THE FORD MOTOR COMPANY'S RESISTANCE TO THE
LABOR MOVEMENT IN DALLAS, TEXAS

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THE FORD MOTOR COMPANY'S RESISTANCE TO THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN DALLAS, TEXAS

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CHAPTER I

THE FORD MOTOR COMPANY'S RESISTANCE TO THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN DALLAS, TEXAS

The story of the labor movement in the United States has been one of oppression, violence and bloodshed. It has also been the story of dedicated and determined men striving to organize the workers of America; of achievements won only through suffering, sweat, and toil. The resistance of employers to the organization of employees has been fierce and violent. In no other industrialized country in the world have employers been so unsympathetic to the needs of their workers or so antagonistic to their efforts at organization. And, in no other country in the world has the power of a democratic government been used to preserve the status of the workers as second-class citizens.\(^1\)

Moved by the prevailing policy of laissez-faire, which advocated rugged individualism, the government left the employers to deal with employees as they saw fit. Employers halted most union efforts to improve conditions of work by creating or employing organized resistance groups.

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Instead of cowering under the hostility and dictatorial powers of employers, the American worker fought back. Resistance, at first weak and sporadic, became more determined as time progressed. Labor continued to fight despite the repeated setbacks, and finally, after the New Deal came into existence began to achieve notable gains in the unionization of industry.²

The Wagner Act of 1935 attempted to strengthen the bargaining position of the worker and make it possible for labor to obtain a larger share of the national income. The New Deal policy makers thought that only through government support could labor meet management on anything close to equal terms and that the time had come for labor to have equal weight on the economic scales.³ Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes stated in the five-to-four decision in NLRB against Jones and Laughlin, "Employees have as clear a right to organize and select their representatives for lawful purposes as the respondent has to organize its business and its own officers and agents."⁴ He further stated that labor unions were essential to give the worker an opportunity to deal on an equal basis with his employer. A single worker, dependent on his employer for the maintenance of himself and his

²Ibid.
⁴Ibid., p. 279.
family, was helpless in dealing with his impersonal employer. Only the demands of a majority of the employees of a company, bonded together in one concentrated voice, could seriously attract the attention of management.5

One of the most powerful obstacles for the labor movement in the 1930's was the automotive industry. The "Big Three"—General Motors, Ford and Chrysler—dominated the industry and by highly centralized control and direction ably kept unions from gaining any noticeable foothold in their plants.6 Of the leaders, General Motors and Chrysler yielded a little to the unions but Ford yielded nothing. The companies long hampered the efforts of unionization in their plants, and were guilty of abusing their workers by paying uneven wages, speeding up the assembly line, employing spies, and making foremen push the workers to their limits. General Motors employed labor spies from agencies specializing in industrial espionage, while Ford had set up its own spy network under the direction of Harry Bennett. The report of the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee, investigating the abuses of workers' civil rights, revealed that from January 1, 1934, to July 31, 1936, General Motors had spent $994,855 on private detective services.7

5Ibid.
To combat the tactics of the automotive giants, the United Automobile Workers, an affiliate of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, employed a new weapon in the history of labor. This device, known as the "sit-down" strike, virtually stopped factory production whenever used. In practice the strike was extremely effective because the workers simply dropped their tools and sat down at their work stations in passive resistance. The workers then could prevent scabs, men employed to replace those on strike, from taking over their jobs, and at the same time develop a sense of solidarity while taking advantage of the shelter and warmth of the plant. By February of 1937 sit-down strikes effectively had stopped General Motors' production and cost the company its seasonal profits. Thus hindered, the company agreed to recognize the U.A.W. as the bargaining agent for its own membership. The door opened for wage and seniority right negotiations, and the means for eliminating the speed-up and other abuses were studied. Two months later Chrysler capitulated to the U.A.W. after a sit-down strike had successfully closed its factories. The corporation agreed to grant the same working conditions and wages that General Motors allowed its workers.8

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8Ibid., pp. 134-35.
Henry Ford, observing the gains made by the union in General Motors and Chrysler, began to organize his plants in order to prevent unionization. He had no intention of complying with the Wagner Labor Relations Act and vowed he would never recognize any union's right to bargain for his employees. Ford intended to use every means available to keep the union out of his plants and chose Barry Bennett to direct antiunion strategy. He then made sure that every branch of the Ford empire understood his intentions; every shop, assembly plant and office was informed of company policy and all executives were expected to obey without question. 9

The Dallas plant followed the policy of resistance to the letter. A man, Warren Worley, was sent from Detroit to organize the resistance system in Dallas, and the resulting militant organization came to resemble that of the Michigan plant, especially in its crushing efficiency. Consequently, Henry Ford's labor policies and his determined efforts to defeat labor's attempts at organization throughout the Ford empire may be seen in microcosm in the Dallas plant. Although directions came from Ford's Detroit office, no plant in the company's hierarchy opposed the spread of unionism more violently or persistently than did the Dallas organization. The militant organization in Dallas was similar in structure,

9Ibid., p. 138.
purpose and function to those employed elsewhere in Ford’s company and clearly illustrate his basic labor policies. Furthermore, the labor-management struggle in Dallas not only is indicative of the struggle that took place nationwide, but illustrates the nature of Southern opposition to unionization.

The workers of today, who are enjoying the benefits of an adequate living wage, paid hospitalization, humane working conditions and representatives to hear and act on their grievances, should be made aware of this struggle and should realize that only three decades ago the benefits that they now enjoy did not exist. They should recognize that these benefits resulted from the struggle of determined and dedicated people concerned with the plight of the working man. Many people suffered innumerable hardships and shed much sweat and even blood before management came to realize that workers were entitled to middle class status.

Organization of and Working Conditions in the Ford Motor Company

In 1937 Ford Motor Company owned and operated assembly plants located in sixteen cities and several foreign countries. The company also controlled other facilities producing materials essential to automobile fabrication such as glass factories, coke ovens, paper mills, open hearth furnaces, steel plants, blast furnaces, foundries, a cement plant, machine shops, electric power and light stations, railroad lines, ships and barges, and other plants vital to the
automobile industry. The company, originally incorporated under Michigan law in 1903, had its principal executive offices located in Dearborn, Michigan, from which came the policies concerning production, wages, personnel and the general operations of each branch of the company. And, from these offices came the policies which resulted in the oppressive working conditions prevalent in Ford's plants three decades ago.10

The organization and operation of Ford's assembly plant in Dallas, Texas were basically the same as the others in the company. The plant produced approximately 290 automobiles per day during the normal production season, supplying finished automobiles and parts for Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Colorado, and the Republic of Mexico. Ford subsidiaries, located throughout the United States, made all of the materials necessary for the manufacturing of an automobile and shipped them to the Dallas branch in an un-painted and knocked-down condition, except for motors and differentials, which were shipped intact. At the assembly plant, the pieces of the body were fitted and welded together into a shell and then transferred to a moving conveyor where other workers installed the various components forming the interior of the body. The body then was attached to the

chassis which proceeded along the line with more equipment and accessories being added until the unit reached the end of the line as a completed automobile. The completion of an automobile required approximately seventy-two hours and when the line ran at normal speed a car was finished about every two and a half minutes. To carry out these operations and maintain the rate of production, the plant employed between 1,200 and 1,500 men.\textsuperscript{11} The incessant pace set by management to meet daily production schedules and the company's desire for maximization of profits resulted in numerous labor grievances which clearly indicated the necessity and desire for unionization.

Of all the labor grievances perhaps none demanded more of the men than the speed-up. By making a few simple adjustments foremen could easily increase the speed of the line, forcing the workers to strain themselves to the limits of endurance in order to keep up. This often resulted in poor work which was rejected by the line inspector; rejection of a piece of work by an inspector brought forth harassment from the foreman.\textsuperscript{12} In one incident, a spot welder in the Dallas plant was sent to the inspector's station to correct some of his work. The line continued to run but no one took the place of the absent spot welder. Several cars passed the welder's

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12}Personal Interview with H. A. Moon, Area Director for the United Automobile Workers, Dallas, Texas, July 16, 1965.
work station before he returned from the inspector's area and when these cars reached the inspector they naturally were rejected. The spot welder then was reprimanded for failing to perform his work in an acceptable manner. This constant strain from harassment and the speed-up broke many men mentally and physically, aging them beyond their years. When these broken souls could no longer maintain the nerve wracking pace demanded of them over a period of years, Ford dismissed them as unfit for work.\(^{13}\)

The speed-up became even more repulsive when combined with the common practice of exacting work from the men for which they were not paid. Rex Young, who went to work at the Dallas plant in 1936, relates that sometimes the workers toiled twelve and fifteen hours a day but received pay for only eight hours' work. This was achieved by means of a plant rule stating that when the line was stopped for five minutes the men had to punch their time card out for at least an hour. Many times a foreman shut the line down for five minutes, the men punched out, the foreman then restarted the line forcing the workers to go right back to work on their own time. "Many and many a time we gave Ford 55 minutes of free labor that way."\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\) Nevins, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 153.

\(^{14}\) Brochure published by United Automobile Workers Local 870 of the Dallas Ford Plant (hereafter cited as \textit{Local 870}), p. 7.
Ford employees actually worked only five months out of the year, which was the time required to produce a sufficient number of automobiles to fulfill all orders for that production year. Employees spent the other seven months at odd jobs waiting for production to begin on the new models. In the months they did work for Ford, they never could be certain how long they would work when they reported to the plant. Sometimes they worked only an hour or two before trouble developed somewhere on the line forcing a shut down for the day. Equally exasperating to the men was the care they had to exercise when punching the time clock before going to work. Punching the time card one minute after the hour meant that the worker's pay did not start until the next hour. When punching out for the day, if a worker's card was punched at fifty-nine minutes after the hour he did not get paid for that fifty-nine minutes because he had not worked a full hour.15

The time card procedure was one method utilized by Ford to cut down on labor costs, but the company also was not averse to resorting to unfair employment practices to further save money. In one prominent practice, Ford fired all the workers when the last car was finished for the year instead of laying them off as is the practice today. Months later when time for production of the new model arrived, the men were rehired at the base rate of pay; many of these men had advanced to

15Interview with H. A. Moon, Dallas, Texas, July 16, 1965.
maximum pay before production had ceased on the old model. On some occasions persons making higher wages during peak production were escorted to the employment office, given a physical examination, fired and then rehired with their pay reduced to the six dollar a day base salary.16

Another unfair practice that particularly angered the experienced workers was the company's disregard for seniority rights. Men with five, seven or ten years' experience in the factory often stood in the employment line and observed others who had never been inside an assembly plant get the jobs.17 E. F. Edwards, a worker at the Dallas plant in 1937, recalled the haphazard system the company used in its hiring of employees. Having heard that the Ford plant was hiring, Edwards arrived early in hopes of obtaining work. Approximately one thousand men stood in line at the gate when the employment official made his appearance and walked down the line of hopeful men and "just picked out some of us at random, maybe because we looked the strongest or the biggest."18

These unjust employment policies coupled with the company's unconcern for the basic needs of the workers tended to make working conditions intolerable. Whenever he worked in the plant a Ford employee expected to be on his job uninterruptedly for eight hours with no rest even for lunch.

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16 Nevins, op. cit., p. 154.
17 Ibid., p. 153.
18 Local 870, p. 6.
"There was no time to talk, to say hello to anybody. You ate lunch with a sandwich in one hand and worked with the other." 19

No one was allowed to sit down. On one occasion a worker sitting on a can had it kicked out from under him and received a warning that he would be discharged if caught sitting again. A line worker could not even go to the toilet until a relief or foreman could and would take his place. When he did go he could not stay longer than two or three minutes. One man working with an acid solution stopped to wash his hands on the way to the toilet and was informed that he would be fired the next time. A worker could be fired for stopping work one minute early. One skilled worker was suspended for two weeks for smiling. "Your mind's not on your work," his foreman told him when he demanded a reason for his suspension. 20

Although the aforementioned labor grievances were irritating and debasing to the Ford employees, perhaps the most repugnant practice was the utilization of a spy system whose very existence attests the desire among the company's employees for unionization. After successfully testing the system at the River Rouge Plant in Dearborn, Ford rapidly installed similar spy systems in all the company plants with the aim of thwarting any union efforts at organization. At Dearborn the service department, under the direction of Harry Bennett, had the assignment of battling the union, and to

19 Ibid.

carry out this task Bennett assembled a private police force unequalled anywhere. Ninety percent of his group were either former prize fighters or wrestlers, ex-convicts, former policemen discharged by trial boards, or simply husky men who were handy in a rough and tumble fight. However, some of the men in the service department depended more on brains than on brawn. These were the stool pigeons, or spies. Several of these men were assigned definite tasks to perform while others roamed about the plant, both inside and outside, doing nothing in particular. They supplied Bennett with a steady stream of information, sometimes inventing believable tales to satisfy Bennett's desire to know what was going on at all times in the factory. If things became dull, the spies kept in practice by snooping into each other's affairs or by spying on those executives who did not agree with Bennett's policies. Bennett even had spies investigating the activities of Henry Ford's son, Eisel.21

The spies in Bennett's service department formed the nucleus of the system. Built around this core were about eight or nine thousand authentic workers who were forced by various means to spy on their fellow workers. Because of the presence of the company's secret agents an aura of fear and tension seemed to permeate the River Rouge Plant. During

the lunch break men shouted in loud voices about the baseball scores lest they be suspected of talking unionism. Workers seen talking quietly to each other were taken off the assembly line and fired. Any man suspected of union sympathies received immediate dismissal, usually under the trumped-up charge of starting a fight, in which the falsely accused often received a terrific beating. Employees feared and hated the system, as did the foremen, who were watched as closely as the regular line workers; Ford's turnover rate for foremen was the highest in the automobile industry.

The case of Joe Sable exemplifies the typical action exercised against those suspected of union affiliation or sympathies. Sable was not a union member but he did play on a union baseball team. During one game he observed two men from Ford's service department watching the game. Sable did not think much about it but when he reported for work the next morning he found a husky fellow loitering close to his work station. The burly giant was not doing anything, only getting in everyone's way, and when Sable accidentally brushed against him, the husky asked Joe who he was shoving and started swinging. Joe Sable was fired for causing a disturbance.

22 Nevins, op. cit., p. 150.
23 Rauhenbush, op. cit., p. 15.
24 Levinson, op. cit., p. 214.
The action taken against Sable parallels that exercised in every branch of the Ford empire and emphasizes the extent to which the company was willing to go in order to prevent organization by the United Automobile Workers. The deplorable working conditions and company disregard for personal rights made unionization appealing to the workers, but the company exploited the workers' fears of physical injury and loss of employment so successfully that unionization was postponed in the Ford Motor Company until early 1941. This delay was achieved only after the initiation of a planned program of physical violence directed against anyone suspected of union connections or sympathies who might possibly upset the status quo in the Ford Motor Company.
CHAPTER II

ORGANIZATION OF THE FORD PLANT IN DALLAS
TO RESIST UNIONIZATION

In the National Labor Relations Board 1940 hearing against the Ford Motor Company conducted in Dallas, Trial Examiner Robert N. Denham stated that never in the history of the Board had he known of a case in which "an employer had deliberately planned and carried into execution a program of brutal beatings, whippings, and other manifestations of physical violence" as had been proven by the testimony of those who had perpetrated that violence. He further stated that "there was no limit of brutality to which this squad and those who were directing it were willing to go if necessary, for at one stage even murder was planned." The squad referred to by Trial Examiner Denham was the outside squad organized at the Dallas factory to repulse the efforts of the United Automobile Workers, and Denham's statements demonstrate the personal revulsion he felt after learning the extent to which the company was prepared to go in order to prevent

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1 The Dallas Morning News, April 20, 1940, Sec. 1, p. 1.
unionization. Although management in Dallas was directly responsible for the violence inflicted upon those who advocated unionization, the man who condoned and fostered such action was Henry Ford. Ford opposed labor organization and did not hesitate to make his opinions known not only to the general public but especially to the workers in his plants.

In an article in the Detroit News, April 29, 1937, Ford expressed his opinion of unions and their effect on labor. The main office in Dearborn reprinted the article in the form of a booklet entitled "Ford Gives Viewpoint on Labor" and distributed a copy to every employee of the Ford Motor Company. Ford declared that unions were the product of corporation-controlled companies under the influence of New York financiers who wanted to gain control of labor in order to limit competition in industry, thereby limiting wages, also.\(^2\) When asked by the interviewer what unions meant when they stated that they had gained some recognition from industry, Ford replied:

Simply this, the type of management that already wears the New York collar, now agrees to recognize the employee who wears the same collar. After that everything will be nice! A little group of those who control both capital

and labor will sit down in New York, and they will settle prices, and they will settle dividends and they will settle wages. The mechanic, the skilled factory man, will take what is left. These are his new bosses—not the bosses who pay his wages, but the bosses who make them pay him.

The Wagner Act is just one of those things that helps fasten control upon the necks of labor. Labor doesn't see that yet. It thinks the Wagner Act helps it. All you have to do is to wait and see how it works. It fits perfectly the plans to get control of labor.3

Furthermore, Ford placed the responsibility for labor agitation upon the unskilled workers as their wages were often insufficient for their families' needs. "Merit, skill, and ability take care of the salaries of the higher paid men,"4 stated Ford, and this statement sounds good until one recalls Ford's practice of firing and rehiring men to lower their wages. These declarations made by Henry Ford in the newspapers and the distribution of "Ford Gives Viewpoint on Labor" to all workers left no doubts in the minds of his employees of the unpopularity of the UAW and anyone who might be sympathetic to that union.

Branch management was charged with the responsibility of preventing the unionization of that branch. Those in the highest positions of responsibility in the Dallas branch were the manager, C. B. Ostrander, the plant superintendent, W. A. Abbott, Jr., and the head of the factory service department,

3Ibid.
John Moseley. Rudolph F. Rutland, the general body foreman in charge of all production work having to do with the assembling of bodies for the automobiles produced at the plant, also figured prominently in the Dallas plant.⁵

Ostrander, as manager, was directly responsible to Dearborn, and he carefully watched the evolution of the UAW dispute in the early spring of 1937 in Ford's Kansas City plant. After that affair, Ostrander decided to take preventive action to head off the organization of the Dallas workers. About the last of April or early May, he summoned Abbott to his office and instructed him to select some men to cruise around Dallas and neighboring areas endeavoring to pick up any information possible about attempts by the union to organize the Dallas plant.⁶ In addition, Ostrander directed Moseley to devise a defense system to prevent damage to equipment should the plant be involved in an attempted sit-down strike. Moseley immediately carried out these orders by issuing orders to his watchmen to be on the alert for any possible union action and by assigning certain trusted men to special duty stations to which they would proceed should the plant be threatened in any way. S. C. (Fats) Perry and Warren Worley were selected by Abbott to carry out the instructions Ostrander had given to him.⁷

⁵*Transcript of Testimony, I, 173-74.*
⁶Ibid.
⁷Ibid., p. 175.
One of these men, Warren Worley, had been sent to Dallas by the Dearborn office in March, 1937, for the express purpose of working with loyal Dallas employees in espionage and antiunion activities. In the 1940 NLRA hearing, Ford Motor Company lawyers contended that Worley had been transferred to Dallas for reasons of health and not to work against union organization. However, credible witnesses at the hearing, such as John Moseley, testified that Worley had been sent to Dallas to participate in antiunion activities. Moseley swore that he personally saw the letter sent to Abbott explaining the transfer of Worley to Dallas. Furthermore, the owner of a drug store across from the Ford plant said that Worley himself had disclosed that he had been sent to Dallas to prevent unionization. In addition, had Worley transferred to Dallas for reasons of health, he would not have been selected by Abbott for assignment to special outside work. Abbott would have selected a person familiar with Dallas and the Dallas Ford employees.

Rutland, whom Abbott put in charge of the espionage work, gave Perry and Worley the assignment of driving around Dallas and the surrounding cities in search of information concerning union activity so that the labor trouble which had affected the Kansas City plant could be avoided. To

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8Nevins, op. cit., p. 142.

9Transcript of Testimony, IV, 2603-4.
facilitate this task, the two men had ready access to the plant at any time of day or night and enjoyed the use of a company car that had been originally assigned to Abbott. Each evening Perry parked the car in the Ford garage and found it the next morning washed and filled with gas, ready for another day's work. Perry and Worley continued to work on their special assignment from April until June, 1939, when the sudden appearance of two CIO organizers in Dallas prompted the company to enlist the services of more men and to adopt more drastic methods in dealing with the union.

Trouble soon developed. On the afternoon of June 23, 1937, two representatives of the United Automobile Workers in Kansas City, Baron de Louis and Leonard Gumpeltein, appeared outside of the Ford plant and began talking to some of the men leaving the plant. The union representatives were in Dallas to test the feeling of Dallas workers toward forming a union. They then moved to a drug store across the street from the plant, where they talked to more Ford employees, describing conditions in the Kansas City plant and UAW accomplishments in that branch. A few workers expressed interest in the formation of a union. Two employees, O. N. Roderman and Edward Bailey, displayed a keen concern, and Bailey went so far as to arrange an appointment with the union representatives in their hotel room that night. He was to bring two friends he was sure he could trust.

11 Ibid.
Shortly after making the appointment, Bailey returned to the Ford plant and reported to Abbott the presence of the organizers and the appointment he had made for that night. Abbott directed Bailey to keep the appointment in order to discover the plans de Louis and Guempelein had for organizing the plant employees. Following his conversation with Abbott, Bailey received instructions from a messenger sent by Rutland to meet Rutland in a cafe located next to the drug store. Bailey went to the cafe and confirmed the rumors that Rutland had heard about the presence of CIO organizers. At the same time Rutland found out about the union men, Fats Perry also became aware of the organizers and went immediately to the drug store, where he joined a group gathered around de Louis and Guempelein. Rutland stayed near the door of the store. The store owner warned the representatives to leave and as Guempelein went to the phone to call a taxi, he was struck on the side of the head by Rutland. At the same time Perry attacked de Louis. De Louis was able to escape and get back to his hotel, where he checked out and waited in the lobby for Guempelein to return. Guempelein had not been as fortunate as de Louis. He was grabbed by a group led by Worley and taken to a nearby school yard where he received a severe

12Transcript of Testimony, I, 180-82.
beating, which left him with numerous cuts and several broken ribs.\textsuperscript{13} Perry soon arrived, decided that Guempelein had been beaten enough, and told him to "get the hell out of town and take that other CIO so and so with you."\textsuperscript{14} Guempelein returned to the hotel and with de Louis went unobserved to another hotel.

On Abbott's orders Bailey and Roderman attempted to keep their appointment with the Kansas City men, but were informed at the hotel that de Louis and Guempelein had checked out. Bailey made no further attempts to see the union representatives, but Roderman persisted in his search until he finally located Guempelein. Guempelein escorted Roderman to his hotel room, where de Louis was conferring with W. J. Houston, an attorney who had previously handled business for other unions in Dallas. Roderman feigned interest in the organization of a union, took all the literature available, and arranged to meet with Houston, whom de Louis had retained to handle organizational matters for the UAW in Dallas. However, that was the last seen of Roderman by the three labor advocates. Based on the instructions by Abbott, it is reasonable to assume that everything discussed in the hotel room was reported to the plant.\textsuperscript{15}

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\textsuperscript{13}\textit{NLRB Decision}, p. 338.
\footnotesuper{14}\textit{Transcript of Testimony}, III, 1657–65.
\footnotesuper{15}\textit{Transcript of Testimony}, I, 185.
\end{footnotesize}
Organization of the Outside Squad

Following the attack on de Louis and Guempelein, the company made plans to organize a group of the Ford employees into a squad which would function outside the plant at designated places in the city to check on union activities, investigate people suspected of being union organizers, and use any methods necessary in preventing the plant from being organized. On June 25 Rutland informed Perry that he would be assigned eighteen or twenty men to make up this squad. Most of the men in this new group had been members of the champion tug-of-war team sponsored by the plant and were selected because they were big, strong and not afraid to handle any situation that might arise. To insure the loyalty of the squad members, they were assembled in Rutland's office and told that if the union were successful, Ford would move the plant to another location, costing them their jobs.

A day or two later the squad reassembled and each pair of men was given a definite assignment. One pair was stationed at the Greyhound bus terminal to observe incoming buses for CIO organizers, to observe a picket line at a garment factory directly across the street, and to keep watch on a trade union office down the street from the terminal. Another pair operated

\[16\] NLRB Decision, p. 339.

\[17\] Nevins, op. cit., p. 142.
near the Republic Bank building, checking on the activities of Houston, the attorney for the UAW. Other pairs were directed to different parts of the city to attempt to detect the identity of union organizers. The squad men were instructed not to wear their Ford badges in order not to connect the company with their activities. They maintained constant contact with the company by a telephone in the employment office which had been designated for squad use only. Two members of the squad were assigned the task of receiving all calls to that phone. In addition, two other squad men were placed in the employment office to accept applications of prospective employees and pass on any information obtained from these applications concerning out-of-town applicants. Because of the labor trouble at Kansas City, any applicant from that city was automatically suspect and subject to investigation by the squad. Rutland informed the men that they would be paid their daily rate, and arrangements were made to have their time cards punched each day.\(^\text{18}\)

«The members of the outside squad carried out their assignments under the direct supervision of Perry. In the beginning these men relied on their wits and muscle, but soon after the squad's inception, blackjacks were manufactured in

\(^{18}\) *NLRB Decision*, pp. 340-41.
the plant's maintenance department and distributed to the men. As the controversy deepened, other tools, such as whips and lengths of rubber hose, were acquired by the squadmen. Those who possessed pistols were allowed to carry them. This assortment of weapons, when not in use, was kept in Moseley's desk in the service department.

Organization of the Inside Squads

While the outside squad was assigned the responsibility of taking care of organizers and union sympathizers outside the plant, inside squads were created to prevent the possibility of secret organization from within. In time ninety percent of the production employees became members of the inside squads. To prepare the employees for the organization of the inside squads, Claud Dill, acting on instruction from Rutland, held two mass meetings in Tennyson Park. Approximately ninety-nine percent of the Ford employees attended these meetings because absence would have created suspicion of union sympathies and possible loss of employment. Each meeting was addressed by Dill and members of the outside squad, who made speeches designed to create antiunion feeling. They told their captive audience that if the union secured a

19 Transcript of Testimony, III, 1673-75.
20 Ibid., pp. 1675-80.
21 The U.A.W. Citizen, p. 5.
22 Interview with H. A. Moon, Dallas, Texas, July 16, 1965.
foothold in the plant the company would move to another location and they would be out of work. This was distressing news to these people who were just recovering from the depression, and the fear of being without a job caused many to do things they might not have done in more prosperous times. The Dallas Morning News reported that after each antiunion statement the Ford employees cheered and applauded with apparent approval. The newspaper was unaware of or failed to mention that the audience had been instructed to yell and cheer. The men were afraid to disobey.  

Following these mass meetings the company initiated a program of organizing all employees in the plant. Each department was divided into three divisions with each division in turn being divided into groups of five to fifteen men. Each group was piloted by a captain who was directly responsible to his division leader, who, along with the group captains, was carefully selected by Rutland or by R. S. Tucker, whom Rutland entrusted with that responsibility. One leader in Rutland's body department was Claud Dill, the organizer of the mass meetings. A key man in the trim department was Roderman, who had met with de Louis and Guempelein on Abbott's instructions to learn union organizational plans. Bailey, who had gone with Roderman to find de Louis and Guempelein, was one

23Ibid.
of the group captains. By August, 1937, ninety percent of the workers had been organized into these groups.\footnote{Transcript of Testimony, I, 202.}

In order to achieve the inside squads' purpose of opposing the UAW-CIO, telephone numbers were exchanged among the division leaders, group captains and group members so that all personnel could be contacted in case of the detection of a union organizer. Division leaders instructed their men to contact the plant immediately should they receive a visit from a union representative and to prevent the visitor from leaving until other squad members arrived to deal with him. The group captains were instructed to listen to the conversations of the men in their groups for statements considered sympathetic to the CIO.\footnote{Ibid., p. 203.} With the formation of these inside squads and the organization of the outside squad, the Dallas plant now was prepared for battle.

Activities of the Inside and Outside Squads

Of the outside and inside squads, both directed toward suppressing any attempts to organize the Ford workers, the outside squad was the more violent. This squad had the responsibility of investigating persons suspected of union sympathies and literally chasing away any union representatives.
The only evidence necessary to place a person under suspicion was a charge of advocating unionism. As a result, many innocent people became victims of the Gestapo tactics employed by the outside squad in the course of their investigations. These tactics are aptly illustrated in a review of the L. E. Shepard case.

On August 2, 1937, Shepard, a Kansas City branch employee on vacation to Galveston, decided to stop in Dallas, visit the plant there, and contact some of his friends, who had formerly worked in Kansas City. He went to the plant personnel office to inquire about seeing one of his friends, and during the conversation with the clerks in the office he related that he was from Kansas City and on vacation. After being informed that he could not see any of his friends during working hours, Shepard began walking back to his car when Perry and another man placed themselves on either side of him. Perry asked Shepard if he were from Kansas City and when Shepard said that he was, he was ushered to a waiting car, which he entered along with Perry and other members of the outside squad. While driving to the outskirts of the city, Perry told Shepard that since he was from Kansas City he must be a CIO member, which Shepard promptly denied. He offered to prove his denial by allowing the squad to search his wallet and car for anything that might link him to the CIO. Perry's men found nothing, and the irony was that Shepard was a foreman in the Kansas City branch and
not even eligible for union membership. After convincing the squad of his innocence, Shepard was driven back to the plant and allowed to proceed on his trip with no further trouble.26

Other Kansas City employees who came to Dallas were not so fortunate. Charles D. Elliot was visiting relatives in Fort Worth when he and his wife decided to visit Dallas to see the Pan American Exposition and to tour the Ford plant. Elliot had been a union member in Kansas City but his membership had lapsed. Upon arrival at the plant, Elliot went to the personnel office to secure passes that would allow him and his wife to tour the plant, but before reaching there, he was stopped by Roy Mason, a member of the outside squad. Mason had noticed Elliot's Kansas license plate and asked him if he worked at the Ford plant there. When Elliot answered in the affirmative, he was forced into a nearby automobile and refused permission to inform his wife what was going on. The strong arm squad then searched his wallet, found his UAW card, and proceeded to White Rock Lake. At White Rock Lake they left the car and Bob Johnson, another squad member, grabbed Elliot around the neck and forced him to bend over while other squadmen pulled Elliot's shirt up and dropped his trousers. They cut switches from a nearby tree and proceeded to whip the

26NLRB Decision, p. 356.
Kansas City man, after which he was beaten and kicked by two other squadmen. Upon completion of their "investigation," Elliot was taken back to Dallas and released from the car about six blocks from the plant. The gang then drove to the plant, told Mrs. Elliot where to find her husband, and warned her to get him out of town.27

Another example of the outside squad's technique of investigation involved Richard Sowers, who had formerly worked for the Ford Motor Company in Kansas City. In October, 1937, Sowers applied at the Ford plant in Dallas for a job. Several applicants were present at the employment office when a clerk asked if any of the applicants had ever worked for Ford at any other location. When Sowers answered that he had worked in Kansas City, he was immediately directed to fill out an application. While filling out the application, four or five men approached him, put a gun in his ribs, and asked if he was a member of the CIO. Sowers answered no but was escorted to a car waiting in front of the plant and driven to White Rock Lake, where he was beaten into unconsciousness. When the gang returned Sowers to town, they gave him until sundown to get out of town and warned that he would be killed if he went to the police. Instead of leaving town as ordered, however, Sowers did go to the police station, where he swore out a warrant for the arrest of his attackers. Three men were subsequently arrested and identified by Sowers as part of the group that had

27Transcript of Testimony, I, 238-41.
beaten him. John Moseley, head of the service department, obtained the release of the three men on bail and the case, when brought to court, was dismissed because of lack of evidence.28

The fact that a person was not employed by Ford did not make him immune to the wrath of the strong arm squad. Such was the case of Orville Phillips and his family, who were in Dallas to attend the Pan American Exposition. Phillips had been a CIO member in California and his car bore a CIO sticker on the windshield. The presence of Phillips' car parked at the fair parking grounds was reported to Barto Hill, a member of the outside squad and captain of some of the inside squads. Hill instructed four other squadmen to proceed to the Phillips' car, watch it, and wait for other members of the squad to arrive. The watchers waited most of the afternoon but before their reinforcements arrived, Phillips and his family returned to the car and prepared to leave. Instructed by Hill to prevent the car from leaving, the squadmen approached the automobile and engaged Phillips' brother-in-law in a conversation about California. They then turned to Phillips and pointing to the CIO sticker, informed him that they did not allow such things in Dallas. As Phillips was being told this,

28 Ibid., pp. 243-50. Evidence of police collusion in the labor violence perpetrated by Ford will be discussed in Chapter V.
he was hit on the side of the head with a blackjack. This started a general fight involving Phillips, his brother, and brother-in-law and the four Ford men. The Phillips trio was successful in driving off the Ford men, which was the only time on record that the strong arm squad met defeat. This was also the only occasion on which the attackers and their intended victim battled on near equal terms.29

The action against those suspected of union interests as illustrated in the aforementioned cases parallels that exercised against persons actually endeavoring to organize the Ford workers. Baron de Louis, who had received a beating in June, 1937, returned to Dallas the next month to further explore the possibility of activating a union among the automobile workers. He enlisted the aid of George Chandler, who was not employed by Ford, in an attempt to contact Ford employees and arrange informal meetings with them. Chandler was successful in arranging a meeting with J. L. Phillips for the evening of July 5. Prior to the meeting Phillips called the plant to notify the employment office of his appointment with de Louis and Chandler and to say that he thought a plant representative should be present. De Louis and Chandler arrived at the appointed time and had just started to discuss union organization when the conversation was interrupted by a telephone call to Phillips.

29NLRE Decision, pp. 361-62.
Overhearing the call and fearing for their safety, de Louis and Chandler decided it might be safer for everyone concerned if they continued their discussion at another location. They went to a nearby tavern and were away from the house for approximately an hour. When they returned to Phillips' home and parked the car, they were suddenly surrounded by twelve or fourteen men. The strangers opened the doors of the car and allowed Phillips to leave unharmed after he pointed out the other occupants as the union representatives. Chandler was jerked out of the automobile, struck with a blackjack, and beaten and kicked into a semi-conscious condition. At the same time other strong arm men pulled de Louis from the car and began to attack him. De Louis managed to escape before being severely injured and ran to a nearby house, where he called the police. When the police arrived, the squad calmly got into their car and left the scene with no interference from the officers. 30

Another person involved in the attempted organization of the Ford plant was attorney W. J. Houston, who had been retained by de Louis. Following de Louis' first visit to Dallas in June, Houston released statements to the newspapers in which he professed that a skeleton organization of the

30 Transcript of Testimony, I, 192-95.
UAW-CIO already had been established but that the names of the officers were being kept secret temporarily.\(^{31}\) He further stated that two organizers had been to Dallas in response to a petition sent to the national union headquarters asking for a UAW charter. The newspapers also quoted him as saying that wholesale organization of the Ford workers was expected to begin soon.\(^{32}\) Because of his connection with de Louis and the statements credited to him by the newspapers, Houston was destined to become the next victim of the outside squad. Perry obtained photographs of Houston, distributed them to members of his squad, and began an organized search to locate the attorney. On July 10 Earl Johnson spotted Houston in a drug store sitting at a table with another man. Johnson sent for squad members and entered the drug store to engage Houston in a friendly conversation while the others assembled outside.\(^{33}\) As Houston and his companion, L. A. Dalton, walked out the door, Johnson grabbed Houston by the arms from behind and told the waiting gang that this was their man. With that, seven men jumped on Houston and began beating him while two other men watched Dalton. The attack continued until police arrived.\(^{34}\)


\(^{33}\) *Transcript of Testimony*, I, 197.

\(^{34}\) *The Dallas Morning News*, July 11, 1937, Sec. 4, p. 1.
After the arrival of the police the squad members melted into the crowd that had gathered while Bob Johnson, one of the strong arm men, talked to the officers. While an officer was questioning Houston, Bob Johnson reached around the policeman and struck Houston in the mouth. The police arrested Bob Johnson, Earl Johnson, and Barto Hill.35

Immediately following the arrest one of the squad men telephoned the plant to report and Moseley, who had been instructed by Rutland earlier in the day to stand by in case of trouble, took the call. Moseley went directly to the police station to do whatever was necessary to protect the arrested men, which included keeping the newspapers from taking their pictures and arranging the necessary bonds. Following a brief conference with the chief of police, R. L. Jones, and Fats Perry, Houston declined to prefer charges until after he received hospital treatment. He decided later not to file charges and the men were released.36

Directly after the assault on Houston, James Longley, a squad member, reported to the plant and gave Rutland an account of the gang’s achievement. Rutland demonstrated his approval by saying "That's fine" and explained that he had already sent someone to the police station to secure the release of those arrested.37 Perry also reported to Rutland and the following conversation took place:

35 NLRB Decision, p. 351.
36 Transcript of Testimony, I, 201. 37 Ibid., p. 199.
He (Rutland) said, "I heard you picked up Mr. Houston down there." I (Perry) said, "Yes, they picked him up and liked to beat him to death." He said, "That is a good job then. Maybe that will learn him to listen."38

Knowing that Houston was the clearing house for UAW matters in Dallas, Rutland ordered his movements watched at all times. However, since Houston spent most of his time in his office, the men assigned to watch him were unable to secure any information of importance. In the middle of July Rutland conceived the idea of tapping Houston's home telephone and had Claud Dill and Richard Liston rent an apartment in the neighborhood of the lawyer's residence. The apartment was rented by Liston in the name of R. L. Lancaster and paid for with money supplied by Rutland.39 However, the apartment was served by a group of telephone trunk lines not sufficiently related to the trunk lines serving Houston's residence to make the tapping of Houston's telephone practicable. As a result, Liston located an apartment more advantageously situated in order to successfully tap the attorney's telephone. Once this was accomplished, two men were assigned the task of listening to calls to and from the Houston residence. The wire tapping continued for about two weeks but was stopped, as the only calls intercepted were those made by Mrs. Houston to her friends.40

38 Ibid., p. 200.
40 Ibid., p. 229.
The momentum and intensity of the company's antiunion program began to increase with the beating of Houston and the accompanying wire tapping. Union representatives and suspected Kansas City employees received a harsh and violent welcome in Dallas; anyone who might possibly threaten the status quo was immediately subjected to a thorough and brutal investigation. While the company primarily directed its antiunion campaign against UAW organizers and suspected Ford employees, persons completely unassociated with Ford or the UAW fell victim to the outside squad. The outside and inside squads worked together in disrupting public meetings and subjecting union sympathizers to brutal and humiliating beatings. The continued brutality, as described in the next chapter, finally resulted in intervention by Governor Allred, who sent investigators and Rangers to Dallas in an effort to stop labor turmoil in the city.
CHAPTER III

VIOLENCE AGAINST UNION ADVOCATES
AND FORD EMPLOYEES

The Dallas Ford antiunion program soon spread to attacks on people who were in no way connected with the company. The company's fear of a CIO invasion was so great that anyone openly professing interest in or advocating unionism was subjected to the brutality of the strong arm squad.

The first incident against persons not connected with Ford involved A. B. and A. C. Lewis, identical twins who, while in business together, had never been connected with any labor organization. In July, 1937, A. C. Lewis met a man named Farrar, a Ford employee, with whom he often discussed labor matters. In one of their conversations Lewis openly stated his support of union organization. Farrar reported the conversation to Perry and accused Lewis of being a CIO advocate and organizer. In an effort to make Lewis further commit himself, Perry gave Farrar a union card that had been taken in the attack on Guempalein and told him to show it to Lewis. Perry surmised that Lewis would speak more freely thinking Farrar to be a union member, but the ruse failed.

A few days later Perry and another squad member drove to Farrar's house and had Farrar go across the street to Lewis'
house and urge him to speak with the men in the car, whom Farrar said were union organizers. Lewis went to the car, where he and Perry discussed the idea of attempting to sign some Ford workers for the UAW-CIO, but Lewis indicated that he was not interested and returned home.1 On August 3, Perry, Earl Johnson, and several other members of the strong arm squad (outside squad) forced one of Lewis' friends, Carroll Ewing, to accompany them to Lewis' home. There, Ewing told Lewis that the strong arm men were threatening to beat him because Lewis had accused him of being a union man. Lewis denied the statement and went with Ewing to speak to the waiting men. Approximately a block down the street the men encountered ten or twelve members of the outside squad, and Lewis vehemently denied making the statement about Ewing. The gang was armed with pistols and blackjacks, but before they could use them a police car drove up. The squad threw their weapons into a gully beside the street but made no attempt to escape. Lewis did not complain to the police and, out of danger, returned to his home.2

1 NLRB Decision, p. 362.
2 Transcript of Testimony, I, 208-10.

The following morning, Earl Johnson and Barto Hill went to the Lewis home and apologized for their actions of the previous night. They invited Lewis and his wife to attend the wrestling match that night at the Sportatorium as Hill's guests, but Lewis had to leave town that day on business and could not go.
However, during the day, A. B. Lewis visited his brother, learned of the difficulty the night before, and said that he would go to the Sportatorium to discover what the trouble was about. Upon arriving at the Sportatorium, Lewis' twin asked Perry, who worked as ticket taker, if he could see Hill, and Perry called the plant to have Hill come to the arena. Hill arrived during one of the intermissions and went directly to where Lewis was standing with his wife. The two men talked a short time, during which Hill apologized for the previous night's trouble and suggested they go outside the arena to continue their conversation. Lewis followed Hill outside, where they turned left and walked between the wall of the building and a line of taxicabs. Mrs. Lewis, who had stayed behind, heard a commotion, went to investigate, and discovered that her husband had been attacked and seriously injured. From the time of the assault on August 4, 1937, until his death, December 11, 1937, A. B. Lewis remained under a physician's care; his death resulted from pneumonia developed while recuperating from his injuries. Before he died Lewis told his brother that he had been attacked at the Sportatorium because the attackers thought that he was his twin brother. He said that when he and Hill reached the end of the line of waiting taxicabs, someone hit him from behind; Hill then turned and knocked Lewis to the ground and kicked him. The day after the assault on A. B. Lewis,

Ibid., pp. 210-12.
Rutland gave Hill twenty-five dollars for expense money and told him to stay out of town until the affair blew over. As a result no arrests were made in connection with this case.4

Although the outside squad directed its activities primarily against CIO affiliates, other organizations and their representatives did not escape the attention of the group. On August 6, 1937, George Baer, an organizer for the APL Millinery Workers union, met with Mike Bierner, the proprietor of a millinery business in Dallas, who agreed to an appointment on August 9 to discuss the problem of collective bargaining in that industry. On August 7 Rutland told Moseley and Perry that he had received a telephone call from the police station informing him of the presence of a union organizer in town who was giving the police trouble. The caller suggested that Rutland send someone from the strong arm squad to the station to talk to them about the organizer. Rutland sent Moseley and Perry to talk to Inspector Welch, who told them that Baer was making considerable trouble by attempting to organize the millinery industry and that he would like the strong arm squad to "get a line on him."5

Following this conversation with Welch, Perry and Worley went to Bierner's millinery business, where they learned of the August 9 appointment. Earl and Bob Johnson were placed

5Ibid., p. 214.
in the shop with orders to observe Baer when he appeared and grab him when he left. Baer arrived at the appointed time, talked with Bierner, and then left, but before he had gone ten paces outside the shop, he was accosted by Earl Johnson, struck in the mouth, and knocked to the sidewalk. Earl Johnson, Bob Johnson, and Warren Worley then carried Baer to a waiting car, beating him with blackjacks as they forced him into the car. The three thugs threw Baer on the back floor board of the automobile and drove, with one man sitting on top of him, to the Sportatorium. Upon reaching the Sportatorium, Worley phoned Ferry at the plant and informed him that they had Baer but did not know what to do with him. When Ferry arrived at the Sportatorium, he found Baer in very poor condition. Baer's eye had been knocked out of its socket, blood covered his face, his nose was smashed, his head was bleeding, and most of his teeth were missing. After briefly discussing what to do with him, they decided to take Baer along the highway out of town and dump him into a field. Later regaining consciousness, Baer crawled to the highway, where a passing motorist took him to the hospital. Baer remained in the hospital for nine days and as a result of the beating lost all of the teeth that had been knocked out or jarred loose and the sight of one eye.

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6 *NLRB Decision*, pp. 363-64.
8 *NLRB Decision*, p. 365.
recuperating in the hospital, Buster Bevill, another strong
armer, discovered the Dallas address of Baer’s brother. Upon
instructions from Rutland, Bevill telephoned George Baer’s
wife and told her to get her husband out of town in ten hours
or else. Baer, however, had to remain at his brother’s
house for a week after being released from the hospital before
he was able to return to his home in Massachusetts.

Another flagrant example of the indignities labor advoc-
cates suffered at the hands of the Ford organization occurred
at a public park the same day Baer was attacked. On this
occasion the inside squads actively cooperated with the outside
squad. On the evening of August 9, George Lambert and Herbert
Harris scheduled the showing of a movie in Fretz Park on
behalf of the Textile Workers Organizing Committee. The
picture, Millions of Us, did not advocate membership in any
specific labor organization, but demonstrated the general
advantages of organization. On the morning of August 9
Perry and Worley went to Fretz Park and talked to the park
policeman, Jim Burrows, about the meeting to be held that
night. They told him that the strong arm squad intended to
break up the meeting and destroy the film, and that he should
see that the women and children were kept out of the way.

Ibid.


11 Transcript of Testimony, I, 219-220.
Burrows replied that he did not have the authority to take such action. However, when Perry called him later in the day, Burrows told Perry that his crowd could attend the meeting that night as planned.¹²

That afternoon Claud Dill called a mass employee meeting to delegate various inside squads to attend the Pretz Park meeting. James Longley, a member of an outside squad and a captain of an inside squad, was directed to assemble the members of his squad at Hill's house that evening for further instructions. These two meetings resulted in a plan whereby the inside squads would create confusion while the outside squad destroyed the equipment. In addition, after the movie was shown, Hill planned to kidnap the speaker, who was to be tarred and feathered.¹³

After the showing of the movie, an elderly man mounted the platform to speak and Hill, observing the man's age, decided to kidnap the projectionist instead. When the speaker endorsed union organization, Hill gave the signal to start the riot. The equipment was quickly destroyed and the projectionist, Herbert Harris, was knocked unconscious by Barto Hill and carried to a waiting automobile. Harris was blindfolded and taken to a spot in the suburbs of Dallas, where Perry, Worley, and other squad members forced him to remove all of his clothing except for shoes, socks and shorts. After being covered from

¹² Ibid.
¹³ Local 870, p. 7.
neck to feet with a soft tarry substance and feathered, Harris was wrapped in a blanket and returned to the city. The gang had originally planned to dump Harris in front of the Adolphus Hotel, where a *Dallas Morning News* reporter, Truman Pouncey, waited to photograph their handiwork. Perry balked at this arrangement because he did not want his picture taken. Consequently the gang dropped Harris beside the office of the *Dallas Morning News* and notified the reporter of his location.\(^\text{14}\)

The riot at Fretz Park and the threat made on the life of George Baer by Bevill brought the Texas Rangers and agents from the Texas Department of Public Safety to Dallas, which immediately started a bitter controversy. The *News* ran a headline which stated, "Governor Allred Bitterly Criticized For Sending Ranger Forces to Dallas."\(^\text{15}\) In the accompanying article, the names of many who had wired protests to the governor were printed. One name listed was that of Leon Armstrong, Abbott's personal secretary.\(^\text{16}\) At the 1940 NLRB hearing the full story of the protest telegrams was revealed. Soon after the arrival of the Rangers, Rutland called a meeting in his office for the purpose of drafting a telegram to be sent to Governor James Allred protesting the assignment of Rangers to Dallas. A copy of the telegram was given to the captain of each inside group with orders that every member sign it. In addition, Dill arranged

\(^{14}\)NLRB *Decision*, p. 366.

\(^{15}\)The *Dallas Morning News*, August 22, 1937, Sec. 4, p. 1.

\(^{16}\)Ibid.
a general protest meeting and instructed all inside squads to attend. Perry received orders to have members of the outside squad present to make speeches denouncing the governor. At the meeting, the speakers referred to the governor as "our CIO Governor" and declared the CIO and its affiliates were not wanted in Dallas.¹⁷

The many telegrams sent to the governor which indicated that the people of Dallas bitterly resented the sending of state agents to Dallas did not represent the entire picture. Some Dallasites heartily approved. Forty citizens sent a letter headed "Congratulations, Governor Allred," in which they stated:

> We the undersigned taxpaying citizens of Dallas congratulate you on your action in sending rangers here to protect our citizens from thugs whom we believe to be hired and imported from Northern cities in an effort to intimidate labor leaders. When local authorities fail to see and apprehend thugs who commit crimes on our downtown streets in broad daylight, it is high time for you to act as you did.¹⁸

The letter indicates that at least a few people detested the violence occurring in the city and were concerned about the resulting bad publicity the city received. In addition, the Daily Times Herald and the News heartily approved of the Rangers' presence and said so in editorials. Although both newspapers disapproved of the CIO and its organizational methods, they could not condone the acts of violence perpetrated on the

¹⁷NLRB Decision, p. 367.
city streets. Both papers denounced the lawless actions directed against the unions and urged the police force to seek out and bring to justice those responsible for the violence.

The presence of the Rangers in Dallas temporarily curtailed the overt activities of the outside squad, but the inside squads continued to successfully disrupt other open meetings held in the city parks without using strong arm tactics. In the fall of 1937 Barto Hill informed Longley that CIO representatives from Houston were to be the principal speakers at a park meeting, and instructed him to have his inside squad break up the meeting by making so much noise that the speaker could not be heard. Approximately four hundred members of Ford's inside squads attended the Sunday afternoon meeting and caused such a ruckus that the speaker had to stop talking. The speaker then challenged any member of the audience to a debate, whereupon a man named Rowe, who had come from Dearborn with Worley, came to the platform. Rowe passionately denounced the CIO and UAW and each declaration evoked cheers from Ford workers in the crowd. To prevent a recurrence of the Fretz Park incident, the speakers were escorted from the park by police officers.

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20Dallas Morning News, August 11, 1937, Sec. 2, p. 2.
21NLRB Decision, pp. 367-68.
Violence against Ford Employees

Part of the responsibility of the outside squad involved the investigation of Ford employees who were suspected of union interests. These investigations began in mid-July, 1937, when Rutland received word that two company employees had made some pro-union remarks while on a fishing trip. He arranged to have the men kidnapped by the strong arm squad, taken into the country, and "investigated." To accomplish this, a party was arranged at an employee's house to which the two suspects were invited. Worley and other outside squad members then raided the party and took the two suspects and their host to a spot outside of Dallas. The host was taken so that the captives would not know that the party was a frame-up. The witness to the pro-unions remarks earlier made by the victims was present at the rendezvous. Worley selected two strong arm men to fight the accused men but in the ensuing fights, one of the accused succeeded in thoroughly beating his strong arm opponent. This man was told to report for work as usual the next day, but the other man, who had refused to fight, was advised to draw his pay the next day and leave the plant.22

On another occasion in July, Doyle Fowler, a Ford employee, was asked to invite two men suspected of union

22Transcript of Testimony, I, 195-96.
activities to his house one evening. On instructions from Fats Perry, a group of outside squad members under the leadership of Barto Hill assembled near Fowler's house to await the suspects. When their automobile stopped in front of the house, the gang attacked and beat those inside.23

These "investigations" by the outside squad continued into August, when William M. Stone, who was clearly innocent of any union activity, was subjected to a severe beating by the goon squad.24 The Stone case indicates that although Rutland was in charge of the antiunion campaign, Abbott still actively engaged in some of the actions. When Stone reported for work one morning in early August, he received instructions to report to Abbott, who questioned him about the identity of a man he had been seen with the previous day. Stone answered that the man was a friend from Oklahoma, but Abbott pressed the point that the man might be a union organizer, which Stone denied. Abbott told Stone that he believed him and directed Stone to report to his work station.

A few days later Stone told Perry that he had encountered a man in one of the local bars who was talking favorably about the CIO. Perry instructed Stone to get the man's name, find out all he could about him, and then call the plant. Stone encountered the man a few evenings later in a bar and

23 Ibid., p. 197.

24 Personal Interview with H. A. Moon, Dallas, Texas, July 16, 1965.
engaged him in a conversation. At this point, Stone's wife, who knew of Perry's instructions to her husband, entered the tavern, saw her husband talking to the man, and left to call the plant. The man left the tavern while Mrs. Stone was calling the plant and shortly afterward Stone also left the bar and did not return home until about ten o'clock, where he found Perry waiting. Perry told Stone about his wife's call and that the squad had gone to the tavern but had not found either Stone or his companion. Perry expressed the thought that Stone was protecting the other man by getting him out of the tavern before the strong arm squad arrived. 25

A couple of days later Rutland summoned Stone to his office and questioned him about his union convictions. Rutland warned Stone that he had better be careful or he would end up "getting the manure kicked out of" him. 26 The next afternoon, August 16, Claud Dill and two other members of the outside squad accosted Stone as he attempted to leave the plant. The goons forced Stone into a car and drove him to a secluded spot on the outskirts of Dallas, where Dill accused Stone of being a "dirty CIO son-of-a-bitch" 27 and struck him. When the beating was completed, the strong arm men planned to leave Stone in the field but finally yielded

25 *NLRB Decision*, pp. 353-54.
26 *Transcript of Testimony*, I, 237.
27 *The UAW Citizen*, p. 5.
to his pleas to take him to a place where he could call a taxi. Dill and his two accomplices returned to the plant and informed Perry of the beating. Perry went to Stone's house, took him to the hospital to have his cuts sewed up, and escorted him home, and explained to Stone that the beating was the result of the incidents which had caused Abbott and Rutland to suspect him of being a CIO sympathizer.28

The last incident of outside squad violence against a Ford employee involved an assault on Harold M. Bowen in October, 1937. The previous August, Bowen had come to Dallas from Kansas City to confer with M. M. Cook, foreman of the cushion department, with whom Bowen had once worked. He hoped that Cook would get him a job in the Dallas plant. Bowen was aware of the treatment former Kansas City men received, so when he went to the employment office and was asked to identify himself, Bowen avoided mentioning Kansas City, and replied that he had come from California where he had worked on airplanes. Cook was not at the plant at the time, so Bowen left and walked across the street to the drug store where de Louis and Guempelein had been assaulted in June. Before reaching the store a man whom he had never seen before stopped him and demanded to see some identification. Bowen refused, but before the stranger could react, a member of the outside squad, who knew Bowen, approached the pair and vouched for Bowen's

28 Ibid.
Bowen's friend obtained Cook's home address and later that afternoon Bowen called on Cook at his home. During their conversation, Bowen, who was a member of the UAW, disclosed his union sympathies. Cook advised Bowen to return to his job in Kansas City, where he remained until the plant closed in October.\(^2\)

Bowen returned to Dallas October 26, 1937, and again went to the plant seeking Cook's assistance in securing employment. As before, he was unable to contact Cook and while waiting around in front of the plant, a car drove up, and five goons grabbed Bowen and transported him to White Rock Lake, where they assaulted him. Others of the squad, including Perry, joined the group, and one of the new arrivals carried a cat-o'-nine-tails whip made of quarter-inch solid rubber thongs joined together at the handle. The thugs bent Bowen over and dropped his trousers and beat him with the whip for about fifteen minutes.\(^3\) Upon completion of the whipping, different individuals of the squad began knocking Bowen down, and each time, as he attempted to rise, he was knocked down again. And, each time he was knocked to the ground, the circle of hoods kicked him. As a result of the beating Bowen suffered

\(^2\)Transcript of Testimony, I, 245-47.

\(^3\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 247-49.
several broken ribs, a badly abraded face, and numerous lacerations where the whip had been applied.  

**Discrimination against W. A. Humphries**

The case of W. A. Humphries illustrates that the company could interfere with and restrain the rights of its workers without the use of violence. Humphries was employed by the company in 1936 as a guard for an exhibit the company had on display at the fair ground. At the close of the exhibit Humphries was transferred to the plant service department and at the time of his discharge in August, 1937, served in the capacity of watchman for the plant. Approximately one week after Baer, the organizer for the Hatters, Cap, and Millinery Workers International Union, was beaten, Abbott and Rutland discussed the prospect of discharging Humphries because his wife was a member of the millinery union and had participated in a strike against the millinery manufacturers of Dallas.

When Humphries reported for work on the seventeenth of August, he found his time card missing from the rack. Humphries asked his supervisor, Moseley, about the card and was told that he was being laid off because of a work shortage. Humphries asked Moseley about his work and was told that it

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32 *Aid*. Three men were arrested in connection with this beating. The details of the arrest will be covered in a later chapter.

33 *NLRB Decision*, p. 385.
was satisfactory. When Humphries asked Moseley whether he would be recalled for work later, Moseley answered that he did not know but for Humphries to keep in touch with the plant. 34 A few days later Humphries returned to the plant to inquire about the prospect of returning to work and while he waited outside Moseley's office, Buster Bevill, a strong arm squad member, approached him and ordered him to leave the plant and to stay away. Humphries left but returned the next day and stood around on the sidewalk across the street from the plant, debating with himself about whether he should enter the plant. Bevill again approached him and said, "I thought I told you to stay away from here," 35 whereupon Humphries answered that he was not on Ford property and could do as he pleased. Bevill warned him that if he did not leave and stay away that he would end up a victim of the outside squad. Humphries asked Bevill why he was being run off and Bevill answered, "Well if you weren't so damn dumb, you would know why." 36 When Humphries stated that he still did not know why, Bevill said, "Well, your wife works at the milliners, don't she." 37

34 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., p. 386.
Following this conversation with Bevill, Humphries arranged for his wife to go to the milliner's union and have her application card and union record destroyed to completely sever her connection with the union. Humphries then asked for and received from the union headquarters a letter stating that his wife was not a member of the milliner's union. He took the letter to the plant and gave it to Moseley, who passed it on to Abbott. However, nothing came of the letter and Humphries was not rehired until after the NLRB hearing in 1940.38

Discrimination against H. C. McGarity

H. C. McGarity worked for the Ford Motor Company for eleven years before he was chased from the plant in 1939 by one of the inside squads. At the time he was forced to leave the company, McGarity served as maintenance electrician for the body shop, a position he had occupied for four years. In this capacity he was under the direct supervision of C. P. Ragsdale, chief electrician, and under the general supervision of W. Schumacher, the maintenance superintendent.39

On June 12, 1939, McGarity became a member of the Electrical Mechanics Local Union No. 1, an independent incorporated association of local electricians.40 This

38 Ibid.
39 Transcript of Testimony, I, 273.
40 Ibid., p. 274.
union was not affiliated with the CIO or the AFL but was a union sponsored by construction employers which functioned more as a clearing house for employers to locate suitable employees than as a union. *McGarity made no secret of his union membership and openly talked about the union to his fellow workers and to his immediate supervisor, Ragsdale. From time to time he invited his fellow workers to attend meetings with him. Ragsdale, who was a good friend of McGarity's, warned McGarity to curb his open discussion of the electrical union as he was being watched. Ragsdale further warned him to stop attending union meetings until he was no longer under suspicion.* Meanwhile, Rutland conducted an investigation and sent Bevill to attend one of the electrician's union meetings to check on the presence of McGarity. Rutland also questioned Curtis, an electrician at the plant, about McGarity's union interests.

On September 7, 1939, McGarity was approached by Claud Dill and a group of men who worked at various points along the body shop line. Dill asked McGarity if it were true that he had joined a union, and McGarity answered that he had and showed the group his union card. Dill then informed

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41 Personal Interview with L. N. D. Wells, Dallas, Texas, July 9, 1965.
42 Transcript of Testimony, I, 274.
43 Ibid.
McGarity that they did not like his joining a union and that he must either quit the union or his job. McGarity said that he would quit the union, which he did that evening. The following day McGarity told two members of the group that had confronted him the day before that he had definitely resigned from the union. Later in the day McGarity received a warning from another man in the group that he had better leave the employ of the company or "take the consequences." McGarity reported to his general supervisor, Schumacher, that he had been threatened and asked to see the plant superintendent. Schumacher directed him to John McKee, the employment manager. McKee listened to McGarity's story and told him to return to work and that he would investigate what McGarity had related to him. This conversation took place on Friday afternoon and McGarity did not have to be back at work until Monday morning, when he expected the situation to be straightened out.

As he approached the employees' entrance where the time clocks were located on Monday morning September 11, 1939, McGarity was met by Claud Dill, who ordered him to stay away from the plant. McGarity said, "I thought you said if I quit the union it would be all right, that I could go to work."

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44Ibid., p. 275.
45NLRB Decision, p. 389.
46Ibid.
47Transcript of Testimony, I, 276.
To this Dill answered, "Well, I feel this way about it, like the man who said 'Once a thief always a thief.' You would still be a union man." Following this conversation, McGarity walked to the main entrance of the plant looking for someone in a position of authority to whom he could report the situation. He located the chief clerk, told his story, and was advised to see Harrison, the plant superintendent. McGarity proceeded to Harrison's office but found Harrison gone. However, McKee was in the office and agreed to listen to McGarity's story, after which McGarity demanded protection from Dill. McKee instructed him to wait in the lobby for Harrison and explain his problem to the superintendent.

McGarity went to the lobby and had waited about five minutes, when the door leading to the assembly line opened, admitting Claud Dill and eight or nine other men. They walked over to McGarity and Dill said, "How many times are we going to have to run you out of here? We mean business and we are going to run you off." They told McGarity that they would rather he leave peaceably and not have to suffer a beating, upon which he left and did not attempt to return to the plant.

The discrimination against McGarity was the last recorded incident of labor resistance by the company. The mere threat of physical harm had been sufficient to force McGarity and Humphries to leave their jobs in the plant. The past beatings

48Ibid. 49Ibid., p. 278. 50Ibid., pp. 277-78.
of labor advocates and organizers instilled in plant employees a fear of suffering similar physical harm and successfully prevented union organization. Instead of remaining silent about his treatment, however, McGarity filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board in Fort Worth charging the Ford Motor Company with discrimination against him because of his union membership. The complaint filed by McGarity, and other events described in the next chapter, led to an investigation by the NLRB, which resulted in a hearing that revealed to the public the sordid story of the Ford antiunion campaign.
CHAPTER XV

SVSNTS LEADING TO THE NLRB INVESTIGATION
OF FORD AND THE RESULTS OF THAT
INVESTIGATION

The outside squad had so successfully prevented the advent of the UAW-CIO that by the end of 1937 its existence was no longer necessary. The members of the outside squad returned to their regular duties, no longer enjoying the extra benefits afforded them earlier. While assigned to the outside squad, they remained on the payroll in their previous job designations and continued to draw their regular pay for forty hours work. Due to plant shutdowns regular production employees often failed to work a full week. The squadmen also benefited from a general five cents an hour wage increase granted to all production employees, and the more enthusiastic members received individual merit increases.¹ Bevill, Perry and Worley received such increases, and on the forms which Abbott sent to Dearborn for approval, justification for the raises contained such comments as "work merits increase" and "good worker."²

¹Transcript of Testimony, I, 254.
²NLRB Decision, p. 368.
Perry and Worley performed no regular production work in the plant after being assigned their special espionage and surveillance duties in April, 1937. In addition to the raises they received upon recommendation by Abbott and the praise they often received from Rutland, Perry, Bevill, and two other squad members also received letters of commendation sent by Abbott to all department foremen. Although the Ford Company denied any connection with the outside squad at the NLRB hearing, the letters sent to the strong arm men prove that the company not only was aware of its existence but actually promoted it. The letters, ordinarily sent out on Christmas Eve, were sent only to department foremen and not regular employees. The letter sent to Perry reads as follows:

Mr. C. S. Perry  
Dallas Branch

Dear Pats,  
"Ring Out The Old, Ring In The New"  
That statement covers a lot of territory, and it means that you personally have taken many steps, so to speak, since last December 25.  
For your various steps toward better co-operation, a better understanding among your co-workers, and the best organization in the Company, I wish to express sincere appreciation from the writer and from the Company.

I know that you have on many occasions tackled problems that seemed difficult to solve--but you made the grade. Though you may not have realized it, your efforts and ability to carry on enabled the Dallas branch to pass another milestone and hang up the sign "Production Not Interrupted." That too covers a lot of territory.

Ibid., pp. 372-73.
I thank you for your genuine loyalty to the Company and for your individual accomplishments to maintain harmony and efficiency in Your Branch. You kept the Dallas Branch ahead another year, in more ways than one. Let's Carry On.

With best regards, and the Season's Greetings,
I am
Sincerely Yours,

S/W. A. Abbott
Superintendent

In addition to regular wages, paid the outside squad, other expenses incurred in performing assigned tasks were paid by the Ford Motor Company. Company cars were provided and serviced for the squad's use in transporting its victims to appropriate locations for "investigation." The company paid the rent for the two apartments used in connection with the wire-tapping of the Houston telephone. Plant materials were used in the manufacture of whips and blackjacks. Those men involved in the more serious assaults which received wide publicity and the attention of the police were given protection from possible apprehension and prosecution: protection in the form of funds to defray travel expenses on trips squadmen made to avoid apprehension, and company lawyers to work for dismissal of charges when men were actually apprehended. The most incriminating evidence was Perry's later testimony that sometime during the operation of the outside squad, Max Weismeyer, the Dearborn official in charge of all Ford plants,

4Ibid., p. 373.
5Ibid., p. 369.
visited Dallas to confer with Abbott and Rutland, who informed Perry that Weismeyer had promised protection for the members of the outside squad. 6

To protect members of the squad who might be apprehended for their participation in the more publicized beatings, Rutland, on at least two occasions, sent men out of the city until matters quieted down. On August 4, 1937, the day following the beating of A. B. Lewis, Rutland instructed Barto Hill to leave Dallas to prevent his apprehension by the police. Rutland gave him twenty-five dollars to defray his expenses on a trip to Arkansas to visit relatives. 7 Following the Baer beating and the Harris tarring and feathering, Rutland sent Perry, Worley, and the two Johnsons out of town. After receiving their twenty-five dollars, they left immediately for Lake Dallas, where they stayed in a lakeside fishing camp. Rutland instructed the men not to travel in Earl Johnson's car because the police had the license number and were looking for it in connection with the Baer incident. After staying two days at the lake Perry and Worley returned to Dallas, leaving the Johnsons at the fishing camp. The following Saturday, August 14, Perry, Abbott, Rutland, and their wives traveled to Lake Dallas to talk to Earl and Bob Johnson, and at that time, Rutland informed the Johnsons that they were

6Ibid.
7Ibid.
"real hot," gave them fifty dollars, and ordered them to go to South Texas for awhile.8

In order that Earl Johnson would be able to drive his car while in hiding, Rutland instructed Moseley to apply, in Earl Johnson's name, for new license plates and to deliver them to Johnson. Moseley secured the necessary application form, filled it out in Johnson's name, and signed it "Earl Johnston" in a disguised handwriting. He then had the application certified by Gordon Hall, a notary public and attorney for a nearby business concern, took it to the license office, paid the required fee, obtained the replacement plates, and delivered them to Johnson.9

In some instances the company made no effort to elude the police when complaints were filed against strong arm squad men. On one occasion Rutland and two police officers staged a pre-arranged arrest following the beatings of Sowers and Bowen. Rutland asked for three volunteers from the outside squad to "take a rap," and three men, Ray Martin, Jack George, and O. B. Daniels, readily agreed. Shortly thereafter, two policemen arrived at the plant to make the arrest. Moseley, the three volunteers, and the law officers went to the drug store across the street for refreshments. Moseley assured the volunteers that everything would be taken care of, and after

8Transcript of Testimony, I, 224-25.
9Ibid., II, 1515-25.
they finished their drinks, the three men went to police headquarters with the officers. During the ride they were advised by the officers to throw away their blackjacks, if they had any, before they arrived downtown. The three men were identified by Sowers and Bowen as part of the group that had assaulted them. After they were charged, Moseley provided the necessary bail to release the volunteers and their cases were dismissed when they came to court.

All of the money expended on bail bonds, fines, legal fees, and other incidentals involved in the operation of the outside squad was not provided by the company; plant employees supplied much of it. Beginning in July, 1937, Rutland ordered Perry to place a jar on a stand located near the time clocks. The "pickle jar," was about one gallon in capacity and bore a sign saying "In Case," and was so located that after receiving his pay each employee had to pass it in leaving the plant. Perry, Dill or some other member of the outside squad always stood beside the container and told each passing employee to "hit the jar." Although no official explanation was ever offered to the employees as to the purpose of the jar, they understood what the money was used for.

Following each day's collection the jar was delivered to Abbott's office, where the money was counted and turned

10 Trans. of Testimony, I, 250.
11 Ibid., p. 251.
12 NLRB Decision, pp. 370-71.
over to Abbott's personal secretary, Leon Armstrong, who was instructed to keep the money readily available for Rutland's use. Armstrong opened an account in the Grand Avenue State Bank of Dallas under the title, "Leon Armstrong, Special," with an initial deposit of $122.42, which was the amount of the first collection. Five more deposits were made to the account before the collections were discontinued in early September, 1937.13

Events Leading to Investigation by the National Labor Relations Board

Although the outside squad ceased functioning by the end of 1937, it was not officially discarded until sometime in 1938, when Rutland held a meeting in his office which was attended by fifteen outside squad members. Rutland expressed the hope that everyone present was satisfied with the way they had been treated, and stated that from his standpoint "everybody was satisfied with the way things had been carried on and with the way the men had handled themselves."14

All former members of the outside squad remained satisfied with the treatment they had received until May, 1939, when John Moseley was discharged from his position as head of the factory service department. In the early part of the year a succession of serious thefts of auto parts took place at the Dallas plant, and the Dearborn office, convinced of

13 Ibid.
14 NLRB Decision, p. 373.
Moseley's inability to handle the situation, ordered his removal. Rutland was then elevated to Moseley's former position. Until this time all former members of the outside squad had been continuously employed, but soon after Rutland's promotion, two of the members, James Longley and Tommy Lewis, were fired. The NLRB record does not reveal why they were released, but according to H. A. Moon, some former squad members working in the service department had the responsibility of supervising the unloading of boxcars bringing parts to the plant. They manipulated the unloading so that some parts were left in certain marked boxcars, and later, at night, would return and steal the parts.

During this same period Rutland and Abbott became interested in an oil venture and Rutland began selling stock to employees in the plant. Perry's refusal to purchase any marked the beginning of a personal feud between him and Rutland. Soon after, on August 7, 1939, Perry was dismissed for refusing to obey the orders of his immediate supervisor. Feeling that Weismeyer's promise of protection and security had been violated, Perry decided to go to Dearborn to confront Weismeyer and other officials in the main office with the

15 Transcript of Testimony, I, 256.

16 Personal Interview with H. A. Moon, Dallas, Texas, July 16, 1965.

17 Transcript of Testimony, I, 256.
details of his work as leader of the outside squad and the
broken promise of protection. 18

The first official Perry saw in Dearborn was Everitt
Moore, secretary to Harry Bennett. Moore told Perry to see
Weismeyer and a man named Bernard, who was in charge of Ford's
branch factory service departments. Perry talked to Weismeyer
and Bernard and backed up his story with evidence, which
included a scrapbook of newspaper clippings on the work of
his squad, a list of the men assigned to him which had been
typed by Armstrong, Abbott's secretary, and the letter of
commendation sent to him by Abbott in December, 1937. After
Bernard examined Perry's material, he inquired where Perry
had gotten the letter signed by Abbott, because he understood
that Rutland headed the outside group. 19 Perry explained that
he (Perry) was in immediate command of the outside squad
while Rutland principally ran the inside organization, but
also gave orders to Perry. After Perry finished, Weismeyer
said, "Well you got paid for it, haven't you?" When Perry
gave an affirmative answer, Weismeyer asked, "Then, what do we
owe you, then?" 20 Bernard then told Perry to return to Dallas
and told him that he and Weismeyer would investigate the
matter, obviously a move to get rid of Perry.

18NLRB Decision, pp. 374-75.
19Transcript of Testimony, I, 258.
20NLRB Decision, p. 375.
Perry heard nothing from Dearborn or the Dallas plant after he returned to Dallas, and in September, 1939, went back to Dearborn, where he again talked to Moore. Perry repeated the story related to Weismeyer and Bernard and pressed for reinstatement to his former position. Moore gave him the choice of returning to Dallas and awaiting the results of an investigation or immediately going to work in the Dearborn plant. Perry chose to remain in Dallas, where he made his home. He waited but received no word from the Ford Motor Company about re-employment.21

While Perry was traveling to and from Dearborn, events were occurring in the Dallas plant which would soon lead to an investigation by the National Labor Relations Board. On September 11, 1939, H. C. McGarity was chased from the plant and forced to abandon his job by a gang of employees led by Claud Dill, because he belonged to the Electrical Mechanics Union. At approximately the same time, Jack George, who accompanied Perry on his first trip to Dearborn, was also forced from the plant by a gang led by Claud Dill because of that trip.22 In the early part of October McGarity presented his case before the Regional Office of the National Labor Relations Board at Fort Worth, Texas, and investigators from that office began to check on the general situation in Dallas.23

21 Transcript of Testimony, I, 258-59.
22 Ibid., pp. 259-60. 23Ibid., p. 260.
An event occurred on October 12, 1939, of monumental importance because it illustrates the extent to which Rutland would go in preventing possible trouble at the plant. On this date Rutland summoned Cecil Worley, a former squad member (not related to Warren Worley), to his office and assigned him a special mission. The conversation that took place is best described in Worley's testimony, which follows:

He closed the door to the factory service office, pulled up a chair and told me to get up to the desk, that he wanted to talk to me. He said, 'I have got an assignment for you to carry out here' and with this he proceeded, and he says, 'Worley, this Fat Perry has a union note out there with a list of 16 men on it.' In other words, this list, he told me, 'contains 16 men, and he was trying to get up a union, see.' He said, 'I want you to eat and sleep with that fat son-of-a-bitch, and after you have 'it' and slept with him for two or three days, I want you to keep in touch with me by 'phone, and tell me where you are after you get the information, mind you.' And this is the information he wanted, see, and after that, then he said, 'I want you to let me know where you are and I want to hide my men, and we will put him on the spot.' In other words, he said, 'I want to kill that son-of-a-bitch.' That is exactly what he said.24

The testimony of John McKee, employment manager, reinforced Worley's. McKee swore that he was informed by Harrison, the plant superintendent, that Rutland had put Worley on special assignment. Harrison advised McKee to run a dummy termination through on Worley so that the employment records would show that Worley was no longer employed by Ford.25

24 Transcript of Testimony, VI, 416-22.
25 Transcript of Testimony, I, 261-62.
In selecting Worley for the special assignment, Rutland had unknowingly picked one of Perry's closest friends. Worley pretended to be willing to accept the assignment but had no intention of carrying it out. The word quickly spread that Worley had been fired, and the next day Perry and George went to see him about his discharge. It was then that Worley informed Perry of his assignment. Perry, Worley, George and Bevill decided to leave the next day, October 14, for Dearborn, to report the situation, and to see what could be done to protect themselves. They could not go to the police for they would have to explain why they needed protection, and since they no longer worked for Ford, Perry and Bevill feared prosecution for the assaults committed while employed by the company. Rutland telephoned Worley's mother on October 14, and informed her that a mistake had been made concerning her son's discharge and that Worley should report to the plant for work. Mrs. Worley delivered Rutland's message to her son, but he decided to go on to Dearborn anyway. Before Worley returned from Dearborn John McKee and a man named Johnson called on Mrs. Worley to tell her that Worley's pay was being continued while he was off and urged her to persuade her son to report to work. Approximately three weeks after Worley's return to Dallas McKee and Harrison conferred with Worley at Harrison's home, at which time Worley again was urged to return to work. Worley told the two that while they were in Dearborn, Everitt

26 Ibid., pp. 262-63.
Moore had promised Perry that he would investigate the situation in Dallas and remedy everything. Worley explained that he did not want to return to work until Moore had completed his investigation and all the discharged men had been reinstated.\textsuperscript{27}

Another event that helped bring on the NLRB's investigation of Ford practices occurred in October, 1939. As mentioned earlier, James Longley and Tommy Lewis were fired soon after Rutland took over Moseley's position in the factory service department. Longley, an active member of the outside squad, possessed some photographs of the outside squad and other information concerning the squad's activities in 1937. Upon learning of the discharge of Perry, George, and Bevill, and of the plan to murder Perry, Longley decided to expose the Dallas plant's campaign to prevent unionism. He discussed his plan with Tommy Lewis, and together they went to the offices of the Dallas Morning News, where they offered to sell the complete inside story of the activities of the outside squad and the Ford Motor Company's role in the antiunion campaign of 1937.\textsuperscript{28} The News rejected the offer on the basis that the story was past history and had no reading value for the paper.\textsuperscript{29}

Following Lewis' and Longley's futile endeavor to sell their story, Lewis apparently changed his mind about the advisibility of publishing an account of the outside squad. A few days later Lewis went with Earl Johnson to advise Longley

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 264-65. \textsuperscript{28}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 265. \textsuperscript{29}\textit{NLRB Decision}, p. 377.
not to publicize the plant's campaign against the unions. While Johnson waited at a nearby cafe, Lewis went to Longley's house and invited him to have a drink. When they arrived at the cafe, Longley saw Johnson inside and began to fear for his safety. During the conversation Johnson made it clear that he did not like Longley's plan to publicize the account of the strong arm squad. As the three walked out of the cafe and up the street, Longley was careful not to get between Lewis and Johnson, but Johnson suddenly reached over and struck Longley in the eye, knocking him down. When Longley regained his balance, he pulled a knife, inflicted several severe cuts on Johnson, and made his escape. Following this encounter, Longley contacted the National Labor Relations Board in Fort Worth and gave them the story he had offered the Dallas Morning News.30

By the end of October, 1939, the NLRB, having before it the charges filed by McGarity and considerable information from James Longley, began stepping up its investigation. The Board questioned all former members of the outside squad that it was able to contact, and by early November representatives of the Board had met with groups of the strong arm squad at least twice. However, because they figured so prominently in the squad's violent activities and feared prosecution, efforts to secure detailed information from Perry, Bevill, and George met with little success. On November 22 Perry received a telegram

30Transcript of Testimony, I, 266.
from the Board requesting his presence in Fort Worth on November 27 for a hearing. 31

Armed with the telegram Perry went to the plant, showed it to an official there, and requested a conference with C. B. Ostrander, the branch manager. A meeting was immediately arranged for Sunday, November 26, at Ostrander's home. Perry and Ostrander talked over the situation and Ostrander made arrangements to meet with Perry, Worley, Bevill, and George the next day at the plant. At this meeting on November 27, the branch manager arranged for Jack George and Cecil Worley to return to work at the Dallas plant. 32 Because of the NLRB investigation, Ostrander thought it unwise for Perry and Bevill to work in the Dallas plant and suggested they select another branch location. Perry and Bevill chose the Long Beach branch, and ignoring the NLRB's request for a conference in Fort Worth, Perry and Bevill left for California. On arrival in Long Beach, both men were immediately employed with a notation on their service record which stated that they had been transferred from the Dallas branch for reasons of health. Their wages were adjusted to match that which they had received when they were last employed in Dallas. 33 This was unusual, for when a person transferred from one plant to another, he normally started at

31 Ibid., pp. 267-78.
32 Ibid., p. 268.
33 The Dallas Morning News, March 9, 1940, Sec. 2, p. 1.
the base rate of pay. Ostrander's testimony at the hearing revealed that officials from Dearborn visited him prior to his meeting with Perry on November 26. This visit and the Board's investigation account for Ostrander's efforts to satisfy the former members of the strong arm squad.\textsuperscript{34}

Decision and Order of the National Labor Relations Board

The National Labor Relations Board concluded its investigation of the employment practices in the Dallas branch of the Ford Motor Company in January, 1940, and scheduled a hearing to begin in February, 1940, with Robert N. Denham presiding as Trial Examiner. During the hearing Gabe P. Allen and Neth Leachman, attorneys representing the Ford Motor Company, contended that the company was in no way responsible for the acts committed by the Ford workers against union men or union sympathizers. The defense attorneys attempted to prove that company officials were not even aware of the existence of a supposed outside squad. However, the highest official of the Ford Motor Company to testify at the hearing was Ostrander. Abbott and Rutland, who various witnesses said were responsible for creating the antiunion organization, were not called to testify to contradict the testimony of witnesses for the Board. None of the officials from Dearborn testified in order to deny Perry's story concerning his visits to Dearborn or the statements

\textsuperscript{34} Transcript of Testimony, I, 269.
made by Dearborn officials acknowledging the existence of the outside squad. Ostrander testified that he had instructed Abbott to formulate a plan to protect the plant in case of a sit-down strike but stated that he knew nothing of the organization of outside and inside squads. He further stated that when he read in the newspapers about the violence attributed to Ford employees, he called Abbott into his office for an explanation. Abbott maintained that the beatings were committed by employees while off work and that he had no control over them during that time. Ostrander did question Abbott on several occasions concerning the violence by Ford workers but, on each occasion, he readily accepted Abbott's explanation. Ostrander further testified that on numerous occasions he had warned Abbott that fighting by any Ford employee outside the plant would result in immediate discharge. However, no one in the Dallas plant was ever discharged for that reason.

Although Ostrander claimed to be unaware of the existence of a strong arm squad, he related that in the late summer of 1937 he accidentally pushed the wrong buzzer to Moseley's office, and immediately Perry and three other squad men came to his office. Ostrander explained that when a new department

35 *NLRB Decision*, p. 377.
was created or a new department head appointed, a new buzzer was installed in the panel on his desk. He could not recall when the particular buzzer in question was installed, but the plant records showed that no new department was created or department head appointed in 1937 for the performance of ordinary production work.  

When the Trial Examiner questioned Ostrander about the pickle jar used to collect money from the employees, he testified that he had seen it and had instructed Abbott to take it away. Ostrander’s testimony indicated that he did not question Abbott about why contributions were being solicited or how the funds collected were to be used. On the same subject Leon Armstrong, Abbott’s secretary, testified that the money given to him was used to buy flowers for and to help sick and indisposed employees of the company. He further stated that Abbott and Rutland never had any connection with the account, but testimony by Perry and Moseley contradicted Armstrong’s and the Board chose to believe Perry and Moseley. When the Board obtained the original deposit slips from the bank, they found that two company checks made out to Bob and Earl Johnson had been deposited by Armstrong into the account. The notation on the checks stated that they were issued to the Johnsons to cover expenses incurred between August 10 and August 17.

38 *NLRR Decision*, pp. 380-81.  
40 *Transcript of Testimony*, I, 231-32.
From this evidence the Board surmised that Rutland paid the expenses of Earl and Bob Johnson on their trip to South Texas with money from the "pickle jar." Upon their return to the plant company checks were made out to the Johnsons and were turned over to Armstrong to reimburse the "pickle jar" fund.

The NLRB did not accept Ostrander's plea of ignorance. The Board held that if Ostrander had been truly concerned with the newspaper reports attributing violence to Ford workers, Abbott's explanations would have rung shallow. Furthermore, had the branch manager warned Abbott so often about violence by Ford employees, he would have taken steps personally to halt the violent acts which reflected unfavorably on himself and the company. The Board further found that Ostrander's lack of concern or curiosity about the manner in which collections were made by use of the pickle jar indicated that he already knew its purpose. Finally, installation of the buzzer which brought Perry and his cohorts to Ostrander's office indicated his knowledge of the outside squad's existence and his recognition of them as a new and separate department in the plant.

With regard to the complaint filed by McGarity, the attorneys for the Ford Motor Company attempted to prove that

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41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
McGarity's discharge resulted from his unreliability. Witnesses were produced who swore that McGarity was a hothead and refused to repair the electrical equipment used by the men in their work.\(^4\) All defense witnesses testified that they had complained to their foremen from time to time over a period of several years about McGarity.\(^4\) C. S. Leigh testified at the hearing that he had complained about McGarity at least twice a week for three years.\(^4\) However, when the foremen took the stand in connection with the same matter, each testified that he had received complaints about McGarity but had never reported the complaints to McGarity's supervisor, Hagsdale, or to Schumacher, the maintenance superintendent. The Board contended, therefore, that the complaints were not a serious reflection on McGarity's work since the foremen did not bother to report them.\(^4\) McGarity had worked for Ford for eleven years as an electrician, and if he had been an inefficient worker, as the defense contended, he would have been discharged long before. Too many men wanted jobs for the company to have put up with an incompetent worker.\(^4\) Furthermore, H. A. Moon, who worked in the body shop that McGarity serviced, stated that McGarity was one of the best workers in the plant. He was

\(^4\)Dallas Morning News, March 23, 1940, Sec. 4, p. 1.
\(^4\)Transcript of Testimony, I, 282.
\(^4\)Transcript of Testimony, IV, 2897.
\(^4\)Transcript of Testimony, I, 282-83.  
\(^4\)Ibid.
the only electrician assigned to maintain the body shop, and there was no way he could have kept the line running without being an efficient and fast worker. The Board found that McGarity had been discriminated against because of union membership and ordered that he be reinstated with full back pay.

In answer to the Ford Company's contention that it was not responsible for the acts of its employees, the Board cited numerous reasons why the company was responsible for and approved of the action taken by the Dallas plant. Worley was transferred from the Dearborn plant to Dallas and immediately assigned to espionage work and later to the outside squad. Weismeyer approved Worley's transfer for the express purpose of being assigned to the work in which he was engaged, which indicates that Weismeyer knew in advance and approved of the antiunion program planned for Dallas. Weismeyer's presence in Dallas during the period of the squad's operation and his promise to protect the squad members further connected this official with the activities of the outside squad. Further proof of the main office implication with the outside squad was found in Bernard's statement to Perry in which he said, "I thought Rutland was in charge of it," referring to the antiunion campaign.

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48 Personal Interview with H. A. Moon, Dallas, Texas, July 16, 1965.

49 NLRB Decision, pp. 383-84.
The Board stated that even had the above evidence not been in the record, the Ford Motor Company would still be found responsible for the activities of the strong arm squad. The Ford plants were carefully watched and centrally controlled by the main office in Dearborn. When a series of thefts spread through the Dallas plant, the central factory service department learned of the thefts and conducted a special investigation, which resulted in the discharge of Moseley. It was hardly believable that the Dearborn office had not learned of the more serious acts committed by its employees in Dallas, especially since the press attributed the violence to Ford workers. Had the main office been totally ignorant of the strong arm activities in Dallas, the Board reasonably assumed that when they learned of it from Perry in 1939, they would have launched an investigation, followed by some kind of punishment for those responsible. At the time of the hearing, no punishment had been meted out; Abbott was branch superintendent of the Ford plant in Richmond, California; Rutland headed the factory service department; and Ostrander served as branch manager for the Dallas plant. Therefore, the Board found that the Ford Motor Company formulated, directed, approved, and had knowledge of the organized antiunion campaign in Dallas during the time beginning in April, 1937, to the close of 1939.50

50Ibid., p. 384.
Based upon the testimony heard and the evidence presented in the hearing, the National Labor Relations Board issued a cease and desist order on August 9, 1940. In connection with the intimidation and physical violence practiced by the Dallas branch, the Board ordered the company to provide for all employees and any other person lawfully present at the Dallas plant protection against physical harm, intimidation, or threats of violence aimed at discouraging membership in any labor organization. The Board further ordered the company to prevent the manufacture of and/or removal of weapons from the plant such as blackjacks and whips used for the purpose of discouraging union membership. In connection with the pickle jar collections, the Ford Motor Company was ordered to cease and desist from compelling its employees to contribute to an obvious antiunion fund. Although the Board felt that the employees should be reimbursed, it was found administratively impractical to do so. The company also was ordered to effectively disband the inside squads and to notify all employees that the squads were no longer in existence and would not be revived.51

The Board felt that the Ford Company should take certain affirmative action so that Dallas employees could truly enjoy the freedom which they had been denied under the company's former policy. The first action deemed necessary by the Board concerned the supervisory officials at the plant who had

51Ibid., pp. 394-95.
approved and directed the organized union resistance. Since they were still present in the plant, they remained symbols of the Ford antiunion program. The Board ordered the company to make known to the employees that any official or supervisory employee who attempted to interfere with the rights of the regular employees to form, join, or assist any labor organization would be dismissed or otherwise severely penalized. The company also was ordered to notify the employees that the outside squad was disbanded and would not be revived. The Board further ordered the company to post conspicuously in all Ford plants, a notice that the company did not intend to engage in unfair labor practices.\textsuperscript{52}

In connection with the job discrimination against Humphries and McGarity, the Board ordered the company to reinstate the two men to their former or equivalent positions without prejudice to their seniority or other rights. The company also was instructed to fully compensate each man for the money lost between the time of discrimination and the offer of reinstatement.\textsuperscript{53}

The National Labor Relations Board proved to its satisfaction that the Ford Motor Company approved of and was responsible for the antiunion program perpetrated by its employees. While defense attorneys denied the company's knowledge of the existence of the antiunion groups, testimony

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., p. 395.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., p. 399.
by those who formed the groups and had perpetrated the violence contradicted all arguments presented by the defense. Although the company actively and brutally engaged in antilabor violence, the city in which that violence flourished and went unpunished must also bear some of the blame. Dallas was hostile to all labor efforts, especially those of the CIO. The labor climate in Dallas consisted of a combination of factors working against the CIO and its affiliates.
CHAPTER V

THE LABOR CLIMATE IN DALLAS

In Dallas and throughout the South the social and economic atmosphere was unfavorable to unionism. This situation resulted partly from the fear of conservative whites that the organization of the mass production workers would give the Negro better status.\(^1\) The principal reason for the fierce resistance to labor organization, however, stemmed from management's fear of losing absolute control over their companies. Most Dallas business concerns' management consisted of first generation owners. As a result, unions represented an encroachment on entrepreneurial accomplishment. To this extent the Dallas business attitude was nineteenth century in nature in that management failed to understand or appreciate the concept of unionization. Dallas thus became a stronghold for open shop sentiment and was recognized as such throughout the United States. The city managed to maintain its antiunion posture even while unionism spread into other Texas cities such as Fort Worth and Houston. The successful antiunion campaign resulted from the power of the Dallas Open

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\(^1\)Nevins, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
Shop Association, the weakness of the local AFL unions, and
the presence of the Ford Motor Company assembly plant.  

The Dallas Open Shop Association, formed in 1919 as an
extension of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, functioned as
one of the most tightly knit employer's organizations in the
country. The association boasted that through its efforts
the city remained free from strikes, lock-outs and labor
trouble in general. For many years the Open Shop Association
levied a tax on business concerns to keep the association
operating, and the members readily donated. The Dallas Chamber
of Commerce voiced its support when Ben Critz, General Manager
of the Chamber of Commerce, stated that "his organization
stands squarely for the principles of the open shop association
and will continue to stand for them. The Chamber of Commerce
believes that an employer has the right to run his own business;
that he has a right to employ men and women who belong to the
union if he so desires or to employ those who prefer not to
join a labor union."   

To insure that all members of the association worked to
prevent the spread of unions, the organization adopted a
resolution in 1937 stating that any member who knowingly

2George Lambert, "Dallas Tries Terror," The Nation,
Vol. CXIV (October 9, 1937), pp. 376-78.

3Ibid.

4The Dallas Morning News, July 11, 1937, Sec. 4, p. 1.

5Ibid.
employed a union worker was subject to a $3,000 fine. In return
the association guaranteed that no member firm would be
allowed to go bankrupt as a result of a strike against that
company.6 This resolution was a major factor in successfully
keeping the member firms alert and helped prevent the unions
from securing a toe-hold in Dallas industry.

Open Shop Association firms of the same industry some-
times united to form suborganizations, such as the Dallas
Millinery Council, formed in 1933. This group received the
fire of the National Labor Relations Board in 1937 following
an investigation of labor practices in the millinery
industry. Section Four of the Millinery Council's bylaws
provided:

It shall be the duty of members, when any
person leaves their employ to immediately give
the name of such employee to a central office
which the Council shall establish for the
assistance of other employers who may be in
need of their services and for the assistance
of employees in their search for work.7

While the ostensible purpose of this provision seemed to be to
assist employees in obtaining other employment, the Board
contended that it was, in fact, utilized as a blacklisting
device to prevent discharged union employees from obtaining
other positions with millinery manufacturers in the Dallas
area. Employees fired for union activity were never hired
by other manufacturers even though a shortage of experienced
millinery workers existed.8

After the Open Shop Association gained power in Dallas the local leadership of the AFL had a hard time keeping labor organizations in existence. Instead of engaging in strong resistance to employer domination, the labor leaders adopted a "boot licking attitude." The Dallas Central Labor Council even went so far as to offer the Chamber of Commerce its services in keeping the CIO out of Dallas. Leaders of the AFL met on June 30 to formulate plans to fight the CIO organization process. Their strategy consisted of mailing literature denouncing the CIO, personal contact with individuals and employers, and a series of general mass meetings. W. R. Williams, AFL organizer in the Southwest, related to newspapers that employers would rather deal with the AFL than the CIO because the AFL offered a conservative and trustworthy organization. Williams further stated that several employers had called on him to forestall possible CIO organization of their employees "by organizing them under auspices of the federation."

While pursuing their goal the Dallas Central Labor Council called on the Haggar Pants Company and asked J. M. Haggar to replace the CIO union there with an AFL affiliate. When Haggar refused, he was told that the federation could help the sales of those manufacturers who used the United Garment Workers label and could hurt the sales of those who

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9Lambert, op. cit.

10*The Dallas Morning News, July 1, 1937, Sec. 2, p. 1.*
did not, by boycotting their products. The Council called on several clothing manufacturers and made similar threats, but the labor leaders met little success. The following day the Labor Council requested the Chamber of Commerce to inform all Dallas merchants, manufacturers, and out-of-town buyers that the members of AFL unions would in the future purchase only clothing bearing the UGW label.

One week after the declaration to the Chamber of Commerce, the local AFL leadership suddenly declared war on the Open Shop Association. The AFL reaffirmed its opposition to the CIO and blasted the Chamber of Commerce for its part in making Dallas the dirtiest open shop town in the United States. They stated:

For many years Dallas union labor has had to grin and bear the activities of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce. This organization has made it necessary for Dallas working men in all branches to work at far less pay than those in the same lines elsewhere. Through the years people have been pointing at Dallas as the worst town in America for labor.

By controlling the labor movement in Dallas the Chamber of Commerce and the Open Shop Association had successfully attracted hundreds of businesses to the city. The Labor Council called these concerns "cheaters and chiselers" who could not exist anywhere else because they had been "run out."

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14 Ibid.
Notwithstanding the Labor Council's fight against the Open Shop Association, William Green, President of the AFL, selected Open Shop Dallas as the site for his Labor Day speeches. While in the city Green consorted freely with the Chamber of Commerce and vehemently denounced the CIO in his speeches. In his address Green charged that the CIO welcomed and encouraged Communist support and even adopted Communist methods, while the AFL stood as a barrier against alien ideology. He went on to condemn sit-down strikes as anti-American CIO weapons which brought condemnation by the public against all labor organizations. He further asserted that AFL unions always kept their contracts but that the record of the CIO in that respect was deplorable. In conclusion Green declared the AFL worked to unite the labor movement while the CIO insisted upon ripping the movement apart.\textsuperscript{15}

Green's condemnation of the CIO for its Communist ties merely echoed statements that had appeared in articles printed in the local AFL publication, the \textit{Dallas Craftsman}. One article charged that John L. Lewis was only the titular head of the CIO, while the real directing force emanated from the executive committee of the Communist Party.\textsuperscript{16} In another

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Dallas Craftsman}, September 10, 1937, Sec. 1, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Dallas Craftsman}, August 6, 1937, Sec. 1, p. 2.
article, Holt Ross, Southern district representative for the AFL, denounced the CIO when he stated:

> Our leaders have pointed out in a most convincing way the manner in which CIO leaders have resorted to deception, autocratic domination of workers organizations, heavy special assessments, chicanery and fraud to confuse the minds of the workers and gain publicity. Their record of strife, lawlessness, force, irresponsibility, lack of sane leadership and needless strikes sets an all time record in industrial relationships in America.\(^1\)

These charges of Communist connections and irresponsibility in labor matters increased the unpopularity of the CIO in Dallas.

In addition to the opposition offered by the AFL and the business associations, the CIO received verbal blasts from local publications. An editorial in the *Dallas Morning News* on June 23, 1937, placed the responsibility for the deaths of strikers at the Republic Steel Company in Chicago on John L. Lewis and the CIO. The editorial stated that the picketers violated the law when they refused to disperse when ordered to do so by the police, and that the police were only doing their duty in scattering the picket line.\(^2\) However, pictures taken at the riots in Chicago showed that strikers were shot in the back as they ran and that police used other forms of brutality.\(^3\) In an August

\(^1\)[*Dallas Craftsman*, August 6, 1937, Sec. 1, p. 2.]
\(^2\)[*The Dallas Morning News*, June 23, 1937, Sec. 2, p. 8.]
\(^3\)[*The Dallas Morning News*, July 1, 1937, Sec. 1, p. 1.]
article the newspaper stated that "the News is on record as being in strong opposition to the methods and beliefs of the CIO," and went on to express opposition to the institution of communism. Although the article never openly charged the CIO with communist leanings, the implication was clear. Editorial on July 12 and 14 further denounced the CIO and its organizing methods. The News actually opposed all union efforts to raise the wages of the workers in industry. The paper stated that "real wealth and income are increased by full and efficient production with the gradually cheapened costs passed promptly along to the consumer."  

Like the News, the Daily Times Herald and the Texas Weekly went on record in opposition to the CIO. The Times Herald stated that "the methods of the John L. Lewis faction have made the AFL appear, by contrast, as a sane and conservative group." The Texas Weekly denied the existence of any organized group or faction causing the labor disorders in the city and called the Harris tarring and feathering, the Baer beating, and the de Louis attack all unrelated incidents which happened to occur coincidentally. The paper claimed the unfavorable publicity Dallas received was completely unwarranted.  

20 The Dallas Morning News, August 24, 1937, Sec. 2, p. 2.  
21 Ibid.  
22 The Dallas Morning News, July 2, 1937, Sec. 3, p. 4.  
The journal said of the mass meeting held in the school yard by the Ford workers:

History, in a small way at least, was made in Dallas on Monday night (June 29) of this week when more than 1,500 of the 1,800 employees of that city's Ford plant gathered on the grounds of a Dallas school and served verbal warning to the CIO that they want no part of it . . . . For here we have a picture of men recognizing and publicly proclaiming the fact that their employer is their friend, not their enemy; that he has treated them fairly, not unfairly; that he is a good man to work for, not a heartless exploiter. 25

Indication that one publication condoned the antiunion policy of the Ford Motor Company is evident by the arrangement Truman Pouncey, a News reporter, had with the outside squad to photograph Harris after he was tarred and feathered. Pouncey knew of the squad's plan and instead of reporting it to the police, waited in front of the Adolphus Hotel for his subject to be delivered. 26 During the 1940 NLRB hearing the New York Times and the Daily Times Herald gave much better coverage of the trial than did the News. The Times and the Times Herald provided the public with many of the trial details and published much of the testimony offered by important witnesses in the case. The News usually confined its coverage to a three or four inch article while the Times and Times Herald


26 Interview with L. N. D. Wells in Dallas, Texas, July 9, 1965.
often devoted almost two columns to the proceedings. While the latter newspapers gave day to day coverage, the News often went days without mentioning the proceedings. L. N. D. Wells, attorney for the NLRA, stated that the reason the News did not provide its readers with complete coverage of the trial was because the case "hit pretty close to home" due to the cooperation of the paper with Ford's opposition to union organization.27

The presence of the Ford Motor Company assembly plant in Dallas played a leading role in maintaining Dallas' antiunion sentiment and opposition. In Dearborn the company controlled the political machine, but in other cities Ford had to persuade local officials either to give active aid in opposing organization or at least to remain passive while Ford agents took the necessary action.28 The threat of removing the huge Ford payroll was sufficient in most instances to make officials decide to cooperate. This was certainly true of Kansas City, where the company closed its plant and announced it would not reopen until the city could guarantee "proper protection to Ford employees."29 The Kansas City plant reopened only after City Manager McElroy went to Dearborn and gave such a guarantee. Thereafter, the city police were used as strike breakers.30

27Ibid.

28"Memphis is Safe For Ford," Nation, 146 (January 22, 1938), 3-4.

29Ibid.

30Ibid.
Dallas officials also appear to have succumbed to the pressures exerted by Ford, for there were no convictions in the eighteen assault cases involving Ford employees in the last six months of 1937.31 The complicity of the Dallas Police Department in the antiunion movement in Dallas can be demonstrated in several incidents. First, at the meeting at Fretz Park the park policeman, customarily present at meetings held in city parks, was unexplainably absent.32 Taking into consideration Perry's testimony at the 1940 NLRB hearing, the park policeman's absence is understandable, for he knew of and authorized the riot that preceded the tarring and feathering of Herbert Harris. Furthermore, the park policeman, Jim Burrows, prior to granting Perry permission to carry out his plans of destruction, had to check with a higher authority in the police department. The fact that the meeting was allowed to take place indicates that his superiors were aware of the planned disruption and that they cooperated to the extent of not interfering.33

The Dallas police also had prior knowledge of the Baer beating. Inspector Welch contacted Rutland at the Ford plant and sought his assistance in curtailing the operations of the CIO organizer for the millinery union. Rutland sent his immediate subordinate, Moseley, and his leading henchman,

31 Ibid.
33 Transcript of Testimony, I, pp. 219-20.
Perry, to the police station to confer with Welch, who told them the identity of the organizer and the industry he was attempting to organize. Following this conference, George Baer received a severe and cruel mauling at the hands of the Ford strong arm squad, although he had no connection in any way with the United Automobile Workers and posed no organizational threat to the Ford plant.

A third example of police cooperation in the Dallas labor violence involves the case of W. J. Houston, who was beaten by the outside squad because he was the attorney representing the UAW in Dallas. Houston testified that all his attackers escaped except for Barto Hill, Earl Johnson, and Bob Johnson, who were arrested and taken to the police station. Fats Perry also had participated in the assault and should have feared arrest, but instead of avoiding the police, Perry went to the station, where he, Houston, and Chief of Police R. L. Jones had a private conference. After the meeting, Houston declined to press charges against his assailants and they went free. The fact that Perry went to the police station instead of avoiding it indicates that he did not fear or expect to be prosecuted by the law.

Finally, the farcical manner in which arrests were made indicates the unconcern of Dallas Ford officials about charges

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34Ibid., pp. 213-15.
lodged by victims of the outside squad. Following complaints by Harold Bowen and Richard Sowers, Rutland selected three men, Jack George, Ray Martin, and O. B. Daniels, to be arrested by two policemen. The three volunteers, the policemen, and Moseley assembled in the plant showroom where Moseley assured the three men that they would be taken care of. The arresting officers advised the three to dispose of their blackjacks if they had them. At the police station Sowers and Bowen identified the three men as some of their assailants. Moseley provided bail and the three cases were dismissed when they came to court.36

No arrests might have been made had not some of the citizens of Dallas become alarmed at the violence erupting in the city. In the earlier mentioned letter to the governor praising his sending of Rangers to Dallas, the author of the letter, Travis,37 stated that the police had done nothing toward solving the cases of violence prior to the arrival of the Rangers. He further stated:

It looks like laxity to me when the park policeman at Fretz Park was reported as being off duty just before the attack and tarring and feathering of Harris on the night of August 9. Also it looks odd to many Dallasites that although there are usually many policemen on duty near Commerce and Poydras at 4:15 P. M., none of them was able to see the attack on George Baer. A large number of private citizens were there and they saw it. Since the Rangers have come the police have shown a great deal of activity in this investigation, but nothing has come of it.38

36NLRB Decision, p. 370.  
37No first name was given.  
City Councilman Z. Starr Armstrong made a statement to the papers in which he said that he was not in sympathy with the CIO but was a strong believer in human rights. He expressed concern over police apathy to the beatings and stated that he planned to confer with Chief of Police R. L. Jones and put an end to the labor violence. It was following this meeting that the bogus arrests were made at the Ford plant.

The apathetic attitude of the police and the intense anti-CIO sentiment in Dallas combined to produce an atmosphere in the city that was detrimental to all labor efforts. This feeling stemmed from the opposition to the CIO by the press, the manufacturer's associations, and even the local AFL unions. It is little wonder that labor violence flourished in Dallas, and that those who perpetrated the violence escaped prosecution by the law. The year 1937 always will stand out in the history of the burgeoning metropolis as one of disgrace when the authorities, the public, and private enterprise combined to make a farce of law and order.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The mass production industries violently and persistently opposed the efforts of labor in the 1930's and early 1940's. Of the automotive giants the Ford Motor Company was the most determined in resisting unionization and very ably and successfully prevented the unions from gaining any noticeable foothold in its plants.¹ Unlike other companies, which employed labor spies from agencies specializing in industrial espionage, Ford established its own spy network.² Henry Ford, in the traditional pattern of a founder-owner, vowed he would never recognize any union's right to bargain for his employees. He used every available means to prevent unionization of his plants and chose one of his officials, the criminal Harry Bennett, to direct antiunion strategy. Ford made sure that every branch of his empire understood his intentions; every shop, assembly plant and office was informed of company policy and all executives were expected to obey without question.³

¹Levinson, op. cit., p. 279.
³Ibid., p. 138.
The Dallas plant followed the policy of resistance to the letter. The Dearborn office sent Warren Worley to organize the resistance system, and the resulting militant organization resembled that of the River Rouge plant, especially in its crushing efficiency. Therefore, Henry Ford's labor policies and determined efforts to defeat labor may be seen in microcosm in the Dallas plant. The labor-management controversy in Dallas not only is indicative of the nationwide struggle, but illustrates the nature of Southern opposition to unionization and the extreme conservatism which still distinguishes Dallas in the mid-1960's.

Like many industries in the thirties, the Dallas assembly plant abused its workers in order to maintain a rate of production that would maximize profits. The most repulsive practice was the speed-up, which strained men's limits of endurance. Other grievances included working without pay, unfair employment practices, and disregard for seniority. Although these grievances irritated and debased the employees, none was more unethical than the spy system. After successfully testing the system at the River Rouge Plant in Dearborn, Ford rapidly installed similar systems in each branch plant in order to thwart union efforts at organization. In addition, the

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4Personal Interview with H. A. Moon, Dallas, Texas, July 16, 1965.

5Local 870, p. 6.

company initiated a program of physical violence directed against anyone remotely suspected of union connections or sympathies.

Violence began in Dallas in June, 1937, when two UAW representatives, Baron de Louis and Leonard Guempelen, were severely beaten by Rudolph Rutland and Fats Perry, who were directly responsible for the antiunion activities of the plant. Following the attack the company organized a group of Ford employees into a squad which functioned outside the plant at designated places in the city and checked on union activities, investigated people suspected of being union organizers, and used any method necessary to prevent the plant from being organized. Rutland, who commanded the antiunion campaign for the entire plant, assigned the supervision of the newly created outside squad to Fats Perry. In the beginning the members of the outside squad relied on their wits and muscle to perform their duties, but soon after the squad's inception, blackjacks were manufactured in the plant's maintenance department and distributed to the men. The squadmen later acquired other tools such as whips and lengths of rubber hose, and those who possessed pistols were allowed to carry them.

To further complete the antiunion organization, inside squads were created at the plant. Each department was

7Transcript of Testimony, III, 1657-60.
8NLRB Decision, p. 339.
9Transcript of Testimony, III, 1673-75.
divided into three divisions with each division subdivided into groups of five to fifteen men. Each group was piloted by a group captain directly responsible to his division leader, and each man was instructed to contact the plant immediately upon receiving a visit from a union representative. The captains listened to the conversations of the men in their groups and reported statements considered sympathetic to the CIO.\textsuperscript{10} With the formation of the outside and inside squads, the Dallas plant prepared to battle the unions.

The struggle began in earnest in July 1937, and continued unabated throughout the remainder of the year. Directed against anyone suspected of union connections or sympathies, but primarily concerned with Ford employees, the antiunion program soon spread to attacks on persons in no way connected with the company. In one such incident the victim, A. B. Lewis, died from pneumonia contracted while recovering from injuries received at the hands of the outside squad.\textsuperscript{11} As a result of another beating George Baer, organizer for the millinery union in Dallas, lost the sight of one eye and most of his teeth.\textsuperscript{12} These and numerous other cases demonstrate the brutality of the outside squad and the extent to which the company would go in order to stop the unions.

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 212.
\textsuperscript{12}\textit{NLRB Decision}, p. 365.
The attacks on labor advocates and organizers instilled a fear in plant employees that successfully prevented union organization, and as a result, the existence of the outside squad became unnecessary by the end of 1937 and was officially disbanded in early 1938. The inside squads continued to function and through threats of beatings forced several men who had expressed union sympathies to leave their jobs.

H. C. McGarity, one of those forced out of the plant, presented his case in Fort Worth to the National Labor Relations Board, which then initiated a full-scale investigation of the labor practices of the Ford Company in Dallas. The Board was aided in its investigation by a former outside squad member, James Longley, who described the entire antiunion organization of the company. As a result of the investigation the Board ordered a hearing, which ran from February to April of 1940.

During the hearing Gabe Allen and Neth Leachman, attorneys representing the Ford Motor Company, contended that the company was in no way responsible for acts committed by Ford workers against union men or sympathizers. The defense attorneys attempted to prove that company officials were unaware of the outside squad's existence. However, attorneys for the NLRB, L. N. G. Wells and Charles Brooks, produced several former

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13Ibid., p. 373.
14Transcript of Testimony, I, 260.
15Ibid., p. 266.
16Ibid., p. 269.
outside squad members whose testimony contradicted all arguments presented by the defense and proved to the Board's satisfaction that the company was guilty of employing physical violence and intimidation in order to prevent unionization.

Based on the testimony heard and the evidence presented in the hearing, the National Labor Relations Board issued a cease and desist order on August 9, 1940. In connection with the intimidation and violence practiced by the Dallas branch, the Board ordered the company to provide for all employees and any other person lawfully present at the Dallas plant protection against physical harm, intimidation, or threats of violence aimed at discouraging membership in any labor organization. The Board also ordered the company to make known to employees that any official or supervisory employee attempting to interfere with the rights of employees to form, join, or assist any labor organization would be dismissed or otherwise severely penalized. Further, the company was ordered to notify the employees that the outside squad was disbanded and would not be revived.\(^\text{17}\)

Although the Ford Motor Company was directly responsible for the labor violence in Dallas, the city in which the violence flourished must also bear some of the responsibility. Dallas long had been a stronghold for open shop sentiment and was recognized as such throughout the United States.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{17}\text{NLRB Decision, p. 395.}\)
\(^{18}\text{Lambert, op. cit., p. 367.}\)
Anti-CIO statements by the press, opposition from the manufacturer's associations, and police apathy combined to produce an atmosphere completely detrimental to all labor organizations. In addition, the local AFL unions declared war on the CIO to maintain its position of dominance in the Dallas area. All factors combined, it is easy to understand how the city tolerated the labor violence and allowed the perpetrators of that violence to go unpunished.

Henry Ford's attempts to set himself above and outside the law failed. The Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the decision of the NLRB and the United States Supreme Court refused to review the case. Finally, on February 18, 1941, Ford announced that he would obey the law, and in June, 1941, signed a contract with the UAW making that union the bargaining agent for all his plants. Immediately following the contract signing 1,320 of the 1,380 employees in the Dallas plant held an open meeting. The most important questions raised at this meeting concerned procedure as to electing their committee and determining seniority. It was hard for many to realize that they could hold an open union meeting without fear of suffering a beating or being fired. The feelings of the workers were expressed by one of the Ford employees, H. A. Moon, who stated, "It was like waking up free and in the light, after sleeping in a dark dungeon. You couldn't believe the change. The nightmare was over."
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