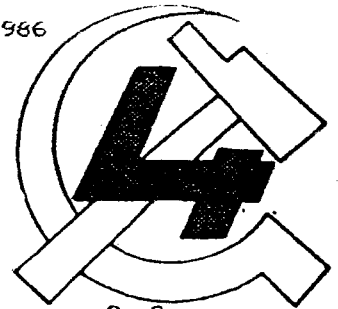


PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

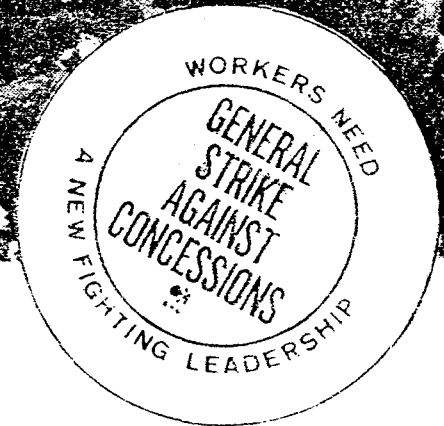
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The Battle of Hormel



[The following account was written by LRPers and supporters who traveled to Austin several times to work with the P-9 strike. One comrade was among those arrested in April while picketing at the plant. See also the articles "With Friends Like These ..." on P-9 support work in New York and "For a General Strike Against Concessions."]

Austin, Minnesota has become a battlefield. A war has raged there since August 17, when meatpackers in Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) began their strike against the Hormel Company's major packinghouse. The bosses have fought this war with all their weapons: cops and courts, press and television, the National Guard and scabs -- plus

the AFL-CIO leadership. The meatpackers have courageously refused to buckle under to the union-busting attacks. But bravery is not enough: a new strategy is needed if the strike is to survive.

In recent months P-9ers have traveled throughout the country to win support from other workers and draw the lessons of their struggle. In a real sense they see themselves as the vanguard of the labor movement. On roving pickets in the Midwest, at their

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Battle of Hormel

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meetings and rallies in Austin and in cities nationwide, their message is simple but powerful: We have to rebuild the labor movement. We have to turn labor's cringing response to concessions into a fighting defense. The P-9 strike must inspire all workers into struggle for our common needs.

Yet after months of hard struggle, P-9 still faces the same task as when the strike began last August: shutting down Hormel, beginning with the Austin plant. This is because the local's strategy has been off target from the start.

P-9's respect for the capitalist laws has been repaid by court injunctions, cop harassment and the

In 1984, in reponse to Hormel's unilateral reduction of wages by over \$200 an hour and its demand for a two-tier wage system and the gutting of seniority and safety rights, P-9 voted to hire Ray Rogers' consulting firm, Corporate Campaign, Inc. This was done under the advice of the local leadership headed by Jim Guyette, who had rightly learned not to depend on the UFCW tops for help. After all, president William Wynn & Co. had treacherously portrayed the 1982 contract as a "no givebacks" agreement, when it had included the "me too" clause allowing Hormel to cut back wages to stay "competitive."

Hormel was so obviously greedy and treated its workers with such contempt (serious injuries have increased 120 percent at the new plant) that it seemed a perfect target for Rogers' method: publicizing the company's inhuman practices before public opinion.



Main Street, Austin, USA. "Middle American" workers are learning you don't have to be black or Hispanic to be harshly victimized by capitalism.

National Guard. Its nonviolence has been rewarded by police beatings. P-9ers have found that in the class war the rules of the game are stacked against the workers and can be changed by the bosses and their stooges when it suits them. The strikers need heavy artillery -- the power of a united working class -- in order to win.

CORPORATE CAMPAIGN VS. MASS ACTION

Over the years P-9 has learned many lessons about the class struggle in the school of hard knocks. Austin meatpackers had given Hormel concessions in 16 years out of the last 21. In 1978, when the new \$100 million Austin plant was being built, workers were pressured into giving \$20 million in concessions and a no-strike pledge. Supposedly no further wage cuts were to occur. But -- surprise! -- the company kept asking for more until Austin workers had had enough.

Hormel's record profits, unsafe labor conditions and mistreatment of workers proved it "unfair." It didn't play by the rules of good corporate behavior.

Mobilizing P-9ers to leaflet, organize rallies and expose Hormel's swinishness was necessary. What was wrong was the failure to use such mobilizations to make a direct appeal to the working class for a united fight against the bosses' all-out concessions drive. From the beginning it should have been clear that Hormel would respond to only one thing -- mass action that threatens to slaughter its profits. Instead the idea was to appeal to the public at large to divest funds from a bank linked with Hormel -- in order to pressure the company to "play fair." This was a moral appeal to all classes rather than a fighting working-class strategy.

Besides, even if one bank could be pressured to withdraw funds, others would be glad to take over.

For Hormel did play by the rules of good corporate behavior -- it was vicious, greedy and profitable.

Rogers believed differently. "We've got a campaign that the company and the financial structure behind it cannot withstand," he argued. He convinced P-9 to postpone strike action. But he failed to convince Hormel, which went ahead to impose concessions and force a strike. Once it began, Rogers insisted that the strike would be won not by shutting down Hormel, by spreading the pickets and mass action but by his ability to raise money for strikers. Time was on the side of the workers. "It's not like they [Hormel] can wait this thing out forever."

Rogers hoped to avoid a real confrontation with



Workers jeer scabs. Fists must replace flags; the bosses own the country. Scab Spam is now more American than apple pie.

the bosses. This is why the good-for-nothing AFL-CIO bureaucracy, although it attacks Rogers for being too radical, is itself a big booster of corporate campaigns. It puts them forward as an alternative to strikes and the kind of mass action that built the unions in the 1930s. It uses the recent wave of defeats and concessions, a result of the bureaucrats' own policies, to argue that the working class is too weak to directly confront the capitalists.

In this period of unbridled attacks on the working class by the government and corporations, Hormel hardly stands apart. Was Ronald Reagan fair to PATCO?

Was Greyhound fair? Were the mineowners of Phelps Dodge fair? Can anyone expect capitalism, based on the exploitation of workers, the expropriation of surplus value produced by workers, to be fair? How many times do we have to be kicked in the head, how many workers have to lose their jobs and livelihoods, how many unions have to be crushed, before we learn this lesson?

Singling out Hormel as exceptionally greedy makes an important point that can mobilize sympathy for victims of a particular injustice. But left at that such an appeal reaches other workers on the basis of charity and decency alone. Publicity was needed to show that the battle of Austin was part of a war against all workers, coming from profitable and unprofitable companies and governments as well. That would have led to mobilizing workers in their own self-interest, as a class with the power to win.

REOPENING THE PLANT

For five months Hormel made no attempt to reopen the Austin plant with scabs. Rogers credited this to his campaign. "We've made it clear that if they bring even one in -- we'll close their whole operation so fast. And, you know, they believe we'll do it."

No doubt Hormel did fear the workers' reaction. It took the bosses time to realize that such talk was more bark than bite. Perhaps the decisive evidence was the P-9 leaders' vacillations on expanding the picketing and confronting Wynn's betrayal. P-9 originally planned to send pickets to other Hormel plants in October. Instead, a deal was made with Wynn, who pledged to sanction pickets only if negotiations with Hormel failed. Rather than spitting in the face of this obvious stalling tactic, P-9's leaders accepted Wynn's terms. Crucial months were lost.

Rogers himself admitted that had they sent out pickets in October, especially with Austin shut down, they would have had a chance for much better results. "We were ready to move certainly by October to close these other plants," he said. "But old Bill Wynn stepped in and held the whole thing up two months. If it was two months earlier with everything together, look at what would have happened. The one thing we never expected was the International's involvement the way it has been, that very negative involvement."

There is no reason for someone with long experience in the labor movement to be caught unawares by such bureaucratic treachery, especially in the light of the UFCW's record on concessions. The problem was that Guyette and Rogers never wanted to openly challenge the International's strategy. They hoped that public relations schemes would force Wynn to support P-9's strike. In particular Guyette argued that P-9ers deserved more because Hormel in Austin was exceptionally profitable. This argument was a gift to Wynn, allowing him to charge that P-9 was divisive for fighting for one local in isolation. P-9 should have called for a UFCW-wide strike against concessions, whether an individual company or plant was

making profits or not. Not doing this and holding back on organizing roving pickets, P-9 allowed Hormel to buy time to organize its counterattack.

In January Hormel called Rogers' bluff. At first P-9 successfully prevented the company's scab operation. But Rogers and the local leaders didn't prepare the strikers for what happened next. Under the pretext of preventing violence, Mayor Tom Keough of Austin, himself a striking meatpacker, called on Governor Rudi Perpich to send in the National Guard.

The Guard's first action was to close the plant, conning strikers into believing it was neutral. But on the second day its role became clear. Closing the highway leading to the plant, the Guard allowed access only to scabs. Several strikers in cars attempted to block the road and were beaten by the "neutral, peacekeeping" Guardsmen. With the Guard on duty, serious scabherding began. What began as a mere handful of workers scabbing grew to over four hundred P-9 members during the month the Guard was there. This was crucial, since the unskilled imported scabs couldn't operate the plant's modern equipment and lacked the training needed for the hazardous work.

Hormel had raised the ante, and P-9's leaders were stunned and unprepared for a confrontation. They saw no way to overcome the Guard except for making feeble attempts to pressure other Democrats to get Perpich remove it. When the governor did so for a few days, it was only in response to a mobilization of hundreds of workers. Perpich's lieutenant on the scene admitted that the Guard was removed out of fear that thousands more unionists would turn out to confront it. This shows what P-9 could have done: for example, wage a fight inside Minnesota labor for a general strike to get rid of the Guard.

Accepting that little could be done with the troops in town cost P-9 the initiative. Emphasis now turned to nationwide support efforts as a substitute

for mass action, and in desperation P-9 called for a boycott of Hormel products. The war still raged but Hormel had recaptured Austin.

SUPPORT IN DUBUQUE

After five months on strike, P-9 suddenly discovered it was in a real war. The battle now had to be fought at the picketlines, but in Austin Hormel was in control. P-9 leaders finally launched roving pickets to try to shut down other Hormel plants, with some success. The tactical problem was for strikers to recognize they were no longer in a corporate campaign but in an old-fashioned brass knuckles brawl. As one striker noted, "the strike only really began in January" — when Hormel brought in the scabs.

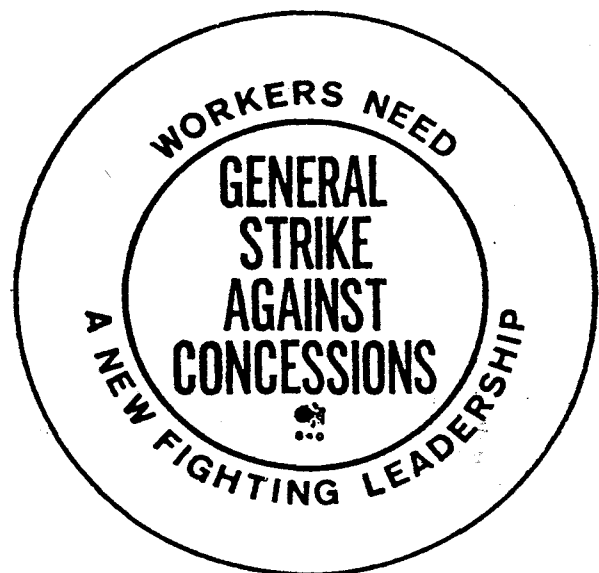
At the Ottumwa, Iowa, Hormel plant, over 500 workers in Local 431 honored P-9 pickets despite threats from the company and the UFCW bureaucrats. Ottumwa strikers won the support of other workers who organized mass marches and food aid. This was clear evidence of the tremendous potential for support for the P-9 strike. But elsewhere success was sparse. At Fremont, Nebraska, Beloit, Wisconsin and the FDL plant in Dubuque, Iowa, UFCW agents convinced workers to cross the lines. The support was there — what was needed was an open challenge to the International.

When roving pickets were finally sent out, it was clear that the corporate campaign strategy had left P-9 unprepared. After a year of work the response to Hormel's new attacks was disorganized and politically incoherent. For example, on a picketing trip to Dubuque on February 16. Some 200 pickets convinced about half of the 900 workers on the morning shift to stay out, thus closing down some lines and cutting into production. The response was encouraging, given the company's threats and the assistance FDL got from Mel Maas, the local union president, who stood at the plant gate with several UFCW reps to tell workers not

NEW BUTTON FROM THE LRP

Militant workers, socialist and non-socialist alike, have been buying hundreds of these buttons in recent weeks. The button has proved especially popular among striking workers who are sick of abstract solidarity rhetoric and want concrete, united mass action. Many in the ranks of labor know that effective action to stop concessions means that Lane Kirkland and other bureaucrats must be replaced by a new militant leadership.

Buttons are \$1.00 each and may be ordered from: Socialist Voice, 170 Broadway, Room 201, New York NY 10038. Make check or money order payable to Socialist Voice.



to honor the unsanctioned picket. FDL workers wanted to support P-9 but were afraid of the consequences in the face of the International's backstabbing.

Disorganization was evident. During the day there were no picket captains to maintain the lines; strikers came and went on their own. More importantly, P-9 was unprepared to capitalize on the good response it did receive. Apparently expecting no success at all, Rogers had organized the trip as a one-day excursion, leaving at 11pm Sunday and scheduled to come back at 6pm Monday. But it was clear to many of us that you can't convince a few hundred workers to stay out and then abandon the picket lines. At first only a handful of picketers agreed to stay, until finally enough volunteered so that it was decided to keep one of the four buses at hand.

A meeting with FDL workers was arranged in a hall a few miles outside the city. Some 40-50 workers who had honored the picket line came to meet with the remaining P-9 contingent. Much of the discussion centered around the question of whether the picket line

"legal." Instead P-9 should have made clear that it would not go back until all jobs are restored in the event of victimization at any plant.

There's a big difference between calling on workers not to cross someone else's picket line and urging them to actually join the fight and strike for the needs of all. If P-9 is to overcome Wynn's sabotage it needs a strategy to mobilize other meatpackers to fight, not just passively stay out. Workers at FDL correctly asked, "How can you tell us to stay out when you haven't shut down Austin?" They pointed to the Achilles heel of the strike -- its failure to close the home plant. Unless P-9 takes decisive action and closes Austin down, all the lawyers in Philadelphia won't convince workers to stay out because its "legal." Bold leadership and action will.

P-9'S LEADERSHIP

The failure to shut Hormel down points to the limitations of the Jim Guyette team. Elected in 1984 on a wave of militant, no-concessions sentiment, Guyette



March 10: Hundreds block Hormel headquarters; over 100 arrested. Pacifist crap lets cops maul workers.

was legal. P-9 vice president Lynn Huston argued that since Hormel had shifted work from Austin to FDL and other places, the pickets were legally following struck work. However, given the International's refusal to sanction roving pickets, workers were threatened with dismissal if they stayed out. FDL workers were wary of the legal arguments since they had no reason to place trust in the rulings of Reagan's NLRB, which would ultimately decide.

Workers were correct to be suspicious of the legalistic approach. P-9's emphasis on legality reflected its mistaken political strategy. It was clear that Huston knew little about the situation at FDL, where workers face conditions worse than in Austin. Rather than calling on FDL workers to tear up the concession-ridden contract and join the strike, P-9 was telling them that not crossing the picket line was

undertook a bold course of action requiring considerable guts. But then he temporized and vacillated in the face of Wynn and Kirkland's hostility. Despite all the anti-concessions talk, P-9 has been offering Hormel wage and other givebacks since February in an effort to sound "reasonable." As well, Guyette has backed down to the courts and allowed legalism to choke the strike, obeying, for example, the injunction allowing only six pickets at any one plant gate.

Despite his political weaknesses, from the start Guyette's stance was an act of defiance against Wynn and the International. Wynn could not afford to allow one local to defeat concessions after the UFCW had insisted that workers had no choice but to accept givebacks. But while this made him a clear threat

to Wynn, Guyette failed to take the only course possible in order to win: leading an industry-wide revolt against the UFCW's concessions policy. Seeking to avoid antagonizing Wynn, he played by Wynn's limits and rules and thereby gave him repeated chances to undercut the strike. The most dramatic was the vote in mid-March to "reconcile" with the International -- to which Wynn responded by ordering the local back to work and rescinding strike funds.

Even when Wynn withdrew the strike pay and threatened receivership, Guyette's response was to take legal action against the International, thereby inviting the capitalist-controlled courts to run union affairs. This still avoids tapping P-9's potential to mobilize all meatpackers in a struggle to roll back the concessions.

The Guyette team appears unable to decide what

kind of strike it wants. It opens up bold struggles and then fails to pursue them to their necessary conclusions. It breaks from Wynn's concessions strategy but doesn't take the necessary steps to lead a revolt against the UFCW bureaucrats. Although the strike has raised a challenge to Lane Kirkland and his cronies

at the top of the AFL-CIO, Guyette continues to play by the bureaucratic rules of debate and holds back from an all-out fight inside the AFL-CIO.

In this he is backed by the main national support group for P-9, an outfit called NRFAC (National Rank and File Against Concessions). Despite its name, NRFAC represents not rank and filers but militant local leaders like Guyette and leftists, especially around the Communist Labor Party, who have won local positions in the labor bureaucracy. They want to fight concessions without openly confronting Kirkland. A wing of NRFAC is pro-Democratic Party, including Guyette who falsely claims that Governor Perpich is a traitor to the true Democratic heritage. If other NRFAC leaders know better, they sure don't say so out loud.

NRFAC has gone to great lengths to avoid criticizing the AFL-CIO tops. At the large February 15 rally it organized in Austin, there was a virtual conspiracy of silence about the rotten role of the AFL-CIO. The only exception was a crack about "Lane" Kirkland by Pittsburgh steelworkers leader Ron Wiesen. The list of speakers featured Henry Nicholas, president of the 1199 Hospital Workers Union, and Jan Pierce, vice president of the Communication Workers.

In his speech Nicholas danced a tightrope to avoid direct attacks on Kirkland. He "prayed" that the upcoming AFL-CIO meeting in Florida would recognize the dignity of the strike. It was time that "we" leaders of organized labor moved from the back of the line to the front. "We" need to know which side the labor movement is on in Minnesota. "We" remember PATCO and how the labor movement didn't take an aggressive enough stance. A lot of verbal sparring -- but no honest direct opposition.

Nicholas must not have prayed hard enough. Kirkland gave the Hormel strikers another stab in the back as he supported Wynn and attacked Guyette. Kirkland wouldn't even allow Guyette to address the meeting; he all but told the strikers to drop dead.

While the battle lines had been clearly drawn by the bureaucrats, NRFAC continued its diplomatic approach. When Governor Perpich appeared before a state AFL-CIO meeting on February 24, these "left" supporters of P-9 could only issue a feeble statement attacking his presence. No attack was made on the state



April 11: Workers peacefully assemble before police riot, yet Congress pushes anti-union laws citing P-9 "violence."

AFL-CIO's meager support to the strike and its criminal silence on Perpich's use of the National Guard as strikebreakers.

THE APRIL BATTLE

NRFAC called a mobilization to culminate in another rally on April 12; it was billed as an effort to "shut down Hormel." But at press conferences beforehand P-9's leaders gave this militant call a pacifist twist. Their plan was to close the plant for two days before the Saturday rally through mass picketing; this would help publicize the strike and show supporters around the country that it was still effective. The point was to use the mobilization to build the national boycott of Hormel products.

But they backed off from even this limited goal. On Thursday, April 10, they decided that too few had showed up to keep the scabs out. Business agent Pete Winkles told the press that this was no defeat because the union meant its shutdown "in the larger sense," i.e., through the boycott. But every worker in the union hall knew they had intended to stop production and that the failure to do so was a setback.

By the next day hundreds had arrived, and now we had enough to effect a real shutdown. Unfortunately, the lack of leadership and preparation for a fight cost us the victory. The plan was to block the roads leading to the plant with circles of cars. At the

main gate, several hundred workers waited for the cops to make their move.

About 70 police, many in riot gear, gathered 50 yards from the blocked off area. It took them a few hours to decide what to do. While the workers chanted slogans and insults, the situation grew tense. But after the initial success in blocking the roads, the absence of a plan of action lost us the initiative. The strikers had time to rush the plant; with bold leadership the workers could have seized it and car-

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ried out a real shutdown, a sit-down strike inside the factory. But the leaders had no plans to shut the plant down beyond the one day symbolic effort.

Although we had the advantage of numbers, the cops were armed and the workers weren't. And at the pre-picket meeting the goal of nonviolence had been reasserted and stressed. This, however, made it impossible to keep the cops from removing the roadblock. How do you stop police without using force? You could feel the confusion and indecision in the air: when the cops come, do we fight or retreat?

While workers stood by, the cops brought in a van to pull a car off the road, thus breaking the circle. The police were then able to enter and begin arresting picketers one by one. Workers pushed and shoved but no real blows were landed: we had not been prepared to fight back. Many of us were certain that we had the forces to win if we had fought.

Despite the pacifist strategy, there was enough resistance to make the cops think twice. After four or five arrests they looked nervous, fearful that the showing might give way to all-out fighting. At this point they tossed in a smoke bomb, possibly to test the wind but really as a pretext for declaring the picket a riot and using tear gas against us. With the gas attack the workers were driven back and a police riot ensued. Arrested workers were now beaten by the cops; Ray Rogers was pulled from his car on the other side of town; and a warrant was issued for Jim Guyette's arrest too.

All this should have surprised no one. For days sheriff Wayne Goodnature (1) had talked of "making police history." He boasted of his preparations: attack dogs, tear gas and stun guns. Thus he was on record as threatening violence whether the strikers were

peaceful or not. In truth, a nonviolent plant shutdown was doomed to fail. It takes force, or the credible threat of force, to stop scabs. (Despite the official pacifism, one popular button read, "Pick a scab; make it bleed.") P-9's effort to deny this disarmed only workers, not the cops. Not preparing to defend the action meant using the workers as sacrificial victims for boycott publicity that could never win the strike.

Exposing workers to police violence and arrest has clearly led to demoralization. Many P-9ers held back from the confrontation on April 11 because they had been arrested at previous encounters. They didn't see the point of going to jail in another non-winning action. Besides, NRFAC and P-9's major effort had gone into publicizing the April 12 rally under the slogan "Shut Down Hormel" While the April 12 rally drew about 3500 people, even more than in February, it was clearly less spirited, and understandably so. Many were disappointed by NRFAC's false promise of shutting down the plant (on a Saturday, when it is closed). Guyette, speaking despite the warrant out for his arrest, continued to spread false optimism in the boycott as a substitute for the action needed to win the strike.

NRFAC's was not the only misleadership around. An important role was played by Jake Cooper, a veteran of the massive 1934 truckers strike in Minneapolis led by the Trotskyists (Cooper today is affiliated to the Socialist Action group). His experience and his organization of food caravans for the strikers gave him considerable prestige inside P-9, but he did not use it to pose an alternative strategy. Speaking at the Thursday night meeting before the attempted shutdown, he admitted that the boycott couldn't win the strike but did not differentiate himself from the pacifist approach of the Guyette team; indeed, he was regarded as one of the main architects of the (ill-prepared) plan of action.

THE JESSE JACKSON SHOW

There was also an intervention by Jesse Jackson, the Democratic presidential politician who knows even more than Ray Rogers about attracting publicity. Invited by P-9 to address the April support rally, he offered instead to mediate; he ended up speaking with Hormel officials and the cops as well as the jailed workers (whom he led in a chorus of "We Shall Overcome"). His point was to reinforce P-9's nonviolent strategy with a dose of civil rights pacifism, and he won deserved praise from Sheriff Goodnature:

"He's the last hope for a resolution of this strike. We've all been reacting. I've been overreacting. He's put some calm in this." (Chicago Tribune, April 14.)

Austin's chief cop was not promising to stop bashing heads at the plant gates and throwing picketers in jail; he probably felt a bit foolish about overpreparing for a milder protest than he had expected from the mood of the workers. His blessing of Jackson is

based on the sure knowledge that goodwill pacifism directed at the workers can only help Hormel. Unfortunately, P-9's no-win strategy allows demoralized workers to look to such disarming mediation as a way out.

THE WAY TO WIN

Through their struggle P-9ers have jumped far to the left of their "left" supporters. To break out of the confines of an isolated strike, they will have to overcome the narrow political approach of NRFAC. P-9 workers see themselves leading a movement, a national struggle against concessions. Their refusal to accept concessions has led to a fight with the UFCW international, a fight that has led many workers to conclude that a struggle for a new leadership throughout the AFL-CIO is needed.

This reflects the life and death character of P-9ers' struggle to save their union and their jobs. In effect they have put the question to the entire workers movement: which side are you on? Yes, P-9 needs money and material assistance. But not at the expense of waging a resolute struggle against concessions. The real strength of the P-9 strike is that it's doing what all unions should be doing -- saying "no more concessions." P-9 should ask for more than applause and money. It should demand that others follow its example. This means a fight inside the labor movement for new leadership.

The road to victory for the strike begins with mass action to really shut down the Austin plant. Yet P-9's leaders continue to spread the illusion that the consumer boycott will save them and that time is on their side. But this is what workers have been told all along. Guyette and Rogers have admitted they never expected Hormel to reopen with scabs. Then too they said time was on their side, but the result was that Hormel regained the initiative. Now time is running out. The Guyette leadership must abandon its strategy of legalism, pacifism, playing by the bosses' rules and hiding behind the feeble boycott -- and face the real job of mobilizing workers for mass action in Austin, in Minnesota and throughout the

country. Here is what has to be done.

MOBILIZE THE RANKS OF MINNESOTA LABOR: BUILD MILITANT MASS PICKETLINES, ORGANIZE SELF-DEFENSE! A real attempt to shut down Austin needs mass support from Minnesota workers and workers around the country. It means mass picketlines to keep out scabs and it means mass self defense against the cops and scabs. An avalanche of support can still be won if workers and farmers are warned of what they face if P-9 loses.

TURN THE STRIKE INTO A SIT-DOWN STRIKE -- SEIZE THE PLANT! Pacifist sit-ins and civil disobedience only show weakness and lead to defeat. Austin meat-packers built the union with a sit-down in 1933. Now they must use the tactic to save their union.

WORKERS NEED A GENERAL STRIKE -- FIGHT FOR A NEW LEADERSHIP! The Austin strike shows why workers must unite and overcome the limits of isolated strikes. Pure trade unionism is not enough: strikes must become openly political and confront the capitalist state. Preparations must be made to call out all Minnesota workers if the Guard is brought back.

Real political action by the working class is called for, not the electoralist trap of the labor bureaucrats and glad-handing politicians. Workers must not forget the absolutely predictable role of their Democratic "friend" Perpich. The need for a general strike fight for a new leadership to mobilize the ranks of labor for the struggles ahead.

The Hormel strike is in extreme danger. It can still seize victory from the jaws of defeat. A win over Hormel would encourage all workers to fight concessions. This is what the bosses fear. This is why they have thrown everything at this strike. Their message is that isolated strikes, no matter how militant, will be crushed. Workers do not need to agree on the need for socialism to understand that we must have united mass action. The only answer is to shut down the Austin plant and fight against the AFL-CIO bureaucracy for a general strike against union-busting and concessions.

April 20, 1986