

# TEACHER'S TRIBUNE

Issued by the teacher's section of the Communist Labor Party of the U.S.N.A.

Sept. 2, 1975

## WHY WE CAN'T STRIKE

Two years ago Detroit teachers came together for a very different meeting, a meeting to take a strike vote made necessary by the Board's intransigence. Today we are here with the union's recommendation of submitting to the Board's proposals. How is it that in two short years we have fallen from a position of strong, united militancy to become passively cynical?

Basically there are three reasons for our fall: (1) a bankrupt union leadership that put more faith in an arbitrator's decision than in our unity, (2) greater isolation of teachers from other workers, and (3) a continually more aggressive attack on all working people's wages and working conditions.

We must place the blame for all three of these conditions squarely on the shoulders of Mary Ellen Riordan. First of all, it was Mary Ellen's vote that broke the deadlock in the executive board and sent our last contract to binding arbitration. Similarly, it was Mary Ellen and her lackeys who spearheaded the drive to discourage any community support during the 1973 strike. They even went so far as to refuse to cooperate with a lawyer who said he could easily get a reversal of the decision to deny food stamps to striking teachers! This and many other incidents where the teachers were shut off from the community's support is the second level of Mary Ellen's contempt for the rank and file.

Thirdly, the teachers' struggle cannot be seen in isolation from the other battles waged by the working class, and especially from other teachers' struggles. On the heels of the Detroit settlement came the Crestwood and Garden City decisions. In all three situations, Mary Ellen and other MEA and MFT leaders failed to organize proper support and thus stifled the militancy of the rank and file. Then, as the world-wide economic crisis deepens, the city workers in Detroit were laid off by the thousands this past year; and next year the U.A.W. contracts are due for negotiation. We raise these examples to show one thing: we as working people are under attack all along the line. And every time one of us submits, it gives the capitalist class a better base from which to attack the others; why should the U.A.W. get an increase if the teachers don't, for example.

That, in essence, is what has happened to us: we have become more isolated, more divided, and now cynical. It is difficult for it to be otherwise. But one thing is still clear: the working class never had anything it didn't fight for. Sharper and sharper lines are being drawn between those who defend us and those who help the capitalists

## "WITHOUT A POLITICAL PARTY THE WORKING CLASS HAS NOTHING"

The Communist Labor Party of the United States of North America was formed one year ago because the North American working class has never had its own party which consistently fights for its own class interests, a party which isn't interested in power for itself as is the Democratic or Republican Party, but a party interested in power for the whole working class.

Our tasks are twofold: the struggle for progressive reforms and the struggle for socialism. The fight for reforms is one step in gaining freedom for the working class. The working class is being attacked day in and day out through worsening working conditions and lower and lower wages. At every turn we must fight for better conditions of life: better health care, better housing, better education, more jobs and greater freedom for the entire working class, but especially for oppressed minorities.

But fighting for reforms is like treating the symptoms without curing the illness. Under capitalism we will always have inadequate care for some, run down housing and unequal education; and of course unemployment. It is only through socialism, the victory of the wage-workers over the capitalists, that we can end the oppression created by a system where the majority of people must sell their labor to the small minority who control the destinies of millions. WE HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT OUR CHAINS. WE HAVE A WORLD TO WIN!

### SEPTEMBER 6: SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

On September 6 the Coalition to Respond to the Welfare Corrective Action Plan and Economic Crisis is holding a rally at Holy Redeemer Church, 1721 Junction at W. Vernor from 12 noon until 4 pm. The rally and hearing will address the recent removal of thousands of people from both the welfare rolls and unemployment eligibility. Substitute teachers and other school employees are in the latter category due to changes in the Michigan Employment Security Act. Come to the rally and show your support for our brothers and sisters who make up the great army of unemployed.

The teachers in the C.L.P. welcome your comments. Please send any communications to the following address. All names are held in strictest confidence.

Teacher's Tribune  
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