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FEB 15 1983

Violent Strikes Should Be Outlawed

ACCORDING to actions of some truckers, the way to get Congress to do your bidding is to inconvenience the public and take pot shots at those who may not agree with your tactics.

That's what they did in calling a strike to protest the unpopular 5-cent gasoline tax and other laws. The strikers' irresponsible actions offer evidence instead that Congress ought to take away the right of any group to stage violent strikes.

Without legislation granting labor unions and their bosses special privileges not available to other segments of business and industry or the public, strike violence would not be permissible.

An editorial in Nation's Business magazine in November said: "Workers in unions that had been among the most militant have become painfully aware that contracts guaranteeing higher wages and benefits translate into higher prices, which can mean lower sales and no jobs."

It is widely believed that labor problems and strikes have resulted in removal of great numbers of fac-

tory jobs to other countries, particularly for the manufacture of computers, calculators, word processors, television, radios, video games, recorders and cameras.

Excessive union demands, conceded by manufacturers, also have been blamed for the influx of foreign cars and high rates of unemployment in the automotive industry.

High labor costs are listed as reasons for shutting down some steel mills, boosting imports and hastening automated systems. Unions carry heavy responsibility for what has happened to railroads.

Misuse of the strike threat may be damaging even if the violence fails. The illegal strike by air traffic controllers flopped because it demonstrated the strikers were not indispensable.

Strikes by teachers, firemen and policemen have become less frequent, possibly because leaders realize that even if spineless public officials accede to their demands they may decline in public respect and confidence.

Although it is not a labor union,

the Movement for American Agriculture called a farm strike in 1977 that was a washout. Spokesmen declared they would neither plant nor harvest until they were guaranteed 100 percent of parity prices by somebody. They got a lot of publicity but not much support, even among farmers, and no parity.

The professional baseball strike of 1981 and the football strike of 1982 cost owners and players large sums of money because of games missed. For the public the strike seasons were big losers.

Labor laws constitute class legislation, since union membership amounted to only 34 percent of the work force in 1955, declining to only 20.9 percent in 1980. Unions used to win most of their elections to organize union shops but lately have been losing most.

Only one worker in 15 in Oklahoma belongs to a union and there might be even less if some did not have to pay dues in order to get jobs. They should have free choice. It is no more right to force a worker to join a union than to compel him to join a club.