



Southern California Social Justice

J.P. Stevens Boycott News

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WESTERN LABOR PRESS ASSOCIATION

Linda Paquette, Editor

Visiting Workers Call for Consumer Boycott to Force Stevens Co. to Obey Law

"We Seek Only Justice"



Los Angeles City Councilman Art Snyder announced to hundreds of local supporters his initiation of an investigation of the legal and factual basis for the City of Los Angeles to officially join in the J.P. Stevens Consumer Boycott. Snyder, Co-Chair with Assemblyman Art Torres of the "Citizens Committee for Justice for J.P. Stevens Workers" participated in a rally featuring former Stevens workers Myrtle Cribbs and Rev. Edward Fleming. ACTWU Vice President Leonard Levy emceed. Also on the platform were L.A. City Councilman Cunningham and Farrell, Secretary-Treasurer Bill Robertson of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, Rabbi Sidney Jacobs and ACTWU Vice President Frank Nicholas. Rounding out the evening was Will Geer, "Grandpa Walton," and his family who provided a musical tribute in song to Woody Guthrie.



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Stevens Guilty of Contempt 3rd Time

Company Ruled Bad Faith Bargainer in Roanoke Rapids, N.C.

The Supreme Court has let stand a lower court ruling that found the J.P. Stevens Company in civil contempt for violations of its previous orders. The 28-page decision of the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit was a scathing denunciation of J.P. Stevens anti-union activities. Judge Wilfred Feinberg wrote in his conclusion that the case has been a troubling one not only because of the violations of the rights of employees involved but because it raises grave doubts about the ability of the courts to protect those rights in the face of persistent violations.

Stevens has been found guilty of 1,200 separate violations of provisions of federal labor laws. The

company, for the first time, faces stiff fines of \$100,000 for each violation and \$5,000 per day for violations of a continuing nature.

Still pending are unfair labor practices in 19 communities in seven states affecting employees in 28 Stevens' plants. Unresolved are 36 outstanding cases against Stevens involving at least 315 separate violations of the law, among them 34 firings of workers who were exercising their lawful rights.

J.P. Stevens bargained in bad faith with the union over a contract at its Roanoke Rapids, N.C. plants, a National Labor Relations Board administrative law judge ruled. Workers voted for union representation at the company's seven plants in Roanoke Rapids in 1974. A contract has yet to be signed. The ruling noted that Stevens had "bargained with the union in bad faith and without any intention of concluding a collective bargaining agreement."

Visiting Workers Describe Abuses

Southlanders were horrified by the practices of the J.P. Stevens Company as told by two former workers, Myrtle Cribbs and Rev. Edward Fleming.

Myrtle Cribbs worked at Stevens' Statesboro, Georgia plant until the company closed the factory after Federal Courts ordered it to recognize and negotiate with the union. Myrtle told of six day work weeks and eight hour shifts without lunch or rest periods. Local supporters were appalled by these abuses which were outlawed in California years ago.

Rev. Edward Fleming, a southern black minister, worked 23 years for J.P. Stevens in Roanoke Rapids, N.C. He stated that the sun stopped shining in his factory in 1961. That was the year J.P. Stevens bought the plant. One of their first acts was to brick up all the windows in the building.

For a time Rev. Fleming trained white men to be shift supervisors while he was repeatedly passed over for promotion.

"If consumers support us by not buying Stevens' products," Fleming said, "and by letting stores all over this region know how they feel about J.P. Stevens, maybe the light will return to my old factory in Roanoke Rapids."



Moderators for KHJ TV's "Mid-Morning L.A." talk show were shocked by J.P. Stevens' continuing record of corporate crime. The empty chair to the right symbolized the company's refusal to participate in the interview.



Activities in San Diego included several TV and radio interviews. Estelle Ricketson, President of San Diego's Coalition of Labor Union Women, is the volunteer co-ordinator of the city's boycott committee.

Robinson's Store Executives Refuse to Meet With Religious Leaders

Southern California religious leaders were repeatedly refused a meeting with executives of Robinson's department stores. In a letter to Robinson's Vice President Edward Teyber they expressed their increasing concern over the plight of the textile workers of J.P. Stevens and the refusal of the Stevens Company to simply obey the law. A meeting was requested to discuss Robinson's voluntary discontinuance of advertising and sales of Stevens' products until the textile firm obeys the law.

Executives of the retail chain were at first evasive, failing to return numerous phone calls. Then Robinson's Chairman George P. Kelly, in a "rude and hostile" fashion, telephoned a refusal to the chairperson of the inter-faith committee.

Determined that the public should be aware of Robinson's decision to ignore questions of corporate responsibility and social justice, the religious leaders planned a final confrontation at the executive offices of the chain. TV and radio stations were present. Kelly would not face the religious delegation himself. Through his secretary he again refused to meet with the group.

Robinson's is the first local retailer to refuse a meeting with community leaders concerned with justice for Stevens' workers and the refusal of the Stevens Company to simply obey the law.



Only after several attempts to meet with store executives failed was the media called to witness a final confrontation. The interfaith delegation includes (L to R) Rev. Priscilla Chaplin, executive director, Southern California Council of Churches; Fr. Laurence Clark, chairperson, Peace and Justice Committee, Senate of Priests, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles; Sr. Marilyn Schafer, social justice secretariat, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet; Rabbi Sidney J. Jacobs, Central Conference of American Rabbis - Union of Hebrew Congregations Commission of Social Actions; Canon Oliver Garver, Episcopal Diocese; Rev. Garnet Henning, president, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, West.

Bishops Find Stevens at Fault

After lengthy meetings with both management and the union, the Catholic Bishops of the Southeast concluded that "any fair-minded observer is forced to acknowledge that the blame for the present crisis lies heavily upon the company."

"Long-standing religious teachings on social justice and the rights of workers to have a just share in the rewards of their labors" is the basis of the Bishops' interest in the economic welfare of the communities in which most of Stevens' 44,000 workers reside.

The Southeast Bishops appealed to the Stevens Company to "reassess its position and, at least, remain neutral in the process of union decisions by the workers."

Stevens Chairman Named on Ten Worst Executives List

James D. Finley, Chairman of the Board of the J.P. Stevens Company, has been named one of the ten worst corporate executives in the country by the Gallagher Presidents Report, a business publication.

Finley was cited by the newsletter for "outdated labor practices resulting in a) contempt of court; b) efforts by the National Labor Relations Board to obtain a nationwide injunction against the company; c) union boycott of company products."

Robinson's & J.P. Stevens: The Corporate Connection

Robinson's department stores as a division of Associated Dry Goods, Inc., is directed by a man who also sets policy for the J.P. Stevens Company. Ralph Manning Brown, Jr., sits on the Board of Directors of both Associated Dry Goods and J.P. Stevens, giving Robinson's intimate corporate ties with Stevens, "America's number one labor law violator."

Avon Chairman Resigns From J.P. Stevens Board

Responding to pressure from its customers, David W. Mitchell, Chair of the Board of Avon Products, Inc., resigned from the board of J.P. Stevens. Mitchell stated that his "continuing service on the Stevens' Board would not be in the best interests of Avon or its shareholders, to whom I owe primary responsibility as Chief Executive Officer." A spokesperson for Avon noted that the company had received "feedback from the field from our representatives" which indicated that its relationship with J.P. Stevens was a matter of public concern.

Next Issue:

Groups of concerned community leaders are meeting with local retailers that have taken sides with J.P. Stevens by promoting and selling Stevens' products. They are being asked about their role in promoting corporate responsibility through merchandising decisions. Upcoming issues will list the responses of Broadway, Bullock's, May Company, Sears, J.C. Penny's, Montgomery Ward, Thrifty-Akron, Gemco, Naha's and Henshey's.

Labor & Womens Groups Form Coalitions to Support Stevens Workers

Representing 800,000 union members and their families, over 50 Los Angeles labor leaders have formed the "Labor United for Justice for J.P. Stevens Workers" committee. It is co-chaired by William R. Robertson of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, Michael J. Riley of the Teamsters, Jerry Whipple of the United Auto Workers and Donald Wright of the Int'l Longshoremen & Warehouseman's Union.

Also represented on the committee are the Catholic Labor Institute, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Committee on Political Education, Frontlash, Jewish Labor Committee, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and the Western Labor Press Association.

A coalition of women's organizations is in formation similar to a national coalition formed earlier this year to support the consumer boycott of Stevens' products.

Organized by the Coalition of Labor Union Women the participants will include local chapters of groups involved nationally including the National Organization for Women, the National Women's Political Caucus, the ACLU's Women's Rights Project, the United Methodist Women's Division, the National Council of Jewish Women, the National Council of Catholic Women and Women's Lobby. Other local participants include the California Democratic Party Women's Division, Women's Int'l League for Peace and Freedom, United Church of Christ Women's Task Force, Emma Lazarus Jewish Womens Clubs, Women's Equity Action League and the Filipino America Women's Political Movement.



Beware of White Sales!

**PLEASE DON'T BUY
J.P. STEVENS PRODUCTS**

SHEETS & TOWELS

Fine Arts
Tastemaker
Utica

designs by:
Suzanne Pleshette
Dinah Shore

BLANKETS

Forstmann
Utica

TABLE LINEN

Simtex
CARPETING
Gulistan

Use caution when purchasing sheets and towels at SEARS, MONTGOMERY WARD and J.C. PENNY'S. J.P. Stevens' products are hiding there behind the store label.

Stevens Workers Need Your Help

If you've got the will to help, we'll find a way, even if you can't leave your home. There's plenty to do: phone calling, letter writing, leafletting and participating with others in visits to retailers in your community. Help Stevens' workers. Call Robby at (213) 749-6161 or Felix at (714) 232-6438.



Celebrities Will Geer and Ralph Waite of TV's "The Walton's" were among the hundreds who attended a Los Angeles rally supporting visiting Stevens workers.

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