



East Texas Historical Journal

A Publication of the East Texas Historical Association

Volume 49 Issue 2

Article 7

10-2011

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Recommended Citation

Botson, Michael (2011) "Revisiting the Battle of Baytown: Unions, Reds, and Mayhem in a Company," *East Texas Historical Journal*: Vol. 49: Iss. 2, Article 7.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ethj/vol49/iss2/7>

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Revisiting the Battle of Baytown: Unions, Reds, and Mayhem in a Company Town

BY MICHAEL BOTSON

In their 1958 monumental history of Baytown's Humble Oil and Refining Company, prominent business historians Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Porter devoted only fifty of their study's 769 pages to the company's labor history. Unsurprisingly, as business historians they focused their attention on the men who established and managed the company rather than the employees who worked there.¹ In summing up the defeat of two union organizing drives between 1936 and 1943, they concluded that "Humble employees simply were not interested in an outside union. They had become convinced that their own federations were effective agencies for collective bargaining with management."²

Moreover, Larson and Porter dismissed critics who suggested employees' loyalty to Humble Oil smacked of feudalism and that they were somehow "inferior in stamina to other oil companies' employees who, in the face of more serious attempts at [management] coercion, had organized and won bargaining rights for Oil Workers International locals."³

However, their simplistic conclusion leaves unanswered one important question: How, in fact, did Humble Oil and Refining Company defeat two Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO) organizing campaigns during the union's peak popularity while workers in all other major refineries along the upper Texas Gulf Coast successfully organized powerful CIO unions and secured collective bargaining rights?

Several factors affect the answer to this dilemma. First is Humble Oil's tradition of anti-unionism reflected in the labor relations philosophy of its conservative, southern founders, Ross Sterling, Walter

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Fondren, Robert Blaffer and William Farish. Under their leadership the company crushed its employees' first union organizing campaign during the Goose Creek Oil Field Strike in 1917.⁴ In 1920 Humble Oil and Refining became part of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Corporation of New Jersey and adopted Standard's antiunion policy as laid out under the Colorado Industrial Relations Plan.⁵ The plan consisted of four elements: a corporate welfare system, a grievance procedure, an employees' bill of rights, and lastly Joint Councils, eventually called Employee Representation Plans, which contained employee elected representatives along with management appointed members.



C.S. Stone, the first person hired to work for Humble oil in Baytown leading a yoke of oxen hauling heavy equipment to the refinery construction site, circa 1917.

Photo courtesy of

Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University New Haven, CT.

The Plan appeared to establish joint governance between management and employees, but the agreements formulated in the Council lacked substance because they were not the result of negotiations between two parties which held equal power and had learned to respect each other's economic strength. As a result there was never any agency to compel employers to honor agreements reached through the Joint Council.⁶ Paternalistic in nature and anti-union in objective, the Plan allowed management to retain control over industrial relations with an iron fist as demonstrated when Humble Oil's Joint Conference figured prominently in management's defeat of the CIO's organizing drive in 1936. In addition to the Joint Conference, other factors led to the CIO's defeat, including managements, intimidation of CIO members,

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and alliance of anti-union local businessmen, their trade associations and newspaper editors who rallied against the CIO, “Red” and race baiting, and, finally, the Union’s misguided decision to call a strike.

The battle between pro- and anti-union factions in Baytown actually dated back to 1934 when Humble employees Bob Oliver and Roy Childers first established Local No. 333 of the Oil Workers Union affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL). At the time the union claimed 1,400 members, approximately sixty percent of Humble’s 2,300 employees. Oliver requested a union certification election under the authority of the Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). Management refused to hold an election based on its opposition to recognizing the union as the sole collective bargaining agent for its employees. Local No. 333 responded by appealing to the Petroleum Labor Policy Board to certify the union without an election but before the Board could take any action the Supreme Court declared the NIRA unconstitutional in May, 1935 thus making the issue mute.⁸

Local No. 333 abandoned the AFL in 1936 over philosophical and organizing differences, and they affiliated with the newly formed CIO. Although employees expressed continuing interest in the union, they remained well-aware that the company disdained it. Twice between September, 1935, and March, 1936, management refused to meet with Oliver and Childers to discuss union recognition, wages, promotions, and seniority rights. The company took the position that in these matters management would only consider individual cases and would not enter into any binding agreement with the Union over these issues or recognize it as the collective bargaining agent for its employees.

Nonetheless, by late summer 1936, the union’s growing numbers and potential influence could not be ignored. Consequently, management consented to meet with Oliver, Childers, and other union officials to discuss union recognition, wages, promotions, and seniority rights. Company officials partly met with union representatives because the union’s growing presence could not be dismissed, but they also could not ignore the newly passed Wagner Act, which had empowered workers to organize unions. Like other companies at the time, Humble Oil officials were willing to meet with union representatives as a show of complying with the law, while, at the same time, stalling negotiations, hoping the U.S. Supreme Court would rule the Wagner Act unconstitutional in a case filed against it by the Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation. The meeting took place in the refinery’s administrative offices on September 4.¹⁰

The day before the meeting, management distributed an open letter from executive vice president Harry Weiss that poisoned the atmosphere. In it, he praised the company's harmonious history of labor relations and condemned the CIO organizers as outside agitators determined to cause trouble. Weiss ignored the fact that Humble's employees worked as organizers and that hundreds of employees had joined the CIO. In part the letter proclaimed:

The leaders of this movement are outsiders who seek to impose their rule on the rest of us. The success of efforts of this kind is dependent upon coercion, and that is the root of the evil. This insidious force can be best combated by the resistance of the employees themselves. The Company will stand behind you with all possible support.¹¹

Weiss's letter became the opening broadside against the CIO, even before management met with union officials. It left no doubt in the minds of employees as to the company's attitude towards the union. From that point on, the anti-CIO assault became a highly orchestrated, systematic campaign that ultimately defeated the union's organizing drive in 1936.

The meeting's transcript is an object lesson in obfuscation. Management representatives tied every issue introduced by Bob Oliver and other union officials into linguistic knots, however, one thing does clearly stand out in spite of management's circumlocution, and that was the company's unequivocal refusal to recognize the CIO as the collective bargaining agent of its employees. During the meeting union officials Bob Oliver and C.C. Fogerty pointedly asked the head of management's delegation, D.B. Harris, to sign a contract and recognize the union. Harris refused, saying that, "We are not willing to write a contract . . . We are not willing to sign an agreement to treat your group any differently in any other respect, either better or any worse than the rest of the employees."¹² Harris went further, saying that the company would not recognize any third party as the employees' exclusive collective bargaining agent, and restated its policy to meet with employees on an individual basis to settle any labor disagreements. A policy he noted, which had worked satisfactorily for years.¹³ Oliver bitterly disagreed.

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He chastised Harris for “[s]etting up [himself] as the man to pass judgment on what is satisfactory or what is not satisfactory. I say to you there is a large percentage of your employees who do not accept it as satisfactory. You know this is a serious situation.”¹⁴ Harris responded by hewing to the line that even if Local No. 333 represented one hundred percent of Humble’s employees, management would not recognize it or any other organization as their collective bargaining agent. But, in fact, during the previous fourteen years management had “fostered, encouraged and supported the Joint Conference in its refinery and conditioned its employees to collective dealing through it.”¹⁵ The meeting ended with this impasse. Outraged at Humble’s intransigence and duplicity, Oliver and his organizers responded to management’s hardball tactics by re-energizing their organizing efforts.

Almost immediately after the organizing efforts began, a rumor quickly spread throughout Baytown that the CIO would strike if management did not recognize the union. The source of the rumor has never been discovered, but it crippled the CIO’s organizing effort by focusing public attention on the potential of a violent strike.¹⁶ It clouded the union’s message of trying to cast itself as a responsible and effective employee advocate, making it nearly impossible to cast the CIO in a positive light. The rumored strike forced organizers into curtailing recruiting efforts and into defending the CIO against charges that it was comprised of agitators bent on anarchy in Baytown.

The fear of a potentially violent strike hamstrung the CIO’s recruiting efforts and perhaps, even more importantly, convinced many members to drop out of the union. In early August the union claimed 1,400 members; but after the strike rumor spread, membership quickly dropped to approximately 800.¹⁷ Beginning in August and until the union capitulated in September, the strike issue colored the rhetoric hurled back-and-forth by the antagonists, heightening passions in Baytown to the boiling point.

Management ordered foremen to gauge union strength by trying to identify CIO members; to stigmatize them as troublemakers; to voice management’s displeasure with union members; and, finally, to intimidate employees undecided about joining the union. Management ordered a garage foreman to conduct a straw poll among his employees to gauge strike sympathy. Foremen throughout the refinery conducted similar polls and directly challenged known CIO organizers and members. In the inspection department, its foreman confronted a union

organizer about his union activities, in particular about his recruiting visits to African American employees' homes, an action overstepping the racial boundaries of Jim Crow segregation. The foreman cautioned him, saying, "Well it looks like to me that they are letting you do the dirty work over there . . . guiding these Negroes around Baytown . . . That will get you into trouble sooner or later . . . you are letting [union organizers] Bob Oliver and Roy Childers make a sap out of you."¹⁸ The accuracy of these polls is suspect since many CIO members would not publicly acknowledge membership fearing management reprisals. The subtle though unequivocal message management communicated through these polls was that Humble Oil and Refining regarded CIO membership as disloyalty to the company and that those who joined fell from favor and jeopardized their jobs.

An additional factor that hurt the CIO included the Texas Communist Party's support of the union's organizing efforts in Baytown. Texas Communist Party head Homer Brooks praised the CIO as the only "industrial form of organization capable of meeting and defeating the huge financial interests in the mass producing industries such as oil."¹⁹ Brooks' enthusiastic support of the CIO's industrial unionism, his endorsement of the CIO's commitment to racial equality, and his assertion that "[t]he interests of the Party are identical with the labor movement," all played into hands of union critics. Though the Sabine-Houston Branch of the Texas Communist Party voiced support for the CIO's efforts in Baytown, there is no evidence that Homer Brooks or any Communists worked in Baytown as organizers.²⁰

The union's call for interracial unionism and the abolition of Jim Crow segregation prompted searing attacks and condemnation of the CIO from racists. Bulletins issued by the Joint Conference's successor organization, the Employees Federation, accurately reflect the hysteria, racist passions, and fear unleashed by race-baiting in southeast Texas during that era. One bulletin warned, "The CIO in its frantic struggle for more votes is secretly carrying on a campaign among Negro workers intended to cause serious trouble . . . They promise that all forms of racial separation shall be abolished . . . We call upon you free white America workers of Baytown refinery to give your active help [to stop this]." Additionally, the arrival in Baytown of African American dockworkers from Houston and other outlying Gulf Coast ports to rally black support for the CIO fanned racial fears among uneasy whites that militant black longshoremen would attack strikebreakers.²¹

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Baytown quickly polarized between those supporting the union and those opposed. Raising the banner of preserving law and order, the newly formed Tri-Cities Citizens Committee, composed of anti-union employees, prominent local businessmen, bankers, the Chamber of Commerce, and newspaper publishers, mobilized to marshal public opinion against the CIO. The fiercely anti-union Clifford Bond, influential publisher of the *News Tribune*, used his newspaper as a platform to condemn the CIO.²² In a bold two-column front page story on September 16, 1936, Bond vilified union president Bob Oliver:

I have found that a young and ambitious man by the name of Bob Oliver, some three years ago, chose the Tri-Cities area as a fertile field to become a sort of “Czar, Mussolini, Hitler, or what have you?” among the laboring men of the Tri-Cities . . . He was able to rally gullible individuals in the employ of the Humble Refinery . . . I have found that after drawing a fat salary from the dues of the members, Mr. Oliver finally reached a point where it became necessary for him to either “deliver the goods or get off the receptacle” (if you get what I mean).²³

Bond had no qualms about mixing “isms” in his denunciation of Oliver and the union. He fell back on the common anti-union tactic of stereotyping big labor bosses as racketeers who are out to enrich themselves by soaking union members for dues. Other Committee members volunteered to give anti-union speeches, engaged in an aggressive pamphleteering campaign in conjunction with Humble’s Security League, and organized mass rallies to coordinate public opinion against the CIO.²⁴

The Tri-City Citizens’ Committee helped anti-CIO employees organize a back-to-work association in preparation for the strike. The association petitioned local law enforcement agencies to deputize non-striking employees and private citizens so they could protect strikebreakers who crossed CIO picket lines, actions that turned the Baytown refinery into an armed camp. Management began stockpiling food and arranging sleeping accommodations for employees who wanted to remain in the refinery during the strike, and even looked into the feasibility of landing cargo planes on refinery property to keep



Photos on pages 16 and 17 are construction of the refinery's mechanical shops, circa 1919. The tent city in the background housed African American and Mexican laborers. Photos courtesy of Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

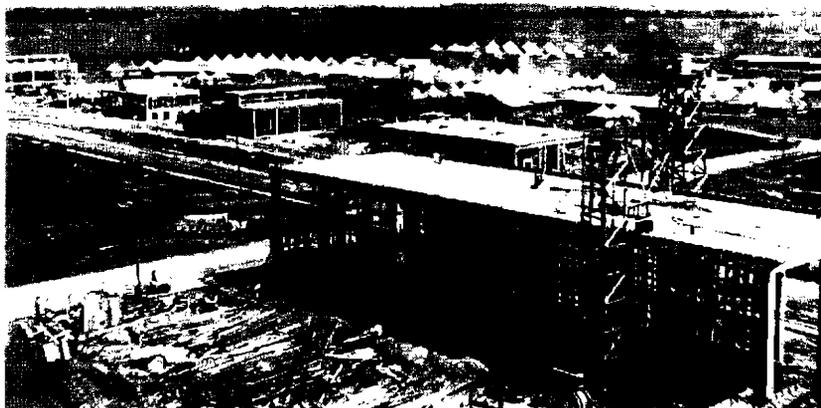
the workforce supplied. By the third week of September, the tension in Baytown had reached a fever pitch, leading to fears of violence.²⁵ Union activism raised race and class anxieties, the fear of communism led to fears of radicalism, and perhaps most important, the power of Humble Oil and Refining Company hung in the Baytown air like vapors from its refinery, ready to ignite into a full-blown war.

After a promising start, the CIO soon found itself on the defensive and quickly lost ground. To publicize the CIO's position and regain control over the issues, Bob Oliver published a letter in the *Houston Chronicle* laying out the union's objectives in Baytown. The letter reiterated the CIO's demand for recognition as the employees' collective bargaining agent and requested wage increases and seniority to become a basis for consideration in promotions, demotions, transfers, and layoffs.²⁶ Management flatly turned down all of Oliver's demands, thereby forcing the union's hand. Oliver then reluctantly called for a strike vote, which the rank-and-file approved with a tally of 787 to 57.²⁷ The union set September 18 as the strike date. On September 16, the Tri-Cities Citizens' Committee and the Joint Conference placed a half-page ad in the *Houston Chronicle*, proclaiming, "We do not believe

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there is justification for a strike in the Baytown Refinery.²⁸ Another article in the same edition cited an unsubstantiated report that 3,100 of the refinery's employees signed an anti-strike pledge circulated by officers of the Joint Conference.²⁹

Adding to the CIO's woes was an attack within organized labor. The members of the International Association of Machinists, Local No. 1051 (AFL), which represented skilled machinists in the refinery, opposed the strike. Although the machinists' union only represented Humble's 108 skilled machinists, a small fraction of the overall workforce, its opposition to the strike was a humiliating blow to the CIO by publicly displaying the bitterness within Baytown's house of labor.³⁰ The machinists' position might have been expected, given that the CIO and AFL were mortal enemies stemming from bitter disagreements over racial policies, as well as craft versus industrial union tensions.



The AFL routinely opposed CIO organizing efforts and engaged in race- and Red-baiting against the CIO similar to that of companies and anti-union workers.³¹

Under great pressure, Bob Oliver and members of Local No. 333 rethought the strike amidst rapidly growing disillusionment with the CIO and decided to hold another vote on the eve of the walkout. Its adversaries had whipped up hysteria in Baytown by successfully stigmatizing the union as bent on class warfare, racial radicalism, and communism. In the second vote, the union unanimously decided to call off the strike, thereby ending the first battle for Baytown between pro

and anti-union factions and representing a resounding defeat for the CIO.³² However, was it defeated, as Larson and Porter concluded, due to Humble's employees simply not being interested in a union like the CIO? Upon careful re-examination, the picture appears much more complex.

Pro-CIO employees faced an uphill battle on numerous fronts in their effort to organize the refinery. A plethora of factors, including management's historic anti-unionism dating back to the Goose Creek oil field strike in 1917, its implementation of Standard Oil of New Jersey's labor policies that included the Joint Conference as a means to foster employee loyalty and discourage unionization, cooperation between management and the hastily formed Tri-City Citizens' Committee coordinating community opposition to the CIO, Red- and race-baiting to smear the union, and the strike rumor, all coalesced to defeat the CIO.

It is essential to note that over the key issue that led to the unraveling of the CIO's organizing campaign, the origin of the strike rumor, there is disagreement between Larson and Porter and the official Labor Board records. Larson and Porter suggest the rumor originated from the CIO as a threat to bully the company into recognizing the union without actually going on strike; but in a Labor Board hearing held afterwards, the official record shows that the source of the rumor was never discovered. The nature of this disagreement is critically important in trying to understand the historical significance of the CIO's defeat, since prior to the rumored strike the union enjoyed significant popularity in Baytown, which Larson and Porter recognized.³³

Furthermore, an announcement of the union's intention to strike ran counter to the CIO's overall national strategy in 1936 and early 1937. Facing reactionary anti-union forces throughout industrial America, similar to the ones encountered in Baytown, CIO leaders understood that a strike should be a last resort for several reasons. Despite the perception of rising worker militancy, solidarity, and class consciousness during the depression, these were not characterizations universally accepted by American workers. Many remained loyal to their companies and company unions, while still others sat-on-the-fence, waiting see whether management or labor prevailed before joining the CIO.³⁴

The great Flint sit-down strike against General Motors, from December 1936 to February 1937, is the best example of this; and although it resulted in an unprecedented victory for workers and

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organized labor, the CIO authorized the strike as a desperate last resort and planned it in complete secrecy. Only a handful of Flint's autoworkers participated in the strike, while large numbers of GM workers opposed, or simply watched with detachment.³⁵ It was risky business to join a union, and a failed strike would likely cost a striker his job. All of these factors came into play during the CIO's Baytown organizing campaign and drove union president, Bob Oliver, to exclaim in frustration, "Hell, I am opposed to it too. We decided to call the strike as a last resort. What we want is to get the Humble Oil and Refining Company to reason with us."³⁶

The strike rumor could very well have emanated from any of Baytown's anti-CIO factions, such as a member of the Tri-Cities Citizens' Committee, the Joint Council, management, or even from an agent provocateur who infiltrated the CIO. The report of the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee, chaired by Wisconsin Senator Robert La Follette, conclusively demonstrated that labor spies from private detective agencies hired by corporations had infiltrated the CIO from its founding, so it is conceivable that the strike rumor could have originated from an agent provocateur or by any of the groups in Baytown opposing the union.³⁷ This, of course, is an important avenue of future research.

In summing up labor's defeat in the first Battle for Baytown, it is much more complicated than the conclusion of Larson and Porter that employees in Humble's refinery "were not interested in an outside union."³⁸ An examination and analysis of the forces arrayed against Humble's employees loyal to the CIO and their effort to organize the refinery, it is clear they faced a collection of adversaries who coalesced into an unassailable anti-union front. It is not so much a surprise that they suffered a defeat as it is a wonder how they managed to do as well as they did.

(Endnotes)

¹ Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *History of Humble Oil and Refining Company* (New York: Harper and Brother Publishing, 1959), 66-77, 350-389.

² Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *History of Humble Oil and Refining Company*., 375.

³ Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *History of Humble Oil and Refining Company*., 387, 375.

⁴ James C. Maroney, "The Texas-Louisiana Oil Field Strike of 1917," In *Essays in Southern Labor History: Selected Papers, Southern Labor History Conference, 1976*, Gary M. Fink and Merl E. Reed, eds., (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), 161-172; William Lee Greer, "The Texas Gulf Coast Oil Strike of 1917," Master's thesis, University of Houston, 1974; Larson and Porter, *Humble Oil*, 66-71.

⁵ The foremost example of Standard Oil's violent antiunionism occurred in April 1914 when the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, a subsidiary of Standard was involved in a strike with the United Mineworkers of America that resulted in the Ludlow Massacre, one of the worst tragedies in American labor history when thirty-three people, including two women and eleven children, died at the hands of the Colorado State Militia. Public outrage over the Ludlow Massacre, aimed in large measure at the Rockefellers, sparked a passionate national debate over the violence inherent in American labor relations. The U.S. Industrial Commission on Industrial Relations issued a scathing report in 1915 on the Ludlow killings and suggested a number of prolabor remedies to eliminate such violence, such as the workers right to organize unions. Unsurprisingly, Standard for the most part ignored the report. Nonetheless, determined to overcome the negative publicity that sullied the Rockefeller name, John D. Rockefeller Jr. hired Mackenzie King, a Canadian labor relations expert, to resurrect the family's tarnished image by formulating a labor relations policy for Colorado Fuel and Iron and Standard Oil to eliminate the conditions that led to the Ludlow Massacre. King named the plan the Colorado Industrial Representation Plan.

The Joint Councils were set up to deal with things such as health and sanitation, safety and accidents, recreations, education and conciliation. It is important to note that the Councils only had authority to advise and not make decisions. In practice foremen continued to wield great power over day-to-day labor relations and were in a position to take retribution against employees filing grievances. Consequently, employees avoided filing grievances with Joint Conference representatives out of fear of reprisals from their foreman.

The Colorado Plan did not empower employees though it appeared to establish joint governance between management and employees with the Joint Council. The plan flatly stated, "The right to hire and discharge, the management of properties, and the direction of work forces shall be vested exclusively in the Company, and, this right shall not be abridged." Paternalistic in nature and antiunion in objective, management continued to control industrial relations with an iron fist. The agreements formulated in the Joint Council lacked substance because they were not the result of negotiations between two parties which held equal power and had learned to respect each other's economic strength. As a result there was never any force to compel employers to honor agreements reached through the Joint Council. In 1915 Standard Oil of New Jersey introduced its Joint Council at its Bayonne refinery. When Humble Oil opened its Baytown refinery in 1920 management adopted Standard Oil's Colorado Plan which included the Joint

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Conference, its company union. See Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 146-176; Marilyn S. Johnson, *Violence in the West: The Johnson County Range War and the Ludlow Massacre, A Brief History with Documents*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2009), 26, 138; William Lyon Mackenzie King, *Industry and Humanity*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), xi-xii; Robert Dunn, *Company Unions: A Study of Employee Representation Plans, Works Councils and Other Substitutes for Labor Unions* (Chicago: Trade Union Educational League, 1927) 5; David Brody, "The Rise and Fall of Welfare Capitalism," in *Change and Continuity in Twentieth-Century America: The 1920s*, eds. John Braeman, Robert Bremner, and David Brody (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968), 159.

⁶ William Lyon Mackenzie King, *Industry and Humanity*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), xii.

⁷ In 1915 Standard Oil of New Jersey introduced its Joint Council at its Bayonne refinery. See, Harvey O'Connor, *History of Oil Workers International Union (CIO)*, (Denver: A.B. Hirschfield Press, 1950), 1-3; Bruce Kaufman, "The Case for Company Unions," *Labor History* 41 (August 2000): 322; Division of Industrial Relations, *Characteristics of Company Unions, 1935* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1938), 9-10 (hereafter referred to as *Company Unions*). In 1915 and 1916 workers at Standard Oil's Bayonne refinery struck over low wages and supervisory abuse. In the ensuing violence nine strikers were killed and 50 wounded in 1915 and seven were killed in the 1916 strike.

⁸ National Labor Relations Board, *Decisions and Orders of the National Labor Relations Board*, 16 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1940), 118 (Hereafter cited as *Decisions*); Melvyn Dubofsky, *The State and Labor in Modern America*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 128.

⁹ National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD, Records of the National Labor Relations Board, RG 25, Case File 684, "Official Report of Proceedings Before the National Labor Relations Board in the Matter of Humble Oil and Refining Company and Oil Workers International Union, Local No. 333 and the Oil Workers International Union, Local No. 316," Exhibit No. 25, 2, (Hereafter cited as NARACP, RNLRB, RG 25).

¹⁰ NARACP, RNLRB, RG 25, Exhibit 25, 1-2; Melvyn Dubofsky, *State and Labor*, 142-151; James Green, "Democracy Comes to Little Siberia: Steel Workers Organize in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, 1933-1937," *Labor's Heritage*, (Summer, 1993): 4-27.

¹¹ National Labor Relations Board, *Decisions*, 119.

¹² NARACP RNLB, Exhibit 25-26.

¹³ NARACP RNLB., 24-29, Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *Humble Oil*, 367.

¹⁴ NARACP RNLB., 26-27.

¹⁵ National Labor Relations Board, *Decisions*, 132.

¹⁶ National Labor Relations Board, *Decisions*, 118, see fn. 6.

¹⁷ Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *Humble Oil*, 371.

¹⁸ National Labor Relations Board, *Decisions*, 121.

¹⁹ Homer Brooks, "Build the Farm Labor Party Now," *The Red Trade Unionist*, March 1936; "Statement of the District Committee of District 20 (Texas-Oklahoma) of the Communist Party on the Problems and Tasks Confronting the Oil Field and Refinery Workers."

²⁰ Homer Brooks, "Why Trade Unionists Belong in the Communist Party," *The Red Trade Unionist*, Dec. 1935.

²¹ Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *Humble Oil*, 371.

²⁴ NARACP, RNLB, RG 25, Hearing Transcript, 784.

²³ Clifford M. Bond, "Some Truth About This Strike," the *News-Tribune*, September 16, 1936, p. 1.

²⁴ National Labor Relations Board, *Decisions*, 120.

²⁵ Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *Humble Oil*, 372; "Strike Parley of Tri-Cities Group is Vain," *Houston Chronicle*, September 15, 1936, p. 1; "Humble Plant Prepares to Meet Strike," *Houston Chronicle*, September 16, 1936, p. 1.

²⁶ "Humble Company at Loss to Understand Baytown Strike Talk," *Houston Chronicle*, August 27, 1936, p. 1.

²⁷ "Humble Turns Down Union's Wage Demands," *Houston Chronicle*, August 29, 1936, p. 1.; "Walkout to Be Carried Out Quietly," *Houston Chronicle*, September 11, 1936, p. 1.

²⁸ "To The Public From Humble Employees," *Houston Chronicle*, September 16, 1936, p. 22.

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²⁹ “To The Public From Humble Employees,” *Houston Chronicle*, September 16, 1936, p. 22; Larson and Porter put the number at 2,436 who voted to oppose the strike, see Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *Humble Oil*, 372. Different sources contradict each other over the numbers of votes cast opposing the strike vote and range from 3,100 to 2, 436. The same holds true for CIO membership. Larson and Porter put the union’s membership at approximately 800 while the September 18, 1936 edition of the *Houston Chronicle* puts the CIO’s membership at 1,200. There is also contradiction between the total number of employees working at Humble’s Baytown Refinery that ranges from 3,200 to 3,500 depending on what source is referred to.

³⁰ “Machinists Vote to Take No Part if Strike Called,” *Houston Chronicle*, September 16, 1936, p. 22.

³¹ Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO, 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 18-21; Melvyn Dubofsky and Foster Rhea Dulles, *Labor in America: A History*, 8thed. (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2010), 264-275.

³² Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *Humble Oil*, 372.

³³ National Labor Relations Board, *Decisions*, 118, see fn. 6; Porter and Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *Humble Oil*, 371.

³⁴ Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO*, 38-45.

³⁵ Sydney Fine, *Sit-Down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969); Henry Krause, *The Many and the Few: A Chronicle of the Dynamic Autoworkers*, 2d ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Idem., *The UAW, 1934-39: Heroes of Unwritten History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 205-294; Irving Bernstein, *Turbulent Years: A History of the American Worker, 1933-1941* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1970), 318-321.

³⁶ “Businessman Will Seek to Avert Strike,” *Houston Chronicle*, September 14, 1936, p. 1.

³⁷ Melvyn Dubofsky and Foster Rhea Dulles, *Labor in America: A History*, 8th, ed. (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2010); Leo Huberman, *The Labor Spy Racket*, (New York: Modern Age Books, 1937).

³⁸ Henrietta Larson and Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *Humble Oil*, 375.