The death of Norman Ray Lewis is the direct result of Handyman Corporation’s policy of unyielding opposition to the organization of its employees, its refusal to sign a fair union contract, and its efforts to break a union brother, and to offer our assistance. We intend to mount economic action against Handyman, and hit them where they hurt—in their pocketbook!

At this point, Laeger started the truck again, moving forward at unusual speed. The front of the truck knocked Lewis to the ground, but miraculously the front wheels did not go over the prostrate body as the truck continued to advance.

Other pickets shrieked, “Stop!” Some banged on the door to attract Laeger’s attention. The men who did this swear that had Laeger heeded their appeals, Lewis’ life could have been spared.

VISIBILITY GOOD

But Laeger did not stop. The truck moved on until the rear wheels crushed the life out of Lewis. And it continued moving for a good many feet beyond. It was then about 4 a.m.

The witnesses say there was no question about visibility. Lewis was a tall man, standing above six feet. He had his picket sign aloft. He stood in the glare of the truck’s headlights.

Three pickets who witnessed Lewis’ death were Howard Hackney, Ron Berger and Steve Burreul. A fourth picket, Mark Medina, did not see the truck hit Lewis, but he did observe that the truck was started up with unusual speed.

Surviving Lewis are his widow, Lena, and the five orphaned children: Brandi Elizabeth, not quite 4; Matthew Scott, 5%; Albert Jeffrey, 9; Michelle Jonathan, 12; and Donald Ray, 14.

The strikers are convinced that the incident was an outgrowth of the company’s determination to break the strike and smash the union.

UNIONS TABOO

From other unimpeachable sources The Dispatcher has learned of the extremes to which Handyman’s anti-union policy go. Local managers are held responsible for keeping unions out of their domains. If they fail, they are automatically fired.

In fact, Bob Taylor, manager of the Handyman warehouse in Tracy, was summarily dismissed one hour after it was announced that the ILWU had won an NLRB election at the plant.

With their jobs and livelihood at stake, managers resort to any device they can think of to keep unions out. They are given counsel and direction by top company management.

HOW IT BEGAN

The background of the strike against the Handyman Company Warehouse and Distribution Center is a familiar story to union members. Like most of his fellow employees, Norman Lewis was dissatisfied with the low wages, poor conditions and minimal benefits. The company was run like a military camp.

In February 1976, Lewis and about 30 other employees at Handyman Distribution Center in this San Joaquin Valley town, voted overwhelmingly for ILWU Warehouse Local 6 to represent them.

But, as one Handyman supervisor was heard to say, “Elections don’t mean a damn thing around here.” For the next six months the company stalled—its spokesmen were available to meet with the union negotiators only infrequently. Wage and benefit offers were insignificant. The company would not accept a union shop or any other form of union security or union grievance machinery. It insisted on a sweeping management rights clause which would cripple the union on the job.

In effect, Handyman said, “Go ahead and strike!” Seeing no alternative, the Handyman employees voted 23 to 2—by secret ballot—to go on strike at one minute...
The Targets
For Boycott

EDISON BROTHERS STORES, INC., headquartered in St. Louis, is the holding company for a large retailing empire. Besides the Handyman chain of stores, prominent also among the Edison subsidiaries are: Leed’s, Baker’s, Burts, Chandler’s, Jeans West, Size 5-7-9 Shops, and United Sporting Goods.

With over 1,000 retail outlets nationwide in the Edison Brothers chains of stores, it is pointless to identify the exact location of each store individually. The following stores and their locations are within easy reach of many, many ILWU members, and are targets for picketing and boycott demonstrations:

The addresses here are only a partial listing of retail outlets of the Edison Brothers Stores, Inc., the chain of stores within the geographic scope of the ILWU.

The Wild Pair

- People up and down the West Coast are urged to consult their local telephone directories for stores in their area.

Remember, Edison Brothers Stores do business under several names.

Handyman Home Improvement Centers

The company driver bumped Norman Lewis, who stepped back several feet. Lewis was run down two nights later.

The Wild Pair

Despite this variety, in one vital respect — household goods, women’s clothing, and women’s accessories; Jeans West, a chain specializing in clothing for young people; the Size 5-7-9 Shops, retailing women’s clothing, and the United Sporting Goods stores.

Edison Corporation’s anti-labor policy guides not only Handyman, but also these other subsidiaries: Leed’s, Baker’s, Burts’ and Chandler’s, featuring shoes and women’s accessories; Jeans West, a chain specializing in clothing for young people; the Size 5-7-9 Shops, retailing women’s clothing, and the United Sporting Goods stores.

If you patronize Handyman’s or any of the other stores of the Edison Corporation conglomerate, you will in effect be showing approval of their “workers be damned” attitude. This company must be dragged, maybe kicking and screaming, into the 20th Century.

You can help by not patronizing their stores until the company straightens up and flies right.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Handyman and its owner, Edison Brothers Stores, Inc., have a notorious anti-labor record.

The dead man, Norman Ray Lewis, was doing peaceful picketing along with several fellow workers outside the Tracy warehouse in the pre-dawn hours of August 6. At 3:30 a.m. four carbados of management personnel went through the picket line. They made ready to ship merchandise out of the plant. The driver then gunned the engine, put the truck into forward gear, running over Brother Lewis and crushing him to death.

Many of us thought this kind of anti-labor violence was over years ago. Not so with some of these dyed in the wool labor haters.

P.S. If you could take the time to drop a line to the San Joaquin County District Attorney, insisting that the driver of the company truck (Leslie R. Laeger) be indicted for murder, this would help. As of the moment he has been indicted on a manslaughter charge for what looks like a deliberate killing. Write to District Attorney Joseph H. Baker, 222 East Weber, Stockton, Calif. 95202.

ILWU locals are urged to adopt the above leaflet for use in their own localities at Handyman facilities and retail stores of other subsidiaries owned by the parent conglomerate, Edison Brothers Stores, Inc.

Additional Targets Listed

Other subsidiaries of Edison Brothers Stores, Inc., which owns Handyman, are:

Leed’s Shoe Stores
Chandler’s Shoe Stores
Baker’s Shoe Stores
Burts’ Shoe Stores
United Sporting Goods

These chains have outlets throughout the regions where ILWU exists. ILWU locals and members are urged to check telephone directories in their own localities for any stores or other facilities operating under the above names, and to take such steps as they deem appropriate to acquaint shoppers with the facts and meaning of the killing in Tracy.