

SAVIN
BUSINESS
MACHINES
CORPORATION

1480 SOLDIERS FIELD RD.
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02131
(677) 783-1180

February 12, 1979

National Labor Relations Board
Region 1
99 High St.
Boston, Mass.

To The Regional Director

RE: Savin Corporation
Case Number 1-CA-14,899;
15,127
1-CA-15,350

Dear Regional Director:

Enclosed please find a certified check to the order of Rona Rothman in the sum of \$1,000.

Said check is to be held in escrow and released upon Ms. Rothman's withdrawal with prejudice of the charges she filed with your office in the above cases, your approval of same, as well as, a dismissal of the complaint.

In the event the above cannot be accomplished, then of course said check shall be returned to this office and a new hearing date will be noticed.

Respectfully yours,

Charles Deet

The Provident	The Provident	30045767
The Provident		The Provident
Institution for Savings		February 13, 1979
The Provident		DATE
	PROVIDENT	\$ 1,000.00
	BRI-6	00 Cts
PAY		The Provident
The Provident	***** Rona Rothman *****	The Provident
TO THE ORDER OF		The Provident
The Provident		<i>Melba A. Douglas</i>
The Provident		AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE
STATE STREET BANK AND TRUST COMPANY	5-2	COUNTERSIGNATURE REQUIRED OVER \$5,000
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS	110	
⑈ 30045767⑈	⑈ 01000028⑈	9052 128 7⑈
CHARTERED 1816		

'Twas a week before Chirstmas,
and all through the branch;
no technicians were bitching,
or taking a stance.

Their toolkits all hung
'round their necks like a cross;
and everyone knew
that Phil Greco was boss.

When down came the edict
that Stuart must go!
Steve Pena yelled "FIRE!!",
HERE'S YOUR MAX M. LOW!!"

"You've opened your mouth
for the last fucking time,
your car never runs,
you don't tow the line.

We never can find you,
your hair is a mess;
your attitude's sickning,
my god how you dress!

Bob Raffa won't help you.
we've convinced him this time:
your just an old has-been,
not worth a thin dime!

We'll make an example
to others like you;
you stepped out of line,
today you are through.

You've riled your co-workers,
but now that your gone;
everyone loves us,
and works with a song.

Production is up,
recalls are way down;
spirits are high
no one's wearing a frown."

To those with an old car
please take this advice:
read on a bit further
it's not very nice.

"Your car makes us money
day after day.
So just get it running
or you get no pay.

A well running car is a must
as you know
no matter the dollars
the car--it must go!

Of course we won't help you
It's your headache not ours;
We can't give an answer
on company cars.

We want you to have them
it s part of our plan;
we'll tell you for years
it's in New York's hands.

Go buy a new auto,
beg, borrow or steal;
when company cars come
you'll lose on the deal.

For those who need money
there's always O.T.
that is if your lucky,
or are a trainee.

Of course if you work late
there's no kids or no wife;
but what is your worry?
cause Savin's your life!

At Cyranose's and Our House
we'll buy you a drink;
keep you distracted
so you'll never think."

No, don't think of profits,
and of banner years;
of bonuses or pensions
just think of free beers

And don't let them fool you
as well as they could;
no matter what they say
your not out of the woods.

Your boss is too busy
to hear what you say!
An open door policy?
to that I say NAY!!

The benefit package
os as gppd as Xerox's
that must explain
why we all are in hock!

So work all you tech-reps
and don't speak of union
you all are supporting
that number one man!

Work Walter, work Kevin
work Kathy, and Tom;
on Richard, on Rona,
on Patrice, Mac and John.

(over)

Mush Billy and Peter
and Abel and Fred;
You all must work hard
and bring in the bread.

To all those I left out
and all those I've named:
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL,
my life will not be the same!

GOD BLESS YOU ALL
GOD HELP YOU ALL

(circulated at Savin's Annual Christmas Party, December 1977)

For information contact:
Payday - Boston
10 Madeline St.
Boston, Massachusetts 02135
(617) 787-3045

February 20, 1979

VICTORIES AT SAVIN: MAKING THE FUTURE WORK FOR US

Workers at Savin Business Machines won a tremendous victory with the back to back announcements that Savin will have to pay dearly for illegally firing Stuart Portner and Rona Rothman. These two employees, active in union organizing efforts, were two authors of a statement, "We've Seen the Future and it's Not Working" charging Savin with misuse of affirmative action. This statement, which Payday-Boston and other supporting groups endorsed, was released to the press at Portner's hearing at the National Labor Relations Board last September.

The announcement that Rona Rothman settled out of court for a large sum of money came just three weeks after the National Labor Relations Board ordered Savin to reinstate Portner with full back pay and interest and all benefits. Judge Robert Cohn issued a fourteen page decision which stated, in part:

As the unfair labor practices committed by Respondent strike at the very heart of employee rights safeguarded by the Act, I shall recommend that Respondent be placed under a broad order to cease and desist from in any manner infringing on the rights of employees...

This court order will protect those still working at Savin actively trying to correct the injustices caused by their employer's misuse of affirmative action. Employees hired under the guise of affirmative action were told that they should be grateful for their jobs while the longer employed men were told they could be replaced by this "cheaper" help. These tactics did not work on either group. Portner, one of the most experienced workers, stated:

I had two choices, working at Savin. I could take on more hours and the work of bossing others around for a few dollars a day more or I could join those I was supposed to boss in demanding more money for the work they were already doing. And after eight years with the company, I knew that all you get for working harder is empty promises and less time for yourself.

With charges of reverse discrimination such as Bakke and Weber in the news, the victory for Stuart Portner shows that there is a way for white men to win with the fight of women and Black and Third World men. The fight at Savin drew support from organizations around the country who saw this fight as crucial, including Payday-Boston, an organization of men fighting against all unpaid work and in support of the Wages for Housework Campaign. Kevin Prendergast, a spokesperson for Payday-Boston said:

Stuart Portner's fight against his firing is part of the refusal of white men to pay with more work and even the loss of jobs for employers' past and present discrimination against all women and Black and Third World men. And increasingly all of us are resisting the attempts of employers and government to pit us against each other--men against women, whites against Blacks--making us scramble for pennies when, just looking around, we see there is enough money for everybody.

For copies of the statement of Savin employees, "We've seen the future and it's Not Working," contact Payday-Boston.

Contact: Boston Wages for Housework Committee
P.O. Box 94
Brighton, Massachusetts 02135
(617) 782-7685

February 20, 1979

THE ANSWER TO BAKKE: WOMEN AND BLACKS GOING FORWARD

A pathbreaking fight for affirmative action and an end to past discrimination by employees of Savin Business Machines and their supporters has reaped several victories, the Boston Wages for Housework Committee announced today. The gains included an order from the National Labor Relations Board that one employee be reinstated in his job and awarded full back pay of over a year's wages, a large cash settlement for another illegally fired employee, and increases in salaries and benefits for employees of Savin.

When Stuart Portner was fired for union organizing at Christmas 1977, employees rallied to his support because they saw him as the most outspoken in putting forth demands of all employees--particularly newly hired women and Black and Third World men (see Equal Times, 9/78; reprint enclosed). Savin employees won support from other groups who saw that the refusal of women and Black and Third World men at Savin to be pitted against older employees and to accept lower wages was going on at other businesses all over the country. The Savin fight offered an answer to the Bakke and Weber cases which implied that schools and businesses must choose among all women and white and Black and Third World men to fill a few vacant positions. Sue Kaufman of the Boston Wages for Housework Committee, an organization that was asked to speak publicly for Savin employees and coordinate support by outside groups, commented:

The fight for affirmative action programs and nontraditional jobs is one way that women have been making a fight for the wages we deserve. We supported the employees at Savin because they made it clear that affirmative action is not a battle of women and Black and Third World men against white men who have only a little more money than we do. The burden for past discrimination must be borne by our employers who have underpaid us all and by the government who has allowed it to happen.

Another employee fired for union organizing, Rona Rothman, was awarded a \$1000 cash settlement by Savin Business Machines. Rothman was a key witness at Portner's hearing before the National Labor Relations Board last summer and had been the most visible employee organizing for the union after Portner's discharge. Savin tried to stop union organizing efforts, even threatening employees they suspected were involved and employees turned first to the union and then to outside groups for support. Rothman commented:

When Savin tried to bust the union, the Teamsters did nothing, so we went on to fight them by ourselves. The support we got from outside groups and the pressure put on Savin by the press was crucial because most of us who worked at Savin could not afford to lose our jobs for speaking out.

Rothman feels her settlement was preferable to taking Savin to trial at the NLRB:

We had reason to fear that any witnesses at my trial might be harassed or fired by Savin as I was. We didn't feel we had anything to gain by sacrificing another person's job for the cause. Rather than waiting months for an NLRB decision, this pretrial settlement gave me my money right away and showed that Savin is more and more scared since they see our demands aren't going away.

Savin has been forced to give in to other demands of their employees. They have increased the starting salary for women and Black and Third World men; there has been an increase in the number of Black employees of Savin. After a prolonged battle for Savin to assume more of the burden of transportation between service calls, the company has instituted an insurance reimbursement plan. Finally, in their efforts to increase worker satisfaction and lure employees away from the union, management has invented such gimmicks as "Technician of the Month" and possible trips to Bermuda.

"We've seen the future.....and it's not working."
by workers from Savin Business Machines, Inc.

Savin Business Machines went from near bankruptcy in 1974 to an over 200 million dollar corporation in 1978. The business papers and journals acclaimed it as a "success story"--but the story for the men and women who work for Savin is very different:

In 1976, as corporations around the country were developing affirmative action programs, the first women were hired into the service department at Savin's Boston branch. Previously at Savin, like at many corporations, women had only worked at clerical jobs--the lowest paying jobs. Now the doors opened to the non-traditional job of repairing copying machines.

For the women that Savin hired to fix their copiers, this meant job training and wages that they had not had access to before affirmative action. It is the demands of women and Blacks--in their homes, on the streets, and in paid workplaces--that has forced Savin and corporations like it to institute affirmative action programs.

But Savin, as a mushrooming international corporation, used affirmative action in its strategy for growth. Savin was hiring technicians like mad as its new low-priced copier sold like wildfire. For them affirmative action meant they could hire women and Black and Third World men at less than they would have to pay already trained white men. Also, they could expect these new people to work hard and without complaining--after all they should be grateful for the job. Finally, it

meant they could say to the men already in the service department, "you better shape up or you can be replaced by a woman."

What's going on at Savin in Boston is going on all over the country and in all kinds of industries. The vulnerability of all women and Black and Third World men is used to keep all employees--including white men--with their noses to the grindstone.

But at Savin this plan is not working. Dependent on the service department to install and keep their fast-selling copiers working, Savin made promises in order to keep employees quiet. Among these were promises of increased raises, more commissions, improvements in health insurance and other benefits, increases in the mileage allowance (for gas and upkeep of cars), and--most important to the women and other newer technicians at Savin--company cars.

Most of the time employees in the service department repair copy machines "on location" at customers' offices all over eastern Massachusetts. Therefore, technicians are completely dependent on cars to drive from one service call to the next and need cars which can be relied on every day and in all types of weather. The newer employees at Savin were paid the least and usually came to Savin from either an even lower paying job or an unpaid job at home (among the women). They found it the hardest to buy, insure, and keep up a car. Savin's offer of company cars was designed to spark the interest of the newer people.

Many of the men who had been working at Savin for awhile, however, had managed to save enough money to invest in new,

reliable cars. An offer of company cars was not so appealing to them. But in their situation, an increase in their mileage reimbursement from Savin would mean more money for car payments and insurance as well as gas and upkeep. But Savin did not offer that each employee could choose the alternative which best fit his or her situation: increased mileage reimbursement or a company car. Instead, they used the opportunity to pit the older technicians against the newer. They required that workers vote for one alternative or the other, hinting the majority solution only would be implemented. Savin tried to fan the flames between newer employees and older ones, hoping to weaken everyone's demands.

But everyone in the service department at Savin -- new and old, female and male, of whatever race-- saw Savin's profits soar as a result of our hard work and felt we should benefit from it. None of Savin's promises seemed to materialize: not the company cars nor the mileage increase, nor even most of the raises and promotions Savin promised its favorite technicians. Everyone began to come together to demand Savin make good its promises and some women and men began to form a union. Nowhere in the copier industry had the technicians yet been represented by a union.

Savin is the lowest paying firm in the copier industry in Boston. The salary at Xerox is \$200/week to start and raised to \$225 after a year. At IBM, starting salary is \$190/week, and after a 3 month training period, the salary is \$230.

Savin stepped in and attacked the organizing of workers in

the service department by firing one worker they knew to be key, Stuart Portner.

Who is Stuart Portner? At the time he was fired, Stuart was Savin's highest paid technician, and one of the most experienced. He was paid \$260 a week, after 8 years at Savin, while the new women in service were being hired at \$160 a week. He knew Savin's copier inside out; it seemed that he could afford to be outspoken and always had.

Now that women were being hired, however, Savin wanted him to justify the "extra" money he was earning. They began to demand more work from him, making it clear that promotions only go to Company men--that is those willing to come in early, leave later, and not ask for overtime pay.

At the same time, the women at Savin began to turn to Stuart; this was no accident since he was the most outspoken and had the most power. But behind his demands of "where's our company cars, where are the profits for us," clearly stood everyone in the service department. And the women and men with less power began to put words in his mouth, urging him to say what they could not afford to.

Stuart began to see that when Savin offered him money, for him alone, it was in exchange for a double job. Savin's new policies of hiring "inexperienced" people meant he was called upon to train these new technicians. Since he did so, he was interested in their success at Savin and it was a blow to see Savin not come through with promised raises and company cars. On the other hand, Savin continually reminded him that if he didn't toe the line he could be replaced by one of the people he had so

carefully trained. "Toe the line" meant that he accept two new jobs, trainer and foreman for the new technicians-- on top of fixing copiers-- without an increase in pay.

Thus when he put forth the demands of the women and other new technicians, he was protecting himself. He stood not only to win more money without additional work, but also to guarantee his own job security, and guarantee as well that he didn't sell out the people he had trained.

Savin saw the choice Stuart had made to side with other workers when he started to distribute union cards, and they fired him. This was just before Christmas of 1977. Now Savin leads workers to believe that Stuart was a trouble-maker-- and that in general its workers are happy. Workers at Savin are not happy, but since Stuart was fired, they have been scared. Savin has said in effect: if you rat on each other you will get ahead, but if you get together you will be fired like Stuart.

But in firing Stuart, Savin broke the law. Workers have a legal right to organize together into a union. On September 6, the National Labor Relations Board will charge Savin with illegally firing Stuart Portner. He is entitled to his job at Savin--and his back wages.

A VICTORY FOR STUART PORTNER MEANS MORE POWER FOR ALL EMPLOYEES OF SAVIN to demand what we want. If the NLRB rules Stuart should not have been fired, it means that none of us can be fired for coming together to demand Savin make good its promises to us. No longer will we be isolated and divided--afraid to even speak to one another.

A VICTORY FOR STUART PORTNER MEANS MORE MONEY FOR EVERYONE. All over the country, businesses and corporations with affirma-

tive action programs are warning employees in a stronger position-- often white men--that even their jobs aren't safe unless they work harder. And part of working harder is often to keep the newer employees-- all women and Black and Third World men--in line. By taking the side of those with less power, Stuart Portner was saying, there is more than enough money for all of us--female and male, Black and white--to be paid the wages we're entitled to for all our work.

We in the Savin service department are entitled to and therefore demand:

1- THAT STUART PORTNER BE REINSTATED at his same job category without loss of seniority and with 100% of the back pay and benefits normally due him for the time of his absence. Furthermore, we demand that Savin pay punitive damages for the hardship forced on Stuart and his family.

2- AN END TO ALL HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION OF EMPLOYEES AT SAVIN. The workers at Savin must be able to organize together in any way we see fit to protect our interests including membership in a union, without fear of being fired, loss of benefits or discriminatory treatment by the management. We demand an end to Savin's pitting us against each other. We want to be able to talk to each other without being intimidated into ratting on each other. We want to work in an atmosphere which is not oppressive, as we spend even more time at Savin than with our families and friends.

3- AN END TO DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX AND/OR RACE. Savin boasts of its commitment to hire "women and minorities." But because most women and Black and Third World men have neither cars nor training, due to past and present discrimination which results in lack of money and opportunities, in order to end discrimination we demand that Savin drop the ownership of a car and prior experience as requirements for being hired. We demand that Savin provide full and adequate training for everyone or fund programs that provide for paid training (i.e. Women's Enterprises).

4- AN ADEQUATE CAR PROGRAM. We are tired of allowing Savin to profit from the use of our cars. We demand that each technician have the choice of one of two programs:

--use of a car for which Savin assumes the cost of car, maintenance, insurance and gas, or

--if we use our own car, \$30/week¹ basic expense allowance, plus 21¢ per mile,² mileage reimbursement.

5- AN IMMEDIATE INCREASE IN ALL OUR WAGES IN THE SERVICE DEPARTMENT to be at least on par with Xerox and IBM. This means a starting salary of \$200 per week increased to \$230 per week after a training period no longer than 6 months. We demand an across the board 10% increase in pay for everyone on January 1 of each year. We demand a cost of living escalator which will adequately reflect the changes in prices that we see everyday when we shop.

¹The expense allowance given at IBM

²Figures from Dept. of Transportation

NO MORE TRADITIONAL PAY FOR NON-TRADITIONAL WOMEN

Wages Due Lesbians (Boston) fully endorses the statement and demands of the Savin workers. We especially support the fight that the women at Savin are making because we know what that fight means for every woman.

Lesbian women have fought hard for non-traditional jobs such as those that women at Savin hold because those jobs carry with them a higher wage. Without a man's wage to fall back on, lesbians have been forced to seek higher paying work outside of the home in order to have the financial independence which makes it possible for us to be lesbian. Our fight for these jobs is really a fight for the money. Lesbians, like all women, know there's nothing so "non-traditional" about lifting, fixing, and getting our hands dirty. What is different is getting a decent wage for it.

In demanding this money, we're told that we are out of our field. When we refuse to accept that our place is behind the typewriter for low pay or behind the kitchen sink for no pay, we're told that we're not acting "like women." This attack has always been used against all women to keep us in line. At non-traditional jobs such as at Savin, it is used against all the women, lesbian or not, to demand a lot of extra work. We are expected to smile and look good to prove that we are really women, and at the same time, we are expected to do the work twice as well as men just to be seen as capable. In addition, we are told that we should be grateful for the "opportunities" that companies like Savin are offering. All women recognize the sham of this argument, but as lesbians, we are especially vulnerable to these attacks because we have access to no other wage.

In firing Stuart Portner, Savin tried to use our less powerful situation as women to keep the men in line. Our fight as lesbians for higher wages and against dependence is not in contradiction with men's fight for more money. We refuse to accept that our gains must be made at the expense of workers with more power-- often men. When Stuart Portner became a voice for those women and men at Savin who are least listened to, he too realized that there is enough money for all of us.

Therefore, as lesbians, we stand with Stuart Portner and all the Savin workers in demanding all their entitlement for all their work.

WAGES DUE LESBIANS (Boston)
Box 94
Brighton, MA 02135

Endorsed by:

Wages Due Lesbians (London)
Wages Due Lesbians (New York)
Wages Due Lesbians (Phila.)
Wages Due Lesbians (San Francisco)
Wages Due Lesbians (Toronto)
Wages Due Lesbians (Winnipeg)

We've seen the past... and we want money in our future.

A Statement of Support for the Workers at Savin

We support the demands of the women and men at Savin and endorse their statement. We know the women at Savin--like women everywhere--are fighting to have the money to lead the lives we want to live. We also support the wives and girlfriends of the men working at Savin because they too are fighting Savin by constantly urging their men to fight for more money. Whether we are working full-time at home or also in paid jobs, women are refusing to accept living on nothing, "on a shoestring."

The demands of women for "nontraditional" jobs is one way that we have been fighting against the low wages we have been forced to accept in "women's jobs" and against the lack of wages for our work in our traditional place in the home. The work we do in so-called women's jobs is the same housework we do at home for free. Since our work has not been valued at home, it consequently has had a low value outside; since it has not even been seen as work, our experience and skills--nursing, teaching, management--have not been visible to employers.

Women in the Savin service department, like women in other "nontraditional" jobs, have found many aspects of their job are not so new to women at all. There's nothing new to women about working hard--we've been doing that both inside and outside the home for a long, long time. There is also nothing new to us about getting dirty. From scrubbing the floor to cleaning stoves, we have a long tradition of the dirty work--and of cleaning up after the "dirty work."

There is also nothing new about facing health hazards, which is another aspect of work at Savin and other "nontraditional" jobs. Repairing copiers involves use of chemicals and exposure to fumes the consequences of which have not been explained to the technicians, or even investigated. In addition, workers are on the road in cars driving from one service call to another where they encounter the stress and the air pollution of driving in traffic as well, of course, as the risk of accident. Some of the types of health hazards may be new; that we encounter risks in our work is not.

While the men we work with on nontraditional jobs also face hard dirty work entailing risks to their health, the women face an even larger burden. Women have been traditionally excluded from skills such as mechanics required to get out of our job ghetto. Women are constantly under pressure to show that we can do the job well; we are forced to be consistently excellent simply to stay at the same level. On top of this, we are expected to do the housework of smiling, flirting, listening, and comforting expected of women on any job.

Finally, when the day's work on the paid job is finished, women go home to the housework of cooking, cleaning the clothes, house, etc.--preparing for the next day's work. Few women do this just for ourselves; there are also husbands, children, lovers, or even roommates to put back together from the day's work and prepare for the next.

We are not in nontraditional jobs to prove that we can work as hard as a man. We have been working harder than men for a long time. We are in nontraditional jobs, first of all for the money. These jobs can provide us with wages higher than those attached to our "traditional" jobs. They also can offer training in skills which allow us to obtain higher paying jobs elsewhere--skills which provide us some security. It is in order to gain these wages and job security that women and Black and Third World men have fought and won affirmative action programs requiring employers to hire the people that they have excluded in the past.

A second reason, closely related to the higher wages, that women have sought nontraditional jobs is to break from the work expected of us as women, and which so many of us are tired of doing. In our society each of us--Black and Third World men or women, white men or women--has tended to be associated with certain jobs and therefore with certain skills. So, changing diapers is a job for women, and driving trucks is a job for men, and in the past picking cotton was only a job for Black people of both sexes. To each set of skills, then, is attached a wage which has nothing to do with how skillful you are or how important the skill but what sex and/or race you are. The fight for affirmative action and for nontraditional jobs is a fight by women and Black and Third World men not to accept the low waged and unwaged work we have been traditionally forced to do. It is also a struggle not to be defined by the work; not to have certain skills seen as our nature, and to gain skills other than those traditionally expected of us.

The statement from workers at Savin describes how Savin--like businesses across the country--has tried to use affirmative action to make everyone work harder. Newer workers are told they have to prove they are capable of doing the work, the older workers are told they can be replaced more cheaply. They are pitted against each other for what they are told is a few jobs, a limited amount of money.

We have been pitted against each other in the schools also when we are told that only a limited number of students can attend the "good" schools--those that offer skills and education we can use to get jobs. We have been pitted against each other in the university for the limited number of places they say are available there. Each section of the population is supposed to blame the other for the lack of jobs, schools, etc. As Black Women for Wages for Housework (U.S.A.) makes clear in their statement of support for Savin workers:

In demanding what is rightfully ours, we refuse to be used as the excuse for getting anyone else to accept less, as if there isn't enough to go around for everyone. When affirmative action is interpreted to mean that other people should be deprived of good wages or an education that opens the door to good wages, as in both the Bakke case and the bussing issue, it backfires first of all against us. As Black women we are not about competing against white women or against men for the crumbs--for the inadequate schools, the underpaid jobs, or the high-rent, low-quality housing. No talk of "fiscal crisis" can convince us that there isn't enough for all of us, because we know how hard we've worked to produce more than enough.

At Savin, employees have refused the company's attempt to pit them against each other. Stuart Portner was clearly speaking for all workers at Savin when he spoke out for "company cars and...the profits for us."

As women we support Stuart Portner in his fight to reclaim his job at Savin. We know it is an attack on women when employers fire those in the position to put forth our demands. We may not be able to speak as loudly but we are demanding as much. We are tired of being unpaid at home and underpaid outside. We know there is plenty of money to pay for all of our work and all of the hazards we face.

-- Boston Wages for Housework Committee
Box 94
Brighton Mass 02135
782-7685

Endorsed by:

Black Women for Wages for Housework (U.S.A.)
New York Wages for Housework Committee
Philadelphia Wages for Housework Committee
Cleveland Wages for Housework Committee
Black Women for Wages for Housework (Ohio)
Chicago Wages for Housework
San Francisco Wages for Housework Committee
Los Angeles Wages for Housework Committee
Toronto Wages for Housework Committee
Black Women for Wages for Housework (Britain)
London Wages for Housework Committee
Bristol Wages for Housework Committee

STUART PORTNER IS NOT EXPENDABLE

The firing of Stuart Portner by Savin is not simply an attack on him, but, as Savin workers pointed out in their statement, it is a clear example of how "the vulnerability of all women and Black and Third World men is used to keep all employees - including white men - with their noses to the grindstone". In so doing Savin is trying to turn victory - Affirmative Action - into a means of disciplining all of us.

Affirmative Action means more access to better paying jobs for all women and Black and Third World men, who traditionally have been working for little money or no money at all. And, as men, we all know that when the women who live with us go out to work and get a non-traditional job (with a higher wage) through Affirmative Action, this in many cases is essential to the survival of our families. We also know that when they are less dependant on us for money, we have more bargaining power on our jobs.

In firing Stuart Portner - a white man - Savin wants to make sure that all of us, working at Savin and everywhere else, get the message: no matter how high our wages are or how long we have been working for our employers - we are all expendable. If we become too vocal, they can use Affirmative Action and hire somebody else cheaper in our place with the blessing of the government.

Stuart Portner's fight against his firing is part of the refusal of white men to pay with more work and even the loss of jobs for employers' past and present discrimination against all women and Black and Third World men. And increasingly all of us are resisting the attempt of employers and government to pit us against each other - men against women, whites against Blacks - making us scramble for crumbs when, just looking around, we see there is enough bread for everybody.

Furthermore all women's and Black and Third World men's refusal of lower paying jobs is the only insurance policy those of us who are white men have against being undercut by workers who have even less than we have. As a matter of fact we know that, when those of us who are white demand more money and better working conditions, our struggle is strengthened by the pressure of women and those of us who are Black who want those same things for themselves.

That has been particularly clear at Savin. The company's plan was having the "more experienced" - white men - work harder to train and discipline the "less experienced" - women and Black men. But women and Black men's fight against this discipline and for more money and better working conditions offered Stuart Portner and the other white men a better option. Stuart Portner in his attempt to organize a union at Savin, sought first and foremost to unite with the less powerful workers, because this was his only chance to win more money for himself and to refuse the extra work of keeping them in line. Savin felt this was such a threat that Stuart Portner was continually harassed and subsequently fired.

As Payday, a network of men organizing internationally against all unpaid work and in support of the International Wages For Housework Campaign, we know that Stuart Portner's struggle is part and parcel of the struggle all of us have been making for more money for all our work. We therefore endorse the Savin workers' statement and support their demands, urging all the men to do the same.

Payday - Boston

endorsed by: Payday - Los Angeles

Payday - England

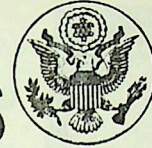
Payday - New York

Bustapaga (Payday) - Italy

Payday - Toronto



NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES



POSTED BY ORDER OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD AN AGENCY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

The National Labor Relations Board, after a trial in which all parties were permitted to introduce evidence, found that we discharged STUART PORTNER unlawfully and that by his discharge we discouraged our employees from engaging in concerted activities and from becoming members of INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS, CHAUFFEURS, WAREHOUSEMEN AND HELPERS OF AMERICA.

WE WILL offer STUART PORTNER his former job or, if such job no longer exists, to a substantially equivalent position and will restore his seniority and other rights and privileges.

WE WILL pay him any backpay he may have lost because we discharged him.

WE WILL NOT unlawfully discharge employees for lawfully engaging in union activities or protected concerted activities.

The laws of the United States give all employees these rights:

- To organize themselves;
- To form, join or help unions;
- To bargain as a group through representatives they choose;
- To act together for collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection; and
- To refuse to do any or all of these things.

All of our employees are free to remain, or refrain from becoming or remaining, members of a labor organization.

SAVIN BUSINESS MACHINES CORPORATION
(Employer)

Dated _____ By _____ (Representative) _____ (Title)

THIS IS AN OFFICIAL NOTICE AND MUST NOT BE DEFACED BY ANYONE

This notice must remain posted for 60 consecutive days from the date of posting and must not be altered, defaced, or covered by any other material. Any questions concerning this notice or compliance with its provisions may be directed to the Board's Office, Keystone Building - 12th Floor, 99 High Street, Boston, MA 20110, Telephone No. 617-223-3313.

NOTICE TO BE POSTED BY SAVIN, BY ORDER OF NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD, JANUARY 24, 1979.

Bias Case That May Rival Bakke's Accepted by High Court for Review

Continued From Page A1

Justices not to accept the case but to send it back to the appeals court for further proceedings, argued that this interpretation put employers in an impossible situation: If they tried to improve the status of minority workers without admitting past errors, they would be open to lawsuits from disgruntled whites; if they admitted that they had discriminated in the past, they would "invite suits for substantial back-pay awards" from blacks.

"If permitted to stand," the Solicitor General's office told the Supreme Court, the lower court decision "can be expected to chill voluntary affirmative action programs not only in the Fifth Circuit but throughout the country."

By coincidence, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission today issued its own guidelines for the handling of reverse discrimination cases. According to the guidelines, as long as an employer makes a "reasonable assessment" and finds that affirmative action is an "appropriate" remedy, the commission will not take administrative action against the company on the ground of reverse discrimination.

However, the guidelines have no effect on the way the courts choose to handle private lawsuits such as Mr. Weber's.

The affirmative action program at issue in the Weber case was part of a nationwide agreement reached in 1974 between Kaiser Aluminum and the United Steelworkers of America and was designed to remedy the almost complete absence of black workers from skilled jobs in the aluminum industry.

The agreement called for the creation of special training programs at 15 plants open to blacks and whites on a 50-50 basis

until the minority representation in the skilled jobs was equivalent to minority representation in the labor force from which the plant recruited.

In the case of Kaiser's Gramercy plant, situated on the Mississippi River halfway between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, blacks made up 39 percent of the able-bodied workers in the area of St. James Parish and its surroundings but only 15 percent of the plant's employees. And only 5 out of 290 skilled jobs were filled by blacks.

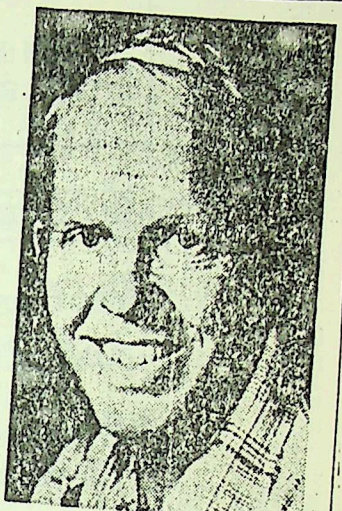
Thirteen training positions were created and filled with seven blacks and six whites. Brian Weber applied for one of the openings but was turned down even though two of the blacks who were accepted had less seniority at the plant. He brought suit on behalf of himself and other white workers.

Mr. Weber, now a 32-year-old laboratory analyst at the Gramercy plant who earns \$21,000 a year, said today that he was confident the Supreme Court would uphold the lower court decisions.

Reconsideration Is Urged

Although both Kaiser and the Steelworkers union sought Supreme Court review, the Government did not. Instead, a brief written by lawyers from the Solicitor General's office, the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission asked the Justices to send the case back to the lower court for "reconsideration and supplementation of the record" in the light of last June's Bakke decision.

In that case, a three-way split on the Court struck down a rigid quota system for medical school admissions at the University of California at Davis — thereby allowing Allan P. Bakke, a white applicant, to gain admission — but at the same time suggested that affirmative action



United Press International

Allan P. Bakke, who challenged the admission program at the University of California, was the first to raise successfully the issue of "reverse discrimination."

programs could be justified by a variety of other factors, including past findings of discrimination.

The Government brief said that such findings had in fact been made in compliance reviews conducted at the Kaiser plant by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance, evidence that never became part of the record in the one-day trial of Mr. Weber's lawsuit.

The Government's position was widely seen as a strategy for avoiding full consideration of the case by a Supreme Court that does not seem enthusiastic about affirmative action. If the Court had accepted the Government's recommendation and fitted the case into the guidelines suggested in Bakke, no new law would have been made. However, an affirmation of the lower court ruling would be a nationally binding precedent.

DO NOT FORGET THE NEEDIEST

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"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

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— NEW YORK, TUESDAY

Bias Case That May Rival Bakke's Accepted by High Court for Review

A White Factory Worker Charges Program Designed to Give Skilled Work to Blacks Is Illegal

By LINDA GREENHOUSE

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11 — The Supreme Court agreed today to decide a discrimination case that is potentially even more significant and divisive than last term's Bakke case.

The Justices accepted for review the assertion of a white Louisiana factory

worker, Brian F. Weber, that a training program designed to increase the number of blacks in skilled craft jobs illegally discriminated against him and other white workers at a Kaiser Aluminum plant in Gramercy, La.

The case, United Steelworkers v. Weber (No. 78-432), poses a question that the Supreme Court has never decided: whether a voluntary affirmative action plan openly favoring black applicants is outlawed by the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which specifically prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of race.

Bribery Case to Be Heard

In another action, the Court also agreed today to decide whether a member of Congress could be prosecuted for taking bribes in exchange for sponsoring or voting for bills and, if so, what kind of evidence the prosecution could present.

The Justices agreed to hear an appeal by Henry Helstoski, a former New Jersey Representative, from a decision that his prosecution for bribery and conspiracy could go forward despite the constitutional provision that members of Congress "shall not be questioned" regarding "any speech or debate in either house." [Page B17.]

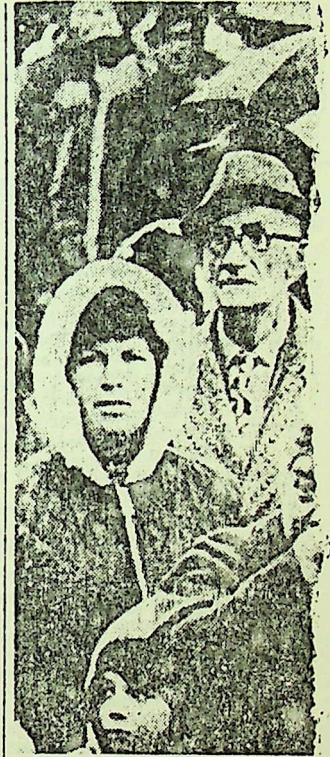
Kaiser's affirmative action plan was struck down by two lower Federal courts on the ground that such programs were permitted by the Civil Rights Act only to correct past discrimination and to restore to their "rightful places" specific individuals who had been the victims of discrimination.

The Federal Government, urging the



Associated Press

Brian F. Weber in Gramercy, La.



Israeli mourners waiting out

RECESSION FORESEEN BY CONGRESS AGENTS

Projections by Budget Office Diverge
From Those of Administration

By CLYDE H. FARNSWORTH

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11 — The Congressional Budget Office is projecting a decline in the nation's output of goods and services for the final two quarters of the year. This would meet the formal definition of a recession.

If the Congressional Budget Office's

Koch Budget Cut Likely to Cover Hospitals, Prisons and Education

Continued on Page B17, Column 1

the United Steelworkers of America to set up a voluntary affirmative action program that Mr. Weber contends illegally gave preference to black workers in filling skilled jobs.

If the Supreme Court rules strongly for Mr. Weber in his suit against Kaiser and the union, its ruling could dwarf the Bakke decision by wiping out quota-system programs for hiring and promoting women, blacks and members of other minority groups at thousands of American factories.

Industry Programs Not Addressed

Such industry programs were not addressed by the Court's decision that Mr. Bakke had been illegally denied admission to the medical school at the University of California at Davis. Mr. Weber's case provides the Court an opportunity to answer, for the first time, the question of whether a voluntary affirmative action plan openly favoring black applicants is

"When the company first starting hiring they had two kinds of badge numbers — certain numbers for whites and certain numbers for blacks. They were separated, segregated, you know.

'There Was Discrimination'

"So I would say there was discrimination. That didn't change until the union came in and they merged the lists."

Eleanor Holmes Norton, director of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, said "critical evidence" not on the Supreme Court record would show that the Kaiser plant has "had deep, critical and long-lasting oversight" from Federal authorities as to the role of race in its hiring practices at three Louisiana plants.

Moreover, she said, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance found in 1973 that Kaiser had waived experience requirements for whites, but not for blacks, in filling skilled-craft jobs at its Gramercy plant. And Kaiser paid a \$255,000 consent decree in a civil-rights case involving race and seniority issues at its plant in Baton Rouge, La., Mrs. Norton noted.

Questions about the evidence also were raised by John Falkenberg, a lawyer who represented the steelworkers' union in the original trial of the Weber case in 1975. Mr. Falkenberg said Judge Jack M. Gordon of Federal District Court based his finding of no discrimination at the Gramercy plant on the testimony of Mr. Weber, two white co-workers and a white Kaiser executive. Mr. Falkenberg contended that in most discrimination cases, Federal courts would regard such testimony as too self-serving to be authoritative.

Order to Remand Sought

Convinced that racial discrimination existed here as in other Deep South towns in the 1950's and early 1960's, the Justice Department has asked the Supreme Court to remand the case to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans, which has upheld Judge Gordon. According to a source close to the case, the Federal lawyers in their brief "tried to tantalize the court by saying there's more here than meets the eye." The findings of the contract compliance agency were cited in the brief.

Meanwhile, debate continues, among

lawyers and in the musical accents of the bayou folk around Gramercy, over the claim that blacks were never discriminated against at the plant.

All sides agree that the question has put Kaiser in what one lawyer called "a legal box." The company could justify the quota system attacked by Mr. Weber only by admitting that it had discriminated. However, such an admission would open the company to additional lawsuits from black employees.

Kaiser's position was put this way by Thompson Powers, its attorney in Washington: "Kaiser, like most companies, is not prepared to admit it violated the law. If that's what companies have to do to have a basis for voluntary affirmative action programs, then we'll see very little voluntary action in the future."

Dual-Badge System Disputed

Catherin Moss, a spokesman at Kaiser's corporate headquarters in Oakland, Calif., said the company still contends that all evidence necessary to decide the case "are presently before the court."

She said the company has "absolutely no knowledge" of the dual-badge system described by Mr. Roussel. And she noted that in paying the \$255,000 consent decree involving the Baton Rouge plant, Kaiser admitted no misbehavior.

Miss Moss also acknowledged said that experience requirements had been waived on one occasion to permit advancement of a white employee, but she said that action was corrected after it was discovered.

The dispute over the evidence is only one of several curious features of the Weber case. Another is that Mr. Weber and his attorney, Michel Fonthan of New Orleans, concede that the quota system challenged by Mr. Weber did not actually cost him a job in the year that the suit was filed, because Mr. Weber almost certainly had too little seniority to qualify for the 13 jobs opened in 1974, regardless of the affirmative action program.

Anger at National Union

The 32-year-old laboratory analyst said many of his objectives in bringing the suit have to do with the anger he and other whites in the Gramercy steelworkers' local felt at their national union for agreeing with Kaiser in 1974 to institute a 50-50 racial quota in the training program for

Weber. Mr. Weber then contacted the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in New Orleans and in due course got a "right-to-sue" letter under Title VII, the portion of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that bars job discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, religion or national origin.

One-Day Hearing

He then went to the Federal courthouse in New Orleans to ask for a court-appointed attorney, as the law provides. Judge Gordon named Mr. Fonthan to represent Mr. Weber in the class-action suit, and, after a one-day hearing, ruled against Kaiser and the union.

Since the Supreme Court agreed to review his case, Mr. Weber has been deluged with telephone calls from reporters. But few have made the trek to Gramercy, a Cajun-French town of 2,567 tucked under a Mississippi River levee. In this season, the levee is topped with teepees of wood that will be lighted on Christmas Eve to guide Papa Noel to the children of families with names like Boudreux and LaBoeuf.

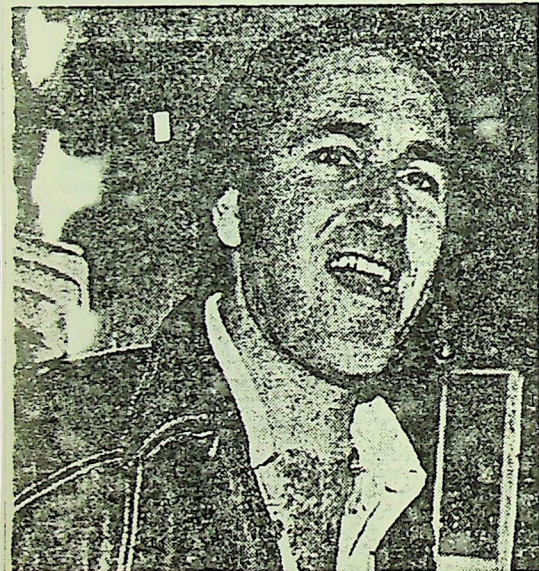
As he sipped a cup of coffee at a vinyl-topped table in Faycheux's, Gramercy's best cafe, Mr. Weber reflected that the questions reaching him over the telephone these days often have to do with his "basically conservative" racial attitudes, which he insists played no part in his filing of the suit.

"I just couldn't accept the fact that you could treat people differently after years of talk about equality," he said. "It looked like a step backward.

'Not Desegregation Any More'

"It's not desegregation any more. They've crossed over into taking our jobs. I guess if I was black I'd do the same thing. The thing that bugs me the most is black guys with chips on their shoulders for something that never happened to them. They guys that were really discriminated against are beyond their working years."

"We will win," Mr. Weber declared softly. "In the arguments that the Justice Department has advanced, they're talking about excuses and social conditions. They're not looking at the law. They're not looking at what's good for the majority."



United Press International

reacting at union hall in Gramercy, La., to Supreme Court hear his suit contending discrimination in favor of blacks.

Evidence Questioned in White Factory Worker's Job-Discrimination Suit

12/18/78

By HOWELL RAINES

Special to The New York Times

GRAMERCY, La., Dec. 14 — Parties close to a discrimination suit involving a Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation factory say that evidence not on the record in the case may undercut the contentions of a white worker whose lawsuit has cast him in the role of a blue-collar Allan P. Bakke.

A key question in the case, accepted by the Supreme Court Dec. 11 for review, is whether Kaiser had a "no-discrimination hiring policy" from the time its sprawling factory opened in 1958 in this then-segregated Mississippi River town.

Two Federal courts have upheld the contention of the white worker, Brian F. Weber, that the company had such a policy. Therefore, the courts ruled, Kaiser was not legally justified in joining with the United Steelworkers of America to set up a voluntary affirmative action program that Mr. Weber contends illegally gave preference to black workers in filling skilled jobs.

If the Supreme Court rules strongly for Mr. Weber in his suit against Kaiser and the union, its ruling could dwarf the Bakke decision by wiping out quota-system programs for hiring and promoting women, blacks and members of other minority groups at thousands of American factories.

Industry Programs Not Addressed

Such industry programs were not addressed by the Court's decision that Mr. Bakke had been illegally denied admission to the medical school at the University of California at Davis. Mr. Weber's case provides the Court an opportunity to answer, for the first time, the question of whether a voluntary affirmative action plan openly favoring black applicants is

outlawed by the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which specifically prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of race.

Federal officials and officers of the steelworkers' union, in interviews with The New York Times, have raised questions about the truth and completeness of the evidence that led the lower courts to find that there had been no discrimination at the plant, and, therefore, no lawful basis for the affirmative action program.

And citing a Government finding of discrimination at the plant that is not on the Court's record, the Justice Department has filed a brief seeking to have the case remanded to a lower court. Such evidence cannot be added to the record of the case while it is before the Supreme Court.

"That's wrong," J.P. Roussel, the white president of the union's Local 5702, a white and a friend of Mr. Weber, said flatly of the no-discrimination claim.

"When the company first starting hiring they had two kinds of badge numbers — certain numbers for whites and certain numbers for blacks. They were separated, segregated, you know.

'There Was Discrimination'

"So I would say there was discrimination. That didn't change until the union came in and they merged the lists."

Eleanor Holmes Norton, director of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, said "critical evidence" not on the Supreme Court record would show that the Kaiser plant has "had deep, critical and long-lasting oversight" from Federal authorities as to the role of race in its hiring practices at three Louisiana plants.

Moreover, she said, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance found in 1973 that Kaiser had waived experience requirements for whites, but not for blacks, in filling skilled-craft jobs at its Gramercy plant. And Kaiser paid a \$255,000 consent decree in a civil-rights case involving race and seniority issues at its plant in Baton Rouge, La., Mrs. Norton noted.

Questions about the evidence also were raised by John Falkenberg, a lawyer who represented the steelworkers' union in the original trial of the Weber case in 1975. Mr. Falkenberg said Judge Jack M. Gordon of Federal District Court based his finding of no discrimination at the Gramercy plant on the testimony of



The New York Times/Dec. 16, 1975

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the sought-after skilled-craft jobs at the plant.

Blacks, who make up 40 percent of the population in this area, held only six of 279 such jobs in 1974, when Kaiser and national officials of the steelworkers' union agreed to set up dual seniority tracks for the training program. Of the local's 800 or so members, 81 percent are white.

Acting on behalf of his disgruntled friends, Mr. Weber said, he "bid" for one of the 13 training program slots, even though he had little if any hope of being chosen on the basis either of seniority or of seniority plus race. "I was testing them," acknowledged Mr. Weber, who since filing his suit has been elected grievance chairman of his local three times.

Six whites were admitted to the training program, as well as seven blacks, two of whom had less seniority than Mr. Weber. Mr. Weber then contacted the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in New Orleans and in due course got a "right-to-sue" letter under Title VII, the portion of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that bars job discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, religion or national origin.

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workers at savin charge:

Affirmative Action Abused

by Laura Barrett

"We have seen the future, and it works," Savin Business Machines proudly proclaims in its advertisements. It's ironic that this \$200 million corporation should choose a slogan that is a variation of Lincoln Steffens' glowing praise of the Russian Revolution.

What's even more ironic is that Savin's conception of a "future that works" is one where profits are made at the expense of worker satisfaction. At least that's what some service technicians in Savin's Boston branch claim.

During the last two years, Savin's plain paper copiers have sold like hot cakes. They are proud to boast that currently Savin makes more copier placements (i.e., sales, rentals and leases) than Xerox and IBM combined.

Savin stocks have soared astronomically. Savin recently purchased a helicopter. Savin salespeople have won vacations to Hawaii. Meanwhile, Savin's service technicians have won a whopping \$5 starting salary pay raise since 1976, which means that new technicians generally start at \$165 a week. Savin's sales may top Xerox and IBM, but the salaries and benefits for their technicians trail way behind.

"What burns me up is that back in 1973-74, when Savin nearly went bankrupt, they asked us to pull in our belts, and we did. Then they got big, and forgot about us technicians and clerical workers," said Stuart Portner, former Savin technician.

Ingratitude in big business is nothing new. What's truly disturbing about Savin's Boston branch is the reportedly underhanded way it is pursuing the almighty dollar, through old-fashioned union-busting techniques and new-fashioned misuse of affirmative action.

It's difficult to get a full picture of what's been going on at Savin because management refuses to answer questions. When asked if he would discuss the problems in the service department, Service Manager Steven Pena said, "What problems? We don't have any problems here." Branch manager Robert Raffa acknowledged that there are problems, but declined to answer questions while Portner's case is in litigation.

So the story on Savin comes from current and former Savin employees, some of whom asked not to be quoted by name.

In a Statement written by several employees in September, some workers claimed that Savin, under the guise of affirmative action, has pitted established white technicians against recently hired women and Third World men. They wrote, "What's going on at Savin is going on all over the country...The vulnerability of all woman and Black and Third World men is used to keep all employees — including white men — with their noses to the grindstone."

They explain how this came about. Back in 1976, when Savin had to beef up its

service department to keep up with burgeoning sales, several inexperienced — and inexpensive — women and minority men were hired as technicians. These new employees received on-the-job training by men like Stuart Portner, a Savin worker for eight years, who received numerous monetary rewards and citations for being an excellent technician.

Portner says he wasn't too happy about becoming a trainer as well as trouble-shooter and repairman, but spending time with the new workers allowed him to hear their complaints, as well as the complaints of his white co-workers. The problems he heard about last year still exist today, technicians say.

A major grievance is that for years Savin has made two different promises about cars, but has kept neither. Cars are essential for technicians. Most of the women and minority men have trouble buying and insuring new cars on \$165 a week, so they were pleased when Savin managers promised them company cars.

Most of the established technicians, on the other hand, have decent cars, so they welcomed promises of higher reimbursements for car use (the current 14 cents a mile just doesn't cover costs).

Neither group has gotten so much as a tankful of gas. Instead, they have been put in a position of squabbling among themselves over company cars versus higher reimbursements.

A second complaint has been that everybody is under fire to work harder and at more kinds of tasks, for no extra pay. Since there is no formal training program for new technicians, Portner and others have had to train new people, who in turn train others. At the same time, technicians are expected to keep up with their own service calls. Eve Borenstein, former Savin salesperson said,

"They got them to work harder because of the implied threat to the whites that 'we can replace you with a woman or Third World man,' and an attitude towards the women and Third World men that 'you should be grateful for this non-traditional job.'"

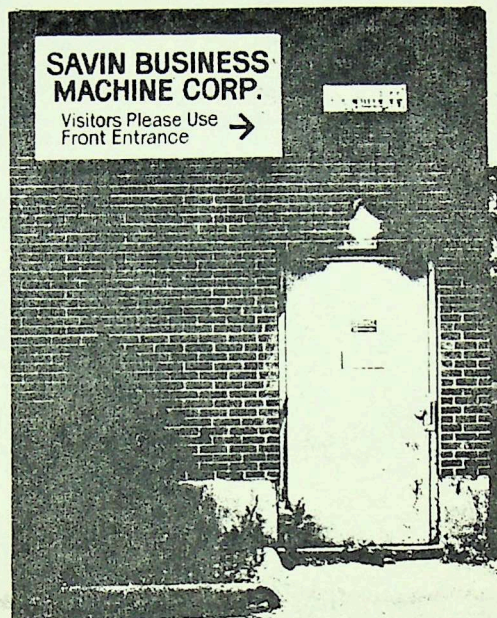
A third complaint centers around the charge that women technicians have consistently been paid less than men doing comparable work. This has been hard to verify, because Savin is highly secretive about salaries. Several technicians claim that Raffa once admitted discovering that women were inadvertently being paid \$5 less than men. Later, an employee said, he denied ever making such a statement.

Being a superb technician of long-standing, Portner believed he could speak up for the minorities, women and white males without losing his job. So last fall and winter he spoke up. When management wouldn't budge, he and others became active in a union drive. A few days before Christmas, Stuart was given the axe.

Portner filed suit with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) claiming that he was illegally fired for his union activities. The hearings ended recently, but a ruling won't be made for some time.

In court, the main reasons Savin came up with for firing Stuart were his "disheveled appearance" and "negative attitude." His "sloppy dressing," he pointed out, hadn't prevented him from being given a cash award by the president of the corporation three months prior to his firing. As for "negative attitude," well, most people don't commit themselves to a union drive when they feel overwhelmingly positive about how things are being run, he said.

Portner claims that his "negative attitude" was not unreasonably harsh or demanding. Several of his co-workers agreed. "I'm not a radical," he said. "I



Peggy McMahon

prefer to solve problems from within. As I see it, Savin has a choice — they can either give us what we deserve voluntarily, and we'll be happy, or we'll form a union and force them to give in."

By firing Portner, Savin lost a great technician, and became embroiled in a costly and embarrassing law suit. But Portner feels it was clearly a well-planned tactic, for it gave all the employees a simple message: if he was expendable, so are you.

For a while the tactic had the desired effect, and a climate of fear froze the union drive. But recently a second union drive was set in motion, and is being actively pursued by a coalition of women, minority men and white men. Apparently Savin doesn't like it.

When technician Rona Rothman became involved in the drive, she began receiving "warning notices" in her box about her appearance, and other matters. Feeling threatened by these ominous rumblings, she decided to file suit with the NLRB before joining Stuart on the unemployment line. Last Wednesday the NLRB voted unanimously to try her case.

Meanwhile, Cathy Hughes — who left Savin in anger last February — has filed charges with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. She claims that as a technician making \$173 after more than a year with Savin, she was being paid less than men she was training.

Angered by these and other abuses, several employees published a Statement accusing Savin of union-busting and misusing affirmative action. The Statement revolves around the Portner case, but their analysis and grievances were far-reaching.

When the Statement came out, management got hold of a copy and called a meeting with the minority men, and another with the women. Employees claim that they were asked publicly whether or not they agreed with the Statement, and whether or not they felt discriminated against. But such intimidating tactics only served to fan the flames, a technician said.

If Savin thought that women and minority employees would be so grateful for getting non-traditional jobs they would put up with anything, the law suits, union drive and Statement must have come as a rude awakening.

If they thought that the established technicians would be so fearful of losing their jobs to "cheaper" woman and minority men they would put up with anything, they obviously underestimated the likes of Stuart Portner.

As Portner said, "I must be a fool to put principle before my job, but I'll be damned if after eight years with Savin I'm going to let them walk all over me."

Portner is afraid that the NLRB, which prefers out-of-court settlements to legal rulings, is going to take a long time deciding his case in the hopes he will be "starved into giving into Savin." But, he said with a sardonic smile, "I can wait them out...I bought Savin stock when it was low." □