

at Brown University, the study investigated health effects of long or permanent layoffs on 200 workers of two large industrial plants.

The findings may be particularly relevant for workers currently laid off in Youngstown, Ohio; Lackawanna, N.Y.; Johnstown, Pa., and other iron and steel centers. (ITT, Oct. 5 and Oct. 12.)

"The situation is quite comparable—layoffs due to plant shutdowns," Dr. Kasl says.

Workers who were older, had been employed longest and were in poor health were hit harder than younger and healthier workers with a short work history at the plant, the study found. Kasl and Cobb's two-year study focused on married men aged 35 to 59 who had at least five years' seniority and a long history of stable work experience.

A significant number of these men suffered physical stress symptoms from the time they were anticipating job loss, until after they were rehired.

They showed high levels of uric acid, associated with arthritis; high pulse and blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels, associated with hypertension and heart disease.

A high frequency of hypertension was observed. There was a high level of peptic ulcers, including flare-ups of old ulcers. Minor ailments also were more frequent among the unemployed men than in a control group of industrial employees who still had jobs. Wives of the unemployed also showed a high incidence of ulcers.

To avert such health problems Dr. Kasl recommends programs that offer emotional support. These should involve the family, the union, the company and the community, he says.

Yet he and Dr. Cobb found that layoffs usually mean abandonment by the union, the company and the loss of other support groups.

The study recommends that companies and government cooperate to prevent sud-

Sidney Harris



den job terminations for thousands of workers and, instead, set up job phase-out and retraining and re-employment programs that allow gradual transitions and prevent needless stress.

Martin Brown, science editor of PNS, teaches at the University of California at Berkeley.

While Shell may not have ignored the guidelines, the company-sponsored study's unscientific arbitrariness is suspicious. During testing of DBCP, rats and other animals showed tissue alteration at 5 ppm. But never did the scientists test for consequences at exposures below 5 ppm. They took a calculated risk that 1 ppm would be safe.

The consequences of their decision have to be borne by the workers who have unknowingly handled DBCP since production began in 1954.

Little recourse for workers.

Fertility measurement is a matter of contention in the scientific community. All researchers agree that fertility depends on the production and mobility of spermatozoa as well as hormonal secretions. But some scientists say anything below 20 million is abnormal and others say anything below 40 million is. The company naturally favors the 20 million figure.

This gripes Rafael Moure. As the industrial hygienist for the OCAW International, he is deeply involved with the DBCP problem. The company seems worried more about limiting its liability than about its employees' health and safety, he says, adding that it's hard to believe that Shell officials are saying "It's not that bad; we can't say it's sterility."

Workers in Denver who find they are sterile, by whoever's measurement, will have little recourse in the courts. Not only can they not sue Shell, they cannot get workmen's compensation because the law requires that to be compensable, job-

caused "injuries" must interfere with the employee's ability to work.

The union may lobby to have the state law changed, but the GOP-dominated legislature is considered unsympathetic.

For Elliott and other veteran Shell Chemical workers, cancer is the chief concern now. OCAW wants the government to establish a long-term medical program to monitor past and present employees for the incidence of cancer, which can take 20 to 40 years to appear.

The OCAW has taken a prominent role in defending the rights of its members to safety in this matter. Union pressure led the government to pass "emergency temporary standards" for DBCP manufacture—10 parts per billion—that will effectively prevent the chemical industry from resuming DBCP production. The union also fought hard to obtain company-held results of the fertility test and convinced NIOSH to monitor those tests.

But some workers are afraid if they pressure too hard they may convince Shell to close its aging Denver plant. Said one worker, "It's common knowledge that if Shell gets too much heat, it'll shut a plant down." Hanson said he knew of no instance when Shell had done that.

A footnote to this story of company indifference shows that the DBCP issue may not go away even if another drop of the stuff is never produced. An ominous Canadian study found DBCP residue of 2 ppm on commercially marketable radishes and somewhat lesser concentrations on other root vegetables.

Timothy Lange is a writer in Denver.

Shell workers misled on sterility

By Timothy Lange

DENVER—Increasing evidence gives little doubt that a pesticide called 1,2 dibromo-3-chloropropane—DBCP—is the cause of sterility among some men who worked with it (ITT, Aug. 31). But the Shell Chemical Company, which together with the Dow Chemical Company manufactured 20 to 25 million pounds of DBCP annually, continues to minimize the potential risk faced by employees who came into contact with the pesticide during its 23 years of production.

DBCP is used to protect vegetables and other crops from roundworms, primarily in the South and in California. In June an extraordinary high number of workers who blended DBCP with other chemicals at the Occidental Chemical Company in Lathrop, Calif., were discovered to be sterile or to have marginal sperm counts.

Because fertility tests are uncompleted, up-to-date figures are difficult to obtain. But in Denver, where Shell made DBCP under the brand name Nemagon until last year, 36 men had been tested as of Sept. 17. Of those, at least 10, and perhaps as many as 24, showed abnormal sperm counts.

All inquiries about DBCP are now routed to Shell's Houston office. The public relations representative there, Richard Hanson, said last week that he is "extremely impressed with the moral standards of Shell," the "zeal" with which the company investigates medical problems and its "erring on the side of safety."

But in a Sept. 1 memorandum to employees Shell's company doctor, R.E. Joyner, was quoted as saying, "The data to date is insufficient to draw conclusions concerning fertility or to establish cause

and effect relationships." Dr. Joyner also told officials at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) that the company has been unable to establish a "significant correlation between length of individual exposure and sperm count."

Failure to notify workers.

Most indicative of Shell's attitude is the company's failure to notify its employees about test results that demonstrated a clear link between exposure to DBCP and sterility.

First evidence of this link appeared in 1954 in an internal paper submitted by researchers hired by Shell. Conclusions of that paper and tests commissioned by Dow were published in a toxicological journal in 1961. But it was not until after the Lathrop tests became known that Shell workers learned what the company had known all along. Even then, their local of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) had to pressure the company to get their own fertility tests started.

Hanson said he has convinced the corporate hierarchy that in the future workers should be apprised of the results of all tests conducted on Shell-produced chemicals. But he denied the implication that the company had ignored the 1961 study of DBCP. The company, he said, had followed all the study's suggested guidelines, including a recommendation that air in the DBCP-production areas not rise above 1 part per million (ppm). During manufacture, DBCP in the air averaged .2 ppm to .6 ppm, well within the guidelines, he said.

Women have job safety concerns

By Andrea Gunderson and Jane Melnick

CHICAGO—A group of 6,000 peach growers recently suggested that people who don't want children, who are already sterile, or who want to "get around certain religious strictures" against birth control should volunteer to work in peach groves sprayed with pesticides that have been revealed to cause sterility.

This example of managerial ingenuity

was cited by Carl Carlson, chairman of the Chicago Area Committee on Occupational Safety and Health—CACOSH—at the opening of a conference in early October on occupational safety and health and women workers. The conference, "All in a Day's Work" was cosponsored by several unions and health groups and brought over 200 people together for speeches and workshops on occupational

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Commoner, Conyers & Sadlowski featured at Chautauqua

THROUGHOUT THE LATE 19TH AND early 20th centuries popular educators and entertainers plied the prairies and the cities with educational "revues" called Chautauquas. Revivalists and anarchists, temperance advocates and populists, jingoists and socialists—all organized Chautauquas to bring their message to the people. They were, in their time, a key part of American political culture.

On December 3 the Chautauqua tradition will enjoy something of a revival in Chicago. *IN THESE TIMES* will celebrate its first year of publication with a Chautauqua at the Midland Hotel in the heart of Chicago's Loop.

Like the old-time Chautauquas this one will feature prominent speakers.

Barry Commoner, who has been described as "the first person to derive socialism from the second law of thermodynamics," will be the major attraction of the daytime program. Commoner, who directs the Center for the Study of Biological Systems at St. Louis' Washington University, will talk on "A Democratic Energy Program." His latest book is *The Poverty of Power*.

The program will begin with a discussion of "Popular Socialism in These Times" with

James Weinstein and Martin J. Sklar, editors of *IN THESE TIMES*.

Liz McPike, former director of the Illinois Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), will speak on the political meaning of new trends in the labor movement. McPike led her union through seven years of intense organizing. She is currently on the staff of Women Employed, a Chicago-based organization for clerical organizing.

There will also be workshops exploring important issues of concern:

Lou Palmer, a controversial black radio commentator in Chicago, Sister Gabriel Herbers of the Alliance to End Repression, and David Hamlin, who heads the Chicago Civil Liberties Union, will discuss the tensions between the right to free speech and the fight against racism. These issues have been of special significance in Chicago, where Nazis have been openly organizing against blacks and Jews in the volatile Southwest side of the city.

The arms race and foreign policy will be the focus of a workshop led by Sam Day of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists and Betty Bono of the Campaign for a Democratic Foreign Policy.

Vicente Navarro, foremost marxist health care expert and editor of *The International Journal of Health Services*, will lead the workshop on "Can the Health System be Reformed." He will be joined by John McNight of Northwestern University.

The problems and prospects of organizing among working women will be discussed in a workshop led by Clara Day, Vice President of the Congress of Labor Union Women and an organizer for the Teamsters, Day Creamer, director of Women Employed, and Mary Jean Collins, Field Representative of the Illinois Nurses Association.

The prospects for capitalism and Carter's approach to its problems will be examined in a workshop led by Alan Wolfe, political columnist for *IN THESE TIMES*, and Carl Parrini of Northern Illinois University.

Finally, Chicago political activists will meet to debate the prospects of a new political majority in the second city. This workshop will be headed by Vernon Jarrett, syndicated columnist at the *Chicago Tribune*, Don Rose, a leading independent political organizer and journalist in Chicago, and Heather Booth, director of the Midwest Academy.

The Chautauqua will reconvene in the even-

ing to hear keynote addresses from Ed Sadlowski, the outstanding leader of the rank and file movement within the United Steel Workers Union, and Rep. John Conyers of Detroit. Studs Terkel, author of *Working* and the recent *Conversations with Myself*, will emcee.

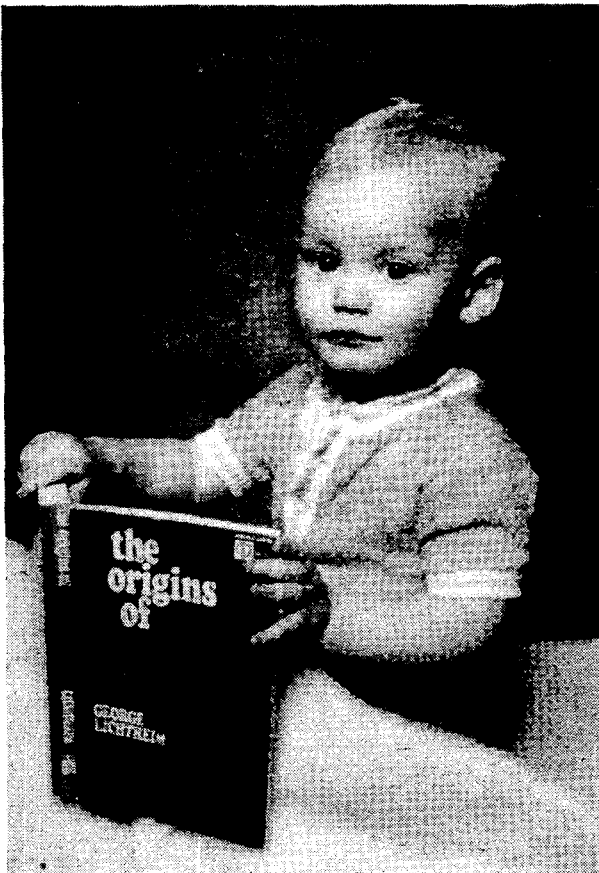
Webster defines Chautauqua as "refreshment for the mind." The *IN THESE TIMES* first Anniversary Chautauqua will undoubtedly be that. But it will also finish with a little refreshment for the body and spirit. Return of the Kalif, a superb Chicago musical group will entertain and there will be dancing and a cash bar.

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