

# Kleen Brite pickets draw diocesan support

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Bill Bombard walked around and around in a loop of more than 130 people chanting pro-union slogans Saturday, May 20, outside Kleen Brite Laboratories, Inc.'s 600 Oak St. plant in Rochester.

"Most jobs I've ever had — once you did your job, they let you do it alone," remarked Bombard, a label operator at Kleen Brite's other plant in Brockport. "(At Kleen Brite) they're just constantly bugging you about it... They wonder why their

quality is losing," he said, noting that his job performance would improve if his bosses would leave him alone.

Bombard only recently became involved in the struggle to establish a union at Kleen Brite. He was converted to the cause because of "harassment," from the management, he said.

Kleen Brite's pro-union employees plan to keep on badgering the company's managers until they accept that the majority of the company's employees want the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union to represent them.

Kleen Brite manufactures household and cleaning products for a 15-state region. Last July, the company's employees voted 143-83 to join the ACTWU. Since then, the company has refused to meet with the union, despite its certification in January by the National Labor Relations Board. According to ACTWU organizer Kurt Edelman, the board is currently taking complaints from employees regarding harassment for union activity on company grounds.

Susan Exford, spokeswoman for Kleen Brite, said the company had no comment on Saturday's rally. She also noted that the company was not planning to meet with the union until the company's case before the labor board was resolved.

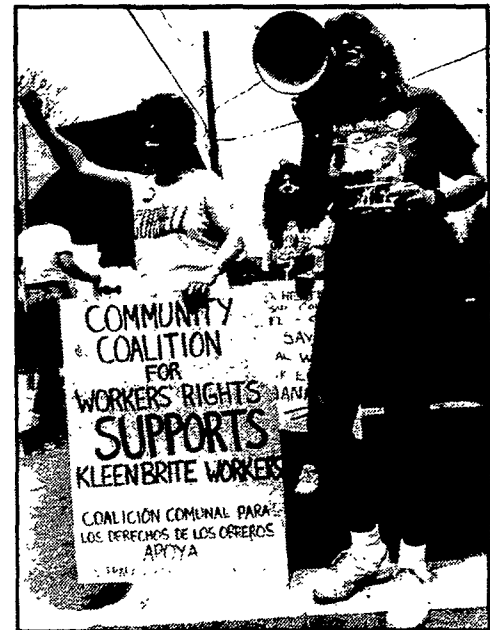
Saturday's rally was sponsored by the joint board of Rochester's ACTWU, the Rochester and Vicinity Central Labor Council, the AFL-CIO, and the Community Coalition for Workers' Rights, which includes several Catholic parishes, the diocesan Division of Urban Services and the offices of the Spanish Apostolate and Black Ministries.

CCWR members have supported the union from its earliest days. Father Peter Deckman, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, opened the church to the union's first meeting in April, 1988, Edelman said. Father Laurence Tracy, pastoral assistant to the Spanish Apostolate, gave the meeting's invocation, Edelman noted.

Father Tracy said that the coalition's involvement in the union's plight was a natural extension of Catholicism. "Being a Catholic is much more than going to Church and receiving envelopes. It means bringing justice to society," he said.

Justice is what the union wants, according to Edelman, who released a statement at the rally, outlining the union's demand that the company enter into contract negotiations with the union negotiating committee. In previous statements, the union has demanded a health and safety committee, increased pay, rewards for long-term employees, and paid leave for jury duty.

On Saturday, May 20, the union demands received the support of three Democratic-Monroe County legislators and a city mayoral candidate. County legislature President Kevin B. Murray and legislators



Marcia Addams (left) and Ellen Galant lead the picketers in a series of pro-union songs and chants.



Sister Campion Bush speaks in favor of Kleen Brite workers' efforts to unionize, as picketers, including Bill Bombard (far right), walk back and forth in front of the plant.

Tom Parker and Charles W. Erb released a statement calling on Kleen Brite's management to negotiate with the union.

The statement noted that company has received county tax breaks, in the past, and mentioned reports from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, which have cited Kleen Brite for several violations. Kleen Brite has paid more than \$13,000 in fines to OSHA since last fall, and a \$6,000 fine to the DEC for violations of its regulations following a chemical spill in 1982.

John Erb, a Democratic city councilman and a candidate for mayor, also was on hand to march with the protesters.

Despite such support, Edelman noted the union is not holding its breath waiting for Kleen Brite to give in. Bombard echoed Edelman's sentiments, noting that he didn't anticipate the company negotiating with the union anytime soon.

Looking over the long line of chanting protesters, some carrying signs that said, "Momma, don't let your babies grow up to be KBL employees," Bombard remarked: "It might cause a little commotion."

## WOKR-TV13 to show film on church in China

WOKR-TV13 in Rochester area will broadcast the ABC-TV documentary "China at the Crossroads" on Sunday, June 4, from 12:30-1:30 p.m., according to Father George Norton, diocesan director of telecommunications. "China at the Crossroads," a report on Catholicism in China, is the first such report to air on network television, Father Norton said.

The film was produced by the U.S. Catholic Conference, the public-policy arm of the U.S. bishops' conference, and was funded by a grant from Capitol Cities/ABC Inc.

"This is the first time that the Chinese government allowed cameras to film the activities of the Catholic community," said Joseph D. Fenton, executive producer. "We discovered that the Catholic Church is alive and thriving after intense persecution since 1949."

The documentary focuses on Shanghai, one of the largest centers of Catholicism in China. In the years since the Cultural Revolution, the government has allowed churches to reopen and Catholics to attend Mass. But church officials must function under the direct control of the government, and they have had no official contact with the Vatican since Beijing broke relations with Rome in 1957.

"We were able to document the conditions under which the Chinese Catholics function and limitations to their religious freedom," Fenton said. "What we observed is a church that still uses Latin and has just recently heard of the Second Vatican Council."

### Family camp scheduled at Koinonia in July, August

Kamp Koinonia will offer four one-week programs for families this summer. Under the direction of Father Charles Manning, each camp session will offer opportunities for prayer, personal growth and fun.

The dates for the programs are: July 9-15; July 16-22; July 30 to Aug. 5; and Aug. 6-12. Call the diocesan Department of Youth Ministry at 716/328-3210 for information.

The documentary, which is hosted by actor William Whitaker, concludes with a look at Hong Kong, the British colony that will revert to Chinese control in 1997. While China has promised to let Hong Kong's Catholics continue to recognize the authority of the pope, Catholics there express great anxiety about what will actually happen.

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