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A PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF THE ASBESTOS STRIKE:

A STUDY IN THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

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DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AT FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK
1950

sympathizers who had a knowledge of the history of labor relations in the United States. To this group, Johns-Manville was simply applying the "Mohawk Valley Formula" to the Asbestos outbreak. To them, the company's actions appeared to fall in a sequence not dissimilar to the bare outline summarized by the National Labor Relations Board as the essence of this strategy:

> (1) When a strike is threatened, label the union leaders as 'agitators' to discredit them with the public and their own followers.
>
> (2) When the strike is called, raise high the banner of 'law and order,' thereby causing the community to mass legal and police weapons.
>
> (3) Call a 'mass meeting' of the citizens to coordinate public sentiment.
>
> (4) Bring about the formation of a large armed police force to intimidate the strikers and to exert a psychological effect on the citizens.
>
> (5) And perhaps most important, heighten the demoralizing effect of the above measures -- all designed to convince the strikers that their course is hopeless -- by a 'back to work' movement, operated by a puppet association of so-called 'loyal employees' secretly organized by the employer.
>
> (6) When a sufficient number of applications are on hand, fix a date for an opening of the plant through the device of having the opening requested by the 'back to work' association.
>
> (7) Stage the 'opening' theatrically. . . .
>
> (8) Capitalize on the demoralization of the strikers by continuing the show of police force and the pressure of the Citizens'

Committee, both to insure that those employees who have returned will continue at work and to force the remaining strikers to capitulate.

(9) Close the publicity barrage, which day by day during the entire period has increased the demoralization worked by all these measures, on the theme that the plant is in full operation and that the strikers were merely a minority attempting to interfere with 'the right to work,' thus inducing the public to place a moral stamp of approval upon the above measures.[1]

To the better-educated, ardent Syndicate member and protagonist, this formula served as a text from which "chapter and verse" could be quoted as evidence of a step-by-step plan of attrition to break the strike. Yet, in fairness to the Company, while police, "open letters" to the citizenry, and a back-to-work movement did enter the picture, there were no grounds for equating the Management of Johns-Manville with the coldly-calculating, pugnacious managerial groups of the 'thirties, when "Mohawk Valley" was popular. It is not the untruth of this accusation which the Company should deplore, but rather, its failure to perceive that its motivation could be interpreted differently than was intended, and that an alert antagonist could make capital out of an accidental combination of unfortunate elements. Because of this inability to project itself, the Company's publicity releases were not only frequently ineffectual, but often harmful, as well. Granted that the strike was called without

1. Herbert Harris, Labor's civil war, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1940, pp. 183-187.