

WAR ON MISERY

#1
Winter 2005-6
FREE (TO) ALL PEOPLE

THERE MUST BE SOME KINDA WAY OUTTA HERE...

YOU SAY LOHR, WE SAY CLASS WAR

ST. LOUIS, MISERY
Against the drudgery
of daily life and for
a holiday without
beginning or end

Unions, bosses, and turning the lights on in the theatre of conflict

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little (Class) War

Sparkle and fade, Sparkle and fade. The story of our city's recent labor struggles. Oh, they're going on strike. Oh, there they go with their signs. Oh, there's the settlement. Oh, back to work. Grocery workers, textile workers, auto mechanics, Madison County workers, nurses, and even symphony musicians.

There have been some glitches in the choreography though - for better and for worse. The successful WashU student occupation proved how tactically effective occupations are, but also exposed how alienated the students and workers are from their own lives. The workers' anger and frustration at their conditions, usually forcibly channeled (and thus diluted) through the union negotiators, became hyper-diluted as students acted on behalf of them, forcing the union to act on behalf of the students. And the students, thinking they are actually nonexistent creatures unworthy of something called life and dignity, failed to realize that they have their own conditions to revolt against.

Of the more promising stories: the first day of school no-show by city students two years back after all sorts of cuts to school funding and workers' salaries and benefits, coupled with the wildcat strike and sabotage by school workers (talked about later on) around the same time *and* a student walk-out that ended in a near riot and multiple arrests outside Roosevelt High; and then there were those couple cases of grocery strike supporters crossing picket lines only to

shoplift hordes of food and, upon exit, distribute it to the picketers.

But whatever happened to the sparkle and *explode?* 1877 style.

Dancing under the Stars

When mid-May rolled around and Lohr Delivery workers walked out of work and onto the picket lines, "same old shit" rumbled through everyone's head. Technology offers another speed-up (work loads doubled), costs are streamlined (health benefits cut), and the workers grumble to their union who authorizes a strike. Might be short, might be long, but always a courteous begging for the company to throw down some concessions.

The only leverage the workers had was the threat of, "if you don't grant our demands, we'll remain on strike." Then came the threat of various bars (a mere 44 out of 5-600) boycotting Anheuser-Busch products delivered by Lohr. But that was it. Lohr's response: hire scabs. Business, minus a few dozen delivery locations, remains normal. There has also been some rather exciting ambulatory picketing where strikers humiliate scabs by following them in vehicles and getting out to picket whenever the scab stops to make a delivery.

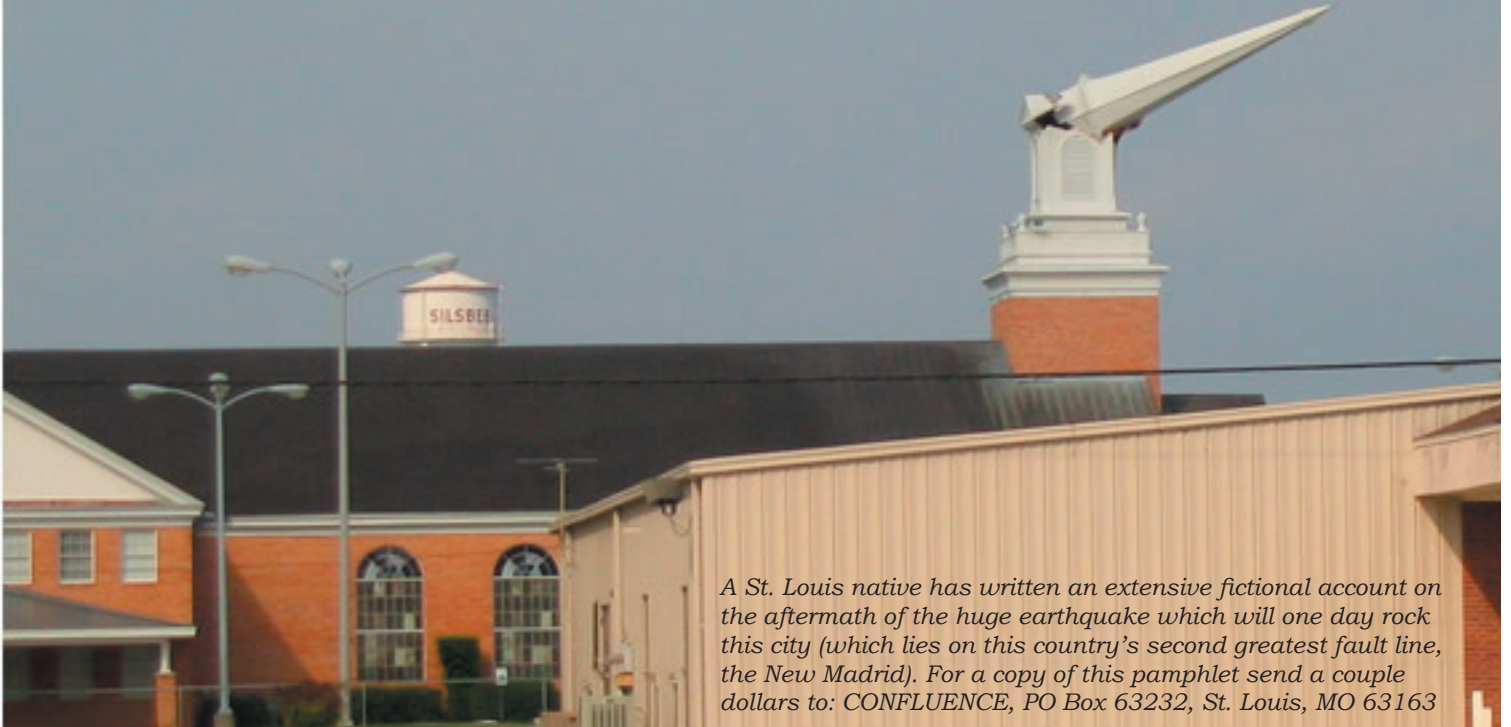
After a month, still no settlement. Then two, then three... Now it's six. Interesting, but nothing out of step with the routine dance that unions do with the company and the workers.¹ Just a long, slow dance to the horrible music of Michael Bolton. Nothing new to St. Louis. We've see our fair share of long labor disputes. From the grocery strikes of this time two



Piccoloist Jan Gippo: "There is a poison in the air."

ON WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

By the unwanted children of capital



A St. Louis native has written an extensive fictional account on the aftermath of the huge earthquake which will one day rock this city (which lies on this country's second greatest fault line, the New Madrid). For a copy of this pamphlet send a couple dollars to: CONFLUENCE, PO Box 63232, St. Louis, MO 63163

Like those in New Orleans, St. Louisians knew how it felt to be shit on and fucked over by their 'representatives,' and they were aware of the multitude of empty buildings in their city. So, they, including many local homeless folk, took things into their own hands and began opening the doors of the many, many abandoned buildings to house themselves and the refugees from the hurricane.

With the situation in the Gulf Coast and also locally in places like Hobo Park, people needed a place to go. And the people, no longer trusting the Red Cross, FEMA, or any other state sponsored organization, began longing to live in a world where people practice mutual aid. So they took crowbars and anything else they could use to pry open every abandoned house in St. Louis. It was an utter disrespect for the law that the Gulf Coast was already experiencing. The police first tried to stop people from taking shelter, but the civilians were outraged by the authorities' unswerving defense of private property – nothing new to those who had come from the Gulf Coast days earlier. This was everyone's last straw, as they saw the connections between all that was happening lately. The National Guard was sent in to crush the initiatives of the squatters. People began shooting down their helicopters. State and local police were continually ambushed and workers refused to serve them food in stores and restaurants. It became clear that they were unwelcome and faced great danger if they insisted on staying. The Red Cross tried to come in and pacify the rebellion from a 'humanitarian' point of view. People saw right through their smooth-talking bullshit and kicked them out too. With the people

2 fending off federal, state, and humanitarian forms of intervention that used the language

of 'aid' and 'social order,' St. Louis became a fiercely defended autonomous zone. And with St. Louis as an autonomous zone, New Orleans in 'anarchy,' and many of the country's soldiers being thinned out in Iraq, it became more than the State could handle.

The media took the usual spin on things, trying to break working class unity and make everyone scared of everyone, saying that the festive looting atmosphere in the Gulf Coast was actually filled with rapists, violent looters, and armed gangs. They said St. Louis was under siege by the same kind of people.

But the nation bought the media's lies no more – city after city began to escape from the State's control... from their physical control by fighting back against its militarized police and surveillance mechanisms... and from their psychological control by burning the media stations down and not believing any of it.

Everything was breaking down. People began to congregate in assemblies to exchange information, voice concerns, make decisions, and take action themselves instead of waiting for representatives, entrepreneurs, or bureaucrats to do it for them. Workers refused to endure the daily abuses of their bosses who were the only ones appealing for the police force to return. Throughout the Midwest, the tables began to turn. In Minneapolis, airline workers seized the airplanes and began to deport their airline executives to a remote corner of Greenland. In Chicago, 40,000 people stormed the Federal Building, while another 20,000 in Indianapolis opened the city jails while banks were seen burning on the horizon. In Kansas City, health care workers collectivized their medical centers (now 'free clinics') and opened them up to everyone. A whole new world of possibilities began to arise...

AND SO WE BEGIN...

Who is WOM and what's all this goddamn gibberish?

"I'm tired of this shit... I ain't feeling to be keeping no goddamn getting up every motherfuckin' day, having to get up and do this, that and the other, even though I'm makin' it happen. I'm not ready to keep on bustin' my motherfucking ass. Shit, nigger needs a day to kick back and do that when he feels like it."

-Otis McAllister, member of St. Louis's most notorious bank-robbing gang

Life grinds forward. Work, School, Unemployment, Prison, the Movies, the Bar. These everyday realities are the backbone of an indescribable emptiness- a misery. But we also bear the brunt of more tangible assaults. We see and experience deportations; murders, beatings and reckless car chases provoked by the authorities and suffered by community they're sworn to protect; work-related deaths and maimings; union, city hall, and police department corruption; evictions; mass layoffs; shoplifters shot dead; domestic assaults; utility price and transit fare hikes; the healthcare industry forcing us into lifelong debt; social service cutbacks; exposure deaths of the homeless; the jailing of unemployed youth; modern architecture and urban planning's attack on our sanity; the leveling of forests for development; and a downward spiraling frenzy of a war. (And for those oblivious to such matters... to you, we can only repeat the saying "reality is elsewhere," and place the poverty of your existence in the above list.) In all, too many assaults to simply endure. And so the pressure rises.

Some of you may take pride in our city's reputation as blues capital of the world. We think this is like someone celebrating their virginity. We think suicide (and virginity) to be boring. We are losing interest in recounting or exposing how bad it all is. Indeed we are victims, but we are also actors, and it is our *action* that must be heralded and reproduced if we are ever to snap out of the blues. In future issues, we plan to continue the "Chronicles" column with reports of people responding *directly* to the normality of this sick society. Our aim is



to highlight frontal assaults, fiercely defend them, and urge them to take increasingly imaginative, collectivized, and coordinated forms. This first issue might be a bit on the dreamy side- more concrete analyses and proposals will come in future issues- but after all, dreams *are* the only point of departure from misery.

Our ferocity will not diminish, but our perspectives may change from issue to issue as we continually learn how and where to engage in this daily war.

For now, you can contact us at
war_on_misery@hotmail.com

CHRONICLES

There is a pleasant thread of consistent, though severely under-reported, targeted attacks being carried out against those responsible for the submissive, depressing nature of our lives. The following acts seem isolated, but when viewed together, present a coherent story of an ongoing fight-back. It's not criminality that we necessarily support (i.e. - rape, murder, and child abuse are mostly despicable), but strikes against the logic of the law (both the State's and the Economy's) and its domination of our daily lives. Some acts more intentional than others, some more imaginative than others, some more collective than others, but all worthy of publication, defense, and proliferation.

February 16, Ferguson - A man follows an employee into work at the UMB Bank before opening time, demands money, locks the employee in the vault, and escapes with an undisclosed amount of cash.

March 14, St. Charles - A UMB Bank branch is robbed by two men.

March 24, St. Louis City - Anti-war protesters vandalize a two-story movie poster for the Omnimax film "Fighter

Pilot: Operation Red Flag" outside the Science Center. Profanity ("Fuck the War" and "Fuck the Military," says an employee) is written across the banner and part of the building, causing \$4000 worth of damage. Claiming the film is about the science and teamwork of flying an F-15, SC spokesperson says, "It was... it was very shocking for us."

April 1, Bluffs (IL) - Seventy miles north of St. Louis, hundreds of silver

foxes, set to be slaughtered for their fur, are liberated from all 58 pens at the fox factory farm of Kerry Littig, the top breeder of silver foxes in the country. The majority of the surrounding fence is also destroyed and breeding records removed. In a communiqué sent to the media, the Animal Liberation Front claims responsibility and asserts the action was done in solidarity with Peter Young, recently imprisoned

by the State for his role in animal liberation activities. The statement concludes, "Kerry better believe that we will come back, time and time again, until this hellhole is closed once and for all."

April 4, University City – Twenty Washington University students occupy the admissions office demanding the university pay the standard living wage of \$9.79/hour plus full benefits to its contract workers. Two and a half weeks later on April 22, the demands are met and the occupation ends.

April 7, St. Louis County – Two bank robbers escape from Southern Commercial Bank on Meramec Bottom Road in south St. Louis County with an undisclosed amount of cash.

April 7, St. Francois County – Three individuals set fire to a building with Mineral Area Drug Task Force Agents inside investigating a possible meth lab. The cops flee the building while the flames destroy almost all of the alleged evidence.

April 8, St. Louis City – In the early morning, four St. Louis police cars and one airport police car have their windows broken by bricks and pellet guns. The cars are parked outside the officers' homes on the 3900 and 4100 blocks of McDonald Ave., the 3900 block of Parker Ave., the 3700 block of Gustine Ave., and the 3900 block of Oleatha Ave. Sources within the police department later leak out information that multiple cars were actually set ablaze the same night.

April 12, Jefferson County – While tracking a man with multiple felony warrants, police and bounty-hunters encounter "booby traps and explosive devices" in the fugitive's home. In addition to two separate mouse-trap/shotgun snares (one aimed low and the other at face-level), a four-foot alligator is found guarding the house.

April 28, Cape Girardeau – For the fifth time in 7 years, the Bank of Missouri branch in Cape Girardeau is successfully robbed. Over the last 7 years, only one of the robbers has ever been caught.

April 20, Granite City (IL) – The Bank of Edwardsville is robbed by a man who escapes with an undisclosed amount of cash.

May 1, Edwardsville (IL) – SIUE offers a \$1000 reward for graffiti vandal. Since the start of the year over 40 incidents of "Spanish-style" graffiti have been reported on campus costing the university thousands of dollars in overtime and clean-up. The grandest feat to date: "people-size letters" on a rooftop ledge of SIUE's Metcalf Theater.

May 3, Kansas City – A man and woman are arrested after police discover them digging graves outside the University of Missouri-Kansas

City ROTC building. The man, an ex-Navy corpsman releases a statement encouraging ROTC students to "refuse to obey their commander-in-chief."

May 5, St. Peters – Counter-demonstrators outnumber local white supremacist group, the Council of Conservative Citizens, as the CofCC hosts an anti-immigration rally on Cinco de Mayo. Throughout the evening, drivers stop and join the pro-immigrant line, swelling it to over three dozen. Among the anti-racists' "Bomb the Racist State" and "Against All Borders" signs is an immigrant, her three children, and her husband who carries a sign reading, "I love Mexicans. I married one!"

May 5, Columbia – Teams of thieves set diversionary fires inside two area Wal-Marts while trying to steal electronic merchandise. The heists fail, but everyone escapes and "financial loss is substantial, due to merchandise damaged as the fires were being put out and the loss of business while the stores were closed."

May 15, Byrnes Mill – Responding to reports of a muzzle flash in the wooded bluffs along Highway 30, two police officers encounter gunfire upon arrival at the scene. For the next hour and a half, from 12:45 to 2:15am, the sniper (or snipers) fires 20 shots, all intentionally missing, at the growing law enforcement presence - more Byrnes Mill officers, Jefferson County sheriff's deputies, Missouri Highway Patrol troopers, and even St. Louis County and city police helicopters who scour the area to no avail with their spotlights.

May 22, Kansas City – A couple dozen anarchists, upon leaving an anti-war rally, briefly rampage through Kansas City's wealthy Plaza district chanting, "We're fed up with symbolism. Take the Streets, Disrupt the War!" and "Fight the Rich. Arm the Poor. We want a Class War!" Trashcans, newspaper stands, tables from yuppie establishments, and other items are left strewn across intersections.

June 2, Edwardsville (IL) – American Legion Post 199 announces the reopening of its lounge after two arson fires caused more than half a million in damage in 2004. Money was also taken and alarm and phone lines cut.

June 4, Marlborough – A man successfully robs an undisclosed amount of cash from the local National City Bank.

June 13, St. Louis City – A robber escapes with an undisclosed amount of cash from the U.S. Bank at 5418 Hampton Ave.

July 5, Kirkwood – In the Meacham Park neighborhood of Kirkwood, a gunman surprises police Sergeant

William McEntee by firing multiple shots into the passenger window of the officer's squad car. The car careens forward another block before ramming into a tree. As residents gather around the car and the dead officer, the gunman runs up to the car, fires several more shots into McEntee, takes the officer's pistol, and flees on foot. The accused is Kevin "Rockhead" Johnson. Hours earlier, Rockhead's 12-year-old brother Bam-Bam collapsed on the floor of his house. Police, including Sgt. McEntee, are slow to respond and when they do, they fail to even check his pulse and simply stand around waiting for an ambulance as Bam-Bam lies face down on the floor. Upon arrival, paramedics pronounced him dead. An old friend of Rockhead remarked "he wouldn't hurt a fly, but he did kill a cop."

July 10, O'Fallon (IL) – Anti-patriotic vandals hit the downtown business district hard. Vandals try throwing a large flower pot through the door of Wood Bakery and successfully bust out the front windows of AC Computer and a clothing store – all of which have patriotic storefronts. Besides a "sick feeling" and broken glass, outside the State Farm Insurance building the charred remains of an American flag are left behind. "I think it's pretty disgusting," says resident. "This is a military town. Scott Air Force Base is just five miles from here. It's blasphemous."

July 13, St. Louis – Live on the air, KATZ's morning show deejay Kaos asks his sidekick, Sylli Asz: "If, after being handcuffed by a police officer, that cop willfully took off the handcuffs and challenged you to a fight, would you go for his gun first or his radio?" Sylli chooses the radio so the cop can't call for backup. The show continues with caller discussions of how to evade speed traps and even a vote on the city's worst police department (Jennings). On July 17, Clear Channel, who owns KATZ, suspends the deejays. In the following week, the local and national chapters of the Fraternal Order of Police call for their firing. On August 3, Clear Channel does just that.

July 14, Maryland Heights – A robber walks out with an undisclosed amount of cash from the National City Bank at Westport Plaza.

July 28, Wentzville – In the afternoon, two men successfully rob First Bank.

August 14, Worldwide – Boeing and SBC Communications computer systems fall prey to a worm released by hackers several days earlier.

August 16, St. Louis City – Moments after harassing two youths on the corner of Idaho Ave. and Itaska St. and driving

THE KIDS'RE PISSED

They think they can control us.
And that's the funny part.

They think that if they can get us to wake up at the same time each day, drag ourselves to school and all the cells inside of it when the bells chime and tell us to; that if we listen to their noise on the radio and buy the things the voices and talking heads tells us to; and eat the excretions of their machines and systems and *still* make it to bed on time each night, that when we're older, we'll go to other schools and other cells and cram other things in our brains and mouths and then finally be able to enter THE ADULT WORLD where we'll get up at the same time each day and drag ourselves to factories and office buildings, stockrooms and cubicles, cash registers and computer consoles, in order to go on consuming with our empty leisure; until one day we meet that one special someone and when they tell us we can fuck we'll fuck, while assuming the proper fucking position, in the proper fucking hole with the proper fucking gender, in order that that special someone and us can have kids of our own who we can get up each day and...

Forgive me. Please, please, forgive me. Perhaps I'm being too, bleak. Too, black and white. Too, cynical.

I seem to have forgotten the *Hot Topic's* and the *Whole Foods Market's* of the world. The *Left Bank Books'*, the *Plan-it X's* and the *Cheap TRX's* who – when we're fed up and are scheduled some

time to rebel – will sell us our freedom. And how glorious it will be to cram organic things in our mouths, fresh noises in our ears and plastics in our asses (*in all new positions!*) when they say it's okay to.

no no no no no no.

They've gone about it all too cockily...

The ingenuity of phoning in bomb threats¹ and smashing electrical boxes² in winter when there's no snow or summer vacation in sight (and the kids know there're just not gonna make it to Friday without a break) will never grow old. Carving in desks, writing on stalls³, cutting class or skipping school (*class war*) will always be healthy mindful steps taken in order to reach the weekend. And when Saturday night does roll round (and we're given bigger cages) it's time for the kids to wage war on their emotional ghettos. Yard signs⁴ and ornaments⁵, libraries⁶ and statues⁷, car windows⁸ and gravestones⁹ (nothing *is* sacred!) are all fair game in the youth's instinct to redecorate their surroundings; their birthright to annihilate the Old World.

This shitty, mindless, existence of routine and boredom has nothing to offer except the catalyst to destroy it. If the riots in France and Europe have shown us anything, it's that the kids have control; the cops and politicians, the priests and imams are all a joke. We can run and write and dance and bike and burn and swim and fuck anyway we fucking want to without the fear of consequence; knowing that THE ADULT WORLD is far more terrifying, and unless we live on our terms... life's just a show.

Mindless violence is getting up each day and being complacent.

Self-destructive behavior is worshipping routine for its security and praying to the market for happiness or adventure.

The kids act up when they want to be alive.

We'll slip through the cracks.

Our greasy, dirty necks'll worm right out from underneath their antique grasps.

We know that if this disaster keeps up we'll be building our own cages before too long– so the kids're not the least afraid of ruins.

¹ A sixteen year old is accused of calling in bomb threats to Shawnee Community College on January 28 and February 2, in order to get the day off. Both days classes are cancelled.

² A seventeen year is accused of taking a claw-hammer to electrical boxes at Duchesne High School, rendering 12 classrooms powerless and getting the students December 1 off. (Remember to wear rubber gloves when hoping for an early Christmas vacation!)

³ Four Barnwell Middle Schoolers got to start summer vacation early in April of 2003, after being suspended for allegedly writing bomb threats in the girls' and boys' bathrooms. (That's for sure gonna freak a few squares.)

⁴ A seventeen year old was held for \$50,000 bond after police accused him of stealing over 50 yard signs – all of which had ties to the local Illinois election.

⁵ On the night of January 17, fourteen homes have their landscaping lights destroyed. **John Gnuse's** security camera caught what looked to be teenagers with baseball bats and golf clubs beating the lawn decorations. In all the kids made off with over \$2000 worth of property destruction.

⁶ "We're trying all the time to show young people that we're a really positive place to come," says Library Director Barbara Rhodes. "We've put in soda machines and we opened up community rooms and we try with our programming to show

them that you know we're their friends and we really want to help them and do whatever we can for them; and some, some obviously we aren't reaching quite yet." Those the Library's charity hasn't reached are assumed to be the ones who busted out street lights in order to tag-up the front of the Library.

⁷ On the morning of May 26, Clayton residences "on their way to Starbucks" were shocked by "the vandalism of their new pride and joy": Man on a Horse. Yellow spray paint was used to tag "05" all over the week-old statue

⁸ In December of last year over two dozen car windows were busted out in neighborhoods surrounding the airport. Ten cars in Breckenridge Hills, nine cars in St. John, three in Berkeley, two in Woodson Terrace and 8,973 in France were all heavily damaged. Police were baffled since nothing was taken and the three teenage suspects have no prior "run-ins" with the law.

⁹ "Vandals left a path of destruction [November 5] at a Godfrey, Illinois cemetery." A fourteen year old was charged with the destruction of 33 headstones during his alleged "drunken stagger" through the "sacred ground of the dead."

As long as you can still be disappointed
you are still young.

CHRONICLES, continued from page 4

off, two police officers sustain gunfire damage (four bullet holes) to their squad car.

August 22, St. Louis County – Area gas stations report the number of gas thefts (gas-n-go's) has more than doubled since the same time last year.

August 23, St. Louis City – Narcotics detectives report someone in a vehicle fired shots at them on the 2600 block of Hebert Street just before 7:00pm.

August 24, Chesterfield, Creve Coeur, Olivette, & St. Peters – Police report that within the past month, area banks have been forced to pay more than \$50,000 to around 60 customers after thieves installed card-readers and cameras at ATMs thereby obtaining card information later used to make withdrawals.

August 26, Edwardsville (IL) – SIUE announces problems with security resulting in \$40,000 worth of missing school projectors. Security had hoped to stop the theft in May when it started but the locks placed on remaining projectors were no match for these “educated” thieves and the total number of missing projectors currently stands at seven.

August 26, St. Louis City – A robber escapes from the Commercial Bank at 4914 Gravois Ave. with \$2,500.

September 9, Alton (IL) – Thieves make off with \$20,000 worth of equipment from the under-construction Alton High School. Police speculate it was an inside job, and that construction workers used a wheelchair and wheelbarrows to move a plasma arc welder, art equipment, video projectors and nine computers.

September 9, Jacksonville (IL) – An assistant prison warden at Jacksonville Correctional Center reports ten keys “missing” - among the keys, a master key that opens doors to all cell houses, two locked wings, and even work camps in Greene County and Pittsfield. For four days, the prison is locked down and Corrections Department officials search frantically for the keys before the search is called off and the locks changed. The keys have yet to be found.

September 15, Clayton – At 3:30pm, a county employee's truck, parked since 7:00am, suddenly catches fire inside the St. Louis County Courthouse parking garage in downtown Clayton damaging several cars around it and filling the entire structure with smoke.

September 16, St. Louis City – After 4 months of passive picketing, several striking Lohr delivery drivers, are arrested after storming a banquet of Anheuser-Busch executives at the downtown Renaissance Grand. The action comes hours after Lohr announces the hiring of “permanent replacement workers.”

6 Their Teamsters union and Jobs with Justice are quick to dissociate

LOHR, continued from page 1

years back to the nurse's strike last winter. Same routine: union offers settlement, company turns it down. Company offers settlement, workers vote to turn it down. Back and forth until the union thinks it has a winner, sells it to the workers as such and workers (albeit some of them still rightly grumpy- now not only with the company, but the union too²) vote to return to work. All the while scabs cross the picket lines everyday while strikers simply hold their signs and stare, occasionally thumbing their nose or yelling an obscenity at the passing scab only to be later reprimanded by a union official for being impolite.

And so it goes. No support from those of us other workers or unemployed other than a letter in the newspaper, a honk as we drive by the picket, or a silent moral objection (a sip of a Schlafly) to scab labor. You could even argue that the bar owners (who have far more in common with Lohr and A-B executives) have offered up the most solidarity by refusing to accept deliveries from Lohr.³

Shit! Here Comes a Flaming Meteor!

But now things are getting interesting. On September 15, Lohr announced it was tired of dancing and that the scabs were now *permanent* replacement workers. Within 24 hours, strikers organized a small rally downtown outside an A-B executive banquet. Their union, Teamsters Local 600, and Jobs with Justice wanted nothing to do with it. Several strikers stormed the banquet and got arrested. The pickets have continued since.

Then, on October 26, the Post-Dispatch reported that a Lohr salesman's company van was set on fire outside his home in South City. With all that time standing on the picket lines, maybe workers are beginning to talk to each other and get funny ideas. Ideas that supersede the logic of the unions. Ideas that see through the lies of the company. Ideas that encourage a cage-fight rather than a dance. Ideas that just might prompt the strikers to begin acting for themselves. Dangerous, dangerous ideas.

November 17's Post-Dispatch delivered the exciting news that two people used a baseball bat to beat a scab driver making a delivery in North City. Our first response was one of pity: “Oh, the driver probably had no [immediate] idea why he was attacked.” Our second response: “Now he does.” He suffered injuries to his back and thigh. The attackers said nothing and took nothing. They were not muggers and they had no intent to cause serious injury... this time.

The arson and the attack forces everybody who still works at Lohr to choose sides. The message to them: Join your brothers and sisters on the picket lines or start looking over your shoulder

**Exclusive excerpts from
Instructions to Pickets
handed out by union
officials at the nurses'
strike in December 2004**

**Other than “Dear Children... thousand times before”
everything is word for word.*

“Dear children, you are not yet old enough to speak or act for yourselves. It is for your own good that you never grow old enough to engage in such behavior. In order to ensure this and so as not to make us union bureaucrats obsolete or offend the company that has stolen so many years of your life, please abide by the following instructions. Trust us, we've done this a thousand times before... At all times speak in a normal voice, never shout, yell or create a vocal disturbance... No rough stuff... no threats... no profane language, no violence... do not get involved in an argument... do not block or obstruct any entrances or driveways, sidewalks or traffic... in any way... Be courteous and polite at all times... Do not talk! If someone desires information regarding the picket line please refer such people to the Union office... Do not threaten any truck driver... Merely let such persons see your picket sign and then let that person make up his or her own mind about crossing the picket line.

whether on the clock or off. The scabs' shroud of innocence is forever lost. They are ultimately responsible for rank and file actions stricken upon them.

The recent events are a bit reminiscent of the St. Louis City school workers two years back, who, after hearing of future cutbacks, downsizing, and other privatization measures, bypassed the unions and organized themselves to all call in sick for two consecutive days. Even cases of sabotage to electrical boxes were reported in some schools.

Mom, Dad, is the Sky Really Falling? Mom...? Dad...?

In the meantime, A-B has denied any relevance to the situation⁴ after Teamster officials, following a July 20, rally crawled to August Busch IV himself asking him to step in since Lohr was too stubborn. A foolish move by any account given the tight relationship the two companies have.⁵ Lohr striker, Ed Norris, explains, "They always say this is one big happy family. But with what's going on now, that's a family I don't need." Alas, the kids have disowned Mama Lohr and Papa A-B after years of child abuse.

How can we not be inspired by the recent self-activity of the strikers? Through their actions, they have shown many of us that their fight is our fight. And, unless victory means the return to work under the same conditions you left and for the same nasty bosses who dictate your time and wages, we must generalize the fight. It's not just Lohr workers- it's all of us. What if the scabs were spat on and heckled wherever they went in the city? What if *all* delivery drivers in the city refused to go to work?⁶ What if all the transportation workers went on strike and blocked the roads? Do you think Lohr could maintain its tough guy stance? What if 1,000 of us showed up at the Lohr picket and blocked the scabs from driving in or out? What if no Lohr vehicle was safe? What if A-B was *made* relevant? What if every gathering of A-B and Lohr executives was ambushed?

What Lohr is doing to its workers, our bosses and society as a whole is doing to us. More work and less time with friends and family, while at the same time ensuring we feel insecure in our future- a future without safety nets in a shark-infested economic system.

Solidarity with the Lohr strikers!

No love for the scabs!

Lohr is vulnerable to our solidarity with the strikers and to our attacks!

Banana peels to the dance floor!

War to Lohr!

Lohr Distributing is located at 1100 South 9th St. Their phone number: 314-231-6400. The daily stationary picket is at 8th and Hickory. The union's website has a list of the bars honoring the strike. All other city bars are in bed with Ron Lohr.

¹ Ron McKay, president of the Local 600, did in fact shout at a rally: "Ron Lohr can kiss my Teamster ass," but it's all part of the show to keep the audience (the strikers) watching and cheering- anything but acting. Indeed the union-company relationship may look like a fight at times, but isn't it just a fight over who should lead the dance?

² St. Louis Symphony Piccoloist Jan Gippo was straight to the point after the musicians' bitter labor dispute: "[The Union] sided with management. They betrayed us." Afterwards, musicians began leaving the symphony. Trombonist Gerard Pagano described it as, "rats jumping from a sinking ship." We ask: Why not just push the captain overboard?

³ Most of the decisions to boycott are actually responses to pressure from union customers. KC's Bar and Grill owner, David Carter, told a Riverfront Times reporter, "Most of my customers are union workers. If I don't honor the Lohr boycott, I risk losing a substantial amount of business."

⁴ A-B: "Lohr... is an independent operator. We have no involvement in their daily operations." A-B even had the audacity to sue the union for picketing their headquarters. And the National Labor Relations Board (stacked with spineless liberals and pro-business stooges) backed them up, banning pickets against A-B.

⁵ Since when do you need a referee to dance? And how will a partner's sibling be fair in that role. In 1964, A-B's head, August "Gussie" Busch Jr. awarded his long-time friend and A-B executive, Curt Lohr, exclusive rights to A-B distribution in the city. Forty-one years later, it's their sons that run the companies.

⁶ Do you think all the profit-driven bar owners would support it then?

themselves from the action. The strike was prompted in May of this year by the company's push to double the current work load and price health insurance to exorbitant levels.

September 21, St. Louis City – For the second time in less than a month, the Commercial Bank at 4914 Gravois Ave. is robbed.

October 13, Earth City – A customer at Moto Mart, sporting a "Stop Snitching" T-shirt, swipes the money from a donation jar marked for a dead Missouri State Trooper.

October 19, St. Louis City – Workers assigned to clean lead paint from window sills at Mann Elementary School collectively refuse to go inside the school after learning that they were expected to work without any safety equipment. They are subsequently reassigned to other duties.

October 22, Wellston – The school district fires an employee suspected of sabotaging the district's computer system successfully wiping out *all* its data, including attendance records and report card information. After two months the district is still unable to send report cards to parents.

October 24, St. Louis City – Outside the home of a Lohr salesman in South City, a Lohr Distributing minivan is heavily damaged in an early morning arson attack. The strike has now entered its fifth month.

October 26, Troy – The Lincoln County sheriff's deputy responsible for the October 23 fatal shooting of two unarmed men during a traffic stop receives threats from residents. "We are not releasing his name for security reasons," Lt. Rick Harrell told the Hannibal Courier-Post. "Several threats have been made, so that would be inappropriate at this time."

October 28, St. Louis City – Graffiti, daubed on a building undergoing rehab work near the intersection of Chouteau Ave. and Mississippi Ave., greets non-union construction workers arriving for their second day of work. The writing on the wall, which unfortunately allegedly uses racist language, implies the construction workers, working for a Mexican-American owned business that was subcontracted by a drywall contractor, are scabs.

October 31, Troy – More than 200 angry friends and family of the two Troy youths slain by a sheriff's deputy march around the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department screaming for justice. The sheriff asks for calm during the investigation.

November 2, Springfield – Despite a heavy police presence, dozens of high-school and college students stage a noon-time walk-out and noisy march through the city's main square in protest of the war and the Bush regime. While **7**

You know, when you're waving a Molotov cocktail, you say watch out. There are no words for expressing what you feel; you only know how to talk by setting fire.

-Parisian youth, November 2005

A SHORT CLIP FROM A LONG SAGA

It had all the signs of a grand showdown between the rabble and the rich of Washington Ave.: the homeless of downtown defending their haven at 14th and Locust, Lucas (Hobo) Park, from the loft-dwellers of Washington Ave. wanting to expand their safety boundaries. Throughout the summer, police stepped up nighttime sweeps of the park and the Downtown St. Louis Partnership, a private group driven by downtown developers, began monitoring those serving food at the park. Then, word from homeless folks of the city's plans to erect a fence around the park on September 1 to keep them out. Some loft residents had heard the same as had several of the serving groups and shelters. An August 17 article published by the St. Louis Independent Media Center announced an ominous September 1 "battle" for the park. Suddenly, it's December. No battle. But no fence either. Just a little shadowboxing... and now victory.

CARS ABLAZE? PAY NO MIND?

In the coming months, expect numerous media reports on the struggle of the Lafayette Square residents to keep Praxair, Inc. from rebuilding their Chouteau Ave. site. In June, an industrial plant fire set off a massive series of explosions sending tanks and fireballs raining down onto the wealthy neighborhood. If guerillas were in the hills, we would no doubt credit them, but in this case, Praxair is the accidental culprit. Thus, we can only sit and watch the false debate progress: Praxair, a former division of Union Carbide, the company responsible for the gas leak and subsequent chemical massacre in Bhopal, India, versus Lafayette Square residents who frequently dream of a similar massacre in the nearby Peabody housing projects.

local police surround the campus, Central High School officials place the school on lockdown, confining everyone to their classrooms and handcuffing some students to railings.

November 10, Kirkwood - A man successfully robs an undisclosed amount of money from the U.S. Bank branch.

November 16, St. Louis City - A Lohr scab delivering beer on the 4300 block of Natural Bridge, is attacked by two men with a metal baseball bat. They say nothing and take nothing, but strike him twice, once in the back and once on the thigh.

November 24, Clayton - Thieves disable an alarm, break through the back door, and make off with tens of thousands of dollars worth of fur coats from Dicker and Dicker of Beverly Hills.

November 26, Moline Acres - In the early morning hours, someone sets fire to a car alongside the mayor's house. The ensuing blaze destroys half of the house.

November 28, Dupo (IL) - The West Pointe Bank branch loses an undisclosed amount of cash to a robber.

December 7, St. Louis City - Des Peres police pull over after a prisoner they are transferring to St. Louis city, handcuffed and barefoot, warns that he will vomit. Upon opening the back door, he bolts into the nearby Fox Park neighborhood and escapes.



THE WARM TEARS
SNAKING DOWN MY
FACE. THE BLACK
OIL ROLLING,
...PULSING, THROUGH
MY SKIN. I LOOK AT
EVERYONE AND SEE
GLIMPSSES OF DESPAIR.

I THINK WE HAVE
MORE IN COMMON
THAN WE ADMIT.

MY BODY IS IN A CONTINUOUS
STATE OF EMERGENCY! FUCK! HOW
DO WE TALK TO EACH OTHER, KILL
THIS ISOLATION?! WORK.
COMMUTE. HOME. BAR. STORE.

ALWAYS CROWDED, ALWAYS
ISOLATED, NEVER ABLE TO CON-
NECT, TO FIGHT TOGETHER. THE
SHATTERED BUS SHELTERS
ALONG GRAVOIS LAST SUMMER
FINALLY MAKE SENSE.

SEEMS THAT SINCERE COMMU-
NICATION ONLY HAPPENS WHEN
NORMALITY AND HABIT RUPTURE,
IN REVOLT. I'M AFRAID TO SAY IT,
BUT, SEEMS LIKE LOHR STRIKERS

PREFER LIFE
TOGETHER IN THE
PICKET TENT TO LIFE
ALONE..

BEHIND THE
HANDTRUCKS.