage of members covered by pension plans rose from less than 5% to more than 50%, those with health and welfare coverage from 27% to 90%.

Of Elmer Walker it was said that while he had many disputes in his long career, no one ever questioned his honesty. Serving during years in which per capita remained constant while expenses rose steadily, he carefully guarded the IAM's resources. Members sometimes accused him of squeezing each nickel until the buffalo bellowed. When he took over the union's books in the summer of 1959, the strike fund was scrapping bottom with only \$561,000 to serve a union of more than 800,000 members. With the fund reorganized and despite paying out some \$15 million in benefits during his six years as GST, he left a \$10 million reserve for his successor. Walker spent his retirement years at his home in Silver Spring, Maryland, occasionally releasing his pent-up energies in angry letters to editors and politicians. Finding little satisfaction in retirement he suffered a stroke and died shortly after attending the 1968 Grand Lodge Convention in Chicago.

Hayes, always as much at ease with himself as with others returned to his native Wisconsin where he savored retirement to the fullest, playing penny ante poker and fishing the Northern lakes into his early eighties.

Matt DeMore--Vesuvius from Cleveland



Matthew DeMore
1965-1969

Walker's successor, Matt DeMore, was a departure from Machinist tradition. All previous GST's, beginning with Dawley almost eighty years earlier, had embarked on formal apprenticeships, aiming for journeyman machinist status, at an early age. DeMore's entry into the trade was indirect.

Born in Cleveland in 1903, Matt DeMore began peddling papers in a tough East Side neighborhood at the age of nine and was clerking in hardware by the time he was eleven. After knocking around at various jobs including blacksmith helper on the Michigan Central Railroad in Detroit and motorman on a Cleveland streetcar

line, he got his growing family through the Depression working as a maintenance machinist at a company that later became a division of General Electric.

In 1935, DeMore led his fellow workers into Local Lodge 439. He advanced rapidly, first to the presidency of the local in 1936 and to directing business representative of District 54 in 1938. Over the next twenty-three years DeMore built District 54 into one of the IAM's largest and most progressive units. In the early '40's he once had his skull cracked when mounted police charged an IAM picket line in a memorably bloody strike at the Pipe Machinery Co. Before being elected to the Executive Council in 1961, DeMore became well-known throughout the union as a member of the Law Committee at five consecutive Grand Lodge Conventions and a president of the Ohio State Council of Machinists. When he came on the council, Hayes assigned him to New York to head the Northeast Territory. When he was brought to Grand Lodge to serve as resident GVP many speculated that Hayes was grooming DeMore as his successor. If so, he failed to persuade the rest of the council to ignore the claim of Siemiller's long seniority. A number of other council members were in contention for the GST post but when the council finally reached agreement upon a slate for the 1965 balloting, Siemiller was at the top of the ticket with DeMore in the second spot.

Solidly muscular and compact in stature, DeMore was warm and amiable by nature but could erupt like a roaring volcano if provoked. He had a deep, rumbling, booming voice that could shake the walls and carry for blocks. Whether in a convention hall or at a bargaining table, Matt DeMore needed no electronic amplification to make his point.

About the time he took over as GST, the IAM's new electronic brain, the Univac III, was ready to become fully operational. DeMore made certain the new technology was put to maximum use, not only in keeping membership records and mailing lists, but in speeding the printing and mailing of strike benefits and providing swift retrieval of information on bargaining agreements covering workers in more than 15,000 work places.

Roy Siemiller--Anything But An Old Shoe



P.L. Siemiller
1965-1969

Until Roy Brown took himself out of the picture by crossing swords with the rest of the Executive Council at the 1960 Grand Lodge Convention, he seemed destined to follow Hayes as International President. Roy Siemiller admitted as much at a breakfast meeting with the Grand Lodge staff in Washington the morning after he took office. Despite speculation about DeMore and others, Siemiller's seniority on the Council and his successful seventeen years as head of the IAM's key Midwestern territory gave him the edge needed for Council endorsement when the chips were down. When elected he was unknown nationally and widely under-rated by the press. One magazine described him as, "a fairly unobtrusive, old-shoe choice for International President." Roy Siemiller quickly proved to be neither unobtrusive nor an old shoe. In a few short years he zoomed from relative obscurity to a national reputation as one of the labor

movement's most militantly hard-nosed leaders, a figure one reporter described as "constantly snarled in controversy and apparently thriving on it."

Tall, lean and bald, Siemiller peered like a quizzical (or, when irritated, a querulous) hawk over glinting, rimless spectacles. His conversation was salted with such homespun phrases as, "It don't make no never mind," and "We busted them guidelines to smithereens."

Christened Paul LeRoy, Siemiller was born in September 1904 on a homestead close by the Platte River in central Nebraska. His father was a Civil War veteran who served at various times with the 4th Iowa Infantry and the 51st Missouri cavalry. While Roy was still a boy his father left the farm to an older brother and began an odyssey that took the family westward and eastward before finally settling down in Arkansas. Striking out on his own in the old-time "strive and succeed" tradition of a Horatio Alger hero, young Roy left school at an early age to become a Western Union messenger. Spotting an "Apprentice Wanted" sign in the window of a machine shop where he was about to make a delivery, he removed his Western Union cap, went in, fibbed about his age and talked himself into working nine hours a day at 11¢ an hour (with, as he later said, "no deducts"). After completing his apprenticeship and serving a hitch in the Navy, he went to work for the Rock Island Railroad in Herrington, Kansas. Though not yet an IAM member Siemiller joined the parade when union members marched out in the big shopmen's strike of 1922. With no other jobs in sight Siemiller bummed around as a farm hand before finding work as a machinist in Port Arthur, Texas. He was initiated into Local Lodge 823 in September 1929 just in time for his job to be wiped out by the stock market crash a couple of months later. Again taking to the road he eventually wandered into the Ozark town of Harrison, Arkansas, where he pounced upon a rare opening in the machine shop of the Missouri-Arkansas Railroad.

Having kept up his IAM membership Siemiller tried to find other IAM members. He learned that a few years earlier the only IAM local lodge in the area became defunct following a strike in which a mob of company-incited vigilantes hung the financial secretary from a railroad bridge.

With Roosevelt and the NRA creating a more favorable climate for unionism, Siemiller became the catalyst for a union revival in the Harrison shops. After organizing enough machinists to charter Lodge 1093 he was elected general chairman and negotiated the IAM's first contract with the Missouri-Arkansas line. When Siemiller began to help organize the other shop crafts, Wharton began hearing about the IAM's young live wire down in Arkansas. Deciding to check for himself, he arranged a fishing trip to the Ozarks where, after looking Siemiller over, Wharton hired him to help in the organizing drives that were beginning to gather steam in all directions. After a tryout as a temporary organizer Siemiller was given a permanent appointment to the GLR staff in 1937.

As International President, Siemiller immediately set out to lay the groundwork for a new referendum on the per capita and staff salary proposals that were shot down by the members following the 1964 Grand Lodge Convention. He began by going out to build support at the grass roots. Unconcerned by ceremony or such considerations as the dignity of his office, Siemiller reveled in the give and take camaraderie of the lodge hall. Meanwhile back at Grand Lodge, looser, less formal relations between the front office and the staff were signaled the day the new IP came to his desk

coatless, tieless and decked out in a steward's sport shirt, complete with full color Machinist emblems across both front and back.

In stumping for rank-and-file support for the per capita increase, Siemiller later recalled, "I didn't let my shirt tail hit my back till I covered all the U.S. and Canada like the morning dew." A reporter recording a characteristically rip-snorting Siemiller speech at a banquet of the Pennsylvania State Council of Machinists in Scranton, described Siemiller's itinerary: "After shaking hands and patting backs, he was off again, flying first to Chicago, then San Francisco, then back to IAM Headquarters in Washington."

Hitting the road time and again throughout the fall and winter, Siemiller sat in on local lodge meetings, talked to district lodge stewards and carried the gospel to every state council and regional conference in sight. In covering on of these meetings the *Wall Street Journal* described Siemiller as "an animated, colorful speaker who would make grammarians cringe but whose earthy, thigh-slapping humor and straight-forward, gutsy leadership appeals to his blue collar constituency." Siemiller was also described as being "as subtle as a bass drum, as diplomatic as a storm trooper, as meek as a monarch."

Seizing upon a spectacular new version of rock dancing, known as "go-go", that featured strobe lighting and non-stop, hip-swinging, disc-displacing gyrations, Siemiller set out to reshape "the good gray Machinist" (as *LIFE* magazine once called the IAM), into a "go-go" union. Soon, stewards and members everywhere sported the large, brightly colored buttons with the "go-go" logo emblazoned across the Machinists' traditional M. The "go-go" union theme was repeated over the next few years in buttons, organizing leaflets, *Machinist* editorials, posters, matchbook covers and dozens of other ways that would attract public attention.

In January, 1966, a little over a year after the members rejected convention-proposed increases in per capita and staff salaries, a far larger turnout responded to the IAM's new "go-go" image by reversing the results of the previous count, voting roughly 80,000 to 50,000 to raise monthly per capita 50¢ and give officers and staff their first salary increase in nine years.

The Big Airline Strike of '66

The 1966 round of negotiations on the airlines--initiated in October of 1965 but prolonged as usual by the long, drawn-out technicalities, notices and waiting periods required by the Railway Labor Act--was seen as catch-up time by members working for a number of major airlines. Despite the high skills needed by airline mechanics, their wage scales were significantly behind other industries. For some years airline profits were depressed by the huge capital outlays needed to bring the industry into the jet age. The work force assumed that when the switchover from reciprocating to jet engines was complete, the carriers would share the profits made possible by greater productivity. By the mid '60's those profits were enormous. In 1965, for example, Eastern turned a \$5.8 million loss in 1964 into a \$29.7 million profit. United almost doubled its 1964 profit of \$27.3 million and the industry as a whole recorded a half

billion dollar surplus. *The Machinist* graphically described the industry's profits as having "whooshed into the jet stream." The 1966 negotiations involved more than 35,000 IAM members on five major carriers--Eastern, National, Northwest, Trans World and United. However, some of the underlying causes of the strike that followed went deeper than money. On United, for example, many IAM members were still simmering with resentments left over from the '63 negotiations. In that earlier round of bargaining which dragged on for eighteen months, the longest in the history of the industry, supervisors at Idlewild (now JFK) in New York picked a fight by bringing Teamsters employed by a subcontractor on the field to do IAM work. With patience already stretched to the breaking point by many frustrating months of fruitless talks, IAM stewards pulled their members off the field and began phoning local leaders at Newark, Buffalo, Cleveland, Washington and other points. By morning, United was down at locations across the continent. The company immediately struck back, firing twenty-three stewards and officers. Included were some of the IAM's most loyal and committed local leaders--members with as much as twenty years seniority. Thousands of United's union members prepared to stay out until hell froze over or the fired local leaders were reinstated.

Seeking to avert a shutdown that would be a public relations disaster in view of the upcoming Christmas holidays, Al Hayes met with United's top brass and worked out a settlement that included arbitration rather than the unconditional reinstatement the members were demanding. He urged this solution on District 141's leadership, convinced that any fair-minded arbitrator would reinstate the workers since the company had blatantly goaded them into their wildcat. The general chairmen reluctantly agreed to submit the company's offer without recommendation. Many local presidents urged their members to turn it down, but with Christmas coming on and the package containing a large chunk of retroactive wage increases, the members voted to accept, many assuming the fired local lodge leaders would be reinstated in arbitration. When the decision upheld the company in twenty of the twenty-three cases, the Grand Lodge was stunned and a call for vengeance went up at the grass-roots.

This was the context in which the 1966 negotiations were conducted. But another factor also contributed to the confrontation. With U.S. involvement in Vietnam deepening, the Johnson Administration was jawboning a voluntary 3.2% wage guideline to keep the economy from heating up. Early in the negotiations, the IAM's Transportation GVP, Joe Ramsey, warned that despite the guidelines the union would not accept wage increases of less than 5% in 1966 and 1967, plus another 4% in 1968. This would take top mechanics from \$3.52 to \$4.05 an hour. Other issues included more holidays, longer vacations, company-paid welfare and pension plans and a cost-of-living escalator. With negotiations deadlocked, the members were ready to walk out in April, but Johnson invoked the Railway Labor Act, setting up a special emergency board headed by Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon, to recommend a settlement. The board came up with a 3.5% offer--little more than the president's 3.2% which Ramsey had termed unacceptable. The carriers were quick to snap at the "compromise," but the workers flatly turned it down. On July 8, almost a year after negotiations started, and more than six months after the old contract expired, 35,300 IAM members began picketing 230 airports. From JFK to Honolulu jet engines revved up for one last roar before gasping to final silence. In empty waiting rooms throughout the nation signs went up:

United Air Lines regrets
the temporary suspension
of service due to the
work stoppage of employees
represented by the International
Assoc. of Machinists. United
will resume service as soon
as possible.

With cargo handlers, ramp service workers cleaners, storekeepers, inspectors, and food service workers joining mechanics on picket lines the strike hit far, wide and deep. 150,000 daily airline passengers were forced to scurry around for trains, buses or rental cars. Airmail and air freight were delayed and hotels, travel agencies, resorts and other businesses began to feel the pinch. In a move that bordered on government-sanctioned strike-breaking the Civil Aeronautics Board announced that carriers still operating would be allowed to increase their service and non-scheduled airlines would be permitted to lease planes from the five downed lines. The Transport Workers Union, representing thousands of workers on American and Pan Am, served notice that they would not perform any duties "not normally done prior to the strike" and would not work on any aircraft leased from the five struck carriers.

As the strike continued politicians and newspapers chorused condemnation of IAM members. The *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Evening Star* called it a "strike against the public." The *Philadelphia Bulletin* described it as "a gun-at-the-head strike." And the *New York Times* termed it "unconscionable." In Congress, the usual coterie of conservatives and reactionaries shouted for legislation replacing the right to strike with compulsory arbitration. The unkindest cut of all came from Senator Wayne Morse, long considered the workers' best friend on Capitol Hill. Elected and re-elected with labor support, his voting record was considered second to none by union members. But he was furious at Siemiller and the Machinists. Having served as chairman of the special emergency board, he took the IAM's refusal to abide by its recommendations as a personal insult. He condemned the strike as unpatriotic and a breach of the union's responsibility to "our troops in Vietnam". Roy Siemiller, appearing before a Senate Committee, denied that national defense was imperiled, stating, "contracts between the struck carriers and Military Air Lift Command are still in effect. All MAC flights are still being serviced. 177 charters carrying more than 15,000 military personnel were serviced between July 9 and July 25." Nonetheless, as the strike stretched into the third week with no end in sight pressures built for legislation authorizing government seizure or compulsory arbitration.

On the morning of Thursday, July 28, the President called negotiators for both sides to the White House and sat them down for marathon bargaining. During the day, LBJ dropped by from time to time to sip coffee and keep the talks moving. By the evening of the next day Siemiller and the airlines' chief negotiator, William Curtin, stepped before TV cameras to announce agreement. The next day newspapers all over the country pictured a beaming Lyndon B. Johnson with his hands clasped in

benediction over Siemiller's and Curtin's handshake. It appeared that Johnson, the master manipulator, had settled the strike on its 22nd day. The proposed pact called for a 4.5% raise each year for three years. Johnson termed the settlement "non-inflationary" even though it exceeded his 3.2% guideline.

The general chairmen from the five striking districts sent telegrams recommending ratification of "the best contract ever negotiated on the airlines." But at terminals across the nation the air turned blue with denunciation of an offer the members considered "too little and too late". They noted that it failed to include a cost-of-living clause and came up short of fringes. Over the weekend angry Machinists stormed local lodge halls to reject the settlement--17,251 to 6,587. While the members turned thumbs down on the settlement Siemiller's popularity did not seem to suffer. He had made himself symbolically visible on the picket line throughout the strike. Most members, being familiar with Johnson's reputations as an "arm twister", assumed he used his formidable powers of persuasion to force a settlement on the IP. Letters and telegrams poured into Grand Lodge assuring Siemiller that rejection of the contract was not repudiation of him.

The result of the strike vote shocked the White House, Congress, the press and the public in general. Until the overwhelmingly one-sided vote dashed cold water on the settlement many people assumed rank and file union members were being kept off the job involuntarily by their "union bosses." The vote proved that these members were even more militant than their leaders. As the strike neared its fifth week Congress and the President were baffled and bewildered as to the next step. With an election on the horizon neither was anxious to initiate strike-breaking legislation. In leading the fight against a compulsory arbitration bill introduced by Senator Morse, Senator Clark of Pennsylvania said, "I'm not ready for it; I don't think the Senate is ready for it; I don't think the country is ready for it."

With the strike in its fifth week the Senate agreed upon a bill authorizing the President to re-invoke the Railway Labor Act and send the parties back to the bargaining table for another 180 days. If this failed to produce a settlement the President could make further recommendations to Congress. A week later the House passed a similar bill. Appalled by the prospect of a compulsory settlement the union and the industry went back into an all-night session mediated by Assistant Secretary of Labor Jim Reynolds and finally reached the agreement that was ratified, 17,721 to 8,235, on August 19, forty-three days after the strike began. The new contract provided for a 56¢ an hour raise for skilled workers, and average increase of 50¢ an hour for others. More importantly, it included a cost-of-living clause and substantial improvement in fringes. The final settlement worked out to 6%, considerably better than the President's original 3.2% guideline, the 3.5% proposed by Morse's special board or even the 4.5% offered in the White House settlement.

With \$10 million in the strike fund on June 30, only \$7.4 million remained by the end of the strike. The Grand Lodge began to mail individual \$25 strike checks at the beginning of the third week. Of the \$6.5 million paid out in strike benefits for the entire year of 1966 almost half went to members striking the five grounded airlines. The IAM was pilloried in editorial columns and received unfavorable newspaper headlines every day for weeks. And yet membership, already up 40,000 in the first six months, surged even more spectacularly while the strike was in progress. GST DeMore reported that with a net gain of 12,345 in July--the largest monthly increase since the Korean War--membership

topped 900,000 for the first time in the IAM's 78-year history. Much of this gain came as a result of the build up in Vietnam and new hiring in aerospace.

Bye-Bye Boulware

While battling on one front to break the Administration's 3.2% wage guideline in the air transport negotiations, the IAM was simultaneously involved in a multi-union effort to combat a bargaining strategy that had long been used by General Electric and that was named for the vice president in charge of its industrial relations, Lemuel Boulware. Labor historian Thomas Brooks has called Boulwarism "the first truly new anti-union formula since James H. Rand, Jr. devised his famous Mohawk Valley formula in 1936."

Boulware borrowed many of the techniques perfected by Rand but added refinements of his own to achieve the primary objective: divide and conquer. For decades General Electric played off one union against another, craft against industrial, AFL against CIO, IUE against UE. Boulware also commissioned regiments of high-powered public relations experts to conduct a continuous year-round program of sophisticated communications designed to drive a wedge between workers and their unions. By persuading large numbers of employees that unions were outside trouble-makers while the company was genuinely concerned with the interests of its "family," Boulwarism softened resistance to the "take-it-or-leave-it" packages the company tossed on the table in lieu of bargaining at contract time.

Having almost destroyed its majority union, the IUE, in a disastrous strike in 1959, the company was able to keep most unions in its plants demoralized and on the defensive. As a result wages in electrical manufacturing lagged substantially behind other major industries. While General Electric's profits rose 90 percent between 1960 and 1966 employee wages and benefits increased an average of only 2.2 percent a year, even lower than LBJ's 3.2 percent guideline. Profit and wage comparisons for the other electrical appliance giant, Westinghouse, were roughly the same.

In March, 1966, representatives of eight unions--the IAM, IUE, IBEW, UAW, Allied Industrial Workers, Sheet Metal Workers, Technical Engineers, and Flint Glass workers--met in Washington to try to change the pattern of bargaining at GE by forging a new trade union response to Boulwarism: coordinated bargaining.

The fifty man IAM delegation, led by GVP Gil Brunner of the Northeast territory, included business representatives, stewards, negotiating committee members and presidents from eighteen local lodges and ten districts in eleven states. The eight national and international unions agreed to seek uniform goals in wages, holidays, vacations, SUB, overtime, contracting out, sick leave and a number of other contract clauses. Over the next few months these goals were presented to General Electric and Westinghouse workers at a series of grass roots bargaining conferences in seventeen states.

When the IUE tried to open contract talks in New York City in early May, GE's representatives walked out, saying they would not negotiate in the presence of observers from the IAM and other unions. Westinghouse followed suit in refusing to open contract talks. Until ordered to the bargaining table by a Federal district judge in New York neither company would sit down with representatives of

more than one union in the room. The court termed GE's walk-out inexcusable, describing it as "the boldest and most explicit form of refusal to bargain." The morning after this decision was announced thousands of union members streamed into GE and Westinghouse plants throughout the nation with "Unity" buttons pinned to their shirts and blouses.

Dragged to the bargaining table by court order, GE tried to bluster through with its usual "take-it-or-leave-it" offer. Hitting an unprecedented wall of labor solidarity GE finally broke its longstanding bargaining rules and improved the offer for skilled workers. It was not enough. The unions set a deadline for a walkout by more than 110,000 GE employees. With production essential to Vietnam threatened, the President stepped in, appointing a special committee of the Secretaries of Labor, Commerce and Defense to mediate the dispute. By this time three more unions, the Carpenters, Plumbers and Steelworkers, had joined the coordinated bargaining sessions. At the twelfth hour the company deflected a nationwide strike by sweetening a formerly "final offer." Despite the national agreement local IAM lodges walked out until local issues were resolved in Evendale, Cleveland, an Bellevue, Ohio; Auburn and Utica, New York; Ft. Wayne, Indiana and Rockford, Illinois.

Though coordinated bargaining by unions did not originate with the 1966 negotiations at GE and Westinghouse, the technique spread rapidly thereafter. Conceived as an antidote to Boulware's divide and conquer tactic, coordinated bargaining developed as the best way to deal with diversified conglomerate corporations. By the early 1980's the IAM was coordinating its bargaining with fifty-three major corporations through the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO. This was in addition to in-house coordination of bargaining in aerospace, non-ferrous fabrication, electrical appliance manufacturing and a dozen or so other diversified conglomerates such as Bendix, Dresser Industries and Textron.

In the 1966 negotiations the labor movement managed to bend but did not break Boulwarism at GE. In time the IAM and other unions learned that their gains that year were but partially due to coordinated bargaining. GE sought peace in 1966 only because the Vietnam conflict simultaneously combined a surplus of profits with a shortage of labor. As the IAM and other unions were to learn three years later Boulwarism was far from dead at GE.

The Referendum to End Referendums

Still basking in the glow of his success in busting LBJ's wage guidelines in the air transport strike, and with his popularity in local lodge halls never higher, Roy Siemiller decided to try to free future International Presidents from the requirement that all convention-approved changes in the constitution be ratified by membership referendum. Originally adopted in the early years as a Populist/Socialist check on the IAM's first strong IP, James O'Connell, the requirement that every proposed constitutional change be submitted to a referendum of the entire membership had become an archaic relic which did little except impede the administration of the large, complex and far-flung organization the IAM had become. Members seemed willing to accept all constitutional changes voted at Grand Lodge

Conventions except those increasing dues or per capita. The most recent examples were rejections of higher minimum dues following the 1952 and 1956 Conventions, the defeat of the per capita increase needed to establish a strike fund in 1956 and the vote against a 50 cent monthly per capita increase proposed by delegates at the 1964 Convention.

In most cases a determined IP could eventually persuade the members to reverse such rejections in later referendums. After a per capita increase sufficient to set up and finance a strike fund was voted down following the 1956 Convention, Al Hayes succeeded in getting the members to accept a slightly modified version in 1958. And, as noted, when another per capita increase was rejected in 1965 Siemiller was able to go out and sell it a year later.

Noting that few, if any, unions required every action taken by convention delegates to be ratified by referendum, Siemiller set out to persuade the members that this requirement was an antiquated and unnecessary holdover from long forgotten schisms in the IAM. Once again he hit the circuit of state councils, territorial staff conferences and as many local and district lodge meetings as he could manage. Crisscrossing the country he argued that the referendum requirement was too time consuming and costly for a modern, up-to-date union like the IAM. The expense of printing, mailing and processing ballots may have been a minor consideration in 1912, when the IAM had but 63,000 members but by the mid-1960's a typical referendum following a Grand Lodge Convention involved printing and mailing almost a million ballots. Moreover, individual votes had to be counted and verified on as many as fifty or sixty separate issues. The process was not only costly, cumbersome and time-consuming but, Siemiller contended, not really very democratic. In a letter to local and district lodge presidents, Siemiller reminded them that "in some recent referendums, a small minority, sometimes barely four percent of the membership, has been able to veto the considered actions of convention delegates representing the overwhelming majority."

To the surprise of almost everyone except possibly Siemiller himself, the members agreed, by a vote of 49,000 to 41,000, to give up their right to ratify constitutional changes proposed at Grand Lodge Conventions. They still retained their right to initiate constitutional amendments for submission to referendum and also to elect the Executive Council by vote of the membership as a whole. However, by eliminating the traditional rank and file veto over convention actions, Siemiller radically alter the IAM's governing process.

"Mediation to Finality" on the Railroads

"These are journeymen," Roy Siemiller told a group of Washington reporters in January 1967, "They must be paid journeymen wages." In an impromptu press conference he was explaining why Machinists, along with five other shop craft unions, were getting ready for the first nation-wide strike on the railroads in forty-five years. The after effects of that earlier walkout were still reflected in the

substandard wages still being paid skilled craft workers in railroad roundhouses and repair shops throughout the industry.

When negotiations began, in April 1966, railroad machinists received \$3.04 an hour--\$1.82 less than construction machinists, 84¢ behind airline mechanics and from 50 to 96¢ an hour below most manufacturing. With the railroads fattening their profits hauling freight headed for Vietnam, the workers asked for increments totaling 20% over three years. The carriers countered with a lone, one-time 5% wage increase. After six months of negotiations, bargaining reached an impasse. In most other industries the workers would have been free to strike but under the Railway Labor Act the shopmen had to wait until a special board appointed by the President issued a report and made recommendations. It added a few minor sweeteners, but basically went along with the carriers' 5% offer. While acknowledging that wage compression had created inequitable differentials between skilled and unskilled classifications, the board offered no solution beyond "speeding job evaluation to rationalize wage structures." The shopmen set a strike date and began packing their tool boxes. As in the airline industry negotiations a year earlier, Senator Wayne Morse led the fight against the workers' right to strike. He informed the Senate, "We cannot tolerate a shutdown of the railroads of this country for 48 hours, in this time of crisis, to say nothing of a prolonged strike."

As the White House began whipping up semi-hysteria with statements suggesting that a nationwide railroad strike "would sell out our boys in Vietnam and bring the economy to its knees", only one Senator and eight Congressmen had the courage to vote against a joint resolution to extend the Railway Labor Act's ban on strikes. During this extension the parties met daily, often twice a day but, even with the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Transportation sitting in, the carriers would not budge beyond a general wage increase of 6%. As a new strike deadline approached, the President called for another joint resolution extending the no-strike, no-lockout bar for still another ninety days. Senator Morse introduced a bill proposing that if the parties could not reach agreement within ninety days a five member board would file determinations to take effect for two years or until the parties reached agreement. Morse called this "mediation to finality." When Siemiller heard this description he snorted, "Hell, that's a violation of truth-in-packaging. You can call compulsory arbitration mediation to finality, but it's still compulsory arbitration."

Testifying before a Senate Labor Subcommittee, the president of the Railway Employee's Department warned the proposal being pushed by Morse and the White House would increase the profits of private railroad corporations while robbing workers of their right to strike. He noted that the proposed legislation:

Imposes no penalty of any kind on corporations that have refused for nearly a year to . . . seriously try to settle this dispute. They have been trying to goad us into a strike and goad [Congress] into a law taking away our right to strike.

When the debate reached the Senate floor, Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas argued that while Johnson' "mediation to finality" limited the "right of workers to strike, it does nothing to limit

management's quest for greater profits." Rejecting the argument that the war in Vietnam crated a crisis, Yarborough asked, "If the national interest is to supersede labor's right to strike, should not the national interest impose some burdens on railroad management?"

According the *LIFE* magazine, Siemiller triggered passage of the Morse bill in the House by giving, "If not a strike call, at least a wink and a nod to some 25,000 railroad Machinists, who hadn't had a strike since 1922." As IAM members surged out of the shops, the other crafts scrambled out with them. For forty-eight hours, just long enough for the House to rush the Morse bill to Johnson's desk, 137,000 shop craft workers from six unions walked picket lines outside the nation's railroad yards. Chiefs of some of the other railroad unions were livid. A vice president of the Sheet Metal Workers blamed the swift enactment of compulsory arbitration legislation on Siemiller's "bullheadedness, egotism and lack of judgment." Characterizing the Morse bill as "The Strikebreaking Act of 1967," Siemiller snapped back by characterizing some of the other railroad union chiefs a "gutless wonders."

In a report reviewing the situation, the Washington Post contended that the biggest casualty was collective bargaining. The Post pointed out that while many were pinning responsibility for the Morse bill on the IAM's forty-eight hour walkout, "others blame the equally hard line of the chief management negotiator and the carriers unabashed campaign for a government-dictated settlement." Moreover, the *Post* said, by making it clear the White House would not tolerate a strike Johnson "played directly into the hands of the carriers, which had been lobbying assiduously for a compulsory arbitration law."

In the end railroad industry bosses had a reason to regret their pressure for a government-dictated settlement. Investigations conducted by the special board, headed by the same Senator Morse who had conceived "mediation to finality", found that railroad shopmen were far from parity with similar skills in other industries. According to the *Machinist* the special boards' determination left industry chiefs "shocked, stunned, embarrassed and confused." Their award raised machinist' wages 55¢ an hour, to \$3.60, 32¢ above the carriers last offer.

Having demanded government intervention, railroad management could do little except mutter "We wuz robbed" when they saw the award. Though pleasantly surprised by the outcome Siemiller could forgive neither Morse's intervention in the 1967 railroad negotiations nor his opposition in the 1966 airline strike. When Morse campaigned for his fourth term the following year, he did so without the support which had always been automatic and enthusiastic from Oregon machinists. In the primary, Morse defeated the MNPL-backed challenger but could not heal the wounds that were left before going down in the general election.

The Millionth Member

In Southeast Asia, Lyndon B. Johnson was steadily raising the ante on America's involvement in Vietnam. That involvement, which began with aid given the French colonial forces by the Truman

Administration following World War II, was increased during the Eisenhower years and was further expanded by Kennedy. But the build-up entered a new dimension in March 1965 when Johnson authorized the first U.S. ground troops, a contingent of 3,500 Marines. By the end of 1966, 375,000 American troops were in Vietnam, by January 1968, 525,000. As the fighting dragged on longer than World War II or Korea, Americans became increasingly divided. On one side were peace marchers who expressed revulsion of "search and destroy missions" and daily body counts in chants of "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" Just as many, if not more, proudly adorned their car bumpers with such flag-waving slogans as "America--Love It Or Leave It" and "No Glory Like 'Old Glory'."

When billions of dollars' worth of new Pentagon procurement were piled on production needed for NASA's projected Apollo 11 space shot, factory orders and employment surged. As unemployment fell to post World War II lows, recent workers fears of automation and union concern about overseas export of jobs quickly evaporated. Rising consumer debt--up 133% between 1956 and 1967--when added to these other inflationary pressures, eroded the purchasing power of working families. While it became increasingly difficult for skilled workers to subsist on wages ranging from \$3.50 to \$4.50 an hour* corporate profits were reflected in such extravaganzas as the Houston Astrodome--where private boxes rented from \$15,000 to \$34,000 a year and spectators bored with the gladiators below could retire to secluded suites complete with wet bars and color TV.

**In 1967 the federal minimum wage was \$1.40 an hour.*

With labor in short supply more workers turned to unions to try to keep up with the cost of living. George Meany's report to the AFL-CIO's 12th Annual Convention in November 1967 showed a million-and-a-half membership increase since 1965. Moreover, as the *Machinist* exulted in a front page story, Meany's report "disclosed that the IAM scored the greatest increase in membership of any national or international union during the past two years." Two months later GST Matt DeMore reported that net growth of 174,312 since June 1965 had finally put the IAM over the million member goal that eluded Harvey Brown in the 1940's and Al Hayes in the 1950's. Total membership, including retired, striking and unemployed members, showed 951,269 members in the United States and 51,310 in Canada. A check of the computer revealed the one millionth member to be Tim Braunstein, a twenty-four year old assembler at Pratt and Whitney. Braunstein joined Local Lodge 1746 in East Hartford shortly after completing a six-year hitch in the Navy. He signed up during an intensive company-wide organizing campaign conducted by an elite corps of stewards known as the "Green Berets"*** set up by GLR, later GVP, Justin Ostro.

***This was a takeoff on a much publicized special forces fighting unit in Vietnam glamorized by Hollywood star John Wayne in a movie called "The Green Berets."*

To commemorate this milestone Siemiller had Braunstein flown to Washington where he was introduced to such dignitaries as AFL-CIO President George Meany and Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz. Braunstein was also wined and dined as the guest of honor at a sumptuous "One Million Strong" banquet at one of Washington's toniest hotels.

About the same time that Braunstein was being feted as a visible symbol of the progress the IAM had made in its first eighty years, some 60,000 Viet Cong troops were celebrating Tet--the Asian Lunar New Year--by overrunning police stations, military, bases, government building, radio stations, power plants, embassies, including the U.S. Mission in Saigon, and other key points in 100 Vietnamese cities.

This marked the beginning of the end in Vietnam. Realizing that even America's enormous power could not prop up a regime lacking the support of its own people, Lyndon Johnson overruled his generals and began the long, slow and painful process of disengagement. Total IAM membership hovered above the million mark for the next thirty-three months. However, the proportion of dues payers to retirees, striking members and unemployed members began to fall steadily in the late '60's when America's involvement in Vietnam and commitment to the space program were simultaneously reduced.

Chicago--Turmoil and Tear Gas

When delegates to the 1968 Grand Lodge Convention converged on Chicago, the headquarters hotel, the Conrad Hilton, reeked with the lingering stench of tear gas and stink bombs. Along with fresh bloodstains on the plush carpeting in the lobby, the putrid odors were reminders of running battles the week before between police and demonstrators protesting the war in Vietnam. Thousands of young people had come to Chicago to disrupt the Democratic Convention.

Week-long skirmishes recorded by television climaxed in a battle between police and young people in Grant Park that spilled over into the hotel. The blood of a number of "Clean-For-Gene" young people working for the nomination of peace candidate, Senator Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota, still stained carpeting in the lobby.

Few of the IAM delegates arriving at the scene felt any sympathy for the demonstrators who were clubbed by the police in full view of millions of television spectators. Those who fought in World War II or the Korean conflict or had sons fighting in Vietnam were infuriated by the sight of unkempt "hippies and yippies" desecrating the American Flag.* In his opening speech Roy Siemiller undoubtedly spoke for most of the delegates when he said, "Union members, who have worked long and hard to build this country, are sick of rioters, looters, peaceniks, beatniks and all the rest of the nuts trying to destroy it."

**The term "yippies" derived from the Youth International Party, a put-on of the establishment parties. Their Presidential candidate was a hog they called "Pigasus."*

In line with official AFL-CIO policy the IAM viewed the war in Vietnam strictly as a continuation of the eternal struggle between democracy and communism. Reporting from Vietnam in 1965, *Machinist* editor Gordon Cole sent back glowing descriptions of the Vietnamese Confederation of Labor

as one of the country's unifying forces. Throughout the decade the *Machinist* periodically featured stories and pictures extolling the activities of Vietnam's "free and independent unions." At various time Cole urged IAM locals to help rebuild schools, union halls and orphanages in that stricken country. Until the final years of the struggle, when the peace movement finally began to seep into union halls, Machinist state councils and AFL-CIO state federations routinely approved resolutions supporting U. S. policy in Southeast Asia.

In addition to patriotic reasons for supporting the war, delegates in Chicago deeply resented the damage the demonstrators inflicted on the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, Hubert H. Humphrey. Like most American trade unionists IAM members felt a special kinship for Humphrey, one of the most progressive and decent candidates ever offered by any party. In the 1940's, long before civil rights became a popular issue, Humphrey was battling bigotry and discrimination. Throughout his long career as a Senator and Vice President he was an eloquent and effective advocate for laws improving the nation's health, housing, education, Social Security, Medicare and labor laws. Humphrey was a brilliant, witty and powerful speaker who could inspire and electrify union audiences as no one since Franklin D. Roosevelt. He was a regular and welcome speaker at IAM conventions and meetings. In the 1968 election against Richard Nixon and George Wallace, Humphrey was labor's choice by far. But since he had no course as Vice President except to support Johnson's policies in Vietnam a bunch of political crazies came to Chicago to destroy him.

Later investigations and court proceedings showed that much of the turmoil surrounding the Democratic Convention in Chicago resulted from overreaction by Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley and the police. In dealing with demonstrators law officers allowed themselves to be taunted and tormented into what formal reports later characterized as a "police riot." But to delegates attending the IAM's Convention in 1968 Daley and the police were heroes. Despite some scattered mutters of disapproval, the delegates cheered lustily when Daley's name was mentioned and enthusiastically endorsed a resolution commending him and the Chicago police force. According to the *Machinist*, "It was adopted with loud applause and no dissent.

This was the first convention since 1911 in which constitutional changes did not have to be submitted to membership referendum for ratification. Prior to the convention, a number of lodges launched a move to let Siemiller serve at least one more term. Nearing sixty-five, Siemiller appears to have harbored hopes the delegates would reward his accomplishments by raising the retirement age. No less than 199 lodges endorsed a proposition providing that "any elected officer whose term of office begins prior to his 65th birthday may serve out his full term of office." Since Siemiller would not be sixty-five until September 1969, three months after the next IP's term of office would begin, this change was expressly tailored to give him another full term. From the start, however, opposition to the proposal was strong and outspoken. Almost 300 lodges endorsed resolutions aimed at reducing the mandatory retirement age and delegate talk in the corridors, hospitality rooms and bars made it clear the sixty-five year retirement rule was too deeply embedded to be tampered with. Members liked Siemiller and the go-go image he created for the IAM, but they did not consider him indispensable.

Witnesses appearing before the Law Committee agreed almost unanimously that raising the retirement age in the IAM Constitution would make it harder to negotiate earlier pensions in IAM contracts. Responding to the strong sentiment against any change that would have the effect of raising the retirement age the Law Committee recommended, and the convention ratified, a proposition that further tightened the sixty-five year age restriction. This not only barred Siemiller from seeking re-election but eventually shortened the tenure of other council members as well.

With the strike fund falling steadily, from a high of \$10 million at the start of the 1966 airline strike to less than \$4 million when the convention met, the Law Committee proposed that a 50¢ a month per capita increase be made more palatable by upping weekly benefits from \$25 to \$35. Having already authorized a 40¢ per capita increase for the general fund (10¢ a year for four years) the delegates flinched at the prospect of going home after approving a total of 90¢ in new monthly per capita taxes. They voted it down on a division of the house.

For the first time since 1948 neither the Democratic candidate for President nor his running mate came in person to address a Machinist Convention. Normally Humphrey would have come, but the wounds inflicted during the Democratic National Convention were still fresh. Neither he nor Chicago could risk another confrontation. Talking to the delegates over a telephone hook-up from California, where he was campaigning hard to make up ground lost in the chaos surrounding this nomination, Humphrey made a rousing appeal which, as the *Machinist* later reported, touched off "rising cheers, applause and marching demonstrations."

Notwithstanding labor's affection for Humphrey, pollsters gave him no chance to beat Nixon in November. With the albatross of Vietnam around his neck, Humphrey was heckled, jeered and harassed by antiwar protesters at every stop on the campaign trail. At the time IAM's Grand Lodge convention endorsed him, he was hopelessly behind many of America's working people, turned off by the epidemic of riots in the streets and sit-ins on the campus, seemed ready to respond to the demagogic racism of Alabama's Governor George Wallace.

With the regular Democratic organizations broke and demoralized, the labor movement put on a full-court press for Humphrey's campaign. Unions card-punched names of members across the country by state, county, and precinct. The IAM's Univac III computer at Grand Lodge was commandeered to break down lists of union members by address and congressional district. Squads of MNPL volunteers manned phone banks and rang doorbells. To neutralize Wallace's racist appeals, union members were mailed information exposing his anti-union record on right-to-work and other labor laws.

In a best-selling chronicle of the campaign, *The Making of the President--1968*, author Theodore White credits America's unions with a "near miracle" in forging Hubert Humphrey's incredible comeback in October. According to White,

The dimension of the . . . effort . . . can be caught only by its final summary figures: the ultimate registration, by labor's efforts, of 4,600,000 voters; the printing and distribution of 55,000,000 pamphlets and leaflets out of Washington and 60,000,000 more from local unions'; telephone banks in 638

localities using 8,055 telephones, manned by 24,611 union men and women and their families; some 72,225 house-to-house canvassers; and on election day, 94,500 volunteers serving as car poolers, materials distributors, babysitters, poll watchers . . .

On the eve of the election, the *Machinist* featured a front page letter from Siemiller to the members stressing the similarities between extremists on the right and extremists on the left. Reminding *Machinist* readers that campus rioters were responsible for the election of Ronald Reagan in California and urban disorders had led directly to defeat of a great liberal, pro-labor Senator, Paul Douglas in Illinois, the IP warned members against being tricked into a vote they would live to regret. Matt DeMore campaigned throughout his old haunts in Ohio, where he had been president of the State Council and the Northeast Territory, where he had been GVP.

Efforts such as these persuaded millions of previously uncertain union members to pull the lever for Humphrey on election day. They led a surge which, most political analysts agreed, would have given Humphrey the victory had the election been held just a few days later. The final vote was 31.7 million (43.4%) for Nixon, 31.2 million (42.7%) for Humphrey and 9.8 million (13.5%) for Wallace.

In one of the ugliest and most acrimonious political campaigns in American history, unions brought their candidate from far behind to within an eyelash (7/10 of 1%) of victory. It wasn't quite enough. Thanks to a motley crew of hippies, yippies and assorted political crazies, America got Nixon, Agnew, Watergate, Kent State, Jackson State and five more years of Vietnam.

Donnybrook at McDonnell

While the campaign to put Humphrey in the White House was absorbing the IAM's attention nationally, a long simmering struggle was coming to a head at the huge McDonnell Douglas complex in St. Louis. The roots of this situation grew out of the vastly changed relationship between District 9 and Local Lodge 837. When originally chartered during World War II, Lodge 837's fifty-four members were employed by a subcontractor producing parts for a Curtiss-Wright cargo plane. After the war the plant was taken over by an engineering team from Glenn L. Martin headed by James S. McDonnell. As McDonnell's little company grew and prospered in the design and production of aircraft for the U. S. Navy, Lodge 837 grew and prospered with it. By the mid 1960's McDonnell (later merged with Douglas Aircraft Corporation of California), was the primary producer of the F-4 Phantom jet, the military's favored aircraft in Vietnam. And Lodge 837, with more than 20,000 members, was almost as large as all the rest of District 9 put together. For many years Lodge 837's members, like others in the St. Louis area, were served by business representatives elected by the total membership of the district. Most of the people of McDonnell had no complaints about wages or working conditions--considered good for St. Louis and comparable to the rest of the aerospace industry--but as the membership continued to grow, local autonomy inevitably emerged as a political issue in local lodge elections.

In the beginning the issue centered on the right of Lodge 837 members to elect their own business representatives independently of the rest of the district. But as time went on demands developed for complete separation and establishment of a new district patterned on those at Boeing, Lockheed and other aerospace giants. Though this demand for autonomy was strong it was by no means unanimous. A significant number of skilled journeymen, having trained in District 9 shops, remained loyal to the organization built by Elmer Walker, Lloyd Weber and Larry Connors over at least three decades. While not surprising that a lodge as large as 837 would seek more control of its own affairs neither was it strange that District 9's leadership would resist such a traumatic reduction in their membership, per capita and political influence.

Mounting frustration over the District's inability to assign more business representatives to handle a growing backlog of grievances eventually spilled over into a wildcat strike in November, 1965. Soon thereafter, a small group of stewards contacted a lawyer with Teamster connections for advice in developing a challenge to District 9's leadership.

This was the beginning of an internal struggle that kept Local 837 and District 9 in an uproar for the next three years. Originally, the stated objective was a new set of business representatives for District 9. But, gradually the goal became repudiation of the IAM and its replacement as the certified bargaining agent for McDonnell employees by an "independent" union calling itself the Technical Employees of Aerospace Manufacturers (TEAM). From the first meeting with the Teamster lawyer to the final NLRB vote three years later, TEAM, though claiming to have no connection with the Teamster hierarchy, received direction and financing from sources close to or identified with the IBT. Continuously handbilling the plants and union meetings with leaflets and newsletters, TEAM partisans gradually gained control of most lodge offices, including the editorship of the column traditionally reserved for Local 837 news in the *St. Louis Labor Tribune*.

Receiving reports that IAM supporters were being hooted down and even physically threatened by a noisy clique of TEAM partisans at monthly lodge meetings, Siemiller imposed supervision, direction and control. This was followed by suspension shortly after a Grand Lodge auditor and several GLR's were forced to barricade themselves in the lodge offices for a weekend round-the-clock vigil to keep Lodge 837's books and accounts out of the hands of renegade officers intending to shift more than \$80,000 in lodge funds to TEAM control.

Though the per capital increase approved by the January 1966 referendum made it possible for District 9 to assign more business representatives to Lodge 837, discord continued to fester throughout the next year. By January 1967, the conflict between TEAM partisans and IAM loyalists threatened to tear the local apart. With the situation deteriorating rapidly District 9's leadership came to the reluctant conclusion that only drastic action could save the unit. With their agreement the Executive Council gave Lodge 837's membership the option of voting for a separate and autonomous aeronautical industrial district. This proposal was approved with cheers at a mass meeting of the membership and a new district of four lodges was quickly established. Having achieved their original goal--independence from District 9 and separate election of their own business representatives--the leaders of the TEAM pressed

ahead with their campaign for decertification and by the early fall of 1968 had enough cards to demand a representation election.

With such a significant unit at risk, the Grand Lodge rushed in a crack troop of top GLR's to take charge of the situation. An experienced editor, assigned by the *Machinist* to coordinate public relations, immediately kicked off the counterattack by setting up a district newspaper to keep members better informed. In the campaign that followed practically every known form of advertising and public relations was used to present a positive image of the IAM. GLR's began passing out handbills at plant gates each morning making house calls each night. A telephone hotline was installed with messages changed daily to keep members posted on late-breaking developments. Full-page ads were placed in the city's dailies and radio spots were aired over local stations during peak time. Roads leading to plant gates in Hazelwood were lined with billboards bearing IAM messages. Workers commuting by bus read overhead placards extolling the steady and substantial long-term gains which IAM bargaining had produced for members of Lodge 837. The cars of IAM supporters were bedecked with pro-IAM bumper stickers.

At the last moment, the UAW filed for a place on the ballot. UAW President Walter Reuther had recently pulled his members out of the AFL-CIO, citing philosophic differences with George Meany, and had promptly forged an unholy Alliance for Labor Action (ALA) with the Teamsters. For years, the UAW had lusted for the IAM's unit at McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis, but IAM representatives working on this campaign were convinced the UAW, with no realistic hope of winning the unit, intervened solely to help the Teamsters by splintering off support that would normally go to the IAM.

Due to the UAW's interference, three elections had to be held before the issue was finally settled. The UAW and "no-union" were easily eliminated on the first ballot. When a run-off was conducted the result was almost too incredible for belief. With more than 15,000 votes counted, the IAM led by one vote with two ballots challenged. The NLRB threw out one of the challenges but decided to sit on the other in order to force both sides to agree to try for a more convincing result. When a third election was scheduled the campaign became even more intense. The dead heat in the second election emphasized the need to get every possible supporter to the polls for the third balloting. Some members who had been content to do nothing more than cast their own vote began to actively electioneer with their shop mates.

Though high feelings sometimes spilled over into the plant and parking lots, violence and dirty tricks were fortunately limited to an occasional fist fight or sugared gas tank. Originally coming out of Lodge 837, and serving as the first business representative elected from that lodge, Midwest Territory GVP Gene Glover knew McDonnell Douglas workers would react negatively to hooliganism.

This was proven a few days before the third election when an officer of one of the newly established local lodges decided to stop for a Friday night beer at a bar known to be a TEAM hangout. Though loyal to the IAM, he apparently prided himself on maintaining cordial relations with all parties. That night his "friends" from TEAM plied him with drinks until they got him into a T-shirt emblazoned with one of their slogans. While snapping pictures of him modeling the T-shirt they persuaded him to sign a statement supporting TEAM's efforts to supplant the IAM as bargaining agent for McDonnell

Douglas workers. Shortly thereafter an IAM staffer got a phone call from a friendly tipster in a local print shop. The TEAM forces were preparing a handbill, to be passed out just before the election, bearing a picture of an IAM lodge officer in a TEAM T-shirt singing his name to a statement urging support of TEAM.

Receiving news of this turn of events, GVP Glover took the next plane out of Chicago and called an emergency staff meeting. Some of the BR's and GLR's angrily suggested a course of action calculated to raise doubts about the man's credibility and character. Coolly studying the individual's obviously befuddled expression in the picture, as well as the messy signature, Glover dispatched the chief lieutenant in the campaign, GLR Jim Malott to find out what the man himself had to say in the cold, clear light of the "morning after." At the man's home Malott learned he was ridden with remorse and ready to set the record straight.

Armed with first hand testimony as to the true facts in the case IAM handbillers were able to deflect the potential damage of this last minute "dirty trick" by TEAM partisans. In fact IAM reps close to the campaign believe this incident created a backlash that set off a last-moment surge of support for the IAM.

In the final days before the third and last ballot, both sides scraped and strained to get every possible vote to the polls. The IAM leased buses to go out to little towns sixty and seventy miles from the plant to bring known IAM supporters to the polls. The final result, though still close, was conclusive. With over 18,000 votes tallied, the IAM saved its certification by 409 votes.

The dust of the battle for representation rights barely settled before 18,000 IAM members at McDonnell Douglas were on the picket line fighting for a new contract. Apparently believing it could exploit the recent split in union ranks, the company immediately tried to launch a back-to-work movement. A massive campaign of radio, television and newspaper advertising promised instant pay raises and other benefits to workers crossing the picket line. Despite the media blitz, the *Machinist* reported the strike was "100 percent effective" from the start. Throughout the next six coldest weeks of the winter, thousands of District 837 members eked out Grand Lodge strike benefits with food stamps and surplus farm commodities. The members ratified the new district's first contract when the company agreed to remove the cap on a cost-of-living escalator and made a number of other improvements in vacations, medical care and pensions.

The Largest Award in Labor History

While aerospace members were forging unity on picket lines outside St. Louis, air transport members were displaying a new sense of trade union solidarity in Miami. Flying in from every part of the country, more than 6,000 IAM and Transport Workers Union members rallied at Miami International Airport to protest a lockout by National Airlines. The dispute arose when three IAM members were individually suspended in separate incidents for refusing to taxi Boeing 727 jetliners at JFK airport in

New York without a third person in the cockpit. They pointed out existing work rules required such a third person to check instruments not visible from the pilot and co-pilot seats. When a thousand other IAM members walked out to protest the suspension, National retaliated with a system-wide lockout. Though ordered by the Federal district court in New York to use three-man crews when taxing at Kennedy, management refused to reinstate the locked out members, replacing them with scabs and supervisors.

This was the genesis of a battle that spread from airstrips to courtrooms and back on two continents over the next two years. Because of restrictions in the Railway Labor Act, the IAM was barred from calling on other unions to honor its picket lines. But other ways were found to put pressure on National. At Miami Beach, a picket plane flew back and forth above the beach trailing a sign warning vacationing sunbathers, "IAM skilled mechanics fired . . . Don't fly National." Boats decked out with similar messages became floating billboards sailing back and forth along the beaches. In New York, Newark, Philadelphia and other National destinations, the lockout was publicized by IAM pickets and motorcades. At the same time a battery of IAM attorneys pressed cases simultaneously against both the airline and the National Mediation Board charging violations of federal law. Grand Lodge launched a union-wide drive for a special "lockout fund," to supplement victimization benefits paid out of the strike fund.

The IAM piled up a string of victories in the courts. By September, almost nine months after the lockout began, the Court of Appeals in New Orleans ordered National to reinstate all the locked out IAM members, but the company delayed another five months with a series of appeals and legal maneuvers. The IAM's affiliation with the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) paid off when British airline unions informed National's top brass that if they went ahead with plans to open a newly scheduled route between Miami and London their planes would not be serviced. *The Financial Times* of London reported National had already spent more than \$1.5 million advertising its Miami-London flights and was paying \$62,000 a year rent for sales offices described as ranking "among the bleakest, most miserable in England."

After more than fourteen months, the airline agreed to reinstate all the locked out employees with their seniority intact. But the court battles continued until January, 1971 when the U. S. Supreme Court finally upheld the right of 1,000 IAM members to receive "full benefits including back pay" for the entire period of the lockout. The ruling confirmed the IAM's contention that an air carrier could not arbitrarily change work rules while a new contract was being negotiated. The final settlement provided individual back pay awards ranging from \$500 to nearly \$10,000. The total \$6 million was the largest back pay award in U. S. labor history.

Siemiller and DeMore Bow Out

Following the failure of the somewhat half-hearted effort to raise the retirement age in Chicago, Roy Siemiller joined Matt DeMore in bowing out amid a veritable cornucopia of gifts, congratulatory

messages and banquet oratory. They exited just as the first ominous cracks were beginning to appear in the facade of the prosperity of the '60's.

In a commentary written on the eve of Siemiller's retirement a nationally syndicated columnist observed that the:

rough-cut, soft-spoken, ex-newsboy, ex-bowling pin boy, ex-messenger, ex-roving machinists . . . had led, in a few short years, more dramatic and significant national strikes than John Lewis and the coal diggers did in a decade . . . First Roy shut down some key defense production plants, the five major airlines and eventually, even the railroads . . .

Having thoroughly savored his four-years in the spotlight of controversy, Siemiller was not ready for the rocking chair when he reached his sixty-fifth birthday. Barred from a second term by the IAM's constitutional age limit for Grand Lodge officers, he looked around for another outlet for his boundless energy. Within a few weeks he found it in the National Association of Business' JOB's program. Named as the AFL-CIO's liaison to this effort to help disadvantaged youngsters and long-term unemployed adults get practical on-the-job work experience, Siemiller served this cause with amazing vigor well into the 1980's.

As time for DeMore's retirement neared, he became increasingly interested in the work of the National Council of Senior Citizens (NCSC). Developing a special appreciation of the problems of elderly Americans he was instrumental in persuading the Executive Council to establish the IAM's program for older workers and retired members at Grand Lodge and in local and district lodges. After retiring, DeMore pursued his interest in the NCSC, serving as first vice president as well as coordinator of its political arm, the Concerned Seniors of Better Government. Until his death at the age of seventy-two in 1976, his booming voice, espousing the cause of America's elderly, echoed in the halls of Congress and up and down the corridors of government offices throughout Washington.

Genial Gene--From Journeyman to GST



Eugene D. Glover
1969-1987

DeMore's successor, Eugene Glover, was born to a farm family in Jonesboro, Arkansas in 1922. Following his father's death, when Gene was eighteen months old, his mother moved the family to St. Louis where she found work as a seamstress in a laundry. As soon as Gene was old enough, he joined his brother John in peddling newspapers both morning and evening to help put groceries on the family table. After graduating from high school in 1941, he entered a machinist apprenticeship with the Universal Match Company and joined Tool and Die Lodge 688. His apprenticeship was hardly begun when, along with most others of his generation, Glover was swept into the military by World War II. Serving as a mechanic with the 12th Air Force in the invasion of North Africa in 1942 he later flew missions as a gunner with the 9th Air Force over Germany. Honorably discharged in October, 1945, S/Sgt Glover returned to his apprenticeship at Universal Match, receiving his journeyman papers in 1949. With the match industry hit by layoffs and uncertain future, Glover took his skills to the fast growing McDonnell Aircraft Company. He soon became active in Lodge 837 as a steward and a member of the negotiating committee. In 1956 Glover became the first Lodge 837 member to be chosen by the district to serve as a business representative for employees working under its contract at McDonnell.

As a business representative and secretary of the IAM Electronics Committee, Glover became known over the next eight years for his ability to remain calm under stress and for his disarming sense of humor in negotiations. A relatively young forty-six when elected GST, Glover had spent the four previous years as GVP for the Midwest Territory.

Friendly and outgoing, Gene Glover would spend the better part of the next two decades coping with complexities unknown to GST's of earlier and simpler times. In addition to increasingly intricate and voluminous regulations and court rulings stemming from Taft-Hartley, Landrum-Griffin and the Internal Revenue Code, Glover would also be challenged to find the proper balance between his fiduciary responsibilities and increasingly touchy issues of morality in the investment of pension funds and other monies held in custody for union members.

Red Smith--A Break with Tradition



Floyd E. Smith
1969-1977

The old-time craftsmen who intended the IAM to be an exclusive and selective fraternity of highly skilled journeymen machinists probably spun in their graves when Floyd Emery "Red" Smith was sworn in as the IAM's tenth International President. Not only was Red Smith not a journeyman, he was not even a machinist.

Born to a family of itinerant farm workers in a long-gone crossroads village in Kansas in 1912, Red Smith's first and apparently only brush with the

trade came in 1929 when he went to work for 25¢ an hour as a machinist helper in a small shop in St. Louis after dropping out of high school at the age of seventeen. A few months later, his metal-working career ended abruptly when the stock market crashed and the great depression began. Like millions of other Americans desperate for any kind of work, young Red Smith tried everything from door-to-door selling to bartending. As construction began to revive under the stimulus of early New Deal programs, Red grabbed a chance to apprentice as a bricklayer. During the war, he moved his growing family to Las Vegas where recently legalized gambling brightened the outlook for a post-war construction boom. Within a year he was president of the Bricklayers local in Las Vegas. As he expanded his circle of contacts in the local labor movement he became friendly with the business representative for IAM Local Lodge 845. When Nevada's governor was looking for a deputy labor commissioner, the IAM urged Smith's appointment.

In later years, Smith recalled that in travels to remote corners of Nevada he got to know IAM members in every part of the state and gradually began to serve as a sort of informal unpaid business representative for the Machinists Union in Nevada.

While Smith was building a network of friends in the IAM in Nevada, GVP Roy Brown was building a cadre of tough, two-fisted GLR's throughout the Southwest Territory. Needing someone who combined building trades experience with moxie to serve as business rep for a lodge of construction and erection machinists in Long Beach, Brown invited Red to move to California. Big and powerfully built Red quickly gained a reputation for fearlessness in defending IAM members against jurisdictional infringement by the Teamsters or building trades unions.

In 1952 Al Hayes appointed Red Smith to the Grand Lodge staff and sent him to Seattle to help organize and service construction and erection lodges in the Northwest Territory. While die-hard Machinists never forgave Red Smith for not being a journeyman metalworker, sometimes referring to him sneeringly as "the brickie", his reputation for native cunning and raw courage spread throughout the union. In the 1961 election in which Roy Brown led a challenge against the rest of the Executive Council, Red Smith was nominated to attract votes from West Coast lodges to the slate headed by Hayes

and Walker. Following eight years as GVP for the eleven state Great Lakes Territory, Red was elected International President in 1969.

By this time more grey than red-headed, Smith sometimes seemed a little surprised to be heading one of America's largest unions. As a leader, Red Smith possessed neither the polished eloquence of Al Hayes nor the flamboyant flair of Roy Siemiller. While personally more diffident than his predecessors, Red Smith was nobody's patsy. He was normally cordial and good natured with employees and staff, but irritability or anger could occasionally bring out flashes of a tightly controlled temper. Meeting Smith soon after he took office, a magazine interviewer wrote:

There doesn't seem to be an ounce of pretense in him; no double talk. A big man--both in physical stature, and in the stature of his office--he has not grown away from his humble beginnings, but rather, somehow, has cemented an indefinable human quality as part of his total being . . . Smith represents the very best example of union leadership, thoughtful but fair; a hard bargainer and decent to the core.

Smith launched his leadership by wading directly into the issue ducked by delegates to the Chicago convention: strengthening the strike fund by increasing monthly per capita. As the result of the growing militancy that surfaced in the 1966 airline walkout the strike fund was dangerously depleted. Having paid out \$11 million more than it took in during Siemiller's administration the fund was running rapidly into the hole by the time Smith took over. When he called the field staff together in September the threat of an impending suspension of benefits hung over Smith's first national staff conference.

Meeting with more than 1,000 business representatives and GLR's in Chicago, Smith warned that if the strike fund was not strengthened it would probably have to be discontinued. While inflation was sharpening worker wage demands it was also stiffening employer resistance. With more strikes likely, Smith proposed that monthly per capita allocated to the strike fund be raised from 50¢ to \$1. To generate rank and file support, he linked such an increase to a liberalization of weekly benefits from \$25 to \$40 and a reduction in the qualifying period of membership from six to three months.

The difference between this proposal and the proposition turned down by convention delegates a year earlier was small, but this time the response was more encouraging. Most of the business representatives lined up to enlist in a newly-formed Committee to Save the Strike Fund. This set the stage for a whirlwind education campaign to gain grass roots support. Posters mailed by the *Machinist* for hanging in lodge meeting halls proclaimed, "The Stronger the Strike Fund, The Stronger the Contract."

Following a pattern set by Siemiller four years earlier, Smith took to the road, going from state councils to staff conferences to drum up support for a membership referendum on the issue. In the course of this campaign Smith proved, as he would so often over the next eight years, that he could surmount a plodding speaking style with the earnestness of his own conviction. In February 1970 the members responded by voting 69,000 to 24,000 to ratify the proposal Smith outlined at the September 1969 staff conference. At the time the vote was taken some 150,000 members of thirteen international

unions, including 14,000 members of thirty-four IAM local lodges, had been walking picket lines outside General Electric plants from coast to coast for almost three months.

Return of the Son of Boulware

Though Richard M. Nixon's margin of victory may have been narrow in 1968, the climate for collective bargaining rapidly took a turn for the worse. This became painfully clear when the coalition of unions that successfully coordinated negotiations with General Electric in 1966 returned to the bargaining table in 1969. Encouraged by the new climate of conservatism emanating from Washington, General Electric decided the time was right for a return to Boulwarism. Though wages in GE plants lagged far behind auto, steel and aerospace (and the company's profits were 22% higher than manufacturing as a whole), GE launched a slick advertising campaign to persuade the public and its own employees that union wage demands were the chief cause of a newly burgeoning cycle of inflation.*

**Most objective economists agree that inflation in the late 60's and early 70's stemmed directly from the Vietnamese war while that of the mid and late 70's was set off by the Arab oil embargo.*

Preparations for the 1969 General Electric talks opened at a Spring conference of ten unions in Washington. The sixty-member IAM delegation, again led by GVP Gil Brunner of the Northeast Territory, helped to hammer out objectives described by IUE President Paul Jennings as "reasonable" and "based on the needs of the men and women we represent and the affluence of the company." As a follow-up to the Washington Conference, grassroot meetings were scheduled to brief local lodge leaders in San Jose, Ft. Wayne, Cincinnati, Cleveland and a dozen other cities. *The Machinist* reported that in addition to these meetings, seventeen communications centers were set up in thirteen states to keep GE locals informed on developments in negotiations.

IAM Executive Council members were scheduled to keynote rallies around the country: Smith in Lynn, Massachusetts, Gil Bruner in Atlanta, Southwest Territory GVP Bob Simpson in Dallas and Gene Glover, still a GVP, in Chicago. In an unprecedented canvass of rank and file preferences the ten-union Coordinated Bargaining Committee mailed close to 200,000 questionnaires seeking to assess the priorities of both hourly and salaried workers in wages, pensions, insurance, health benefits, working conditions, income security and other contract issues.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1969 GE viewed union efforts to inform and educate the rank and file on the issues with obvious derision and contempt. Reverting to the classic Boulware bargaining tactic, management threw a package on the table and told the union negotiators to take it or leave it. In a confidential memo to top management GE's chief negotiator predicted that if the unions dared to take their members out "at the end of three weeks they will be straggling back."

With the old contract due to expire at the end of October the unions tried to head off a strike by offering a last minute compromise. The company responded with a firm rejection of any modification of its "first and final" offer which consisted of an \$8 per week pay raise over three years, eliminated the already inadequate cost-of-living clause and rejected a union-proposed grievance procedure. With no alternative, the original ten coordinating unions, joined now by UAW, Teamsters and UE locals, hit the bricks in thirty-four states on October 26.

Dusting off tactics that had always worked for Boulware--including personal letters and repeated telephone calls to employees and their wives--the company rushed to recruit scabs and strikebreakers. A few workers straggled back here and there but reports from IAM business representatives to the *Machinist* verified that by the end of the first month the morale and effectiveness of the picket lines remained high at all of GE's 133 plants. With Christmas approaching and the season looking bleak in the homes of its workers, GE tried to tempt them with a second offer which, when analyzed, proved to be little more than a rejuggling of the original take-it-or-leave-it package.

Three days before Christmas management flooded worker mailboxes and saturated the airwaves and newspapers with messages heralding a "back to work by Christmas" movement. Foremen and plant managers dialed phones from morning to night, trying to entice workers strapped for holiday cash back to their jobs. The Coordinated Bargaining Committee estimated that by the end of December, GE spent more than \$2 million on anti-union advertising nationally plus substantial amounts locally. A business representative for District 10 in Milwaukee estimated that GE was spending \$10,000 a week on newspaper advertising in that area alone--equivalent to \$6.67 a week for each GE worker on strike in Milwaukee.

In response to the company's newspaper advertising, the Coordinated Bargaining Committee ran full page spreads in leading dailies designed to open the public's eyes to the background of Boulwarism, the arrogance of the company's "take-it-or-leave-it" bargaining tactics, and the gross imbalance between the company's profits and the wages it paid its employees.

In addition to collecting \$2 million in union contributions for needy striking families, the AFL-CIO declared a nationwide boycott of GE products the day after Thanksgiving, just in time for the Christmas shopping season. The *Machinist* reported:

Picket lines developed around leading department stores in major cities.
Visitation Committees started calling on merchants who sold GE equipment.
Local union mimeograph machines went into action and local union sound trucks began to blare that no union dollars should be spent for GE products.

In addition the AFL-CIO distributed more than half a million "Support GE Strikers" bumper stickers along with 750,000 "Don't Buy GE" buttons and more than a million handbills. In contradiction to earlier company disclaimers, the chairman of GE's board eventually admitted that the company's profits dropped from \$122.8 million in the third quarter of 1969 to \$18.9 million in the fourth quarter.

Despite freezing weather and knee-high snow across most of the Midwest and Eastern States, the *Machinist* reported the strike was still solid at all points on New Year's Day 1970. Having failed to break the spirit of the workers over the long winter, the company finally backed away from Boulwarism and agreed to return to the bargaining table. After several days of hard issue-by-issue negotiations, members of the largest partner in coordinated bargaining at GE, The IUE, ratified a new contract by a five to two margin in early February. In place of the \$8 a week offer tossed on the table in the original take-it-or-leave-it package, the total value of the final contract, including improvements in fringes, amounted to \$1.12 an hour.

IAM lodges were the last hold-outs. Two weeks after the other twelve unions settled, more than a dozen IAM lodges were still demanding guarantees that strikers would have preference to their old jobs over striker breakers, any layoffs would be strictly by seniority and the company would drop all disciplinary or civil actions against strikers. By the end of February, GVP Brunner reported that these conditions had been met and all IAM members at GE were back to work.

Labor historian Thomas R. Brooks has described the 1969 GE strike as "One of the key strikes of our time," one that marked "a major turn in labor relations." On the surface, the issue appeared to be inflation--and whether a corporation could make workers the victims by branding them as culprits. But the underlying cause went deeper. It was rooted in Boulware's assumption that like a papa who knows what's best for children, a benevolent and patronizing corporation knows what's best for its employees. The purpose of Boulware's "take-it-or-leave-it" tactic was to deny workers any voice in matters that directly affected their daily lives. Throughout the long, cold winter of 1969-70, 150,000 working men and women remained on picket lines rather than return and suffer the indignity of being treated like children.

Changes And Challenges—The 70's And Beyond

By the time Smith moved into Siemiller's seat at Grand Lodge the Go-Go years were gone. With troops slowly being pulled out of Vietnam, defense jobs began to evaporate back home. By the spring and summer of 1970 the *Machinist* was carrying weekly bulletins of escalating aerospace layoffs from East Hartford to Seattle. In June it headlined a report that the Pentagon was planning to wipe out still another 75,000 civilian jobs around the country.

By early July Seattle was being described as a "disaster area". At Boeing 60,000 employees, some with as much as twenty-eight years of service, were being laid off. A special report to the *Machinist* said:

The unemployment situation in Seattle would be worse were it not for the fact that many laid off Boeing workers have left for parts unknown in volumes

equally unknown. The U-Haul trucking and trailer business has been swamped for vehicles heading out of Seattle.

G.L.R.'s from the Northwest Territory joked that a billboard on the outskirts of town read, "If you're the last to leave turn out the lights." With unemployment edging up in more and more cities the *Machinist* began to refer to the jobless as the "walking wounded in the battle of the budget." and featured self-help articles advising members on "How To Hunt For A Job" ("Learn as much about the company as you can . . . be pleasant and friendly . . . stress your qualification . . . don't criticize former employers").

How to Lose Industries and Alienate the Work Force

Steadily rising unemployment rekindled smoldering worker fears and resentments about the export of American jobs. In ever-increasing numbers U. S. companies were closing factories in American cities and shipping machinery and technology to low-wage areas in Asia and Latin America. The official publication of a business group calling itself the Development Authority for Tucson's Expansion advertised, "You don't have to go to Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea or Japan for low-cost, easily trainable foreign labor. It's available right here along the Mexico-Arizona border for as low as 30¢ an hour in virtually inexhaustible numbers." The hemorrhage of U. S. capital overseas was typified by the typewriter industry. In a period of less than three years Underwood and Royal plants were closed in Hartford and Remington Rand shut down its last factory in Elmira. The *Machinist* noted that before moving production of typewriters, adding machines and calculators to Scotland, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Brazil, Remington Rand employed 6,800 IAM members in Elmira.

As more and more industries headed for the exits, setting up low wage factories overseas to produce for high price markets in the U. S., the AFL-CIO began to reconsider its earlier support for the so-called "Kennedy Round" of trade negotiations in the early '60's. Not only were other countries blatantly denying U. S.-made goods access to their markets with various non-tariff barriers, but the promise of special trade adjustment benefits to workers made jobless by foreign imports had proven to be a hoax. The U. S. Tariff Commission rarely ruled any plant closing to be the result of foreign competition. Time after time throughout the 1960's the *Machinist* reported on cases of jobs that were wiped out by imports. But it took the Commission eight years to make its first affirmative finding on an IAM request for relief.

In mid-1970 the AFL-CIO asked Congress for "a thorough revision of U. S. . . . policies in . . . international trade and investment". Union lobbyists advocated repealing tax and tariff regulations that encouraged U. S. markets, curbing outflow of U. S. investments into foreign operations, regulating activities of U. S. companies with plants overseas, and regulating imports in industries significantly damaged by trade, preferably by voluntary agreements, but through quotas if necessary.

The effort to keep American jobs in the U. S. hit a stone wall of classical economic theory. Chorus slogans extolling 19th Century theories "comparative advantage" intellectuals and academics urged Congress to sacrifice the interests of American workers to the profits of multinational corporations. Industries essential to America's prosperity and security were allowed to slip away one by one throughout the 1970's.

Obituary For An American-Built SST

Prospects for bringing the aerospace industry out of its tailspin seemed to depend on continued funding for a supersonic transport (SST) which Boeing began developing in the early '60's. Such a plane would be capable of cutting flying time almost in half between North America and Europe. The billions of dollars needed for further development of the two U.S. prototypes started in the early '60's were beyond the reach of private financing. In Europe the British and French governments had formed a consortium to build an SST known as the Concorde. In the Soviet Union a prototype known as the TU-144 was already in production. Though Kennedy had given the original go-ahead in 1963 and the Boeing prototype was well underway, continued SST production had become a highly controversial issue by 1970. Environmental groups such as the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth stoked increasing public anxiety about the damage that might be done to the ozone layer by planes flying faster than sound at 60,000 feet.

Newspapers and magazines throughout the country fed fears that the SST would pollute the stratosphere, bring on a new ice age, melt the polar ice caps, cause skin cancer, deafen the public with sonic booms, burn up the earth with ultra violet radiation and disturb fish and wild life. Moreover, with so many other pressing human needs, many of labors' natural allies both in and out of Congress questioned the wisdom of investing billions of tax dollars so that a few privileged air travelers could jet across the Atlantic in four hours rather than eight.

Despite these objections, which were admittedly shared by many IAM members, the union's stake in jobs was too direct to be deflected by nebulous and unproven environmental fears. According to most estimates continued Congressional funding of the two prototypes already in production would insure 20,000 jobs immediately. In full supporting production the SST would mean an additional 150,000 production and supporting jobs in forty states. Red Smith and other IAM leaders were convinced, however, that more was at stake than the immediate fate of the Boeing SST. Smith argued that the future of America's technological lead in aerospace depended on continuation of SST production. As he said in a resolution submitted to and adopted by the AFL-CIO Executive Council:

Without an SST the American aerospace industry will be unable to maintain its leadership in world aviation, losing most of the market for Trans-Atlantic air liners. That would mean a loss for the U. S. of its principal manufactured export.

Months of feverish lobbying throughout the winter were climaxed by a flood of letters to Congress coordinated by local lodge officers. The IAM also joined in sponsoring a series of full-page ads in leading newspapers ("The Myths Behind The Plot To Kill The SST"). Despite testimony by Smith in the House, Meany in the Senate and heavy support from the White House, (one of the few times Nixon and the Machinists saw eye to eye on an issue) the Senate voted fifty-one to forty-six to nail the coffin shut on an American-built SST. Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin persuaded a majority of senators that the SST would not only result in environmental damage but waste funds needed for more urgent social purposes.

The *Machinist* editorially lamented the defeat, suggesting, among other things, that the vote to dump the billion dollars and nearly ten years of research and engineering already invested would be interpreted by the Kremlin as a vote to relinquish America's technological leadership as well as "a symptom of a new form of American isolation."

The defeat of the American-built SST left the future of commercial supersonic travel to the French and British consortium. However, by the time the Concorde was ready to go into service in 1976, the supersonic transport was already a superseded turkey. While environmental fears turned out to be unfounded, the Arab oil embargo dealt a fatal blow to the feasibility of commercial supersonic travel. When Kennedy originally gave the go-ahead in the early '60's, jet fuel cost 12¢ a gallon. By the time the first commercial SST flights were scheduled, aviation fuel had surged to more than a \$1.00 a gallon. By the early 1980's the end of commercial supersonic travel was clearly in sight when both BOAC and Air France began cutting back schedules and cannibalizing parts for the few planes still flying.

Bailing Out Lockheed--And The Bankers

Before the dust from the fight to save the SST settled the IAM was plunged into an even more desperate crisis. Lockheed, the employer of tens of thousands of IAM members throughout the nation, was on the brink of bankruptcy. Although Lockheed was the Pentagon's primary contractor it became financially overextended while developing the L-1011 TriStar airbus. As part of a new generation of wide-bodied aircraft the TriStar was Lockheed's answer to Boeing's 747 and McDonnell Douglas's DC-10. The company's financial crisis was triggered by the bankruptcy of Rolls-Royce in Great Britain.

To insure British orders for its new L-1011, Lockheed agreed to purchase engines made in Great Britain by Rolls-Royce. When Rolls-Royce ran into engineering problems and could not deliver at the contract price it declared bankruptcy. With the jobs of thousands of English workers in jeopardy the British government agreed to assure completion of the engines at the contract price if the United States government would guarantee Lockheed's financial ability to take delivery when they arrived.

The bankruptcy at Rolls-Royce came on top of an existing severe cash squeeze at Lockheed. In addition to high development costs for the L-1011 several of the company's high risk defense contracts had recently turned sour. Already owing its bankers \$400 million Lockheed needed another \$250 million

to go ahead with the TriStar. But no bank would risk that amount without an ironclad guarantee that the U.S. Treasury would make repayment if Lockheed could not. Such a guarantee was not unprecedented. Earlier in 1971 the federal government backed a \$100 million loan to keep the Penn-Central Railroad running and a few years earlier Congress authorized such a guarantee for a \$75 million loan to McDonnell Douglas.

The collapse of Lockheed would obviously spell disaster for 30,000 of the company's own employees. But shock waves of unemployment would also reverberate in at least 156 other communities in twenty-five states in which Lockheed's subcontractors were located.

Once again the IAM mobilized on many fronts to save a significant segment of its membership. In California Jim Quillin, president of District 727, led a symbolic march of some 4,500 Lockheed workers from the plant in Burbank to welfare offices in North Hollywood. He then flew to Washington to meet with California's Congressional delegation. The mayor of Marietta, Georgia, a member of Local Lode 709, led a group of his members on an overnight drive to Washington to present the Senate Judiciary Committee with 20,000 signatures affirming the community's faith in the company and its management.

In this struggle, as in the fight for the SST, Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin led the opposition, claiming it was not the government's business to bail out companies that sink under the weight of their own mismanagement.*

**With no members at Lockheed, UAW President Leonard Woodcock polished his image as a "labor statesman" by testifying that Lockheed's demise would merely result in more jobs at McDonnell-Douglas--where UAW members happened to be employed. Some years later neither Woodcock nor any other UAW spokesman suggested that an impending bankruptcy at Chrysler would merely create more jobs at Ford and General Motors.*

Red Smith went before the committee to warn that workers would be the chief victims if Congress allowed Lockheed to collapse. This message was simultaneously circulated in a series of full page ads ("Work or Welfare" and "Some Straight Talk About Lockheed and 60,000 Jobs"), that ran in both major Washington newspapers.

Even without environmental issues to muddy the waters the legislation providing for emergency loan guarantees squeaked through Congress by only four votes. The federal government drove a hard bargain. While the loan guarantees cost the U. S. Treasury nothing and though the government's liability was fully protected by its lien on Lockheed's property, the Treasury eventually earned a tidy \$27 million profit. The workers kept their jobs but in the end it was the bankers who made out like bandits. In addition to federal protection for the \$400 million that was already owed, they received millions of dollars of interest on risk-free notes, more millions in commitment fees on money that was never loaned and still more in profits gained when their low cost warrants were exchanged for high priced stocks.

The Big Chill

In July, 1971, IAM delegates joined top trade union leaders from every part of the country to protest President Nixon's veto of a public works bill which Congress had passed in response to the worst unemployment in ten years. At a mass rally in Washington Red Smith, one of the principal speakers, demanded that reductions in defense spending be offset dollar for dollar by increases in programs meeting the nation's long-neglected public needs. He also flayed multinational corporations for exporting jobs needed by returning Vietnam veterans.

With unemployment rising and inflation steadily eroding worker' purchasing power, Nixon went on a national TV hookup on the evening of Sunday, August 15, and dramatically unveiled what he call a "New Economic Policy." It provided for a total freeze on all wages and most prices for ninety days, as well as tax credits for industrial modernization and the classic Republican remedy for hard times--still more reduction in public spending. The next day the stock market jumped 32.9 points in the busiest session in history to that point.

When Nixon took to the airwaves on that Sunday in August, some 8,000 members of seventy IAM locals were on strike. Under the Presidents' new economic policy they were expected to disregard sacrifices already made, return to work and accept the terms and conditions against which they were striking.

In the next few fast-moving days, the IAM Executive Council publicly blasted Nixon for strike-breaking and for stacking the deck in favor of upper-income groups by failing to freeze profits, bonuses, stock options and other forms of executive compensation. While employers were happy to serve as a self-enforcing check on wages, government procedures for price control ranged from half-hearted to non-existent. In the weeks that followed members showered Grand Lodge with reports of merchants who went in and marked up prices between Sunday night when the President spoke and Monday morning when their stores opened. Two weeks later, in a Labor Day message broadcast nationally over the ABC radio network, Smith condemned, "The President's new economic game plan (for being) weighted in favor of the rich, the powerful, the corporations and the bankers." He noted, "It is no wonder the stock market took off like a rocket the next day. Big business knows a good thing when they see it."*

**In a classic example of the Administration's trickle-down mentality, Vice President Agnew told a governor's conference, "Rising corporate profits are good for the average man and are needed more than ever by the poor."*

In early October, Nixon unveiled procedures allegedly designed to hold inflation down to 2% or 3% a year. This came to be known as Phase II. While refusing to put a ceiling on profits, the President ordered price regulation by a seven-member Price Commission and made wage increases subject to approval by a Pay Board consisting of five union, five employer, and five public members. Red Smith was

named one of the union representatives, along with George Meany of the AFL-CIO, I. W. Abel of the Steelworkers, Leonard Woodcock of the Auto Workers and Frank Fitzsimmons of the Teamsters.

The most pressing issue facing the Board was how to handle increases already negotiated but not in effect on August 15. But a number of other, equally thorny, issues had to be settled. In Utica, for example, Mohawk Airlines tried to claim that because of the freeze it had to deny members of District 147 deferred insurance, pension, vacation and cost-of-living improvements that were now due under the contract. In Omaha, Lodge 31 reported employers were using the freeze as an excuse to withhold previously negotiated contract improvements. And, in Little Rock, Arkansas, the business representative for District 156 exposed the fundamental unfairness of a Pay Board decision to hold wage increases to specific percentage limits. Noting that workers at Timex, the largest employer in Little Rock, received only \$2.20 an hour, he protested, "It seems unrealistic, unfair, unjust to hold employees making \$2.20 an hour down to the same amount of percentage increases as employees making \$5.00 to \$5.50 an hour."

In November the *Machinist* reported that inflation was continuing at the same pace as before the freeze. With little or no government control over prices, GST Gene Glover asked IAM members and their spouses to police local markets and report unjustified increases to Grand Lodge. Unfortunately, as the head of the Consumer Federation of America admitted, consumer price watches were an exercise in futility--since retailers rarely posted prices that were in effect on or before August 15.

With GVP William Winpisinger and GLR George Breitenstein assigned to handle wage cases and appeals for IAM locals, most members received benefits negotiated for them without too much delay. The most important and far-reaching exception was in the aerospace industry where the President's freeze interrupted long, drawn-out negotiations with Lockheed, McDonnell Douglas and Boeing. When agreements were finally reached during Phase II, they were in line with patterns set in that year's round of contracts talks in steel, auto, and other major industries. And yet, without offering any reason for treating aerospace workers differently than those in other major industries, the five "public" members joined the five employer members in ordering a 51¢ wage increase rolled back 17¢ in the first year. Smith was outraged, accusing the Administration of betraying a tacit understanding that settlements negotiated in aerospace would be comparable to those negotiated earlier in similar industries. He protested that he only agreed to serve on the Pay Board because he had been assured "the gates would not be closed until all the cows were in the barn." He directed General Counsel Plato Papps to file an appeal and fight it out in court.

Increasingly disgusted, Smith eventually decided the Pay Board was too heavily stacked against the workers. In March, 1972, he announced his resignation. Three of the other four labor members--all but Fitzsimmons--quickly followed suit. In a front page story the *Machinist* reported, "The walk-out capped five months of broken pledges, double talk, irrational and inconsistent acts, incompetence and delay that have disrupted collective bargaining in almost every industry." The impact of wage controls was reflected in corporate profits. In April, 1972, *Business Week* reported that "Corporations earned more money in the first quarter of 1972 than any previous three-month period in history."

Nixon's "New Economic Plan" staggered through two more "phases" before collapsing in what *Fortune* magazine called "confusion and defeat" in 1974. By that time members at McDonnell Douglas, Boeing and Lockheed had collected the 17¢ an hour wage increase they were supposed to have received in 1971--although it took twenty-six months, three weeks and six days before the first backpay checks were finally issued. Altogether, 108,000 workers in St. Louis, Seattle, Palmdale, Torrence, Marietta and other aerospace centers divided more than \$42 million dollars in amounts ranging from \$75 to \$350, depending on hours worked and overtime.

Just a Few Missing Fingers

Safety on the job does not seem to have been a burning issue with early machinists. The old *Journals* paid almost no attention to accident prevention or possible hazards in the workplace. Old-timers say this was at least partially due to a macho attitude in the trade--an almost perverse journeyman pride in missing a finger or two. However, it also seems likely that until very recently, machinists, like most other workers, assumed that risk went with the job. As Al Hayes told a meeting of the National Safety Council in 1957:

Before workman's compensation laws put a price on worker accidents, it did not matter how many men, women or children were killed or crippled in the course of a working day. There were always more waiting at the factory gates the next morning--driven by poverty to plead for a chance to take the place of the injured and dead.

When *The Machinist* supplanted the *Journal*, it began to run an occasional column on "Safety", usually based on National Safety Council handouts and reflecting the organization's philosophy that worker safety was simply a matter of installing the right guards on machines and wearing the right goggles, hard hats and safety shoes.

In the early '50's Hayes met the chief industrial hygienist for Eastman Kodak, Dr. William Sawyer, while serving on an advisory industrial committee of the U.S. Public Health Service. He asked Sawyer to set up a medical department at Grand Lodge and serve as the IAM's first medical consultant. Members were invited to submit questions weekly in a *Machinist* column called "Live a Little Longer," leaned heavily to general medical advice on such subjects as "tired blood," diet, keeping young, when to call the doctor, food fads and problems of retirement. He seldom touched on job problems, but in the early '60's Sawyer noticed an upsurge in letters complaining of rashes and other skin problems due to exposure to epoxy resins and similar irritants. In a rare column headed "Daily Dangers in Your Work", Dr. Sawyer advised, "If you are exposed to oils, solvents, resins, or other substances, the materials you work with can cause skin irritation, fever, fatigue, eye, nose and throat irritation." His prescription suggested no employer responsibility to warn workers or furnish proper safeguards against such health hazards. Instead he told workers to check ventilation and use masks and protective clothing. Even when speaking to various Grand Lodge Conventions in the '50's and '60's, Sawyer expressed no interest in the dangers

members met daily in the work place. Instead he used these opportunities to talk about the features that should be included in a collectively bargained health and welfare plan or the beat the drums for national health insurance.

Dr. Sawyer was not alone in failing to recognize that individuals need not merely be victims in the work place, that workers could play a role in prevention of job-related accidents and diseases. Until 1968, resolutions and reports of health and welfare committees at Grand Lodge Conventions were more likely to urge support for the City of Hope than demand action to reduce on-the-job risks. In fact the Chicago Convention was the first to adopt resolutions recognizing the many new dangers members were now facing daily in modern industry. The delegates recommended support for a "National Safety and Health Act" which had been introduced in the Senate by Ralph Yarborough of Texas. Over the next couple of years the IAM's legislative representatives worked closely with other labor lobbyists in an all-out push to replace the existing patchwork of mostly weak and ineffective state laws with a strong federal job safety law. When Congress finally approved the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) in December, 1970, the *Machinist* described it as a "Victory . . . of major importance." For the first time in history, the federal government guaranteed American workers safe and healthy work places. Despite the sense of accomplishment that swept the labor movement George Meany warned, " . . . setting standards is not enough. There must be close scrutiny, constant policing and prompt and adequate enforcement." In an editorial hailing OSHA's enactment, Gordon Cole anticipated what would become OSHA's crucial weakness--chronic underfunding. He noted, "If the new law is to live up to its promise, Congress will now have to be persuaded to appropriate funds for and adequate staff of inspectors." Cole also chided the National Safety Council for ducking out in this fight:

Surprisingly, the forces supporting the new law did not include the National Safety Council which has been in hiding ever since the in-fighting on Capitol Hill became serious. Some have been so unkind as to suggest renaming the organization the National Half-Safety Council.

While the new Occupational Safety and Health Administration was being set up and staffed, Red Smith moved quickly to insure that IAM members were informed and ready to enforce their rights under the law. He appointed a special assistant, Angelo Cefalo, to coordinate a union-wide safety program from headquarters. Each GVP in the U. S. assigned a GLR to monitor job safety and health problems in their territory. Local lodges were instructed to send names of members of their safety committees to Grand Lodge. More than 750 locals responded over the next several months.

About this time Dr. Thomas Mancuso, research professor of occupational health at the University of Pittsburgh, began combing files at Grand Lodge in search of clues to explain the unusually high rate of cancer among machinists who had repaired the old steam locomotives in railroad roundhouses. His research uncovered high concentrations of asbestos dust as the causative factor. Dr. Mancuso became increasingly interested in, and familiar with, the safety and health problems of IAM members and when Dr. Sawyer retired Mancuso stepped in as the IAM's medical consultant. He

changed the focus of the weekly health column in the *Machinist* by dropping the "Live a Little Longer" heading and replacing it with "Job Safety". When he invited members to contact him about their on-the-job health problems, they flooded Grand Lodge with letters describing thousands of job-related symptoms. These letters provided Mancuso with the raw material for a highly acclaimed book, *Help For The Working Wounded*, which was designed to assist workers in recognizing occupational diseases, answered 250 most frequently asked questions and told how to file for workers compensation. Thousands of copies were distributed at cost to help local and district lodge committees enforce safety and health standards in IAM shops.

Dr. Mancuso became one of the IAM's most valuable assets. He made an enormous contribution to the union's campaign for safer work places. The law itself was, and is, a good one. If properly funded and enforced it could help local and district lodge safety committees to save countless lives and better protect the health of thousands of members. Unfortunately, the Nixon Administration established the pattern of underfunding and half-hearted enforcement that has sabotaged on-the-job safety and health ever since.

Raucous Caucus in Los Angeles

The 1972 Grand Lodge Convention was far different than the gathering in Chicago four years earlier. In 1968 the IAM was riding the crest of a surging economy. By 1972 the party was over. Burgeoning imports from overseas sweatshops, plus deep cuts in spending for defense and the space program, dropped the IAM's dues-paying membership from a peak of 916,000 in June, 1969, to 760,000 by the time the delegates began arriving in Los Angeles.

In his opening remarks Red Smith told the Convention, "We have been caught in a tide of political reaction and economic recession that has sapped our strength and reduced our numbers". He reported that despite layoffs in the field staff and reduction in Grand Lodge services both the general fund and the strike fund were awash in red ink. To restore financial stability, he proposed the largest per capita increase in the IAM's history--\$1.10 over four years--along with a reduction in strike benefits from \$40 to \$25 a week. He also outlined a revolutionary formula for calculating local lodge dues--one that was being successfully used by such other major unions as the Steelworkers and UAW, i.e. dues based on two times weighted average hourly wages.

From the first fall of the gavel it was apparent that the IAM's 1972 Convention would reverberate with the vast social changes that shook American society in the decade of the 1960's. Local lodge delegations were more widely representative than ever before. More women, blacks, Hispanics and young faces leavened the usual delegations of business representatives and local and district lodge officers. But there was also another difference. At past conventions delegates routinely caucused by state or territory. Now, in addition, groups of delegates began to caucus on the basis of interest in issues arising out of sex and color.

The looser mood of this new breed of delegates was immediately evident even outside the hall. In Chicago, four years earlier, most delegates cheered when police clubbed demonstrators for peace. Now, just four years later, handbillers for peace and partisans of "new left" causes moved freely among delegates passing in and out of the session.

In chairing the debates on resolutions and propositions, Smith was severely handicapped by his obvious weakness as a parliamentarian. Even a presiding officer as deft as Hayes would have had difficulty with delegates as rambunctious as many who swarmed around the mikes in Los Angeles. But Smith's lack of familiarity with Robert's Rules of Order compounded the confusion. At times the proceedings skirted chaos. Following one session which was punctuated by fisticuffs on the floor Smith called on GVP Winpisinger to restore a sense of order and decorum. Speaking off the cuff with an eloquence that impressed many who had never heard him speak the resident GVP reminded the delegates they were "the beneficiaries of a great and justifiably proud tradition . . . forged upon principles of fair play". Despite the general disorder and parliamentary muddles most observers admitted that in the end Red Smith got most of the program he had urged in his opening remarks. While he gave every delegate a fair shot at the mikes and every shade of opinion a chance to be heard he also managed to get the convention to accept a sweepingly new concept for the IAM: a formula that tied monthly dues to hourly wages. Although the delegates rejected the proposal to reduce weekly strike benefits they faced up to the need for the largest per capita increases ever voted at an IAM Convention.

In other significant action the delegates took up two of the strongest civil rights resolutions ever submitted to a Grand Lodge Convention. The Resolutions Committee rejected proposed quotas for staff and leadership positions as "undemocratic and divisive". Offering a substitute resolution, which was adopted, the Committee urged the Executive Council to "seek out, encourage and more fully utilize the talents of women and minority group members in paid staff positions and elected offices of the IAM".

During the presidential primaries that preceded the Democratic Convention that year the eventual nominee, George McGovern, was far from labor's favorite candidate. Although comparatively progressive on most social issues, he reflected the biases of his rural South Dakota constituency in the anti-union votes he cast on repeal of Section 14(b), Landrum-Griffin, the Lockheed loan and a number of other issues important to IAM members. Moreover, in the early primaries, McGovern first gained momentum by telling college audiences that marijuana should be decriminalized, draft evaders overseas should be free to come home, and women should have the right to control their own bodies. After he won the nomination such stands were interpreted as advocacy of "acid, amnesty, and abortion". As a result many union members, along with much of middle America, were turned off by the Democratic candidate. At one point in the campaign COPE Director Al Barkan described McGovern's partisans as "kooks, crazies, queers, and feminists". George Many decided to sit out the presidential race and persuaded the AFL-CIO Executive Council to vote for "neutrality". In practice Meany's neutrality turned out to be one-sided. While maintaining stoic silence about Richard Nixon's dismal performance in the White House the old man did not hesitate to express scorn and derision for McGovern. Disagreeing with such "neutrality" Red Smith was the first of a small band of union leaders of national stature to personally step forward and offer McGovern encouragement and support following the Democratic Convention.

A few weeks later, when the Machinist Convention met in Los Angeles, many delegates echoed organized labor's general reservations about McGovern and some were clearly ready to go along with Meany's neutrality. Grasping for any support that could be found among union members, both McGovern and Sargent Shriver, his stand-in for the Vice President's spot, came to Los Angeles to seek an IAM endorsement. To ease fears of members employed in defense industries about his well-publicized desire to cut military spending, McGovern emphasized his long-standing commitment to planning for full employment through orderly economic conversion. Though many delegates remained skeptical most preferred McGovern to Nixon. In the end he received a convention endorsement which the *Machinist* described as "hearty, though not unanimous."

In the remaining weeks of the campaign the IAM did its best for McGovern. Smith's second-in-command at Grand Lodge, Bill Winpisinger, was loudly scornful of the AFL-CIO's neutral stance. At a rally in Indianapolis he angrily told the crowd, "A labor movement that pretends to be neutral, as between George McGovern and Richard Nixon, is a labor movement the forfeits any claim to being a force for morality in America".

In a last minute, open letter on the front page of the *Machinist* on the eve of the election, Smith urged IAM members to vote even though the labor movement was badly divided. While warning that working people could not afford to be apathetic he expressed his fear that "millions of working people will not bother to go to the polls". Election day proved he was right. The 1972 Presidential campaign drew the lowest voter turnout in a quarter of a century. Despite Nixon's sorry record and evidence of the Watergate break-in (already emerging by election day) organized labor's lack of unity, plus McGovern's own blunders (i.e. the Eagleton affair), were fatal to this candidacy. Nixon carried Columbia-paving the way for future leadership by nonentities like Ford and Carter and reactionaries like Reagan.

As an aftermath to the role the Machinists played in the election Red Smith became the first IAM IP ever elected to serve as a member of the Democratic National Committee (DNC). Though his name was conspicuous by its absence on a list of union presidents recommended by Barkan and COPE, a majority of DNC members from around the country remembered that Smith and the Machinists had stood firm when Meany and the AFL-CIO Executive Council turned their backs on the party's 1972 presidential candidate. In fact, much to Barkan's chagrin, Smith was not only elected to the full Democratic National Committee, but was also installed on the party's interim governing body, the Executive Committee.

Gas Lines, Dimouts and Slowdowns

Having become critically dependent on easy access to an abundance of cheap oil, the U. S. economy was rocked and forever changed in the fall of 1973 when American oil companies joined various Middle Eastern sheiks and shahs in a gigantic conspiracy to raise prices by creating a phony world-wide oil shortage. The oil shock that year (and again in 1979) caused a financial drain on oil-

importing nations that resulted in a ruinous transfer of wealth from industrially advanced economies to petroleum producing parts of the world.

The boycott which made oil a weapon in the so-called Yom Kippur War against Israel was officially launched by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in October 1973. However, artificial shortages had already begun to surface earlier that year. At first scarcities were limited to scattered localities, like Washington, D. C., but by Labor Day the squeeze was becoming painful throughout the nation. For the first time since the earliest automobiles began chugging down the nation's highways, motorists could not simply drive to the nearest gas pump and say "Fill'er up". By the end of September the *Machinist* cited a warning by Washington's Senator Henry Jackson that "we're confronting the prospect of serious, prolonged and widespread shortages which are beginning to have a real impact on our economy, on the standard of living enjoyed by many Americans, on competition and on the structure of the petroleum industry."

In addition to an embargo on oil shipments to the United States (retribution against America's traditional support for democracy in Israel) Arab producers, controlling 60% of the world's proven petroleum deposits, unleashed simultaneous depression and inflation (the phenomenon now known as stagflation) by jacking prices to previously unimagined heights. Such non-Arab producers as Venezuela, Nigeria and Indonesia immediately followed suit.* While the oil embargo caused great hardships for millions of Americans, especially the elderly and the poor, such companies as Gulf, Mobil and Exxon amassed huge profits which they immediately began to plow back into meatpacking, publishing, shipyards, real estate, transportation, chemicals, data processing, insurance, electronics and other industries far removed from exploration and development of new oil resources.

**Before the great oil rip-off of 1973 began, oil generally cost around \$2.00 a barrel. At that time oil producers claimed they could find and produce all the oil the world needed if they could charge between \$4.00 and \$7.00 a barrel by 1985. By 1990 oil was selling at \$32.00 a barrel.*

Within a few weeks after the Yom Kippur War in October the *Machinist* reported that IAM members were among the first casualties of the Arab oil embargo. United, TWA, and American had already grounded forty round-trip flights daily and several hundred employees, including IAM mechanics and cargo handlers, were on lay-off. Other carriers, including Eastern and National, were said to be looking at future cutbacks. *The Wall Street Journal* predicted that by the end of the winter the price of gasoline would rise from around 30¢ to more than 50¢ a gallon.

In January and February, 1974, continuing fuel shortages in factories threw more thousands of IAM members into unemployment lines. At a Legislative Conference held jointly with the UAW in Washington in March 1974, GVP Winpisinger described the kind of job losses that were hitting IAM members throughout the nation. He reported that more than 6,400 workers had been laid off in the air transport industry alone. Moreover a government-ordered 42% cutback in fuel allotments for light and executive type aircraft had turned Wichita into a disaster area. As a result of this order hundreds of IAM members were on indefinite layoff at Beech, Cessna and other light aircraft plants. In Denver 450 IAM members became jobless when sales of snowmobiles plummeted. Winpisinger also noted that because

of the gas shortage car sales had slumped--which meant that far fewer mechanics were needed for new car preparation and used car renovation. In a random sample of IAM members (one out of every fifty) 20% of those responding to a questionnaire from Grand Lodge reported that they worked in plants in which workers had been laid off because of oil or power shortages. Business representatives in cities as diverse as Buffalo, N.Y., Dubuque, Iowa and Columbia, Md. reported unemployment caused by scarcity of plastic components made from petrochemicals.

At the height of the crisis the federal government began printing gasoline ration stamps and prepared to limit drivers to forty gallons of gas a month. Experts estimated this would be sufficient for anyone residing within thirteen miles of their employment. A poll of members of District 727 revealed that two-thirds lived too far to get to and from their jobs in Burbank or Palmdale on such a ration. Throughout the country IAM local and district loges became clearing centers for carpools, vanpools and even charter bus runs. By the spring of 1974, when the price of gasoline at the pump reached 70¢ a gallon, the crisis suddenly disappeared. But the ever-growing flood of dollars from the United States to Arab potentates continued to wreak havoc on American workers. Throughout the rest of the decade oil profiteers at home and abroad not only threw America's balance of payments chronically and deeply into the red, but sabotaged the living standards of millions of working families by igniting a skyward spiral in the cost of such basic necessities as food, housing, heating, transportation and utilities.

Program for Progress

In the final three years of his second term, Red Smith was mainly preoccupied with problems rising out of the great oil swindle. With ever mounting energy costs triggering new rounds of inflation, cost-of-living clauses became the paramount negotiating priority. By 1975 more than half of all IAM members were protected by automatic wage escalators geared to the U. S. Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI). The struggle to keep paychecks in pace with prices resulted in a 50% surge in local lodge requests for strike sanction and a 100% increase in the number of lodges actually going on strike. When 20,000 members walked out of McDonnell Douglas plants and other facilities in St. Louis, Torrence, Santa Monica, Huntington Beach, Vandenberg and Cape Kennedy in February of 1975 the strike fund began to sink rapidly. By the time the dispute was settled thirteen weeks later--after the longest walkout in the company's history--weekly strike benefits had to be suspended despite an infusion of \$4.5 million from the general fund.

At a national staff conference in Chicago in April, 1975 Smith ruefully announced that the *Machinist*, the labor movement's last surviving weekly newspaper, would be published only once a month beginning in June. Like so many other progressive non-profit publications, the *Machinist* fell victim to a series of crushing postal rate hikes. As a result of government policies which narrowed freedom of speech and press by subsidizing commercial junk mail at the expense of non-profit publications, the cost of mailing the *Machinist* had skyrocketed from \$1,500 to \$6,600 per issue in just two years. Moreover, projected increases would boost future mailing costs to \$15,000 per issue. Though

the weekly *Machinist* won many awards for editorial excellence and was widely reprinted and quoted, the Executive Council decided these added costs, combined with the slow but steady leak in membership, were too burdensome for the general fund.

In a sense history repeated itself in the demise of the weekly *Machinist* newspaper. Just as the monthly *Journal* was phased out in 1956 because radio reduced the time members spent reading magazine articles, the weekly *Machinist* was converted to a monthly in 1975 because of mounting evidence that television had even further reduced the average American's reading time. As a monthly publication the *Machinist* continued to carry popular columns on consumer, job safety and legal problems, but current coverage of negotiations, grievances, arbitrations and other timely membership reports from work places and union halls gradually gave way to fewer but more comprehensive articles on such issues as alcoholism, noise on the job, tax justice, and the role of women in the IAM.

The strike benefits suspended during the long walkout at McDonnell Douglas were reinstated in October, barely in time for a bargaining impasse involving 18,000 members at United Airlines. Although wages and other issues were at stake the crucial sticking point was the company's insistence on its right to shift work out of the bargaining unit. When the strike began in early December, District 141 members realized the strike fund had not had time to rebuild and benefits would probably have to be suspended again by the end of the year. United, on the other hand, immediately began to collect more than \$3 million a day from an industry-sponsored Mutual Aid Pact.

Airline unions had been urging Congress to outlaw this agreement ever since a group of the nation's largest carriers joined in setting it up in 1958. Though the pact obviously violated the intent of the Railway Labor Act by undermining collective bargaining and prolonging strikes, remedial legislation invariably got lost in Congressional power plays. With Christmas nearing and hundreds of thousands of holiday travelers facing the prospect of being stranded by the nation's largest air carrier, key members of Congress began to ask questions. Even some newspapers that were normally pro-business questioned the wisdom of paying public carriers not to fly. Facing mounting criticism both from Congress and the press, United agreed to keep work in the bargaining unit and made other concessions sufficient to settle the dispute in time to take care of Christmas travelers in 1975 (and, incidentally, to keep the strike fund from going broke, once again, in 1976).*

**The Mutual Aid Pact paid UAL \$48.9 million for the two weeks it did not fly. However, Congress did not consent to outlaw the airlines Mutual Aid Pact until it thoroughly destabilized relationships between labor and management by deregulating the industry in 1978.*

In December the *Machinist* closed 1975 by listing a state-by-state tally of 114,936 jobs which were known to have been exported during the year. Citing the overseas operations of multinational corporations as the major contributor to unemployment or underemployment of some 10-million Americans, The *Machinist* observed that while multinationals paid employees in foreign plants less than half the wages paid to U. S. workers:

The U. S. Congress continues to encourage manufacturers to move their plants overseas. Americans businesses get from Congress special tax advantages on

profits they make on their overseas operations. They get from Congress special government-guaranteed, low-rate insurance on losses from political upheavals, economic restrictions or plant seizures in foreign countries.

Examples of localities in which jobs were lost that year included the Rohr plant in Chula Vista where a thousand IAM jobs disappeared with the expansion of Rohr's operations in Tijuana and Mexicali; the GE appliance plant in Louisville where 425 workers were laid off after wire frame assembly lines were moved to Juarez; the GTE Sylvania plant in Batavia, N. Y., where employment dropped from 200 to 50 after GTE began production in Taiwan; the Control Data division in Casper, Wyoming, where 150 workers became unemployed when production was shifted to Hong Kong and Korea. Moreover, as the *Machinist* also reported, although one million jobs were lost to foreign competition between 1970 and 1975, only 34,900 workers received special benefits promised in return for organized labor's support for the Trade Adjustment Act of 1962.

In February, 1976, the IAM's International Affairs Representative, Ben Sharman, sitting in for Red Smith, explained to the Senate Finance Committee why unemployment was abnormally high in industries where most IAM members were employed (i.e. 10.1% in aerospace; 8.4% in metalworking machinery; 10% in electrical machinery and 9.3% in fabricated metal products).

Total imports of machinery rose from \$4.6 billion in 1969 to \$12.2 billion in 1974. Imports of machinery and transport equipment from developing countries alone rose from \$409 million to \$3.1 billion. More recently, imports of production machinery in the first ten months of 1975 rose to \$8 billion from \$7.6 billion for the corresponding period of 1974.

Sharman told the senators, "Jobs have been lost by our members who were producing typewriters, pianos, calculators, phonographs, vacuum cleaners and many other products."

Such unrestrained looting of the nation's industrial job base by big business eventually took its toll of IAM membership and per capita. A special committee appointed by Smith to work with the Executive Council in preparing recommendations for the 1976 Grand Lodge Convention found that the steady decline in the dues-paying membership (from 915,000 in 1968 to 723,000 in 1975) had put Grand Lodge operations \$12.5 million in the red during the 1970's. While local lodges were generally prospering from the higher dues being collected under the two times hourly wage formula adopted at the 1972 Convention, the Grand Lodge and many district lodges were suffering severe financial anemia.

After studying and comparing the dues and per capita structures of other major unions, the Executive Council proposed a "Program for Progress" to be presented to the upcoming 1976 Grand Lodge Convention. At the heart of this proposal was a recommendation that per capita be computed annually according to a formula designed to divide dues automatically and equitably between the Grand Lodge and local and district lodges. The Council also recommended that part of the Grand Lodge per capita be set aside for a number of years to build a reserve into the strike fund.

As Red Smith told the delegates when the convention opened in Hollywood, Florida, "The great accomplishment of our 1972 Convention was that it provided a sound financial base for our local lodges. The legacy of this 1976 Convention must be adequate financing for all three levels on which we operate."

Despite widespread unemployment and declining membership (down to 713,000 dues payers by the time the convention opened), the gathering in Hollywood was the largest in the union's history. It was also one of the most unruly and tumultuous. More than 2,300 delegates from 1,065 lodges were on hand to hear the International President outline the Program for Progress at the opening session. With so many more delegates than expected the sessions had to be switched hurriedly to a larger auditorium. Unfortunately, the new hall was L-shaped, which meant that half the delegates could not see the other half except on enlarged TV monitors. The uproar that marked many of these jam-packed sessions surfaced early in an angry denunciation of the Executive Council's failure to establish a permanent, full-time Civil Rights Department at Grand Lodge. A significantly large bloc of black, Hispanic and women members contended that a commitment made in 1972 had not been kept. At a special early morning hearing called by the Resolutions Committee, they demanded a resolution plainly outlining specific objectives and directing the Executive Council to "establish a Civil Rights Department at Grand Lodge under the direction of a person qualified to coordinate, foster and develop the implementation of these objectives."

The noisiest debate at the 1976 Convention came on a motion to reconsider a roll call vote on key portions of the Program for Progress. In a roll call at the previous session the delegates had voted 3,872 to 3,843 to base per capita on half the weighted average monthly dues calculated on a union-wide basis. Seizing on this paper-thin margin to exploit Red Smith's weakness as a parliamentarian, those opposing any formula which would tie per capita to dues brought the convention to the brink of anarchy. In fact, in the heat of a wild debate on a motion to reconsider, a non-debatable motion to adjourn touched off a disorderly bout of shoving, shouting, chanting and catcalls. Good sense finally prevailed when some of the old pros calmly took over the mikes and got the convention back on the right parliamentary track. The delegates agreed to rescind the roll call vote and refer the matter back to the Law Committee. After further hearings the Law Committee returned two days later with a proposal to set per capita at one hour's weighted average earnings computed on a union-wide basis. Though finally accepting this change, the delegates rejected the proposal to build a reserve into the strike fund.

Guest speakers at the '76 Convention included the only Secretary of Labor ever to come out of the ranks of the IAM, a former GLR in the Southern territory, William Usery. The Democratic candidate for President, Jimmy Carter, was also invited although members of the MNPL National Planning Committee considered him the least appealing of the eight candidates who appeared and spoke at their sessions earlier that year. His remarks, like his Administration, were uninspiring. Even his attempts at humor fell flat. But, once again faced with the choice of a lesser of two evils, Jerry Ford or Jimmy Carter, IAM delegates opted for the candidate who said he would reduce inflation and unemployment and reform health care, welfare and taxation. After getting the endorsement of the IAM Convention in September and the votes of most IAM members in November, Carter rewarded this support by sitting

on his hands during labor's fight for labor law reform and by caving in to the oil and gas lobby time after time.

While the Hollywood Convention was unusually rancorous, it was also highly productive. In addition to ratifying a dramatic break with the past (i.e., replacing stated per capita imbedded in the constitution with automatic annual increments based on average hourly earnings) the delegates mandated a number of new or expanded services. These included a new Civil Rights Department as well as vastly expanded Grand Lodge assistance to local lodge community services committees, a larger effort to combat alcoholism and drug abuse, more attention to training for members of local lodge occupational safety and health committees and more coordinated bargaining for members employed by multi-plant corporations.

In giving every delegate a chance to be heard on issues debated at Grand Lodge conventions, Red Smith sometimes left himself open to harassment from local lodge sharpshooters. But, at both of the conventions at which he presided, he achieved his major goals. While some of his predecessors may have been more charismatic or eloquent, no International President ever did more to try to provide a sound financial footing for the future. As George Meany pointed out when Smith retired in June 1977, he guided the IAM safely through some of the labor movement's most difficult years.

Bill Winpisinger--The Beat of a Different Drummer



William W. Winpisinger
1977-1989

Smith was succeeded by his Resident GVP at Grand Lodge, Bill Winpisinger. Christened William Wayne but incongruously known throughout the organization as "Wimpy," the new IP got off to a fast start. Summoning Grand Lodge staffers to a midnight meeting to dramatize the start of a new day, Winpisinger told them that the IAM would no longer be doing business as usual, that traditional pragmatic, bread and butter unionism could not survive the forces now arrayed against America's working people. Repelled by the callous treatment of workers by corporations and government alike, he announced that the IAM would no longer cooperate with such sham pretenses in labor-management partnership as Work in America or the American

Productivity Center. Instead, the IAM would build bridges to coalitions seeking a more equitable distribution of the nation's income and wealth.

Within a few months publications of all kinds were sitting up and taking notice of the IAM's new leader. Various descriptions by the press as "barrel-chested," "balding," "hard-drinking," "profane," and "given to a Buick dealers' clothing style" Winpisinger was identified by the wire services as "The Machinists' maverick," featured in a *Fortune* article headed "Big Labor's Bogeyman" and characterized by *Industry Week* as "erudite and articulate . . . one of labor's toughest cookies."

Born the son of a union printer in Cleveland in 1924, Bill Winpisinger got on the fast track early in life. As a burly teenager he was a ferocious competitor, playing both ways on the line in high school football and good enough at baseball to get a tryout as a catcher with a Yankee farm club. Possessing a keen and questing intelligence he was too much the rebel, too rambunctious and impatient for the faculty at Cleveland's West Tech High School. Helped by a little push from the authorities, he dropped out of the 11th grade a month after Pearl Harbor. With the world at war and itching for more action than a class room could offer, he went to work in a local machine tool factory. In later years he recalled that this first brush with factory life, though brief, was enough to teach him the evils of company unionism. In August, 1942, four months before his 18th birthday, he enlisted in the Navy. Over the next three years he served in the Mediterranean, North Africa, England and was at the beaches of Normandy on D-Day. He was on his way to the Pacific when Japan surrendered. Though he credits the Navy with teaching him his trade as a diesel mechanic, he says it also taught him to distrust the abuse and ignorance of autocratic authority.

Back home in civilian life, married and with kids on the way, Winpisinger put aside youthful dreams of a big league ball career and settled down as a mechanic for an auto dealer whose employees were represented by Local Lodge 1363. He recalls that his personal heroes in those days were Harry Truman and John L. Lewis. He saw Truman as a "two-fisted man's man, who knew how it was on Main Street." And though Lewis and his Mineworkers had been widely condemned for striking in wartime, Winpisinger says, "My heart was with the miners. Lewis was my kind of guy. He didn't cut and run when they turned on the heat."

Propelled by a cocky confidence in his own abilities, Wimpy, (as he was known even then) moved rapidly from recording secretary to president of Lodge 1363. Though still in his early twenties, Winpisinger's high voltage leadership, whether on a picket line or in an emotion-charged negotiation, began to attract attention in District 54 and the Ohio State Council of Machinists. In 1951, at the age of 26, he became one of the youngest members ever appointed to the Grand Lodge staff. Assigned to the field full time, often under cover and absent from his family for weeks and sometimes months on end, he was openly impatient with the traditional conservatism of the staid old Machinist Union. But he was also hard-working--routinely putting in 18-hour days for months at a time--and effective. Members were attracted to this tough, two-fisted young kid who could salt the air with deleted expletives when processing their grievances, but sound like a Harvard M.B.A. when negotiating their contracts.

In 1955 Al Hayes brought Winpisinger to Washington to head a joint national organizing campaign with the Teamsters. Though Winpisinger seldom tried to disguise his impatience with what he generally considered the IAM's starchy leadership, Hayes recognized his resourcefulness and tenacity under fire. Increasingly he was sent where ever strikes were brewing or internal dissension threatened a local or district lodge. In this capacity as a trouble shooter Hayes assigned Winpisinger to serve as his deputy when the old Capital Airlines district was placed under Grand Lodge supervision following a long and bitter strike in 1958. Despite his background in auto repair Winpisinger took to the IAM's airline membership like the proverbial duck to water. As one veteran general chairman later recalled, "He was so well informed on airline issues none of us realized he was an auto mechanic. He acted and sounded like an airlines guy, like one of us."

In 1959 Winpisinger negotiated the IAM's first contract for newly affiliated members on Continental. Two years later the merger of Capital and United, the largest airline merger in history, created a number of potential problems for the IAM. These included integrating the seniority rosters of both carriers and bringing the members and officers of two separate and disparate districts into one unified organization. With factions from the two former carriers competing for leadership, the combined district was threatened by internal turmoil. Foreseeing the need to present a solid front in upcoming negotiations with United--a carrier notorious for hard-nosed bargaining--members of District 141's Executive Board asked Hayes to appoint Winpisinger as his deputy. The ensuing negotiations solidified his credentials with airline employees. However, he faced one of his greatest challenges when Hayes agreed to arbitrate the cases of the twenty-three members fired for aiding and abetting the wildcat walkouts that occurred during these negotiations. As noted earlier these included some of the IAM's most loyal and committed local leaders. As also previously noted, thousands of District 141 members felt betrayed when Hayes agreed to arbitrate. Because of the failure to demand reinstatement, that earlier contract was ratified by the narrowest of margins. Later, when the arbitrator ruled against the union in all but three of the cases, a wave of frustration and fury swept the system. Winpisinger shared the members' anger but knew the IAM was capable of providing the kind of militancy they wanted in their bargaining with United. When he was sent to service members at the carrier's big maintenance base in San Francisco in the early '60's he found feeling against the Grand Lodge was running high. On several occasions Winpisinger had to face noisy hostility at union meetings. In addition to earning a reputation for nerveless courage in taking on hooting and jeering crowds, Winpisinger also proved to be more than a match for management in handling a series of long-standing grievances. Little by little, in face-to-face meetings on the property, in the parking lot and in the members' homes he eased tensions while restoring respect for, and loyalty to, the IAM on the property.

When Joe Ramsey, the last of the old-time railroad vice presidents retired in 1967, the scrappy, young maverick from Cleveland was the natural choice to succeed him. To better serve a membership that now included auto mechanics and airline employees as well as railroaders, Winpisinger moved the office of the Transportation GVP from Chicago, historic center of railroading, to Washington, the center of government power. Five years later in 1972, Smith brought Winpisinger to the tenth floor to serve as resident GVP at Grand Lodge. While Smith disliked making speeches and avoided public appearances as much as possible, Winpisinger thrived on live audiences and quickly became a much demanded, though highly controversial, spokesman for union causes. In paving the way for the "Program for Progress" at the 1976 Convention Winpisinger almost single-handedly sold it to the membership in a non-stop, year-long tour of state council meetings and GVP staff conferences. By the time Red Smith retired, Bill Winpisinger was raring and ready to step into the IAM's top spot.

While still a GVP, Winpisinger provided the press with a preview of his talent for colorful phrases. When a reporter asked him about New York City hard-hat construction workers who attacked students parading in protest against the Vietnam War he responded. "It's hard to tell where the hats end and the heads start with those guys". While barely seated on the AFL-CIO Executive Council he sent shock waves through the labor movement by suggesting it was time for the venerable eighty-four year old George Meany to retire.

Though personally respecting Meany's enormous abilities and rock-hard integrity, Winpisinger believed the labor movement was losing ground because too many young people saw unions as part of an establishment supporting military adventures overseas and the status quo at home. He felt the need for leadership that would put as much emphasis on social protest and reform as collective bargaining. Too much of an individualist to accept rigidly doctrinaire ideology, Winpisinger would describe his political philosophy as a seat-of-the-pants version of democratic socialism. Rejecting labor statesmanship, he would forge links to radicals and reformers who would have been shown the door by most of his predecessors.

Seeking to revive the old-time militance of the "Fighting Machinists," he would take the strongest stand of any union leader against the givebacks and takeaways demanded by corporate employers eager to cash in on the highest levels of unemployment since the depression.

While many union leaders were being conned by politicians, the press and professors into embracing Japanese style quality work circles, the IAM leader would warn members that this was merely the latest wrinkle in management's age-old search for speedups.

Learning that the chairman of J. P. Stevens, America's number one labor law violator, was on the board of a bank entrusted with millions in IAM pension funds, Winpisinger would be the first union president to publicly demand, and eventually force, the resignation of such an individual from such a position.

Appalled by the headlong race toward a holocaust of universal destruction in a war fought with hydrogen bombs, Winpisinger would risk alienating members dependent on jobs in defense industries by calling for disarmament and conversion of defense plants to civilian use.

Seeking to stem the deterioration of America's industrial base, the IAM would not only finance preparation of a detailed blueprint for a national industrial policy titled "Let's Rebuild America", but would initiate a nation-wide drive to mobilize necessary political and legislative support in America's work places.

We Shall Overcome

Despite militant and innovative leadership, the IAM, like the rest of the American labor movement, would be battered in the 1980's by the decline of smokestack industries, by the rise of robotics, by the emergence of low-wage service industries, by the dominance of multinational conglomerates, by the Carter Administration's pusillanimous response to the big oil rip-off, by the resulting triumph of Reaganomics and by stubborn Congressional adherence to trade policies that could not have been more harmful had they been plotted by America's worst enemies.

In the final decade of the IAM's first century, record high levels of postwar unemployment would push millions of workers--many believing they had climbed permanently into the middle class--

back toward the traditional poverty of the working class. The steady deterioration of the nation's industrial base would inevitably take its toll on union membership. The IAM, like the rest of the labor movement, would be decimated by steep and prolonged declines in membership.

Nevertheless with the approach of the union's second century IAM members could reflect on their union's past with a feeling of satisfaction. From that first small gathering in a locomotive pit in 1888 had grown a great organization that spanned two nations. From that tiny band of nineteen railroad journeymen had come a vast army of men and women in hundreds of industries, men and women who build America's rockets and planes, who repair America's autos, who cut and shape the tools and dies of America's factories, and who build, install, service, adjust and operate the machines of an industrial nation.

Because nineteen railroad machinists set out to demand dignity for their skills, millions in later generations would one day enjoy the eight-hour day and the five-day week.

Because of battles fought across bargaining tables and on picket lines millions of Americans would come to accept without question their right to paid holidays and paid vacations, pensions, medical insurance, paid sick leave and a host of other job related benefits.

While feeling justified pride in the past, IAM members can also look forward with hope to the future. Despite the pessimistic purveyors of doom and gloom who predict (or hope for) a permanent state of continuing decline for organized labor, the course of the American labor movement has never been smooth or easy. As Eugene Debs once said, "Ten thousand times has the labor movement stumbled and fallen and bruised itself, and risen again." Early in this century the IAM was bruised in the battle for the nine-hour day. But within little more than a decade it rose to win the battle for the eight-hour day. In the early 1920's the IAM stumbled as membership fell from a peak of 330,000 to 70,000 under the crushing impact of company unionism and the NAM's brutal "American Plan." In the early 1930's, it fell even further under the weight of massive unemployment. But each time the so-called experts began writing organized labor's obituary, the IAM was getting ready for another era of expansion and accomplishment.

Despite opposition that has ranged from the bloody clubs of company thugs to the bulging briefcases of the breed of intellectual prostitutes who call themselves "labor consultants", unions perform a function that remains essential in a free society. They help to equalize a relationship that is inherently unequal: the relationship between employers and employees. Few controls are more pervasive and powerful than the control of one person over the bread of another. If history proves anything, it has proven time and time again that even the most paternalistic and benevolent employer cannot alter the basic inequality in the employer-employee relationship. This has always been true and today, with more and more workers employed by vast, impersonal multinational conglomerates, it is even more so.

For the millions of workers who have been thrown on the industrial scrap heap by the temporary triumph of supply side economic policies, and for the millions more who are laboring at low wage, dead-end jobs, and conditions today are reminiscent of the early thirties. Those who think, or

hope, that gimmicks like quality work circles can displace the need for unions by transforming free and independent American workers into docile, grinning and kowtowing automatons on the Japanese model, are whistling in the wind. They have forgotten that the anthem of the civil rights movement "We Shall Overcome" was first sung on the picket lines of union members.

The history of the IAM is indeed the story of a struggle. In its first hundred years the IAM produced many martyrs and heroes, some forgotten, too many half remembered--Tom Talbot, James O'Connell, Pete Conlon, Emmet Davison, and Al Hayes. The next hundred years will produce others. The eternal struggle for justice on the job is far from over. In coming decades martyrs and heroes as yet unborn will inevitably rise to produce new progress for new generations of IAM members.

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About the Author



Bob Rodden grew up during the Great Depression in a working family in the blue collar section of Pittsburgh known as Homewood. His parents, both of whom first went to work as children, his father in a coal mine and his mother in a textile mill, instilled an early appreciation of unionism.

Barred by childhood polio from joining friends who went to work in the steel mills or other factory jobs after graduating from Pittsburgh's 'Westinghouse High School, the author was sent to the University of Pittsburgh by the federal Bureau of Rehabilitation. Receiving his B. A. from Pitt in 1944 he came to Washington, first as an employee of the War Department and later joining a team of historians preparing a postwar study of the Navy's war-time research and development programs.

Pursuing an interest in unionism which had been further whetted by industrial relations courses at Pitt, Rodden earned his M. A. in labor economics at American University and spent the next several years at The U. S. Department of Labor, specializing and writing on workmen's compensation, industrial relations and other labor issues he became acquainted with various members of the Machinists Union's headquarters staff. Offered a position as special assistant to President Al Hayes in 1957, Rodden has spent the years since researching and preparing speeches, articles, testimony, pamphlets, manuals and organizing materials for IAM officers and staff. For many years he also taught legislative issues and labor history at Machinists Leadership Schools. When assigned to lecture on the history of the American labor movement at orientation seminars for the IAM's field staff some years ago, he developed a deep interest in the IAM's origins and early struggles. *The Fighting Machinists* is the result of hours spent poring over early machinists Monthly *Journals* and other old documents.

Now Retired Rodden lives in Bethesda, Maryland, where he and his Canadian-born wife look forward to frequent visits from a growing bevy of grandchildren in assorted sizes.