

The Tobacco Industry Labor Management Committee
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C., October 11, 1984 -- Without tobacco jobs, thousands of workers would have no chance to achieve the American Dream.

That's the message behind an advertisement that begins appearing this month in five national publications. The full-page ad, which describes the role of the unionized tobacco workers in America's social movements, stresses the importance of tobacco jobs as a force in organized labor.

Headlined "We're the tobacco industry, too," the ad will appear in The New Republic, The Nation, The Progressive, In These Times and Commentary. It is sponsored by The Tobacco Industry Labor Management Committee.

"We want people to know that tobacco jobs are in the mainstream of working class life," said Wallace Mergler, chairman of the committee and vice president of the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers International Union (BC&T).

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"Tobacco jobs provide real income. They do, literally, make the difference between poverty and dignity for us."

Attacks on the tobacco industry -- via unnecessary public smoking restrictions and unfair excise taxes -- threaten those jobs, Mergler noted. Ironically, it is the same people who joined with BC&T in honor of Martin Luther King Jr., in support of health care for the elderly and food stamps, and in 1981's Solidarity Day March, who are leading the attacks that threaten tobacco jobs, he added.

Pictured in the ad are three members of BC&T Local 203 T. The workers, from the Philip Morris, Inc., manufacturing center in Richmond, Va., have more than 80 years of service between them.

"We care about the same things working people all over the country care about," the workers say. "We want you to know our industry is threatened -- not by foreign competition or old-fashioned technology -- but by well-meaning people who haven't stopped to consider how their actions might affect others."

The Tobacco Industry Labor Management Committee is composed of labor and industry representatives.

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