

LABOR IS ON THE MARCH

DETROIT 1937: From Cadillac Square to Hamtramck, from downtown hotels to Ford's River Rouge plant, workers have energized southeastern Michigan this year with their demands for justice, job security, and wages they can live on.

Throughout the spring, sitdowns and strikes by workers seeking to unionize swept through auto and parts plants, department stores, restaurants, hotels, cigar factories and other workplaces, following the lead of workers in Flint who won their first contract February 11 after a sitdown strike that began December 30. "The revolution is here," one worried business executive declared.

The media estimate that 35,000 workers have sat down on the job, while 100,000 more have walked picketlines outside. In all, nearly 130 factories, offices, and stores have been struck — some for as long as six weeks.

Even the media themselves haven't been spared. Sixty-five printing pressmen sat down at the *Detroit News*, costing the paper three editions in a successful fight for better working conditions. The *News* began running a daily box score of "plants closed by sit-downs or lockouts."

Organizing victories abounded. By April, the UAW's membership was nearly a quarter-million, while the Detroit Federation of Labor reported that 16,000 new members and 17 new affiliates had signed up as of June.

150,000 JOIN RALLY

Labor's rising spirit was most evident at a mass rally of 150,000 workers in Cadillac Square March 23 supporting the sitdown strikers' cause.

Many at the rally recalled how just five years earlier, thousands had marched in a funeral procession nearby for the workers shot and killed at what has become known as the Ford Hunger March, when peaceful protesters went to Ford's Rouge plant petitioning for relief and health care for Depression-hit unemployed.

"We came for bread," one Hunger March veteran recalled, in the words of a funeral sign. "Ford fed us bullets."

Underscoring the challenges still felt by workers five years later was the sight of bloodied UAW organizers at the Miller Road overpass in Dearborn this past May 26, when company goons under the direction of Harry Bennett beat up auto workers seeking to distribute union leaflets.

SUPPORT KEEPS GROWING

As workers keep organizing, support for their efforts has been growing in many quarters including the religious community.



Cadillac Square Rally: Some 150,000 workers turned out for this rally to support their striking brothers and sisters on March 23, 1937.

At the Howard Street Mission, a homeless shelter downtown, the Rev. Lewis Bradford, a Methodist minister, broadcast a radio show, *The Forgotten Man's Hour*, on WXYZ every Thursday, interviewing the homeless and unemployed, bringing their stories to the public.

Bradford had left his job as a full-time minister with its guaranteed income because, he said, he felt his calling was to work with poor and working people. He and his wife, Ella, came to Detroit to seek medical aid for his daughter, Little Ella.

He went to work at the Department of Public Welfare, visiting Hoovervilles and trying to help jobless and homeless workers. His family reported that one day on his way home from work, he gave away his last dollar, only to come home to find there was no food in the house.

His radio show was a welcome counterpoint to the radio show of another man of the cloth, the Rev. Charles Coughlin of Royal Oak. Coughlin's *Hour of Power* show on WJR, unlike Bradford's, has taken an angry tone, declaring that "international financiers," code words for Jews, are behind the nation's economic travails.

TRAGEDY AT FORD

In 1936, Bradford went to work at the Ford River Rouge plant, both to earn money for surgery needed by Little Ella, and to try to bridge the gap he saw growing between labor and management.

"Father wanted to establish an Insti-

tute of Human Relations" at the plant, explained his son Curtis. "He thought that with a personal understanding of the men, he might be able to set up a spiritual approach to their problems." He had been disturbed to see how Ford worker, once they went through the plant gate, had seemed to change personality, becoming suspicious and hostile. They worked under constant surveillance by Harry Bennett's Service Department, to whom any sign of unionism could mean instant dismissal.

On November 25, Bradford tried to set up a meeting between plant officials and visiting British social reformer Muriel Lester, but was rebuffed. That night, Ella received a threatening phone call at 1:30 a.m.

Two days later, Bradford was found unconscious on the shop floor in a remote part of the Rouge. He never regained consciousness and died three days later at the age of 51.

His foreman, appearing nervous in a meeting with Ella, told her that her husband had fallen, adding "everybody's gotta die sometime," she reported. "I had all that I could do to keep from screaming at him hysterically, and tell him he was lying and he knew it."

Ella could not even get a copy of the autopsy report, which could have confirmed her suspicions of foul play.

Funeral services were held at the Howard Street Mission, at Central

Methodist Church on Grand Circus Park, and also at the Rouge glass plant, where fellow workers took up a collection and gave Ella \$80, almost all of it in coins.

"I knew that it was a love offering which some of them could ill afford," Ella said.

"The boys at the glass house wanted you to have this," one worker told her. "I was always a better man after I talked with Brad."

A NOTE FROM 2004

More than sixty years after Lewis Bradford's death, Steve Jones, a jazz musician whose grandfather was Ella Bradford's cousin, went looking for the autopsy report. Cassandra Lewis in the Wayne County Medical Examiner's office, searched for two months and found it.

"Multiple stellar fractures," the handwritten report said, resulted in a fractured skull. Reading the report, the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Carl J. Schmidt, M.D., reported on July 28, 2001, that the wounds were "consistent with multiple blunt trauma to the head, such as a beating. This death should probably be classified as a homicide ... there is no reason to think this was an accident."

Jones composed this jazz opera so that Lewis Bradford and others who struggled for justice in the 1930s will not be forgotten.

◆ LABOR IS ON THE MARCH ◆

Clockwise from top: Women support sit-downers by picketing Chrysler's Jefferson Ave. plant; 150,000 rally at Cadillac Square; Flint sitdowners celebrate victory. Bottom: Kelsey-Hayes sitdowners keep warm.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF WALTER P. REUTHER LIBRARY, WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY



Sitdowns close 130 Detroit plants, offices

DETROIT, March 9, 1937 — Sit-down fervor reached a peak in Detroit yesterday when workers at all nine area Chrysler plants barricaded themselves inside the factories.

They were part of a wave of sitdowns in the Detroit area that have closed nearly 130 factories, offices and stores anywhere from a few hours to a few weeks.

Across the Detroit area an estimated 35,000 workers are participating in these strikes, and over 100,000 others are marching in support lines outside the plants.

The takeover at Chrysler began at 1:30 p.m. yesterday when a well-planned sit-down simultaneously closed Dodge Main, Plymouth Assembly, DeSoto, Dodge Forge, Dodge Truck, Amplex Engine, Chrysler Jefferson Avenue, Chrysler Kercheval Avenue, and Chrysler Highland Park.

About 17,000 UAW supporters, joined by hundreds more in nearby Hudson Motors plants barricaded themselves inside the Chrysler plants alone.

By late afternoon, the streets around these occupied plants were filled with thou-

sands of strikers, onlookers, and honking cars.

Jefferson Avenue looked like a World Series crowd.

The UAW moved quickly to seize control of the situation.

"Flying squadrons" of roving picketers told bar owners near the factories to stop selling liquor.

According to UAW officials, most didn't put up any argument, but contributed cigars and cigarettes to the strikers.

The leaders of Detroit's manufacturing community reacted angrily.

"If lawless men can seize an office, a factory, or a home and hold it unmolested for hours and days, they can seize it and hold it for months and years; and revolution is here," stated a leading business voice.

The Detroit Board of Commerce plans to wire the governor demanding "a militant program" to end the near-revolution.

"Detroit's international civic reputation is at stake," said a spokesman for the Board.

But UAW leaders dispelled the extreme characterizations of the business community.

"We do not want to run the plants, but we do demand recognition," stated UAW Vice President Ed Hall.

The Chrysler shutdowns have been the latest in takeovers in this area including four hotels, a dozen industrial laundries, three department stores, all city's major cigar plants, nine lumber yards, at least three printing plants, ten meat-packing plants, restaurants, coal yards, bottlers.

Kroger signs contract after 'strawberry' strike

DETROIT, May 1931 — Krogers signed a one-year contract with workers at its Green Street warehouse site ending a tumultuous episode that began when a foreman suddenly laid off two men and replaced them with strangers.

Furious, the night crew refused to unload the rest of a load of Florida strawberries.

Faced with losing half a trainload of fruit, Krogers backed down, rehired the two men, and began negotiations with the warehousemen's independent union.

The contract compels Kroger to end all discriminatory hiring policies and to guarantee a half-day's pay for each man called to work.

"This is a great victory," said 18-year-old Jimmy Hoffa, who led the warehouse workers.

Conditions at the warehouse have been deteriorating rapidly since the start of the Hoover depression in 1929.

The workers at the Green Street warehouse had to be on the job 12 hours a day but they were only paid for the hours they actually worked.

"And at 32 cents an hour, that isn't much," said warehouse worker Martin Hagerty.

The workers also criticize being paid in scrip. "If you make \$15 a week, you get about \$10 in scrip and \$5 in cash," said Bobby Holmes, a young friend of Hoffa.

"You have to spend the scrip in their stores," he complained.

Like the auto firms and other companies in this area, Krogers has refused to give its workers any job guarantees.

"We are expected to appear at the beginning of each shift, and then the foremen often give the jobs to their friends and relatives," said one young worker.

An industry analyst said that though the "strawberry boys" may have won the battle, Krogers would not accept their defeat easily.

"They'll get rid of that guy Hoffa before long," he said. "He's a troublemaker — big time."

Detroit Labor News

Special Edition for "Forgotten"
(March 2004 Premiere)

WRITERS

Shawn D. Ellis, David Elsila, Mark Gruenberg, Dick Olson and Tom Schram with stories drawn from "Working Detroit" by Steve Babson (Wayne State University Press) and the Detroit Labor News

PHOTOGRAPHS

courtesy of the Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University, Anne Drake, Shawn D. Ellis and Jim West

DESIGN

Barbara Barefield (Graphic Artists Guild)

Union leaders severely beaten at overpass near Rouge plant

DEARBORN, May 26, 1937 — Top leaders of the fledgling auto workers union were severely beaten today at the overpass near the Ford Rouge plant in Dearborn, Mich.

One UAW organizer — J.J. Kennedy — was taken to a local hospital where he is fighting for his life, and the back of Richard Merriweather was broken.

UAW leaders Walter Reuther and Dick Frankenstein had been standing in the middle of the bridge, casually chatting and posing for photographers, when a group of 35 Ford Service Department men came charging up and began to pummel the men.

His face and suit bloodied, UAW leader Walter Reuther said he had been picked "about eight different times" and thrown on his back on the concrete.

The servicemen kicked Reuther in the face, head, and other parts of his body before throwing him down the stairs.

The Ford Service Department men pulled the suit jacket of Dick Frankenstein over his head before punching and kicking the UAW vice president.

Harry Bennett, leader of the Ford Service Department, denied that his men had played any role in the attack.

But several photographers from caught the scene as it unfolded, and a major national news magazine pledged to run the story with photos.

"If *Time* publishes those pictures, we'll withdraw all further advertising from that magazine," said a Ford spokesman.

As the beating began, UAW supporters rushed to the support of the four men.



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WALTER P. REUTHER LIBRARY, WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

"When we arrived at Gate 4, we could see Brothers Reuther and Frankenstein being severely beaten," said Catherine "Bebe" Gelles, head of Local 174's Women's Auxiliary.

When she ran to pull the Ford Service Department men off one UAW man, "the three turned on me, knocking me to the ground and kicking me in the stomach, and then pushing me to the streetcar."

Reuther said that the brutality at the

gate would not deter the union organizing campaign.

"The whole world can plainly see what is going on in the Ford operations," added Frankenstein.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRADFORD FAMILY

Vision of Labor Peace Costs Pastor's Life

[Reprinted from Detroit newspaper, Dec. 2, 1937]

A vision of harmonious relations between labor and capital, of improved understanding among men, led to the death of the Rev. Lewis A. Bradford, it was revealed today.

In pursuit of his vision the Rev. Mr. Bradford got a job as a laborer in the Ford factory to study the minds of working men, to seek understanding of their problems and aims. It was while at work he fell, fracturing his skull.

Services will be held tomorrow at 2 p.m. at the Central M.E. Church, with which he was affiliated.

"Father wanted to establish an Institute of Human Relations," explained Curtis Baker Bradford, a son. "He went to officials of the Ford Company. They suggested he should work in the plant to get the viewpoint of the men.

"He thought that with a personal understanding of the men, he might be able to set up a spiritual approach to their problems so he took a job at the plant and worked there 18 months."

Besides his plans for human relations, Mr. Bradford was seeking support for a crippled children's home to be established at Mt. Clemens and for a new Howard Street Mission.

Mr. Bradford was 51. He lived at 115 West Davison Avenue. He had been in the ministry 25 years after graduating from Cornell College and attendance at Drew Theological Seminary. Beside his son he leaves his wife, Mrs. Ella Bradford, three daughters, Dorothy, Helen, and Ella; two brothers, Ralph B. and Haven; and a sister, Mrs. Helen B. Paulsen.

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talent and lives in bringing to the stage
the story of Lewis Bradford*

Welcome to the Detroit premiere of

Forgotten: The Murder at the Ford Rouge Plant



Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO

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Executive Vice-President David Hecker
Secretary-Treasurer Sandra Williams

*...and the nearly 200,000 affiliated members in
Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties*

**Keep Lewis Bradford's memory alive by volunteering
on a picket line once a month in support of a group of workers
who struggle for social and economic justice.
It's a small price to pay in the struggle by others.**

◆ LABOR IS ON THE MARCH ◆

Thousands protest police at Republic Steel plant in Monroe



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WALTER P. REUTHER LIBRARY, WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

May 1937

Three days after 400 "special" police used tear gas and violence to break up picket lines outside Republic Steel's Newton Steel Plant (above), thousands of union supporters marched in protest in Monroe, Mich.

"We march in solidarity with the steelworkers," said UAW Local 212 President Emil Mazey, a local firebrand.

Local union officials protested the use of tear gas and other munitions by the "special" police who had been hired by the city and armed by the company.

"The Wayne County Gun Commission has prohibited employer purchases for use in labor disputes," said one labor official.

But this paper has learned that this past June the company's chief of plant police, arranged to have the mayor of River Rouge buy the munitions and secretly transfer them to the company.

"We intend to bring charges against Stanley Ferguson for unlawful possession of tear gas," said the head of the gun commission.

"We are also looking into ties between Ferguson and local criminal elements," the



commission said in a statement released yesterday.

The strife at the downriver plant has come on the heels of a nationwide strike of 75,000 steelworkers against the "Little Steel" companies — Republic, Bethlehem and Inland — that refused to follow U.S. Steel's lead in recognizing the Steel Workers Organizing Committee.

Nationwide 18 people have been killed including ten killed in Chicago without warning during a peaceful Memorial Day assembly.

Congratulations

to the
'FORGOTTEN'
cast and crew

Dan, Karen & Claire McCarthy
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Nancy Brigham
Dave & Katie Elsila
Kari Elsila & Michael Buescher
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Jamie Elsila
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Ford Hunger Marchers faced bullets and tear gas as they approached the Rouge plant with a petition March 7, 1932.

Labor Briefs

Excerpted from the
Detroit Labor News 1937

Census Shows 122 Thousand Jobless Here

The final figures in the census of unemployed conducted in Detroit by the Post Office shows that there are 122,000 workers here without employment.

Big Business appears to be attempting to provoke another depression by sabotaging the entire program of President Roosevelt.

Brewery Drivers Sign Up Two More Distributors Here

The Brewery Drivers' Union, Local 28, continued its organization drive this week when it signed agreements with the Old Style Vienna distributors and the Goodwill Beer Distributors, Detroit, agents for out of town brews.

Protest Ford Guards' Attack on UAW Organizers

A mass meeting to protest the attack by Ford Company guards upon leaders and members of the United Automobile Workers union who attempted to distribute leaflets at the Ford Rouge plant on Wednesday will be held Tuesday evening, June 1, at the State Fair Coliseum. The meeting is sponsored jointly by the Civil Rights Conference and the International Union, UAW.

NLRB Holds Beard Hearing

Hearings on the charges that the Beard Printing Co., Detroit, rotary printing concern, discriminated against two Union members of the Printing Pressmen's union, were held this week by the National Labor Relations Board.

Hatchetmen of Ford's Assault UAW Workers

Eighteen members of the United Automobile Workers of America, engaged in the house to house distribution of the *United Automobile Worker*, were driven out of Inkster at 2 p.m. Thursday by a force of approximately 40 servicemen of the Ford Motor Co., Zygmund Dobrzynski, Detroit Ford organizational director, charge. Six men were surrounded by a group of 40 men who had suddenly appeared in cars. The newcomers wore the badges of Ford servicemen and a number carried rubber hose and pieces of pipe.

It's Jitters Time at Hudson's

There isn't any strike at the huge department store of the J.L. Hudson Co. here, and there won't be, if the management of the store has anything to say about it. And what they have to say about it is the placing of Detroit Police at each door and a group of six to a dozen strong-arm men inside each entrance waiting ... waiting for a whistle to blow or someone to yell "strike."

IN OTHER HEADLINES ...

New members are named to Labor Day Committee ... Minimum Pay Rate Established for Dossin's Workers; Agreement Cuts Hours One-Third ... Firemen Ask 'Yes' Vote on Pension Amendment April 5 ... Film Handlers Sign 3 Closed Shop Contracts. ... Polish News Tries To Drive Down Pay Scale of Unions ... Drivers Demand Closed Shop in Laundries Here.

60,000 march to mourn four slain during Ford Hunger March

March 1932

Over 60,000 Detroiters marched down Woodward Avenue to Grand Circus Park to protest the deaths of four men killed by police and guards five days ago during the Hunger March near the Ford Dearborn plant.

The marchers paraded under a permit granted by Detroit Mayor Frank Murphy to protest not only the deaths of Joe York — district organizer of the Young Communist League, Coleman Leny, Joe DeBlasio and Joe Bissell but the injuries suffered by nearly 60 unarmed demonstrators including Curtis Williams, who is fighting for his life.

The Hunger March, led by Detroit's Unemployed Councils, had marched to Ford with petitions demanding jobs, medical relief and emergency aid for the unemployed.

Henry Ford's statements that "the average man won't really work unless he is caught and cannot get out of it," had infuriated the unemployed workers, many of them former employees of Ford.

After firemen prepared to douse the Hunger Marchers with water, police used tear gas to try to break up the crowd, and the marchers responded with rocks and pieces of tear gas from a nearby dump.

Then "all hell broke loose," according to Ray Pillsbury, a local photographer.

"Policemen and guards leveled their

guns and pulled the triggers. I would guess that hundreds of shots were fired into the mob," he said.

The Detroit Federation of Labor, while disassociating itself from the Hunger Marchers' Communist leaders, condemned the fatal violence of Dearborn and company police in strong terms.

In a sign of shifting community attitudes, the *Detroit Times*, owned by the Hearst family, also has condemned the deaths.

"The opposition offered by Dearborn police evidently changed an orderly demonstration into a riot, with death and bloodshed, its toll," said the *Times*.

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Bush!

Dick and Deb Olson

We Salute the Ford Hunger Marchers
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James V. Settles, Director

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The Murder at the Ford Rouge Plant

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A benefit for the Michigan Labor History Society

ComposerSteve Jones
 Director.....Elise Bryant
 Music Director.....Bill Meyer

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Nurse Attendant.....Russanne Bucci
 Ella BradfordStephanie Pascaris*
 Little Ella.....Katie Nelson
 Henry FordMark Moultrup
 Lewis Bradford.....Jason Landis
 ForemanMike Carluccio
 Allen JohnsonMitch McMurren
 Joe CantorJim Salerno
 Rosie JohnsonLynn Marie Smith
 Frank JacksonSam Kirkland
 Father Coughlin.....Davis Gloff
 Harry Bennett.....Henry Nelson
 Clara Ford.....D. Yarrow Halstead
 Hospital AttendantDenise Dotson

WORKERS CHORUS

Melvin Beasley, Russanne Bucci, Mike Carluccio, Denise Dotson, Sandra Esparza Deering, Kae Halonen, Stephen Jones, Sam Kirkland, Jason Landis, Malinda Lewis, John "Bruce" Liles, Clara Leavell, Susan Newell, Stephanie Pascaris,* Gordon Patton, Jim Salerno, Lisha M. Sly, DaJuanny Taylor, Maurice "Skip" Turner

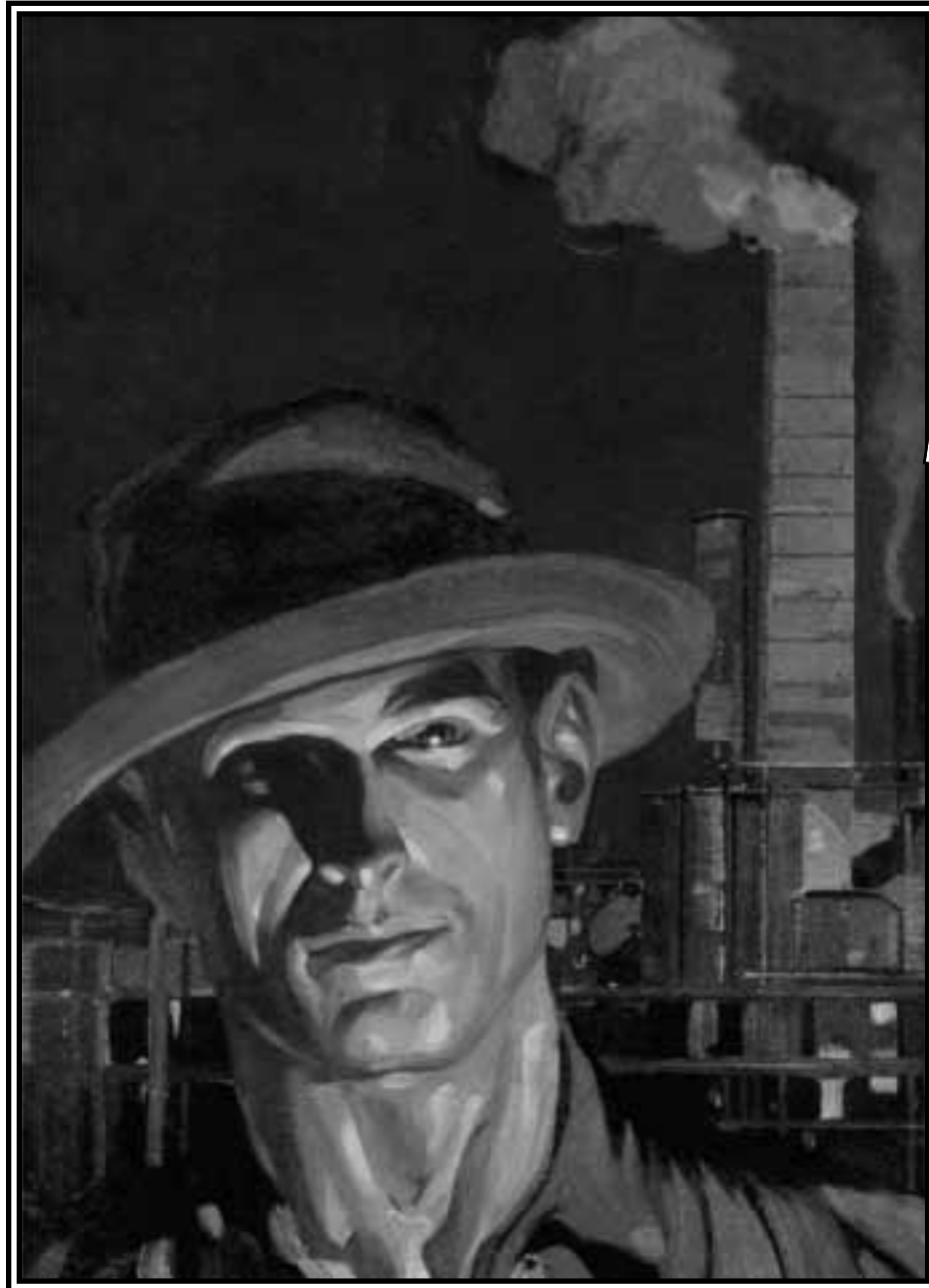
Dancers: Melanie Bruss, Jenny Phan

Hour of Power Quartet:

Mike Carluccio, D. Yarrow Halstead, Stephen Jones, Mike Carluccio.

Forgotten Man's Hour Quartet: Jason Landis, Mitch McMurren, Stephanie Pascaris,* Lynn Marie Smith.

Ford Hunger March: John "Bruce" Liles as Joe York; Kae Halonen as Joe York's mother; Stephen Jones as Joe DiBlasio; Susan Newell as Joe DiBlasio's wife; DaJuanny Taylor as Curtis Williams; Sam Kirkland as Curtis Williams' father; Gordon Patton as Coleman Leny; and Jim Salerno as Joe Bussell.



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Steve JonesWriter/Composer
 Elise Bryant.....Director
 Bill MeyerMusic Director
 Anne Drake.....Assistant Director
 Dave ElsilaExecutive Producer
 Shaun NethercottManaging Producer
 Alisa Lomax.....Production Manager
 Elaine (Hendriks) Smith*.....Production
 Stage Manager
 Leslie LoveMarygrove Theatre
 Manager
 Sister Brenda MoonHouse Manager
 Corretha MontagueAss't. House
 Manager
 Scarlett JadeCostume Designer
 Judi Jewel.....Hair/Makeup
 Ron Burns Set/Lighting Designer
 Lateefah B-Dixon.....Properties Master
 Victor Hood.....Sound Manager

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 Bill Meyer. Keyboards, Director
 Jeff Trudell Drums

*Members, Detroit Federation of Musicians,
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Additional music by Maurice Sugar

The Michigan Labor History Society thanks the following unions for their Solidarity and their support of 'Forgotten'

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 Detroit Federation of Musicians, Local 5 • Theatrical Wardrobe Union • Painters**

**We will be with you in your struggles now and in the future
 To win justice for your members in the performing arts and other industries.**

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

ELLA BRADFORD	wife of Lewis Bradford
ALLEN JOHNSON	radio announcer at WXYZ who is also an unemployed worker, later a co-worker of Bradford's at Ford; husband of Rosie
HENRY FORD	industrialist; husband of Clara Ford
LEWIS BRADFORD	former minister; becomes an organizer at the River Rouge plant; husband of Ella
ROSIE JOHNSON	unemployed woman, becomes a union organizer; wife of Allen Johnson
FATHER CHARLES COUGHLIN	the "radio priest" who used his broadcasts and publications to further anti-Semitism and fascism in the 1930s
HARRY BENNETT	Ford's "enforcer"
CLARA FORD	wife of Henry Ford

ACT 1:

Detroit and Dearborn, Michigan: 1930s

Overture

Keep the Wheels Rolling On	<i>Allen Johnson with Henry Ford and the entire cast</i>
You're Gone Again/How Can I Explain	<i>Ella and Lewis Bradford</i>
We Can Start Again	<i>Lewis Bradford</i>
The Forgotten Man's Hour	<i>Allen and Rosie Johnson, Ella and Lewis Bradford, Joe Cantor, Frank Jackson</i>
The Hour of Power/Cleanse Ourselves	<i>Father Coughlin and the Hour of Power Choir/Lewis Bradford and the Troupe</i>
I Invented Auto-Love	<i>Henry Ford</i>
The Ford Hunger March	<i>Rosie Johnson and the Workers Chorus</i>
You'll Be Like My Son	<i>Henry Ford and Harry Bennett</i>
I Got a Job/I Know the Fear	<i>Lewis Bradford and Harry Bennett</i>
When You Organize	<i>Lewis Bradford and the Troupe</i>
Bradford You Are Dreamin'	<i>Allen Johnson</i>
It's About Time	<i>Lewis Bradford with Ella Bradford and Rosie Johnson</i>
A New Beauty	<i>Lewis Bradford</i>
Sit Down (by Maurice Sugar)	<i>Rosie Johnson and the Workers Chorus</i>
I'm Here for You	<i>Lewis and Ella Bradford</i>
Radio, Guns and Money	<i>Father Coughlin, Harry Bennett, Henry Ford</i>

INTERMISSION

ACT 2:

Detroit and Dearborn, Michigan, May-December, 1937

Shake Hands with the Devil	<i>Clara Ford</i>
Cleanse Ourselves (reprise)	<i>Father Coughlin and the Hour of Power Radio Choir/Lewis Bradford and the Troupe</i>
We Speak Louder than Machines	<i>Rosie Johnson and the Workers Chorus</i>
The Stakes Are High	<i>Henry Ford, Harry Bennett, and Father Coughlin</i>
Battle of the Overpass	<i>Allen Johnson and the Troupe</i>
I Got a Bad, Bad Feeling	<i>Ella Bradford</i>
Let's Take a Walk	<i>Harry Bennett</i>
I Cannot Be Silent	<i>Lewis Bradford</i>
Bradford I Have Got a Job for You	<i>Foreman</i>
We Will All Forget	<i>Hospital attendant, Ella Bradford, Harry Bennett</i>
I'm Here For You (reprise)	<i>Ella Bradford</i>
We Remember You	<i>Rosie and Allen Johnson, Workers Chorus, Ella Bradford</i>

EPILOGUE

After receiving more threats, the widow and her children left Detroit, never to return. Sixty-five years later, there are grandchildren and great-grandchildren and others who know Lewis's story and keep it alive. Lewis Bradford is not forgotten.

In 1941, after years of struggle, the United Auto Workers was on the verge of winning a contract at the Ford Motor Company. Henry Ford declared he would shut down all the plants worldwide before he would sign with the union. Clara Ford threatened to divorce Henry if he didn't come to an agreement with the union, and the next day he signed the most far-reaching contract ever in the auto industry. Today, UAW Local 600 at the Rouge plant is a strong, militant local with a fighting tradition.



Notes on the characters portrayed in 'Forgotten'

Composer Steve Jones combines historical scholarship with artistic creativity to portray Lewis and Ella Bradford, Henry and Clara Ford, Harry Bennett, and Charles Coughlin in "Forgotten."

Lewis Bradford, a Methodist minister, worked with the poor and homeless in Detroit at the Howard Street Mission where he hosted a radio show until he died of injuries suffered at the Ford River Rouge plant in November, 1937.

Ella Bradford, his wife, kept a diary in which she recounted her suspicions that Lewis had met with foul play.

Harry Bennett, an ex-boxer, was Henry Ford's right-hand man, heading the notorious Service Dept., which maintained a network of spies throughout the Ford plant. Ford asked Bennett to be his "eyes and ears" and his work included keeping Ford workers out of the union, which he described as "irresponsible" and "un-American."

Charles Coughlin, the Royal Oak radio priest, quoted from Nazi propaganda in his "Hour of Power" broadcasts and introduced a series of articles on the notorious anti-Semitic forgery, *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. In 1937, he tried to form an anti-union "workers council" at the Rouge in which Jews would not be welcome. A Bennett spy, Ralph Rimar, testified, "It was an open secret among all of us that the company was collaborating with Fr. Coughlin in the era of his best violent, anti-democratic oratory." Unlike Coughlin, many other Catholic leaders and trade-unionists, like Dorothy Day, of the Catholic Worker movement, and the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists brought pro-union and humanistic messages to Catholic workers. Coughlin was eventually taken off the air.

Henry Ford, the auto pioneer, was a complex character who fought unionization yet, when workers voted in the UAW in 1941, signed the best auto contract up to that time. He published anti-Semitic material in his *Dearborn Independent* and received an award from the Nazi government that included a swastika medal. Although he had a puritanical reputation, biographers report that he would view pornographic movies with Bennett and had affairs with servant girls.

Clara Ford had a tense relationship with Henry at times, and disliked Bennett whom she felt was influencing her husband in unsavory ways. She threatened to divorce Henry in 1941.



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THANKS FROM THE COMPOSER

Thanks to the actors, musicians, and the unsung helpers behind the scenes who helped make this show happen. It has been a pleasure to be a part of this show.

In addition to folks putting on the show tonight, a number of people helped in the research and development of *Forgotten*. First, I'd like to thank the grandchildren of Ella and Lewis, including Ella-Kari Lofffield, Kate Bates, Lewis Bradford, Walter Bradford, Lewis Conn, Lore Lofffield DeBower and Michael Kelsay, and Lewis and Ella's son-in-law, Bob Lofffield.

Thanks also to other family, including Coleman Baker, Alan Fritts, Dorothy Jones, Jinny Jones, Lucy Jones, Peter Jones, Phil Jones, Beth Mast, Don Messersmith, Sherry Messersmith, Ollie Moles, Pat Moles, and Holly Syrrakos. Others who helped include Alberta Asmer, Melanie Bazil, Elise Bryant, Mary Culver, Mary Daniels, Dave Elsila, Katie Elsila, George Fulginiti-Shakar, Joe Glazer, Millie Glazer, Willard Hunter, Cassandra Lee, Charlie Micallef, Kathy Micallef, Pat Moles, Shaun Nethercott, Wes Nethercott, Victor Reuther, Carl Schmidt, Sue Schurman, Frank Sladen, Mike Smith, Bill Wylie-Kellerman, Jeanie Wylie-Kellerman. Also thanks to my wife Donna Messersmith Jones and our children Greg and Melanie.

Several books helped shape the story including *Working Detroit* by Steve Babson and others; *Walter Reuther* by Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Flivver King* by Upton Sinclair, *The Ford Hunger March* by Maurice Sugar, *American Odyssey*, by Robert Conot, *The Legend of Henry Ford* by Keith Sward, *The Brothers Reuther* by Victor Reuther, *Brother Bill McKie: Building the Union at Ford* by Phillip Bonosky, *The CIO* by Robert Zieger, *Radio Priest: Father Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio*, by Donald Warren, and *Ford: The Men and the Machine* by Robert Lacey.

Steve Jones

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gram, School of Labor and Industrial Relations, Michigan State University; and "Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives" at MSU.

Rehearsal support: Special thanks to Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Detroit for generously providing the space for *Forgotten* rehearsals for four weeks.

Lewis and Ella Bradford,
and the Ford River
Rouge plant.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BRADFORD FAMILY



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Thanks to the following unions and institutions without whose solidarity and support this Detroit production of *Forgotten* would not have been possible:

Actors Equity Association, AFL-CIO
Benson Ford Research Center
Detroit Area Library Network
Detroit Department of Cultural Affairs and the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs
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Matrix Theatre Company
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Michigan Labor History Society
Plowshares Theatre Company
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Theatrical Wardrobe Union
UAW Local 600
UAW Region 1A
UAW-Ford National Programs Center

Special thanks to these individuals who gave of their time and resources for the Detroit production of *Forgotten*:

Alberta Asmar, who patiently filled countless ticket orders until we were sold out!

Barbara Barefield, for graphic design services including the design of this program.

Holly Syrrakos, for designing the poster.

"Friends of *Forgotten*" Committee:

Co-chairs: Lisa Canada and Skip Turner; Julie Barton, Nancy Brigham, Shawn Ellis, Dave Elsila, Katie Elsila, Laura Johnstone, Dan McCarthy, Sister Brenda Moon, Roger Kerson, Ann Kerwin, Mike Kerwin, Dick Olson, Oscar Paskal, Dolores Paskal, Dia Pearce, Bill Wylie-Kellerman, Jeanie Wylie-Kellerman.

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Videos: Bob Ingalls, Rick Sherman, Larry Matthews (WPON), Shawn D. Ellis.

DEVELOPMENT OF 'FORGOTTEN'

The following institutions and unions provided generous help in the early development and production of *Forgotten* and its preview performances at the George Meany Center in Silver Spring, Md., in May, 2003:

Yip Harburg Foundation
Puffin Foundation
Maryland State Arts Council
George Meany Center for Labor Studies — the National Labor College
Service Employees International Union, AFL-CIO
Communications Workers of America

WHO'S WHO IN 'FORGOTTEN'



Steve Jones (composer) lives in Maryland, where he is a jazz musician and teacher, and can often be found sharing music at union events with his brother Peter and others. He is a

member of the American Federation of Musicians Local 161-710. His grandfather was Ella Bradford's first cousin.



Elise Bryant (director) was raised in Detroit, the daughter of Albert Bryant, a member of UAW Local 600 who worked for more than 30 years at the Rouge plant. For almost 20

years, she worked in labor theater in Detroit and Ann Arbor and has written many plays including *Workin' for a Livin'*. Currently she teaches at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies-National Labor College in Silver Spring, Maryland, which provided her with the opportunity to return to Detroit for six weeks to direct this production of *Forgotten*.



Bill Meyer (music director) composes and arranges for TV and radio, and has been keyboardist for several Broadway shows including *Guys and Dolls*, *Wizard of Oz*,

Mama Mia, and *The Rockettes*. He is music director for Motown's Martha Reeves and the Latin group La Inspiracion, and tours with Marcus Belgrave's Tribute to Louis Armstrong. His social activism is reflected in his productions of the Detroit Tribute to Paul Robeson and Barbara Dane Returns. He belongs to Detroit Federation of Musicians, Local 5.



Davis Gloff (Fr. Coughlin) has been a performer, announcer, lecturer, teacher, pianist, clinician, composer, and commentator on music for over 35 years. A graduate of Wayne

State University, he has sung and acted in opera, oratorio, concert, and recitals throughout the U.S. and has performed with the Michigan Opera Theatre, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and other orchestras. He is a member of the Piccolo Opera Co. and currently is weekday morning announcer on ClassicalMusicAmerica.com.



D. Yarrow Halstead (Clara Ford; Hour of Power quartet/Elizabeth Hanglin; workers chorus/Freddie Mertz) sings with the MA Song Circle, an informal gathering of

women providing support and renewal for self and others. She also performs with the group Sacred Song, and drums with the Flowering Tree Lodge. She has appeared in Worker's Lives/Workers Stories and the Common Ground Theatre Ensemble. A massage therapist, she is a former member of IWW Local 610, UAW Local 735, and AFSCME.



Jason Landis (Lewis Bradford) has performed on stage in Detroit and Chicago, most recently as Dr. Henry Jekyll and Mr. Edward Hyde with the Birmingham Village Players' production of

Jekyll and Hyde. He played Mike in *Working*, Marty in *The House of Yes*, and Stine in *City of Angels* at Columbia College. He thanks his family for their support.



Mitchell Q. McMurren (Allen Johnson), a graduate of Michigan State University in theater/social science, is returning to acting after a long hiatus. Recent productions include

Side Show with the Birmingham Village Players and a movie debut in the soon to be released independent film drama *An Apology to the Dead*. When not acting, he works for Total Health Care Inc.



Mark Moultrup (Henry Ford) has been a working pianist, vocalist, composer, and arranger for more than 25 years. He has released three CDs, and has performed with

artists of many genres, including jazz, Motown and pop. He is a member of Detroit Federation of Musicians, Local 5.



Henry Nelson (Harry Bennett) performed in the Detroit Actors Guild production of *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding* and was an understudy in the Meadowbrook Theater production of

Little Shop of Horrors. He is a singer with the Imperial Rhythm Section and has been in numerous productions of The Players theater group in Detroit.



Katie Nelson (Little Ella) is, at the tender age of 7, already a veteran of the stage. She has appeared in the Detroit production of *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding* and in productions with

the Turning Pointe Dance Co. in St. Clair Shores. She has recently been seen on

Comcast Cable as a reader for the Lanse Creuse School District..



Stephanie Pascaris* (Ella Bradford) returned home to Michigan after touring the East Coast with an improv comedy troupe. She has worked for Mosaic Youth Theatre of De-

troit and Boarshead Theatre in Lansing. Recent roles include Lizzy Sweeny in *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, Merilee in *An Adult Evening of Shel Silverstein*, and Carley in *The Most Massive Woman Wins*. She is a member of Actors Equity Association.



Lynn Marie Smith (Rosie Johnson) is a singer-songwriter whose debut album with Infinity recording artist Natures Divine reached number five on the Billboard charts. A labor ac-

tivist, she has performed at Greenfield Village, Detroit's Laborfest, the dedication of the Labor Legacy Landmark in Detroit, and on numerous picketlines and at rallies. She is an organizer with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 24.



Melvin Beasley (workers chorus) is a native Detroit who has been performing on stage for nearly ten years. His theatrical credits include *The Crucible*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *To Kill*

a Mockingbird, and *La Cage Aux Folles*. He is currently shooting a pilot for a TV show and also is attending the Detroit Repertory Theatre actors' workshop.



Russanne Bucci (workers chorus/Mary Corio Bucci) worked with Common Ground Theatre Ensemble of Ann Arbor before going to Philadelphia, where she worked as a pub-

lic radio producer and trainer in diversity and intercultural communication. She now works as a teacher in a performing arts high school and values being part of a production that shares such powerful history as *Forgotten*. Most of her family members have been union members and her brother is a UAW representative in Local 1281.



Michael Carluccio (foreman, workers chorus) is a vocalist who has opened for Al Martino, Bobby Vinton, and The Gaylords and has performed at the Fisher and Fox theaters in Detroit as well as the

Michigan State Fair. A war veteran, he has performed vintage and original songs at events sponsored by the UAW, Daimler-Chrysler and Delta Dental and helped raise \$40,000 for the World War II memorial fund. His premiere album, *Teach Me Tonight*, was recorded with the Eddie DeSantis Orchestra.



Denise Dotson (hospital attendant Johnnie Mae and workers chorus/Clo Teal) is an actress, jazz singer, and artist. She has appeared in local productions of

The Wiz, *Tambourines to Glory*, *God's Trombones*, *Saint, A House Divided*, and *Perilous Times*. She has sung at Eva's Place, the Summit, the Money Tree, the St. Regis Hotel, and other venues. She owns Praise Avenue Detroit, a shop featuring handpainted inspirational arts and crafts.



Sandra Esparza Deering (workers chorus, Geraldine) is the daughter of immigrant parents from Mexico. Her father was a member of the Teamsters. A union organizer and activist

for the past 16 years, she is a skilled trades journeywoman pipefitter service worker with CMS Energy, and a part-time national organizer for the Utility Workers Union of America, a union that she also serves as steward, trustee, and alternate delegate. She received the Bread and Roses Award from the University of Michigan summer school for women workers.



Kae Halonen (workers chorus/Christina Arsenau) grew up in a Finnish-American working-class family that emphasized the importance of singing, theater, and social consciousness.

A singer, violinist, and mandolin player, she frequently joins husband Sam Stark singing a variety of people's music in various settings. She has worked with education programs for industrial workers for more than 15 years.



Stephen Jones (workers chorus) is a poet and songwriter who teaches English and journalism at Detroit's Chadsey High School. He has performed at Detroit's Laborfest and the

Concert of Colors as well as various Detroit-area coffee houses, and has appeared most recently in a Southfield production of *The Fantasticks*. A CD of his labor songs, *One More Day*, was issued in 2000 as a fundraiser for the Detroit Council of Newspaper Unions. He is a member of Detroit

Federation of Teachers Local 231 and a former member of Newspaper Guild Local 22 in Detroit.



Samuel Kirkland III (Frank Jackson, workers chorus) is a member of UAW Local 653 in Pontiac, and has worked in the UAW National Organizing and Public Relations and Publications

Dept. He has written extensively for union publications including *Solidarity* and three local-union papers, which he has edited. He recently graduated cum laude from the National Labor College of the George Meany Center for Labor Studies and is coordinator and developer of the Black Men In Unions Academy. He sings with the Northwest Unitarian Universalist Church choir.



Clara Leavell (workers chorus) has been an active member of Service Employees International Union Local 79 for 23 years. She directs Local 79's One Voice choir, and is also a union steward.

A member of Third New Hope Baptist Church, she also teaches music.



Malinda Lewis (workers chorus/Dora) has performed in community theatre productions of *Queen Esther* and *Wizard of Oz*. A full-time nurse, she is a member and union steward

with Service Employees International Union Local 79 and sings with Local 79's

One Voice choir as well as in the Zion Chapel Church of God in Christ choir and praise team.



John "Bruce" Liles (workers chorus, Ed Sweeney) has performed his one-man show on the life of Woody Guthrie at many venues including union halls, the Detroit Historical

Museum, Greenfield Village, and elsewhere. He writes children's songs for children and "smarmy political pop" for the rest of us. He is a member of Detroit Federation of Teachers Local 231.



Susan Newell (workers chorus) is a native of Indiana who has made Detroit her home for the past 30 years. Since 1979, she has lent her voice in support of labor and other progressive

causes, first in Finland Station, a Detroit-based folk group, and more recently in One by One, which performed an eclectic mix of folk, blues, reggae, and pop.



Gordon Patton (workers chorus/Ulysses) is a member of the Black Men in Unions Players and has appeared in the stage production of *Stress in the Workplace* and *Last Day*

in a Non Union Shop. He sings in the bass section of the Paul Robeson Chorale at Fellowship Chapel, and he performed as John Newton singing *Amazing Grace* at the

church's Watch Night Kwanzaa production. He is second vice-president, district committeeperson, and civil rights chair of UAW Local 3000 at Auto Alliance in Flat Rock.



Jim Salerno (Joe Cantor/workers chorus) has worked with Teddy Harris Jr., Don Mayberry, Marcus Belgrave, James Carter, Kenny Cox, and other well-known musicians, and has

hosted jam sessions at Baker's Keyboard Lounge and Bert's Market Place, two of Detroit's leading jazz clubs. He is a retired skilled trades worker and UAW member.



Lisha M. Sly (workers chorus) is a native Detroitier whose vocal talents can be heard in the chorus sponsored by UNITE!, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

She has been a business manager of UNITE Local 129 since 1999 and serves on the executive board of the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO. She co-founded Detroit's "Ring in the New Year with a Bell, not a Bang!" campaign.



DaJuanny Taylor is a musician, producer, and vocalist specializing in hip hop and contemporary gospel music. His acting credits include *MPV* starring Wood Harris, *Envy* starring Lisa

Raye and Ray J., *Satan We Declare War*, and *Colored Peoples Time*.



Maurice "Skip" Turner (workers chorus) has performed in several theatrical productions including *When You Strike Flint*, *Workin' for a Livin'*, and *The*

Grievance Trilogy, and has written and directed several plays including *The Terrible Three*, *Last Day in a Non-Union Shop*, *Overtime in a Time of Layoffs*, and his latest work, *Just Between You and Me*. He has been road manager for the Spyder Turner show and was a producer with his brothers on the 2000 production of the hit CD, "Spyder Turner." He is coordinator of Black Men in Unions, the Michigan Summer School for Women Workers, the Winter Leadership Institute, and the Unity Conference at the University of Michigan.

Melanie Bruss (dancer) graduated from Wayne State University's dance department in 2001, and performed with the WSU Dance Company from 1998-2001. She has appeared at Detroit's Music Hall, Bonstelle Theatre, Community Arts Theatre, and in *On Stage!* performances for Detroit Public Schools children. Since graduation, she has danced with Motor City Salseros and other groups. She performed with the Ridgedale Player production of *Taming of the Shrew*.

Jenny Phan (dancer) has been dancing for five years. She studied swing, salsa, ballroom, and ballet and currently trains with a coach in international Latin dance. She has performed with dance teams Revolv, Motor City Salsero, and others, and at the Bacardi Salsa Congress in Detroit and Chicago, and has competed in several ballroom dance competitions nationally.

*Courtesy of Actors Equity Association

(Note: Some workers chorus members have adopted names in honor of mentors and relatives.)

THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Anne Drake (assistant director) has performed with Workers Lives/Workers Stories and was in the cast of *Workin' for a Livin'*, written and directed by Elise Bryant. She wrote song parodies for the UAW organizing drive at Hudson's, the UAW Caterpillar strike, and the Detroit Newspapers strike. She is retired as an electrician from Ford Motor Co., where she was a member of UAW Local 898 and editor of the Local's publication, *Raw Facts*.

David Elsila (executive producer) is a co-coordinator of the Michigan Labor Legacy Project, which built the Labor Landmark on the Detroit riverfront. In 1997, he helped organize Detroit's first Laborfest, which has become an annual event. He worked in labor journalism as editor of the *Michigan Teacher*, the *American Teacher*, and UAW's *Solidarity* magazine, and now teaches part-time at Wayne State University's labor school. He is a member of UAW Local 1981 and former member of Newspaper Guild Local 22.

Shaun Nethercott (managing producer) is founder and executive director of Matrix Theatre Co., an award-winning theatre company. Matrix creates original works through a collaborative process with underserved populations such as the homeless and Spanish-speaking adults and children. She has served on community boards, and worked in environmental and peace and justice campaigns.

Alisa Lomax (production manager) has worked extensively as a production manager or coordinator on film and video projects for over ten years. This is her first time working the position for a stage show, and she's enjoying it! She is also working with Matrix Theatre and the Fisher Players on their show, *Better Days*.

Elaine (Hendriks) Smith* (production stage manager) fell in love with the theater working on plays at Fraser (MI) High School. Her stage management credits include *Phantom Menace to Society* (The Second City, Detroit), *Annie Get Your Gun* (Minnesota Festival Theatre), *Comedy Works with The Guild* (The

Century Theater), *Trinity Irish Dancers* (nationwide), and other productions. She has production stage-managed concerts for LL Cool 3, Fishbone, Lou Rawls, Nancy Wilson, Jean Luc-Ponty, and others. She is a member of Actors Equity Association and the UAW staff association union at Wayne State University.

"Sister" Brenda R. Moon (house manager) is a percussionist with Ubaka Hill and Drum Song Orchestra, and is president of "Power Surge Posse." She is former assistant director in the AFL-CIO Education Dept. in Washington, D.C., and now works as a national field representative for the AFL-CIO. A former staff member at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Maryland, she "traded places" with Elise Bryant, who moved to that position from Detroit. She is a member of UAW Local 22 and TNG/CWA Local 35.

Corretha Montague (assistant house manager) is a union activist who retired as a UAW member after 30 years, and who remains active in labor and the com-

munity.

Ron Burns (set/lighting designer) works regularly with Plowshares Theatre, the Jewish Ensemble Theatre, and Ballet International of Indianapolis. He has designed over 200 productions in more than 30 years of working in this field, and was the lighting designer for the premiere production of *Dance Like No One's Watching* at the Jewish Ensemble Theatre and for *Boy Gets Girl*, currently on the boards.

Scarlett Jade (costume designer) has been a costume designer since 1984 and has worked on over 30 plays and 20 feature films. Her most recent film work was with Jeff Daniels' *Escanaba in da Moonlight* and *Supersucker*. She is a member of the Theatrical Wardrobe Union.

Lateefah B-Dixon (costumer) is a 30-year veteran of performing arts. She started off as an actress and moved into model and designing work where she finds the transformation of actor or actress into character is exhilarating.



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◆ NEWS FOR 2004 ◆

Waterford Schools workers fight for first contract

By Tom Schram
Special to the Labor News

There is a learning process going on in the Waterford School District these days and it's not only happening in the classroom. Members of the Waterford Federation of Support Personnel are learning how difficult it can be to get a first contract.

More than 500 support personnel voted to unionize in April 2002 and bargaining began that fall. While many issues have been resolved, the big ones, like wages and health care, have proven to be a stumbling block.

Bargaining committee member Colleen Wolf said the issue of state financial assistance to the district has impeded progress. That issue was recently resolved, but things have not sped up.

"A mediator has been brought in; that's helped some," she said. "But we had a session last week that started at 7 a.m. and lasted until 7 p.m. and nothing was accomplished."

Waterford School District Superintendent Thomas Tattan said that bargaining a first contract always takes time.

"It's a slow process in identifying all the new members," he said. "We're taking into consideration a whole series of positions in the district that had never been covered by a union before."

Tattan said that health insurance was a potential stumbling block because costs have risen dramatically and the district has limited funds.

"We have to deal with the fact that we're looking at cuts from the state," he said. "But we're on the right track. Our side wants a contract."

David Hecker, president of the Michigan Federation of Teachers and School Re-

lated Personnel (MFT&SRP), said that progress has not been slowed by his union's willingness to come to the table.

"I realize that first contracts take more time than subsequent contracts, but this has taken inordinately long," he said. "We have always wanted to bargain more frequently than they have, not only to get things done, but to build momentum."

Hecker said the union has filed an Unfair Labor Practice complaint because the district has not turned over financial information as it is legally obligated to do. And he said that the district is stonewalling on major issues.

'No, no, no'

"Their position at the bargaining table is very often 'no, no, no,'" Hecker said. "They still are not willing to provide people with the kind of wages they deserve. They really have almost nothing on the table on wages. And they're not even willing to consider health care for anyone but the few who are already getting it."

MFT&SRP staff representative Liz Duhn said the union was reaching out to the community.

"We attend all the school district meetings," she said. "Several members of the labor community have come to speak. Members sit there and hold signs that say 'Contract Now.' We're very respectful. We've had a number of tentative agreements but we're down to substantive issues now and we're getting nowhere."

Board meetings heating up

After refusing to answer questions of several union supporters and support staff employees during an audience comment section at a Waterford school board meet-



Health Care Now: Supporters rally behind Waterford Schools workers, who are seeking a first contract. At a recent school board meeting, Trustee John Himmelspach and Chairman Brian Whiston beat a hasty retreat into executive session after Whiston lashed out at the union.

gain "right now," Whiston and the Waterford School Board however shut down the meeting and went into the private session.

After the abrupt ending, Whiston apologized to one supporter who asked why she wasn't allowed to speak, quickly finished signing some paperwork and then made a hasty exit to an area behind closed doors.

Angry union bargainers noted after the meeting that the next bargaining session is slated for early March.

Stay tuned.

Freelance writer Tom Schram is co-chair of the National Writers Union of Southeast Michigan. Metro Detroit Labor News Managing Editor Shawn Ellis contributed to this report.



Strikers Picket American Axle

UAW members struck American Axle in Detroit and other cities after contract talks broke off. The workers sought to protect job security and health care for retired workers, among other issues. The strike ended February 27 with a tentative agreement that awaits ratification votes by members.

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Design & preparation of all printed work

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security of the working
man and woman are
guaranteed by their own
strength and fortified by
the safeguards of the law."*

— FDR

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◆ NEWS FOR 2004 ◆



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In the spirit of Lewis Bradford: Detroit's United Way Labor Liaison and former UAW Local 22 President Ed Ptasznik (right) helps assemble 16,000 information kits that are being distributed to jobless workers in the metro area. While social service agencies are stepping up efforts to help the unemployed, Congress has refused to extend unemployment benefits to the long-term jobless.

Over 8 million out of work, but Congress won't extend benefits

By Mark Gruenberg
Press Associates Inc.

The nation's unemployment rate ended 2003 at a December figure of 5.7 percent, with 8.398 million people out of work, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported.

The figures continued the high-unemployment trend seen since the U.S. Supreme Court seated GOP nominee George W. Bush in the Oval Office. As of December, the number of additional jobless during his reign totals 2.442 million.

The number of unemployed in January 2001 — the last data gathered under President Clinton — was 5.956 million and the adjusted jobless rate that month was 4 percent.

The reason for the drop in the number of unemployed was a huge one-month decline in total numbers of people in the work force. BLS said 309,000 people left the labor force in December. Of those, 255,000 disappeared from the jobless rolls and

54,000 disappeared from employment rolls.

And 23.5 percent of jobless workers have been unemployed for more than 26 weeks, meaning their benefits have run out. Those people are left without any income because the GOP-run Congress refused to extend federal jobless benefits, which ended Dec. 31.

Some 40.4 percent of all jobless workers have been out for at least four months, BLS data showed, compared to 37.9 percent of 4-month jobless workers last December.

That's not the whole story. BLS said 9.6 percent — one of every 11 — workers are jobless, discouraged or forced to toil involuntarily part-time when they really want full-time work.

The Bush administration argues that the recession is over, but the Economic Policy Institute questions that. Bush is using data from a less-comprehensive survey — not the one that BLS uses for its jobless numbers — to tout employment gains.

That's not right, says EPI economist Elise

Gold. "Jobs have fallen by 726,000 since the 'end' of the last recession in November 2001, and 2.35 million since its beginning in March 2001," Gold said in mid-December.

"It's perfectly understandable why an administration that has been under the gun for weakness of the labor market would want to switch to a more-favorable measurement," she added.

In December, factories marked their 42nd straight month of losses. With seasonal adjustments, they shed 26,000 jobs. Without them, real losses were 43,000. Without seasonal adjustments, factories lost 523,000 jobs in the last 12 months. Losses were small but spread over all types of factories.

In 2000, the last year of the Clinton administration, factories employed an average of 17.263 million people, BLS data show. The factory decline had already started then, and that figure fell to 16.441 million in 2001, 15.034 million in Dec. 2002 and 14.521 million last month.

Borders workers ratify landmark deal

By a majority vote the weekend of Jan. 9, workers at the original Borders Book Store in Ann Arbor, Mich., ratified a first-time contract with the company.

An agreement came Dec. 31 between Borders and United Food and Commercial Workers Local 876, which represented the 45-50 workers, organizer Tom Rekuc told the radio program "Working Detroit 1460" and the Metro Detroit Labor News.

The two-year deal let workers return to their jobs Jan. 2, and ended a boycott of Borders that mobilized union, community, political and student support in the university town.

Rekuc called it "a victory for the workers as well as the union," telling Working Detroit that "Borders was embarrassed by picketers in front of the store during (holiday) shopping season" and resumed talks in late December "with a more positive attitude."

Key issues were wages, health care and employment security, and the workers won on all three counts, he said. Details were not disclosed, pending the members' vote.

Worker writers will gather in Taylor

Organizers are soliciting participants for the seventh annual Worker Writer Festival to be held May 1, 2004, at UAW Region 1A Hall in Taylor.

The theme for this year's festival is "Hand Made: Honoring the Legacy of the American Worker." Worker writers are invited to submit poems, short stories, songs, essays or other creative writings dealing with the theme of workers shaping America with their hands.

"Worker writers are people who work regular jobs and write for the love of it, to tell others of what really goes on in the workplace, to express their vision of a better world and to inspire others to join the movement and help make this dream come true," said Sam Stark, a local labor activist who coordinates the festival.

Stark said that organizers are trying to expand the festival to all unionists in the metropolitan area.

"The Detroit Worker Writer Festival is important because it is one of the few places where rank-and-file workers from many different unions can come together, meet each other, learn from each other and form a unified movement," he said.

For more information, call Stark at (313) 926-5291 or e-mail: sdsklh@yahoo.com.

The Membership and Officers of
UAW Local 653

Wish the cast and crew of

'Forgotten'

a production filled with the same pride and determination that inspired the workers at the Ford Rouge plant when they were struggling to organize the UAW in the 1930s.

SOLIDARITY – YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER!

P.S. Good Luck to UAW 653 member and Forgotten cast member Sam Kirkland

Charlie Tiedeman, *President*
Kit Walk, *Vice President*
Curt Bailey, *2nd Vice President*
Ivan K. Arnold, *Financial Secretary*

Marie McDonald, *Recording Secretary*
Jo Halabicky, *Guide*
Earnest McCray, *Sergeant-at-Arms*
Trustees: Carolyn Winton, Jerry Coe, Jerome Chaumley

Retiree Chapter: Bonnie Melton, *Chairperson*
Shop Committee Chairmen:
Dave Moore, Gary Lee Parker, Nick Karras,
Mike Tierman, Ken Johnson

*The men and women
of the UAW
salute*

Steve Jones

and

the cast and crew of

‘Forgotten’

*Your inspiring performance
tells an untold chapter of labor history.*

*Together, we’ll make sure
the history of working people
will never be forgotten.*

