

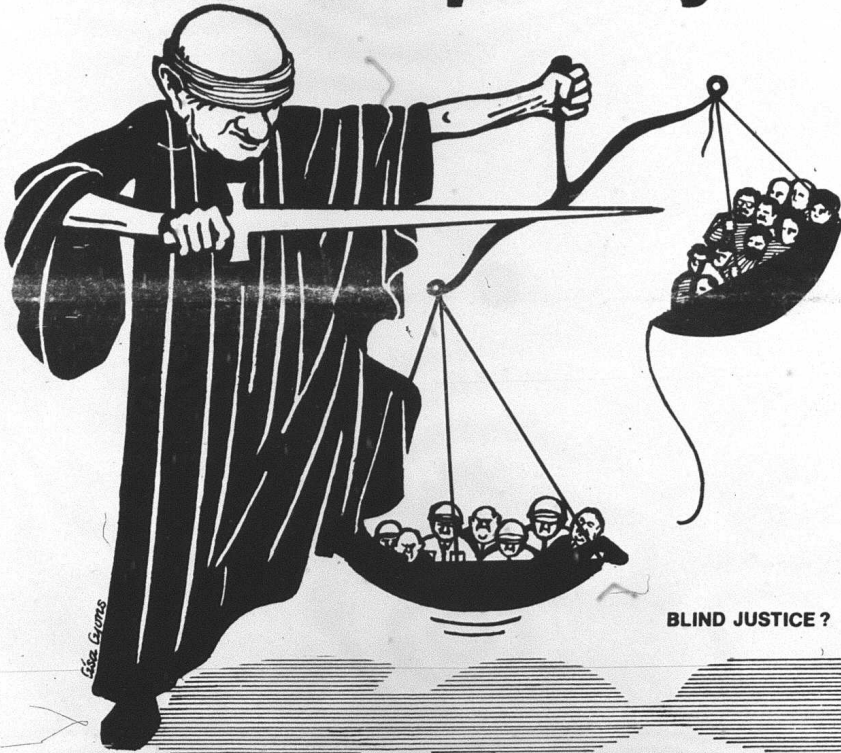
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WALLER PRESS 192

# The Conspiracy Trial



BLIND JUSTICE?

**Rent Strike in Berkeley  
International Women's Day  
The Pill - SMC - Biafra  
Strikes: San Raphael, Flint**

# COMPASSION AND PAIN

Richard Lyons

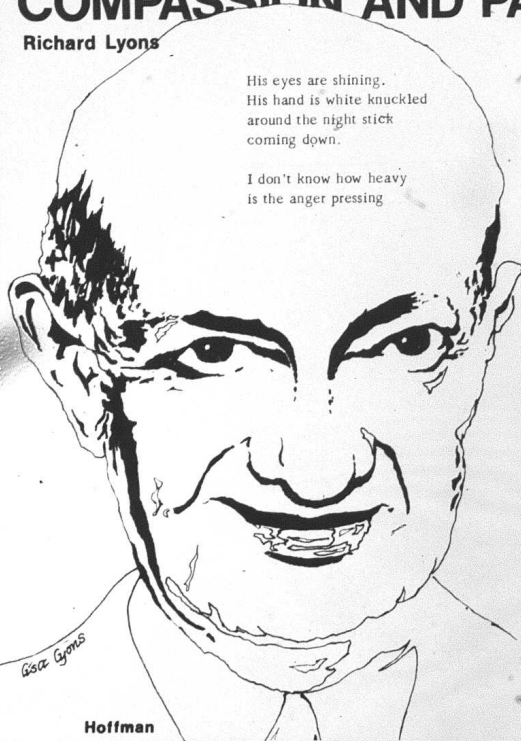
His eyes are shining.  
His hand is white knuckled  
around the night stick  
coming down.

I don't know how heavy  
is the anger pressing

some tender nerve of his life,  
giving weight to his arm's descent.  
He has pissed in too many alleys  
to control now  
his official secretions  
in anonymous heat and safety.

He can share with me  
only his nurtured anger,  
and I take it in kind  
and let it shape my execrations  
as the round wood comes down.  
Familiar aches aid his aim,  
but I have turned the other way  
from his career; turned  
despair, turned anger  
into fans,  
shapes of shelter in the fire,  
arcs of outer enterprise.  
He stands, an extension,  
a dangling sting at the far end  
of the urban organism  
that lights his eyes with frenzy  
and my whole head blindingly  
with the flash fire of impact  
when his hand,  
falling,  
discharges like sterile semen  
his white light from the hard stick  
upon my head.

We lose touch in the contact.



Hoffman

# STRIKE Robert Speiser

at evening lights go on  
along the narrow roads.

the valley rests,  
a curve of trees and shacks  
beneath the cloudy autumn sky.

some deer leap in a field:  
we watch them from the roadside.

some pickets at the gates  
slap hands in the october sun.  
some others, by the fence, converse:  
out sixteen weeks, now the first hope  
to cheer them.

along the roads,  
so many trees and fields,

leaves turning, falling  
at the margins of the drying hay.

so great the distance between houses,  
between the dull brown fields,  
between the families

we too  
return into the mother dark,  
our headlights  
probing the low mists  
which cloud the roads.

we travel fifty miles  
to write the story,  
working without pay,  
uncertain who will read  
or understand.



6:30 am on a picket line, Hudson Falls, N. Y. LNS

# i.s.

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# The Conspiracy Trial and the Left

Jack Gerson

**T**he trial of the Conspiracy Eight in Chicago has more vividly than ever focused national attention on the on-going repression of dissent.

The trial of the Conspiracy Eight in Chicago has more vividly than ever focused national attention on the ongoing repression of dissent. The repression has surfaced in the past year in the trials of the Oakland Seven and the Berkeley Three (both groups charged with "conspiracy to commit a misdemeanor") and the systematic attempt to annihilate the Black Panther Party and the Young Lords Organization. The anti-labor legislation now passing through Congress is a sign that this year's strike wave will be dealt with in the same heavy-handed manner.

In order to understand the trial and the repression, several questions must be addressed: why the repression? Against whom is it being directed? What is the significance of the Chicago trial? How should the movement respond?

The repression is the response of the ruling class to movements arising out of the social decay and urban crisis in America. The escalation of the Vietnamese War in 1965 was of course, the impetus for the emergence of the radical student and anti-war movements. Less obviously, it has also been a major factor behind the growth of the black liberation movement.

The escalation of the war caused billions to be added annually to the defense budget. Defense spending is pure waste, producing missiles, bombs, and the like, but nothing for human consumption. The increase in waste spending produced a decrease in funds for social services such as education, transit, health, and housing. This hits most sharply at black and other Third World people, whose average income is half that of white workers and whose unemployment rate is twice as great. They depend on social services to keep above, or at least near, the poverty level.

The decrease in social service spending was forced onto black people at a time when black power consciousness was emerging out of the civil rights movement. The clear inability of capitalism to improve the most primitive schools and housing, coupled with the emerging black power movement, gave birth to a revolutionary black liberation movement led by organizations like the Black Panther Party and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

The development of a revolutionary black movement posed a clear threat to the state. The militant tactics of the Black Panther Party, and more importantly the Panthers' desire to build alliances with white radicals, made it inevitable that repression would be directed against them. The current police attack on the Panthers (which included the murder of Fred Hampton in Chicago and the siege of the L.A. Panther Office) was no accident. And it was likewise not an accident that Bobby Seale was one of the Conspiracy Eight.

## Assault on Labor

Finally, escalation of the war is responsible for still another movement - the current strike wave. Increased arms spending has created a budget deficit, interest on which must be paid annually. To finance interest on the public debt, taxes must be increased, and these increased taxes are passed along by corporations in the form of higher prices, thereby causing the inflation. Nixon is trying to combat inflation with an austerity program against workers. To keep corporations' profits up, Nixon's economists plan to hold wages down as low as possible. Despite the fact that a recession is here, the inflation continues and real wages continue to decline.

It is this assault on labor that was responsible for the 35-day GE strike and the upcoming strikes in rail, auto, and rubber. The anti-labor legislation now passing through Congress is an attempt to choke this movement from the outset.

While the scope of the repression thus includes a campaign against black liberation and rank-and-file militancy, the Chicago conspiracy trial was primarily designed as an object lesson to the anti-war movement.

The Chicago demonstrations were the culmination of the frustrations of a movement that had tried every conceivable pressure tactic to convince their nation's leaders that Vietnam was all a tragic mistake. The movement had gone from teach-ins to arm-bands to petitions to local reform Democrats and finally to Eugene McCarthy.

## McCarthy

McCarthy stated openly that he hoped to channel anti-war sentiment back into the proper legal channels - i.e., the Democratic Party. The massive demonstrations of October, 1967 at the Pentagon and the Oakland Induction Center marked the most militant confrontations between the anti-war movement and the state. Coinciding with the demonstrations were huge campus actions at the University of Wisconsin and Brooklyn College, heralding a year of unprecedented campus protest culminating in the spring '68 Columbia strike. Anti-war sentiment was becoming more and more widespread. The Peace and Freedom Party got on the ballot in California, reregistering over 100,000 people out of the Democratic Party.

With more than half the country opposed to the war and radical sections of the movement getting out of hand, it was inevitable that a Eugene McCarthy would appear.

McCarthy served two functions. The bulk of the anti-war sentiment was (and still is) liberal-reformist, and for many, supporting McCarthy put their consciences to rest as they voted Democratic. When McCarthy's bid for the presidential nomination failed, these people could tell themselves that they had fought the good fight, having pulled a lever in the primaries, and resign themselves to the hope that Humphrey would be better than LBJ.

These elements, though, were firmly entrenched in the Democratic Party, and would have posed no threat at all to the political status quo were it not for the radical and left-wing sections of the anti-war movement. As we have already seen, this sector was growing in both numbers and militancy. With popular sentiment swinging against the war, direct repression of the militants would have resulted in an outpouring of sympathy for them, because of the sympathy for their cause. The alternative was co-optation - McCarthy.

The co-optive strategy worked fine throughout the spring and early summer. On campuses, many left-moving students decided to give the Democratic Party and the system "one more try". The Communist Party got on the McCarthy bandwagon, as usual tying itself to the liberal wing of the ruling class.

McCarthy would not come out for immediate withdrawal, instead presenting vague and contorted staged withdrawal schemes; he would never take a position on the black liberation movement; he did not even hint at imperialism as the economic-political force behind our foreign policy; and, of course, he had no program for wresting power from the corporations and placing it in the hands of the American working people.

In short, McCarthy barely offered hand-aids for a society in need of major surgery. But he presented the facade of just enough dissent to co-opt a movement which saw no alternative.

But as the Convention approached, it became clear that the entrenched LBJ strength would be more than enough to deliver the nomination to Humphrey. In the meanwhile, demonstrations planned for the Convention by the National Mobilization Committee at-

**FREE THE CONSPIRACY 8!  
DEFEND THE PANTHER 21!**

tracted thousands by focusing on the Democrats as the war party.

Mayor Daley turned loose his trained pigs for a command performance, thereby winning the sympathy of a national television audience to the demonstrators. Significantly, as the Convention wore on, more and more McCarthy kids swelled the ranks of protestors. Thoroughly disillusioned, many seemed ready to make a break to the left.

In fact, many did. SDS chapters across the country found hundreds attending their opening meetings, where the year before they had attracted less than fifty. It was clear that the radical movement had an opportunity to strengthen itself enormously. The conspiracy indictments came down in the fall of '68 - long enough after the Convention for public outrage at police brutality to have cooled off; after a draw-out presidential campaign which had sapped passive anti-war sympathizers of the energy and desire to protest; but just in time to be a slap in the face to what was perceived of as an increasingly dangerous student movement.

The question now poses itself: who was conspiring against whom? The demonstrations in Chicago certainly were planned by the National Mobe. On the other hand, they only reflected the popular outrage at the Democratic Party for the war in Vietnam. If provocation is to be blamed on anyone for the violence, it must be Daley and the Chicago police - as it was in the eyes of the public, the media, and the commissions of inquiry.

Moreover, to have any impact dissent must always take some sort of organized expression. There are always organizers, speakers, street leaders who can be singled out as conspirators. The history of our movement has shown that demonstrations where no leadership is present, such as the July '68 outbursts in the Haight-Ashbury, generally make no political points and degenerate into window-smashing and rock-throwing.

The Chicago demonstrations had a clear political purpose and target - the Democratic Party's war. The movement had been frustrated by every legal channel and was virtually forced into the streets. And once it went into the streets, Daley and his crew made it clear that militancy would have to be escalated, if only in self-defense.

## Conspiracy of the Whole

In short, Chicago was the result of an anti-war movement that had exhausted every avenue, had been stripped of its illusions, and had come in conflict with the state. The Pentagon, Stop the Draft Week in Oakland, and Chicago were the logical and necessary outgrowths of opposition to the war. To speak of conspiracy for these demonstrations is to indict the entire anti-war movement of conspiring to end the war.

The timing of the Chicago conspiracy indictments is important. As noted above, they came down at a time when SDS and the radical movement had grown enormously, while most anti-war sympathizers were retreating into their television sets. The conditions were forming for repression: despite its growth, SDS and the radical movement in general was becoming more and more isolated from popular support. More than that, they had no plan for reaching-out to broader sectors.

For a movement to fight repression, it must have ties with broad sectors of the population - most importantly, with workers. The failure of the anti-war movement to win significant working class support left it composed largely of people with no means of forcing social change - primarily students and middle-class left-liberals and radicals.

The movement was able to raise the war clearly and make it the dominant issue in American politics, but it did not have the power commensurate with the size of anti-war sympathy. The movement has made many important gains, but the lack of workers' leadership has isolated it from the heart of power in this country - the productive machinery which make society function.

This isolation in the long run must lead most elements in middle-class movements either back into the Democratic Party or into the terrorist politics of frustration. The former is the apparatus which for decades has been the burial ground of radical movements, while the latter means complete isolation from public understanding, let alone popular support.

Without popular support, the only people concerned about the repression are those being repressed - the black and student movements. And the rhetoric and strategy of these movements just furthered the isolation - the Panthers with their gun-worship, SDS with Mao-quoting and Weatherman tactics.

There was no program for relating to the inflation-caused decline in workers' real wages; there was no program for the urban crisis and the decline of education, transit, and other services; there was little mention of the war and its role in the imperialist system. In short, the movement too often projected an image of mindless nihilism, screaming, "Revolution for the hell of it."

When the repression came, movement leaders talked about how the movement had to take to the streets to show it would fight back. The trouble was that nobody understood what the movement was fighting about.

Jerry Rubin, Abbie Hoffman and cohorts muttered incoherent phrases about destroying a monster by burning dollar bills and listening to acid-rock, the Maoists talked about "white-skin privilege", but nobody presented programs that could win people to the movement, that could show people why the movement shouldn't be repressed.

Now we're seeing a wave of terrorist acts that threatens to bring on the stiffest repression yet. In the past week police stations in Berkeley and San Francisco have been bombed, crowds of Conspiracy sympathizers have rampaged through several cities breaking windows and hurling rocks, and nobody outside the movement can see why.



To allow ourselves to fall into terrorist tactics now is exactly what the ruling class wants. In last week's Berkeley window-breaking, for example, the Berkeley police made no attempt to control the demonstrators. Why should they? They'll get their chance, and this time with public support behind them. The movement has taken the support it had after Chicago and turned it into mass outrage directed at itself.

The movement has become the victim of the politics of frustration. With no strategy for linking up with the struggles of working people, with no way of reaching out for support on the basis of what we have to offer people in the way of program, terrorism and repression are inevitable.

There is still time to turn the movement around. The war is still going on; the war economy has produced a combined inflation and recession which both throws workers out of jobs and cuts the real wages of those still working; education, housing, and social services continue to deteriorate.

We must focus on these issues, and make appropriate demands - immediate withdrawal of all troops and an end to imperialist domination and the war economy that props it up; taxing the war profits of corporations and banks to provide for adequate housing, education, transit, and medical care; reconvert the defense industry into a system that provides jobs for all and produces for need instead of waste; support for black liberation, linking the struggle of black people to the inflation which hits them the hardest; support for women's liberation and an attack on the economic and social oppression of women.

These are the bare bones of a program that can reach out to working people, blacks, women, to anti-war sentiment - in short, to the overwhelming bulk of the American people. Only when we begin to struggle around issues like these will the movement be able to broaden itself and withstand repression. Only by raising issues like these will we be able to attack cases like the Chicago Conspiracy trial from a political basis.

# POLITICS AND REPRESSION

Ernest Haberkern

Persecution of the Left in the United States is nothing new. In many cases, the Left has been able to meet an attempt at repression, because it was politically self-confident and capable of turning the state's prosecution of political dissent into an indictment of the state itself.

The most recent examples of this came during the Huey Newton and Oakland Seven Trials. In both cases, a political defense was made to the jury and in both cases a political victory was achieved. In the case of Huey Newton the jury essentially accepted the view that Newton had shot Frey, and was justified in doing so. While the state was able to carry out its attempt to imprison Newton, it lost a major political battle in doing so.

In the case of the Oakland Seven, after forcing the court to allow the jury to hear the political rally that preceded the Stop the Draft Week demonstrations, and to consider the question of the war itself, the defense won a complete vindication. As was pointed out during the jury's deliberations, the question was no longer whether the Oakland Seven would be freed, but how soon the jury would join the movement. This was more than a joke, since several of the jurors were obviously moved politically - despite the fact that they were selected by a process which excludes large numbers of blacks and working-class citizens.

In Chicago, by contrast, a political defense was never waged. The whole issue of the Democratic Party and its reactionary role in the war was never raised in the trial itself nor in the publicity battle waged outside the courtroom. The kind of political attack on the war and racism that occurred in the trial of the Oakland Seven, with its implicit confidence in the ability of ordinary Americans to respond to an appeal based on democratic and civil libertarian positions was never attempted.

Instead, the campaign carried on in the courtroom and in the underground press was based on the essentially elitist notions of the Yippies. The counterposition of youth and the cultural revolution to straight "AMERIKA" automatically excluded from the ranks of the saved not only the jury, but also the overwhelming majority of working class and lower middle class Americans.

Julius Hoffman was attacked, not as the politically-biased hack and reactionary he is, but simply as an old fogie. The behaviour of the defendants - despite their personal heroism in facing long jail sentences - completely undermined any attempt at a political defense of the movement.

This climax to New Left politics cannot be understood except in terms of the historical development of the movement. When the civil rights movement first began, and in large part right up until the 1964 Democratic Party convention, the general attitude on the part of even the militants was that this protest not only did not threaten the established political order, but could expect to enlist the support of the majority party in the country and of its leadership.

Only a handful of socialists, and of course the Southern reactionaries who saw their "peculiar traditions" and their committee chairmanships going down the drain, suspected that this movement might shatter the social peace that had prevailed since the end of World War II. The FBI continued to maintain its lists of subversives, but it seemed a little futile when people on the lists kept showing up at White House dinner parties. Even Mayor Daley was a public supporter of the civil rights movement.

But the American social fabric turned out to be quite a bit more fragile than many had suspected. Even before the end of John Kennedy's first term, the inconsistency between imperialist adventures abroad and social reform at home became apparent. More importantly, the massive revolt of the black people that began as the unexpected response to the Supreme Court decision in 1954 spread from the south to the northern urban ghettos. Mayor Daley began to have doubts about the effectiveness of civil disobedience as a means of "improving the lot of the Negro."

In a real sense, the greatest victory of the mass anti-war movement, the forced resignation of John-

son, was also a turning point in terms of liberal support and leadership. At that point, liberals and radicals had the attention of the country. The old politics had proven bankrupt. But what was the alternative offered by this anti-war, pro-black-power movement? The answer was unfortunately an embarrassed silence.

It seems clear now that the movement as a whole can no longer continue as a liberal movement. It has reached the point where its attacks are no longer directed at relatively minor reforms, or reforms that strike at the power of isolated sections of the ruling class like the southern bourbons. The big city machines have decided that southern reactionaries are more reliable allies than "Negro leaders", whose ability to control the ghetto populations is zero (as the experience of the 1966-'68 urban revolt indicated). The liberal wing of the Democratic Party has run into a dead end. The question for them now is how to get the geni back into the bottle. For the moment, the initiative is in the hands of those who want a return to the Eisenhower years.

It is in this context of a general retreat from the rhetoric of progress and reform that events like the Chicago conspiracy trials and the response of the Left have to be seen? The general feeling of isolation and embitterment of much of the Left is in part the result of their own liberal illusions of a few years ago. As the prosecuting attorney in Chicago himself put it, "Kennedy died, then King died, and the lights of Camelot went out; the flags were furled, the parade was over." It is understandable that, frustrated and bewildered liberals and radicals beret of the friends they had, or thought they had, in high office, should mistake men like Nixon for fascists and expect the imminent arrival of the totalitarian state. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

Nixon, Agnew and Mitchell are frightened men who would be the last people in the world to organize the kind of mass movement which would be capable of destroying the institutions of political democracy in this country. The effect of their attempts at repression will simply be to turn the movement back towards the Democratic Party liberals.

After Nixon and company have done the dirty work of defanging the movement and suffered from the inevitable reaction against that work, after their feeble attempts have proved ineffective in restoring peace, prosperity and sanity to America, it is the liberals who will step forward as the progressive-minded and sane alternative. The liberals will, of course, maintain and use the repressive apparatus built up - they just won't take the blame for it.

The effect of the Chicago trial and the Weatherman tactics associated with it is to accelerate this process. By allowing the liberals to appear as the enlightened defenders of civil liberties, while a coalition of anti-imperialist youth and revolutionary nationalists call for the overthrow of AMERIKA (indiscriminately lumping-together the ruling class and the oppressed), the Left is laying the groundwork for a revival of Kennedyite liberalism.

There is no political basis for this revival except the political bankruptcy of the Left. The permanent arms economy which was the liberal cure-all for America's ills is the principal source of the runaway inflation, the rising taxes, the decay of social services, and the imperialist adventures which are the root cause of the present turmoil in American life. It is these reactionary consequences of liberal policies which have put the wind in the sails of demagogues like Wallace and his establishment imitators like Agnew and Mitchell.

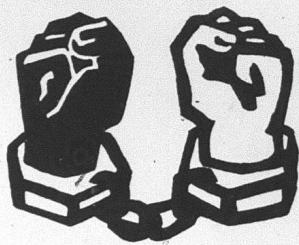
If, after a few years under Nixon, the liberals begin to look good again, it will only be because no alternative to them has been built. As the movement revives in the next few years as a result of disillusionment with the Nixon Administration's attempt to put a freeze on politics, new opportunities will open up for the Left. Precisely because the crisis of corporate capitalism is increasingly apparent, liberals will be reluctant to go too far to preempt the Left. Whether or not radicals and revolutionaries are able to profit from liberal timidity will depend in good part on their understanding of what has gone wrong with their own politics in the last few years.

A step in the right direction can be made by a political defense against the repression directed at the movement. This defense must not confine itself to legal maneuvering but has to be based on a militant attack on the institutions responsible for the repression. The first thing we have to prove is that the anti-war and black liberation movements cannot be driven off the streets and underground, that they have political support that goes beyond the handfuls of individuals involved in the Weatherman-type eruptions.

MICHA  
MAGUIRE

# Prison is Capitalism

Daniel Shays



More and more, public attention is beginning to focus on the prison system. In this period of increasing repression against those who would struggle for change, radicals are understandably concerned about prison.

The Chicago Eight are now locked away after a mockery of justice called a trial, along with countless other unknown and famous political prisoners. The use of felony conspiracy laws against demonstration organizers is widespread. Sentences have become longer and harsher: demonstrations that only a few years ago would have brought suspended sentences of a couple of weeks in the country prison farm now mean felony convictions (as did the recent black studies protests at Valley State College in Los Angeles, for example).

Radicalism can not stop at the prison walls. The prison system is at the heart of the repressive apparatus; if we are to end the repression and build a radical movement, we must deal with the prisons.

The prisons today also are under the scrutiny of those they serve - the ruling class of America. Chief Justice Burger has recently toured the prisons. A California state legislator spent a week in jail to "find out about the conditions".

Establishment figures have been moved in part because of the developing protests inside the prison system. They hope that perhaps with some reforms here and there, prisons can be made more habitable and less of an embarrassment.

But more importantly, they have also been pushed by their own law-and-order campaigns to make the prisons more efficient. The more the focus is on the institutions of law and order, the more it is clear that the prison system has failed in its stated purpose of turning "criminals" into "good citizens". We can expect a goodly number of proposals for patchwork reforms, but as Daniel Shays makes clear in his article below, liberal politicians will probably never understand why the prisons in a capitalist society can "work" only insofar as they are inhuman and destroy every spark of individuality and dignity. Meanwhile, the prison system will keep growing bigger and more expensive.

Finally, of course, the prisoners themselves are concerned with the prisons. The insistent movement in society-at-large for individual and social rights has moved many prisoners to demand room for individual expression within the rigid structure. Also, there has been an influx of prisoners who have been incarcerated precisely because they engaged in the social struggles outside, and of prisoners who see themselves as victims of social discrimination rather than as "criminals".

The draft resister, civil rights worker, or "violent" protester is not likely to forsake the ideals that brought him to prison or to internalize the penal system view of himself as social refuse. And in as much as the current emphasis of the federal regime is to institute repression and imprisonment on the local-state level rather than

the federal one, political prisoners are being thrust into the criminal population rather than isolated in special "political" prisons as is the case in other countries. They have a resounding effect on the prison population as a whole, creating a sense of social consciousness in those who for so long have born the brunt of this society's vindictive sense of justice.

In response to the consequent pressures from prisoners for their rights, the prison authorities are introducing more and more subversive methods of repression.

For example, within the prison population, there is a growing awareness of racial pride among Black, Chicano, and Native American peoples, who recognize their right and need to struggle for liberation collectively. The response to this racial consciousness on the part of the administration is to use the historic racial divisions to provoke confrontations and outright races between the prisoners.

The prison system (not unlike the reactionary forces in American society as a whole) uses racism as its primary device to prevent united action. By doing so, the prison administration hopes to prevent a struggle based on the class oppression of all prisoners, a struggle which could not be so easily explained or controlled.

Coalitions are beginning to develop between numbers of prisoners and ex-prisoners and sections of the radical movement to challenge this institution which is both the symbol and the center of the entire repressive apparatus. One such effort just being organized in California is the Political Rights for Prisoners Committee. The Committee's purpose is to use publicity, legal suits, and other means, first of all, to establish the right of prisoners to read, speak and communicate freely both inside the prison and with the outside world, and more generally to build links between the struggles for dignity and liberation in the society-at-large and those among the prison population.

A leading figure in the establishment of this committee has been a member of the Los Angeles International Socialists, Micha Maguire, who was recently paroled after serving 6 1/2 years in California prisons for unarmed robbery.

For anyone with money or social standing and expensive lawyers, an unarmed drunken robbery of a gas station would draw at most a suspended sentence. Even for those with a southern white workingclass background like Micha's, the sentence is normally at most a few months in jail or long probation. But Micha was arrogant toward the judge, insisted on asking why, and, perhaps, most damaging, had a black girl friend. As a result, Micha received an indeterminate sentence - one year to life - with possible parole based on "good behavior" as determined by the prison administration.

From this point on, the life of Micha Maguire became part of the story of the prison system.

even less. The prison provides a penal version of bread and circuses - with heavy emphasis on sports and television. These fragile links to the outside world are grabbed and clutched - any port in a storm. For the intellectuals, religion becomes a pacifier. For the mass, the maintenance of any link at all to their former environment plays the same role.

Passivity is immensely attractive to anyone facing the hell of prison - you learn the rules and you play the game and you survive. Needless to say, it is also immensely attractive to the warden and the other prison officials: passive prisoners make no waves. In time, this passivity becomes rooted in the mentality of the prisoner; the sub-culture of the prison becomes part of his make-up. Real opportunities for active struggle inside the prisons for changing the conditions, at least among the white prisoners, never quite materialize.

But a few prisoners, like Micha, choose to resist the indignities and dehumanization imposed by the prison system. He started reading "social and political ma-

terial" in 1965 - and very soon ran into harassment from prison officials.

It is not easy to get outside material when in jail. Religious tracts and *The Sporting News* are treated quite lightly by the censors. But political material runs right into official barricades. Most such material has to be sent directly from the publishers, so one either has to make the necessary arrangements or find some way to get around them. Micha did, and he read Lenin, Marx, and Hegel, as well as the literature of just about every political sect on the Left.

In 1967, Micha began to apply what he was learning - and became a "problem". When he actually began organizing in the yard, he made contact with militant black and Chicano prisoners. He was bounced from Southern Conservator Center to San Quentin to the California Men's Colony-Eastern Facility, and his reputation began to precede him.

Micha realized that prison in the capitalist framework bears no actual resemblance to the stated goal of trying to solve the problems of "criminals". The majority of prisoners are from poor and workingclass backgrounds - pointing to the fact that capitalism itself engenders the "criminal element" it claims to find intolerable. The understanding of the class nature of crime only heightened Micha's revolutionary commitment, leading him in 1969 to write several papers, in which he attempted to apply what he had learned in prison about America to the problems confronting the revolutionary movement outside.

Micha also prepared for his release in another way. Politics had given him a meaningful way to confront and combat the brutality of the prison experience. But unlike religion, politics, and particularly revolutionary politics, is not a means of escape. His commitment was forged and tempered in the hottest crucible one can find - and getting back on the streets to him meant being as intensely involved and committed on the outside as he was in prison.

Revolutionaries, to be effective, work best in organizations with other revolutionaries. Micha sought out the organization which best represented the political convictions he had developed in prison, and when he was paroled in Los Angeles, he joined the International Socialists.

## Arbitrary Powers

Prison reform has been in the wind for some time. Numerous investigations have taken place, a few laws have been passed. But "To us [the prisoners] all of them are a tremendous joke. None of the efforts to date have seriously been concerned with correcting the basic problems of prison."

The basic problems center on the power of the California Adult Authority and on the political rights (currently non-existent) of prisoners. As it stands, the CAA has arbitrary powers over the life of any ex-con under its jurisdiction (particularly through the use of the Indeterminate Sentence Law, which means, in fact, a life sentence except for the graces of the Adult Authority or tremendous outside support).

In Micha's case, for example, fairly restrictive conditions have been imposed on his political activity, and any violations would mean return to jail where he would probably be the victim of one of those frequent "unexplained" prison killings.

"A year before I got out," he says, "one member of the Board told me they didn't intend to have a white Eldridge Cleaver running around the streets." That statement may be translated in a number of ways, all of them threatening, but Micha is committed to doing as much as he can, and of course, prison is his primary concern.

We have already gotten, thanks to *Soul On Ice*, tremendous insights into the incredible mental and physical brutality faced by prisoners. Those of us who have been in jail have seen some of it ourselves. But as revolutionary socialists, our concern and concentration cannot be limited to the existential problems of prison life, and we cannot be satisfied with involving

It is a shock, and in many ways completely shattering, to wake up in a cold, gray cell that first morning in jail. For some, recovery never really comes, and for those people life from that moment on is a game of shuffleboard between prison and those all-too-brief moments on the streets before something happens that gets you jailed again. In all likelihood, the habitual loser is baptized and confirmed those first few days of his first sentence. The spirit broken is never really mended.

"You can't help but wonder why you are there," says Micha Maguire. "If you start trying to find an answer, you start reading." What you read is what the prison provides, and that is mostly religious works of some sort or other. Some read the Bible, others get into Zen or the Mandella. "Does that answer your questions? Of course not. But most of them stop there. They find something that can work as a brace, and that's it."

It is, of course, an intellectual minority that even bothers with that much. The bulk of the prisoners do

ourselves in a simple reform movement, no matter how broad or well-received such a movement may become.

The major problem we will have to deal with in the immediate future is that of the nature of prisons themselves.

Rehabilitation is the stated purpose of the penal system, but all the rehabilitation programs are farcical. Real creativity is discouraged, and virtually none of the prisoners ever achieve a sense of accomplishment while in prison. Penologists pontificate about prisoners learning a trade in prison, but every con knows that once he is out, the chance of getting any kind of decent job in that trade is almost nil. And bad as the possibilities are for white prisoners, they are of course even worse for black or Chicano prisoners.

Nobody on the outside really believes in rehabilitation either, so what may have been a vicious cycle for a few becomes a closed circle for all within it. Because the convict learns almost immediately that he will never be considered useful in the outside world, and because prison does nothing to dispel that notion and rather aggravates it, every prisoner becomes a desperate man or woman. Life on the outside after two or three years in jail is often little more than a search for a channel to release that desperation.

Generally, spending more than a year or two in jail literally ruins a person for the outside world. In prison you learn the rules, the tricks of survival, and they become your total orientation. You learn to seal yourself off emotionally, you learn where your niche is, and after any length of time that world and that world alone makes sense to you. Prisons do not and apparently cannot, in class society, prepare individuals to function in the outside world.

"I learned what dictatorship is in jail," says Micha, "and I imagine it is pretty much what life is like under any dictatorship. It's 1984, and I cannot see fighting for anything less than an abolition of this kind of dictatorship and the winning of total freedom now that I'm out."

### Alienation

The alienation of the prison experience is directly related to the alienation of life under capitalism as a whole. The key to understanding what is happening in either lies in understanding the concept of participation. The life of a poor white person, or a black, or a Chicano, is from birth out of his control. For someone who is systematically prevented from involving himself in building and defining the social framework in society as a whole, the laws that send him to prison can make no sense at all.

Survival in capitalist society is a struggle for just about everyone, with desperation a matter of degree, depending pretty much on where you start. And for a poor man, out of work and his family hungry, crime may be unsavory, but necessary.

"I am no thief, but a man can go wrong, when he's busted." So sings Ray Charles, and it's a prisoner's lament. By insuring that a large proportion of our population will automatically have to live by scuffling with not even a glimpse of any quality in a life that is such a struggle to maintain, capitalism insures that a "criminal element" will always exist. And as the prisons do nothing to help those who already have been forced to that extremity, it assures a continued growth of the problem.

The reality, therefore, is that crime will be with us as long as capitalism is with us. But having come to that conclusion, we have to be able to use it, and use it on several levels.

Understanding the desperation inherent in the life of poor and working people makes it all the easier for us to relate to and work with and for them. What programs we develop in the course of the struggle for prison reform must be based upon our revolutionary understanding that "crime" under capitalism reflects the same alienation among poor and working people that made those of us who were more fortunate into revolutionaries.

Beyond that, we must begin to develop and articulate some concept of how socialist society will deal with the overall question of crime and rehabilitation. To begin with, of course, the socialization of the economy and the creation of a social order from which want has been eliminated will quickly sweep away the roots of most behavior which is defined as criminal in class society. A society which opens the door to the unlimited expansion and development of the consciousness and creative capabilities of every man and woman will less and less have much to fear from "crime" as we know it today.



## POEMS BY MICA MAGUIRE

dedicated to the  
"Chicago 8"

### SUMMER- WITH A BAYONET IN ITS BELLY

the grass-cushioned  
bends in city park  
trails with bayonets  
thrustin up into  
the belly of  
summer . . .

its like that now  
you know!

no place to go  
& slumber or have  
a company picnic  
- with watermelon  
& softball - where  
they aint butcherin  
fatherless children  
& stompin the stomachs  
of would-be mothers :

at first  
it was just the  
injun & the  
niggers, they say ---  
oh - & there was  
the irish, then came  
the commies course  
they asked for it!

but now  
its damn near  
anyone ---  
the puppy got it  
thursday: out  
chasin after a  
passin black &  
white.

### POEM TO A PRO GIRL

Came dawn's  
disheveled morning  
with bells all tolling  
madly,  
she damned our  
celebrations  
---tore midnight's  
naked kisses  
from my mind,  
daylight  
had languished  
all her passion,  
her rainy-day-eyes  
staring frigid  
like  
morning-after glasses  
---her almond  
tresses recoiling  
from my reach.  
Outside the  
wind wept wildly  
my bed now cold  
and  
lonely . . .  
sheets gone clammy  
from our pleasures  
--- night's odors  
slipping slyly  
from my room.  
And its strange

that I should  
stand here  
before the window  
of realization  
viewing her  
dream---  
now  
a miscarried  
memory  
--- the leftover  
flavors fade  
from my mouth.

The room,  
now hope's grim  
coffin---

a  
shrine to her  
love - mistaken,  
a new life  
lays slain &  
dismembered  
---disbelieving eyes  
flung the money  
from my hands.

for padres, calf

### THE ALL ALUMINUM EAGLE

The chauvinistic Eagle  
flaring silver its metal  
wings, rolls sideways . . .  
roars Earth-bound; the  
bugle call its war cry.

The finned talons  
caught tight against the  
under-wing . . . snarled,  
ready to engage the  
hunted.

Through the billowy  
clouds --- caught but  
for a second in the  
Sun, the Predatory bird  
shrieks . . . its skull a  
cave of death.

The landscape comes  
rushing --- it greens  
and browns a camouflage  
of rice ponds . . . its  
rodent-brown figurines  
--- suddenly they are  
charcoal corpses.

# Biafra Crushed to Safeguard Profits

Wanda Clenaghan

The news of Biafra's collapse came as a surprise. With its small but determined fighting force pitted against the lack of enthusiasm and even outright mutiny of the front-line Federal troops, it seemed invincible.

Constant reversals were suffered by the Federals due to harassment behind the lines by a hostile population supposedly "liberated" from the clutches of the Biafran regime.

The stepping-up of gun supplies, the secondment of officers from the British and Russians, plus the increasing employment of white mercenaries by the Federals, was in the end decisive. Wilson had to break the stalemate caused by Ojukwu's order to attack the oil-installations.

Britain, supplying 60 percent of the arms, was also worried by the expense caused by the increasing needs of the Federals. It is calculated that a single 105 mm. shell costs £17 (17 pounds), an 81 mm. shell £25, and 10,000 rounds of small ammunition £25. Since any one of the 14 Federal divisions was more than capable of letting off one million rounds a day, the arms supplies were costing Britain £20 m a year. These supplies were not paid for in cash, since Nigeria has long since been completely broke, but were dished out on limitless credit with strings attached.

Why did Britain step up her supplies? Ojukwu, until March 1969, had respected the private property of the Shell-BP consortium that had invested £52m in capital equipment in the East of Nigeria. He had never called for nationalisation or the seizure of the oil installations. (Shell-British Petroleum)

## Oil

His squabble with the rest of Nigeria had been over who - Biafra or Lagos - was to get the royalties of the £68m yearly turnover in oil tossed out to the 'natives' by the oil bosses. By ordering the attack on all oil installations, even to attack the smallest bucket suspected of containing oil, Ojukwu hoped to threaten British arms suppliers into stopping their operations.

The attack had a dramatic effect. From April to August last year, production decreased by 400,000 barrels a day to 280,000. The Federal government then blacked out all figures for oil production which was dwindled to a tiny trickle.

Since the value of a barrel of crude oil is £7, the Biafrans' action was costing Shell-BP £29m a day and hitting the capitalist where it really hurts - in his pocket. No wonder there was an increase in arms supplies.

The British government had been worried from the start. Wilson argued that the 'one united Nigeria' had and would continue to offer magnificent investment opportunities, with a turnover trade of £170m to British businessmen. Any lessening of support for this policy by giving in to Ojukwu's threat to oil, would 'jeopardise all these investments because of the anti-British feeling that would erupt in Nigeria if we cease to be an arms supplier.'

The United Africa Company, owned by Unilever, controlling half of Nigeria's import trade and employing 20,000 Nigerian workers, bewailed the length of the war, which had caused a 25 per cent drop in its turnover.

The British stepped up their efforts. So did the Russians. The motives of the Russian ruling class are essentially the same as the British. Though they had few investments in Nigeria, they used the war as a heaven-sent opportunity to regain the influence in West Africa which they had lost when Nkrumah was kicked out of Ghana in 1966.

They will split the post-war Nigerian market with the West. They did not mind sharing it in Ghana.

The big Russian guns around the Ull airstrip, the lifeline for Biafra, clinched the war militarily for the Federals. The loss meant an end to the outside supplies of

guns and ammunition. Starvation was beginning to affect the Biafran upper classes with the cessation of 'mercy flights'.

The Biafran military government had been able to cream off at least 10 per cent of the mercy flights as well as charging hard currency for landing rights to buy guns. Ojukwu, faithful to the laws of the market, introduced no form of rationing. Poor people, including children and the old, died in droves.

The soldiers were more moved by the emaciated near-corpse who were their fellow villagers and kinsmen.

They could not ship out their children, as the Biafran upper class did. The plight of the starving slowly sapped the soldiers' will to fight.



The causes of the war lie in the history of Nigeria and are embedded in the political structure of the country created by the departing British colonialists.

West Africa first became an important supplier of raw materials to the Europeans around 1450. The Portuguese began shipping out slaves from Lagos, taking them via the triangular trade route to the West Indies. Most of the European powers rushed to share in this lucrative trade.

By the 17th century, the British slave trade had become big business. Quick fortunes were made. The human merchandise shipped in bulk and sold in the sugar plantations became the capital on which the great port of Liverpool was built.

The Barclays brothers, Quaker slavers, used their fortunes to found the bank. A group of West Indian planters financed Watts' steam engine and other important inventions vital to the progress of the industrial revolution. In West Africa, kingdoms were formed that were based on profits made by the African middlemen. They raided each other for captives who were then sold to the white slavers.

When slaving became unprofitable - basically because the French planters were undercutting British sugar prices and British capital was now more interested in the East Indies - Prime Minister Pitt encouraged Wilberforce to introduce his Bill for the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.

The West African chiefs lost their incomes and their empires faded away or were kept half-alive by small trading. The exploitation of these areas was carried out in the 19th century by a pioneer-

ing imperialist called Goldie who set up the Royal Niger Company.

By the late 18th Century, surplus capital was bursting Europe at the seams and had to be exported to the colonies. The Berlin Conference of 1885 saw the great scramble for Africa. West Africa was rapidly annexed by the French, Germans, Portuguese, Spanish and British.

Lord Lugard, fresh from sorting out the natives in Uganda, was sent to the River Niger territory. He quickly annexed the West, where the constantly warring Yoruba kingdoms did not resist.

The North was a harder nut to crack. Ruled by devout Muslims, the Hausa population was forced into producing crops for their conqueror overlords. They made a bargain with Lugard who, having shown them his Gatling gun, 'had impressed upon them the inevitability of British rule'.

The lands east of the River Niger, 80 years later to become Biafra, were not grouped into kingdoms at the time of the British arrival. Slavery had not affected them politically. Instead the people, mainly Ibo, elected village chiefs and councils of elders.

Because the East had not been badly depopulated by the slave trade and warring kingdoms, overpopulation was an increasing problem. Unlike the North, there was no ruling class with a vested interest in keeping their people ignorant and missionary schools were popularly received. Armed with literacy and labour skill, millions of migrants left the crowded East to go to the richer areas of the North and West, where peanuts and cocoa were becoming the main exports of Nigeria.

The migrants were assimilated in the West. In the North they were forced to live in ghettos outside the city walls. By the 1960's there were 1,300,000 Easterners in the North and another 500,000 had taken up jobs in the West.

The Second World War increased investment in Nigeria. The Malayan colonies had been cut off and tropical supplies of rubber were imported instead from Nigeria. Lagos expanded as a port, catering for the cross-Atlantic convoys and as Southern air base for the North Africa campaign.

Black Nigerian nationalism developed. This was spearheaded by Azikiwe, an ambitious journalist from the East who had been educated in the United States. He became a household name in Nigeria in 1949 when his paper was banned for championing the cause of the Enugu miners who had been shot down on the orders of a white policeman during a militant strike.

The colonies were no longer paying their way in the dying British empire. Nigerian nationalism was never strong enough to send the British colonialists packing. Instead, the trend of trade away from the colonies towards the already economically developed countries drew personnel and capital from West Africa. But the British needed to leave behind reliable stooges whom they could trust to protect their still sizeable interests.

Azikiwe was recalled and formed a party, the NENE. The Action Group was set up by a group of small businessmen in the West and the Northern Muslim leaders grouped themselves together in the Northern People's Congress.

## Corrupt Stooges

These politicians were to prove the most corrupt of any in Black Africa. Paying lip-service to democracy and the people, they embezzled government funds and sold contracts to foreign firms for a 10 per cent fee. They fed racial and tribal lies about one another in their fight for a slice of the Federal cake.

As the British prepared to move out, it was necessary to go through the motions of 'democracy' by holding elections. The party politicians hired bands of thugs who toured the countryside destroying ballots, kidnapping opposition candidates and threatening the voters.

The Northern People's Congress won a majority of seats. The representation had been deliberately calculated by the British. Because the Northern Muslim leaders were rigidly conservative, they could be used to counteract the uppishness of the southerners who, although

corrupt, had capitalist ambitions that might later clash with the British.

Independence saw the North in power in alliance with the East, led by Azikiwe. This alliance between the feudal North and the more progressive East was due to Azikiwe's dislike of the other southern party, the Action Group in the West. He felt more able to handle the Northerners, but it was a bad calculation.

In 1964 the workers of Nigeria erupted in a general strike which for a time seemed potentially revolutionary. The workers voiced the disgust felt by the mass of people for their political bosses. The strike was gaining momentum, demanding nationalisation and investigations of corruption, when the leaders, frightened of the force they had brought into action, called it off.

The governments of the four regions persuaded the union leaders to end the strike 'in the national interest. Hesitant union chiefs received visits from the tough boys.

The workers, Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba, were united against the Federal and regional governments. They had all suffered baton charges, tear gas, mass arrests, and shooting.

Riots broke out in the West following the installation of a puppet regime by the Northern feudalists. Azikiwe and the East split from the North. The Muslim chiefs had out-maneuvred him and now had their own strong man in the South.

In January 1965, an army coup led by five majors completely changed the situation. The party bosses in the West and North were killed, including the prime minister, Abubaka. The majors also killed senior Western and Northern army officers.

One officer escaped - an Ibo, named Ironsi. He rallied 'loyalist' forces and took over from the rebel majors.

All political parties were banned. Ironsi promised an investigation into the private fortunes of the politicians and civil servants and threatened to wash all the dirty underwear of the ruling class in public.

The dispossessed Northern rulers seethed. The Southern politicians were in jail and gagged. The Northerners began to fan the myth of 'Ibo dominance'. They said the army was staffed by Ibos and that the East was trying to subjugate the rest of Nigeria.

## Pogroms

Ironsi announced a decree to change the country from a federal to a unitary structure. Terrified that they would lose the base of their power - the regional state coffers and officers - the feudal Muslim politicians led hordes of hired thugs into the Northern Ibo ghettos. Murder and mutilation were set loose. In the barracks, Eastern soldiers were massacred in their beds.

Thousands died but many escaped, Hausas sheltered fleeing refugees. The racist and tribal propaganda of the Northern rulers had not affected the masses.

180,000 refugees flooded into the East where Ojukwu, the military governor of the region since the first coup, arranged to ship out migrant Hausas. He was terrified of reprisals. Refugees came from all walks of life. They included top Lagos civil servants, teachers and 12,000 railway workers.

Appeals were made to the Federal government to help resettle the refugees. Gowon was now in power, a puppet of the feudalists, chosen because he came from a small Northern tribe. He gave no promises to Ojukwu, not even a guarantee of safety if he came to Lagos to talk.

The refugee problem seemed hopeless. One way of overcoming it was to qualify for the oil royalties which would finance settlement by development in an independent area bursting with the skills which the refugees had brought.

Oil in the past five years had become twice as lucrative as Nigeria's former top export, cocoa. For the first time, the East found itself richer than any other region.

The Easterners, smarting over the massacres in the North which had not differentiated between Ibo and non-Ibo, saw oil as their salvation. Since the Federation offered nothing except massacre, they would secede with the oil and build their own nation: Biafra.

There is no doubt that this was a popular decision and not one taken just by a clique of Army officers and 'top men'. On 26 May 1967, the consultative assembly of chiefs and elders, 335 members elected by the villages, gave Ojukwu a unanimous mandate to pull out of the Federation. This he did on 30 May.

Now the nation of Biafra is dead, with up to three million of its people massacred and many more due to die in a few weeks because of the relief blockade.

The workers and peasants, not just the bosses of Biafra, wanted to be free. They failed. The big guns of the imperialist powers of Britain and Russia saw that,

# SMC... NOTHING NEW

Mike Urquhart

Over two thousand people trooped into Cleveland on the weekend of Feb. 15 for what was billed as an historic meeting of the anti-war movement. The meeting was called to lay plans for the spring anti-war offensive.

To no one's surprise, the conference ground inexorably to its pre-ordained conclusion, the adoption of the proposal submitted by Carol Lipman and endorsed by the YSA, calling for a spring anti-war offensive the week of April 13-18.

Early in the conference, during the first plenary session (held to discuss proposals on the future direction of the movement), it became clear that virtually all radical tendencies were there and offering proposals.

The debate clearly polarized between YSA-SMC and everyone else. The YSA argued that their proposal for mass actions was the type of politics which had historically proven itself able to build the anti-war movement and the SMC, and should therefore be continued. The other groups, said the YSA, had no such evidence to present, only the dissolution of SDS and the inconsequential demonstrations in Chicago last October and other parts of the country which had been billed as mass demonstrations, but which attracted at most a few thousand people.

What this approach represented was a systematic attempt by the YSA to avoid any real political discussion, any assessment of the anti-war movement and its future direction. Time and again they would refuse to answer the political points raised, arguing instead that they were for a united movement while other groups wanted to split the movement, or that they were for mass demonstrations while the other groups were for small, scattered and isolated demonstrations.

With only five minutes allotted for motivation of the major proposals, there was virtually no discussion on the floor of the conference of the basic questions facing the anti-war movement.

When it came time for a vote, a straw pole was taken in order to see which were the proposals with the most support. RYM II, the Independent Radical Caucus, and YAWF announced that they were merging their proposals. It was never made clear exactly what this merged proposal was.

After the merger, it was clear that this proposal and that of the YSA-SMC were the major ones and they were counterposed for the final vote, with the YSA-SMC position easily passing.

After a couple of amendments were proposed, and voted down, the YSA moved to cut off consideration of any further amendments. This passed, and hence, though the conference voted to support the April 15 demonstrations, the resolution contained no political program other than immediate withdrawal. The SMC thus took no position on the politics of those demonstrations organized by the New Move and the Moratorium. This battle will have to go on at the local level.

The conference accomplished in two days exactly what it was organized to do, namely, endorse the YSA's proposal for the spring offensive. What it failed to do was to make any assessment of the present state of the anti-war movement, and to have any serious discussion of exactly how this war is going to be ended.

The conference endorsed what it believed to be the strategy which had proven successful in building the movement and the SMC. It didn't consider the key role played by the demonstrations which made it impossible for Rusk or Johnson to go anywhere in the country, the Oakland Stop-the-Draft Week demonstrations, and the demonstrations at the Democratic Convention in Chicago.

The YSA assumes that the movement is in healthy shape, and should therefore continue to be built in the same manner. Hence, there was no recognition of the low level of politics expressed in the March Against Death and in the booring of David Hilliard during the November 15 San Francisco march and rally.

There was much talk at the conference of the power of the present movement, how it had greatly affected Nixon, etc., and how mass mobilizations can end the war. Dick Gregory even went so far as to assert that the youth themselves could bring the country to a halt and end the war, and he got a standing

ovation for that. Yet it was never explained exactly how this will come about, nor why the mass mobilizations of the past have not already done so.

Presumably more numbers is the key, yet it is not clear why Nixon can't as easily ignore a demonstration of ten million people just as easily as he did one million, or the millions who demonstrated on Oct. 15. The I.S. states unequivocally that it does not believe that even an enlarged movement could end the war through mass mobilizations alone.

The YSA position paper itself gives the essential reasons why this is so. In it they point out quite correctly that "the candidates of the Democratic and Republican parties - even those who call themselves peace candidates - are committed 100% to American Imperialism . . . none of them really favors the right of self-determination in Vietnam." It then rightly argues for no support to these politicians.

Earlier in the proposal it states that the "unprecedented turnouts at the anti-war demonstrations last fall testify to the power that we have." What power? The only power it would appear that they have is to bring pressure to bear on the politicians in power. Yet it is unreasonable to assume that these demonstrations can force a change in these politicians who are so firmly committed to American imperialism. And it is certainly obvious that the movement is not now capable of replacing those in power. In short, the YSA's own argument really testifies to the lack of power of the movement.

This lack of power is in large part a function of the social composition of the movement. Made up mainly of students, intellectuals, professional people, teachers, etc., the movement lacks the social power necessary to force a change in government policy. Even on Oct. 15, when millions of people stayed out of school and left their jobs, it did not bring the system to a halt nor disrupt it enough to end the war.

Only the working class, organized at the heart of the production process, has such power. The crucial role the anti-war movement can play is to present demands which represent a bridge between the current massive struggles of workers, which are mainly against the immediate effects of the war, and a future struggle against the war and imperialism itself.

Furthermore, we must look to the establishment of a party based on the working class as the only class capable of replacing those people now in power, and hence bringing about a fundamental change in America's foreign policy. Unless the movement can adopt a program which speaks to the struggles and needs of workers, it will be left speechless, as Carol Lipman was, when asked by workers in defense industries what they will do for jobs if the war is ended.

For the April 15 demonstrations, we therefore propose raising the following demands with equal emphasis: IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM AND ALL FOREIGN COUNTRIES - RECONVERSION OF THE ARMS INDUSTRIES TO PRODUCTION FOR USE, NOT WASTE AND PROFIT - NO MORE WAR TAXES ON WORKING PEOPLE, TAX THE RICH AND THE CORPORATIONS - NO WAGE CONTROLS AND UNEMPLOYMENT AS A METHOD OF FIGHTING INFLATION - SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS, TO BE FUNDED BY TAXING CORPORATIONS.

The YSA has charged that the IS is being sectarian in putting forth this program, that all we are interested in is getting recruits or turning the SMC into an I.S., and in splitting the movement. This is sheer nonsense. We put forth the above program as one we believe will be successful in building a movement capable of ending the war. We may be wrong on that, but our proposal should be debated on its merits for accomplishing that task, and not dismissed as sectarian.

The SMC conference resulted in no new direction or strategy for the anti-war movement. We can only hope that the movement does not retreat into the Democratic Party as it did in 1968, or through frustration undertake adventurist, Weatherman-type acts. In the future, unless the movement adopts a pro-working class orientation and develops a strategy for building working class activity against the war, it will be left with only the satisfaction of seeing Nixon barricade the White House, while business, including propagation of the war, continues as usual.



# Workers' Power



No. 4

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UNION BUSTING VS. RANK AND FILE MILITANCY

## Confrontation in San Rafael

Ted Dibble

When workers at the San Rafael, California, Independent-Journal walked out on January 7, they received little more than a footnote in the press. But what began as an apparently routine strike against a relatively small and obscure newspaper has become a conflict of national importance - a preview of the struggles that will dominate the '70's.

In San Rafael, a new rank-and-file militancy and a growing anti-labor offensive have collided head-on; the violence that has broken out is only a symptom of their confrontation.

The strike began after the Independent-Journal had made repeated attempts to break its workers' union, Local 21, of the International Typographical Union. For fifteen months before the strike, the newspaper's publisher refused to renew his contract with the ITU. After repeated attempts at negotiation failed, the paper fired five workers, including the union vice-president. These actions touched off the strike, and clearly revealed the publisher's desire to break the union.

The newspaper was well prepared for the strike. Before it began, the publisher hired a new business manager experienced in strike-breaking, purchased additional strike insurance, and converted the paper's building into a fortress by boarding up the windows and laying in hired guards.

The original attempts by management to deny the workers a union contract were followed, logically enough, by attempts to break the strike. As soon as the strike began, scabs were brought in to run the plant, and the paper has appeared regularly ever since. The strike-breakers live in the Independent-Journal's building, and take their meals in a near-by restaurant under the watchful protection of the company's armed guards.

### National Campaign

But the implications of the I-J strike go well beyond the attempt by one small paper to break a union. The actions taken by the Independent-Journal represent merely the most recent attempt at union-breaking in the printing trades. The same attack to which the San Rafael workers have been subjected has been directed at workers in the printing trades across the country.

One of the best-known examples of this national campaign has been the attack on the Los Angeles Herald Examiner strike. This strike, still unsettled, has lasted for more than two years. The Examiner has been published regularly by a crew of scabs and strike-breakers since the strike began. The printing workers in San Rafael are thus fighting not only against the management of their own paper, but against a larger campaign of repression as well.

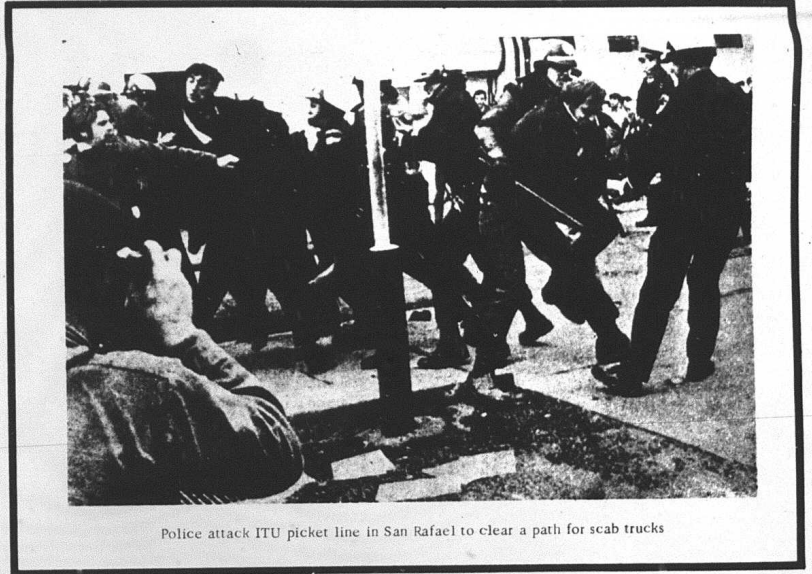
The effect of this concerted effort to break the union has been twofold. The first result has been the creation of both an atmosphere of bitterness around the strike and growing militancy among the union rank-and-file. In fighting for the continued existence of their union, the San Rafael workers, in effect, are fighting for their lives. The tactics of the paper's management

have elicited an angry response from workers throughout Marin County and the San Francisco Bay area. In a display of labor solidarity infrequently seen in the past few years, workers from other unions have appeared on the ITU picket lines repeatedly during the strike.

The second effect of the strike has been to generate insecurity among top labor bureaucrats. The campaign of strike-breaking and union-busting directly threatens their exalted positions in the labor hierarchy. Conse-

a company truck was demolished, and paint bombs were hurled at the building. Over 100 policemen had surrounded the building, and picketing, which had only been interrupted for a few minutes, resumed.

Throughout the morning hours, the demonstration was relatively uneventful. By early afternoon, however, the line had grown to approximately 1000 pickets in anticipation of the daily delivery of the newspaper, which was due to be taken from the plant. The strikers were de-



Police attack ITU picket line in San Rafael to clear a path for scab trucks

quently, they have been willing to mobilize large numbers of workers in support of the I-J strike, and two mass demonstrations against the Independent-Journal have been held.

Called by a committee composed of representatives from the Labor Councils of Alameda, San Francisco, and Marin counties, the second demonstration was held on February 14. Even though these labor officials were willing to call a mass mobilization in San Rafael, they undoubtedly planned little more than a day of peaceful picketing. But whatever the intentions of the bureaucrats may have been, the demonstration quickly passed out of their control.

Early in the morning on the day of the demonstration, the crowd of strikers and their supporters already numbered some five-hundred people. All the deep-seated bitterness and frustration which had been festering for over a year suddenly boiled to the surface, and the strikers attacked the newspaper's building. In short order, virtually every window in the plant had been smashed,

terminated to halt production and stop the day's issue.

Despite repeated warnings by the police to leave the area or face arrest, the crowd failed to disperse. Confronted with this opposition, the police hesitated, but finally charged the massed pickets. In the ensuing fight between the workers and police, one elderly ITU member was knocked to the ground by the police with such force that his leg was broken. Twelve pickets were arrested, including the union vice-president whose firing had been an issue in the strike, and two students. The police failed to emerge from the fight without casualties; three of their number had to be treated for injuries.

The police succeeded in moving the picket line back from the building, but they failed to break it, for the pickets maintained possession of the street surrounding the I-J building. Again the police issued repeated demands that the crowd disperse or face arrest, and as before this failed to intimidate the strikers. At one point police threatened to use tear gas to scatter the

pickets, but the line held.

This situation might have continued indefinitely, but the Labor Council bureaucrats intervened. Appalled by the militancy of the day's events, the union officials agreed to a deal with the newspaper's publisher: if the pickets would disperse, the day's issue of the paper would not come out.

Speaking over a bullhorn to the assembled strikers, the union officials claimed to have negotiated the deal, and that it represented a great victory for collective bargaining. Some officials were even rash enough to claim that the strike was nearly won. But as the paper's publisher was forced to admit, it was the militancy of the massed picket line that had shut down the paper for the day, not the bargaining skill of the union officials. The original request for the postponement of the daily issue apparently came from the police, who were uncertain of their ability to scatter the pickets, without provoking a full-scale riot.

After repeated appeals by the union officials to the pickets to leave the area, the line slowly dispersed. Resistance to the dispersal came mainly from the student picketers, who composed less than a third of the line, but many of the workers present were also reluctant to leave, sensing that victory was not yet won. The labor bureaucrats finally accomplished what the police could not, and succeeded in dispersing the picket line. In doing so, they served to defuse the struggle, and demonstrated their desire to keep the strike within "acceptable" limits. But as the strike continues, the TIU workers may force the struggle beyond those limits.

### Protect the Lines

If the I-J workers are to win the strike and avoid the experience of workers at the L.A. Herald Examiner, they must take steps to protect their picket lines. The February 14 demonstration was not the first to be attacked by the police. One month earlier, when several thousand workers turned out for mass picketing, the police attacked the pickets and escorted a scab truck through the line. Solitary pickets have been attacked and beaten by company guards repeatedly.

The only way to prevent these police attacks is to form workers' self-defense guards, armed and equipped by the union. The company hired additional armed guards for the strike; the union should respond in kind by arming a squad of workers to protect the pickets. Ultimately, only physical occupation of the I-J building and a sit-down strike can prevent the company from publishing the paper with scab labor. But as a first step, the inviolability of the picket lines must be established, and this can only be done by a self-defense guard.

The national campaign to break unions in the printing trades has been only one of the first steps in a round of new anti-labor acts. Legislation is now before the Congress which would bar "subversives" from critical industries, and provide for compulsory settlement of any strike adversely affecting the "national interest".

To fight this anti-labor campaign, workers will have to adopt new, more militant methods of struggle. Union officials will have to be pressured into action by the union rank-and-file, or replaced. As a new round of strikes approaches this fall and in 1971, and labor bureaucrats prove ineffectual in defending union members against the employers and Congress, workers will find that they must rely on themselves and their own collective power to transform their unions and defeat the anti-labor offensive.

## Workers' Power

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## NIXON'S FRAUD

If it wasn't for the fact that Nixon is playing with the lives and health of poor people and the living standards of the working class, his TV speech "explaining" his veto of the Health, Education and Welfare budget might have been called the "Richard Nixon Comedy Hour."

To make his attempt to cut the already miserable-health, education and welfare programs palatable, the President told us that his budget for fiscal 1971 called for "a smaller percentage of Federal spending for defense than in any year since 1950." Washington journalist I.F. Stone, however, points out that this just isn't true. Stone reports:

"In fiscal 1950, total Federal spending was \$76.7 billion and the military took \$13 billion or about 16%. The fiscal '71 budget on the other hand will be in the neighborhood of \$198 billion. The best information available (*Aviation Week*, Jan. 26) as this is written almost a week before the new budget was to be published, places the military's portion at \$71.1 billion. That is about 35% of total Federal outlays, or twice the percentage in 1950, and the total is five and a half times as great." (*I.F. Stone's Bi-Weekly*, Feb. 9, 1970)

Stone goes on to point out that the current spending level of the Department of Defense is about \$400 million above that of last year for the same period. His estimate is that if this continues, the military will spend around \$6 billion more than they were actually budgeted in fiscal 1970. In other words, even a budgetary cut, on paper, is no indication of a real cut.

According to Nixon, the Department of Defense's budget for 1971 will be \$5.3 billion less than 1970 on paper. I.F. Stone's point is that this may be just a smoke screen. And well it might. What Stone doesn't point out, however, is that even this cut is not in the area of arms production, that is, subsidies to the corporations. Fully \$3 billion of this "cut" is in salaries and wages of personnel, largely non-military, who have been working at military bases. Any of the rest of the cut is more than compensated for by the new spending on the ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) system.

As Stone points out, also, the reduced cost of the War in Vietnam is not the source of the \$5.3 billion cut. The \$6.2 billion reduction in Vietnam war costs is simply, and quietly being added to the more basic military expenditures.

In short, we have been had -- once again. The military budget continues to be the number one source of revenue, free for the asking, of the giant corporations, and the primary cause of inflation. It is for the health, edification and welfare of the American capitalist class that the Federal budget is structured and our tax dollars paid.

K.M.

## LABOR BRIEFS

The California State Supreme Court overturned the conviction of four farm workers who heckled Democratic Congressman John Tunney of Riverside at a grape strikers' rally because he refused to support the grape boycott. Tunney was booed and heckled by the farm workers when he addressed a rally in Imperial Valley on July 4, 1968 during the grape strike in that area. The same Tunney is now courting labor support for his candidacy for U.S. Senator.

If you think child labor has been abolished, you'd get a rude awakening by a recent study issued by the Labor Department. During 1967, some 60,000 investigations uncovered 18,536 violations of the child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act; over one-fourth of the firms investigated violated the law. For 1968, with some 77,000 investigations, a total of 14,117 minors were illegally employed. Farm labor violations included the following: an 8-year old boy suffocated under a load of wheat; two 6-year old boys injured - possibly permanently - when a harvester mangled their hands; a 15-year old who bled to death when his arm was torn off by a grain auger. Child labor is cheap labor, and the profit mills are indifferent to age and size.

A.D.



## Beware: New Anti-Labor Laws



One of the scandals of the American labor movement is the passivity of the organized working class in the face of anti-labor legislation. The Taft-Hartley and Landrum Griffin bills have been denounced as "slave labor laws" by no less a personage than George Meany. But after using that kind of language to describe this legislation, the labor movement has docilely accepted its slave status.

This position has become even more embarrassing with the rise of militant student and Black movements which have won serious concessions through militant tactics of civil disobedience. The fact that these movements with their comparatively weak social base have carried on these struggles, in which jail sentences became a mark of honor not only for the rank and file but especially for the leadership, is in sharp contrast to the timidity of organized labor with its 77 million members concentrated in the centers of industry.

The Nixon administration is now proposing new legislation which may meet with a different response. The new legislation comes at a time of rising militancy, diminishing possibilities for economic concessions, and growing tensions and rank and file revolt in the unions themselves.

The first part of the package is a proposal for a three-man board appointed by the President which would have the power in strikes judged by the President to conflict with the "national interest" (as defined presumably by Nixon's mill onaire backers) to impose final settlements after a compulsory thirty-day cooling-off period. An added measure, directed at the wave of rejections on the part of the membership of contracts agreed to by the leadership in negotiations, would simply dispense with the necessity of ratification of contracts by the membership.

While this latter provision will undoubtedly appear attractive to some of the less enlightened sections of the leadership, it is in fact a trap. Even without the compulsory arbitration which is part of the whole package, the lack of an aroused rank and file would leave the unions with no serious leverage in their struggle with the giant corporations. If the rest of the legislation is passed the result will be a union movement with no more bargaining power than those in the Stalinist bloc. The unions would become little more than administrators of dwindling health and pension plans.

It is unlikely that such legislation will achieve its purpose. The attempt to pass and enforce it will only increase the splits within the labor movement that have led to the Alliance for Labor Action break from the AFL-CIO. They are also likely to intensify the friction between leadership and rank and file. The end result may be more of the kind of militant struggles that characterized the Richmond oil strike and the battles in Schenectady around the GE plant.

A recent example of rank and file militancy in the San Francisco Bay Area was the San Rafael Independent Journal strike, where several local Labor Councils called for an anti-cop, anti-scab picket line that saw radical students and middle-aged unionists join forces to close down the plant. In spite of himself, Nixon may succeed in bringing about the kind of rebirth of a militant labor movement that Walter Reuther has been making speeches about for years.

E.H.

# "The USW is a Wholly-Owned Subsidiary of Kaiser Aluminum"

Jack Bloom

For 13 long weeks, the workers at a Kaiser Aluminum plant in Union City, California, were on strike (see I.S. # 14). They were striking one of America's largest corporations, and they had precious little help from the Steelworkers International, which they had just voted to join on the basis of the aid it had promised them in the strike and in collective bargaining.

In fact, if anything the International attempted to crush the efforts of some of the more militant workers to broaden the strike and to increase the pressure on Kaiser. This and other actions on the part of the Steelworkers and Kaiser have led some of the workers to suspect that the union and the corporation were in cahoots with each other; Kaiser would help the Steelworkers to organize the plant in return for an easy strike. Whether or not such an agreement actually existed, both parties acted as if it did.

Kaiser, of course, benefitted by having less 'inflationary' pressures on it and by keeping its control over 'management' decisions (read: higher profits, more speed-up, round-the-clock shifts, and less safety). The Steelworkers union bureaucracy benefitted by increasing the number of members they could control and fattening their dues coffers. Who lost? The ones who continually lose when squeezed in between the 'cooperation' of labor bureaucrats and managements - the workers.

## No Strike Clause

The plant is the newest of 44 Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation plants located around the country. It just opened a year ago, and this was its first strike. The men have just signed their first contract with Kaiser - a 3-year contract, with a strong no-strike clause in it, and with stringent penalties for anyone who even advocates striking, slow-down, or any of the means by which workers have traditionally protected themselves against management efforts to speed up operations or otherwise worsen the working conditions.

The contract does not expire at the same time as those at other Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation plants, or as those in any of the other Kaiser industries. Kaiser, like large employers generally around the country, has aimed to keep contracts from expiring at the same time across the country, in order to minimize the economic pressure that could be brought against them (Such efforts have most recently been brought to public attention during the GE strike, in which one of the main goals of the company was to prevent a recurrence of the coordinated, nationwide effort that took place).

The conglomerate of Kaiser industries is one of the 50 largest in the country. It includes steel, automotive, aerospace, broadcasting, real estate, aluminum and chemical, cement, mining, shipping and trucking industries. It has hundreds of affiliates in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and Australia. It had combined profits in the U.S. alone of \$166 million in 1967 and \$128 million in 1968.

Obviously, a small plant of 170 employees, such as the one which was on strike in Union City finds it difficult to take on such an employer and to put on enough pressure to force any substantial concessions. Not surprisingly, what Kaiser specifically wished to avoid in the strike was any linking of the struggle at the one plant to those at other plants.

The basis for such a link-up is there; the workers at other Kaiser plants face the same issues of lousy wages, speed-ups, miserable and unsafe working conditions. In fact, when a picket line was thrown up at a Kaiser building under construction, it almost closed down the work, despite the fact that it was unsanctioned and no prior effort had been made to contact the workers involved.

But Kaiser wanted the issue confined to a nice, quiet isolated strike where a few concessions would be made

(such as an improvement of the unusually low wage scale - \$1 an hour below Bay Area averages for comparable work), and important issues such as control over working conditions, safety regulations, the effect on the workers of the introduction of machinery, and other 'management' concerns, would be left untouched. The role that the union should play, as Kaiser saw it, would be to help keep the struggle confined to certain limits, to ride herd on those employees who were unwilling to stay within those limits.

Kaiser had good reason for wanting to make a deal with a union that would guarantee to keep a heavy hand on the workers. Though the plant is a new one, those who work in it have found themselves subject to the same deteriorating working conditions that have plagued workers generally across the country in the past several years.

The following are typical of the conditions in the plant:

1) No emergency stop buttons on the machines. So, if an accident happens and a hand, foot or some other part of the body gets caught, the worker is helpless unless he can reach the regular controls (Buttons were finally installed after one operator had a finger cut off).

2) Exposed parts and live wires; equipment running without guards. These endanger the life and limbs of the workers every day.

3) Ladders running two stories in the plant are unequipped with safety rings; steps have no friction on them. It is easy to slip and once slippage takes place there is nowhere to go but all the way down.

4) People are put on machines with no training at all, despite the fact that a week's training is a minimal period necessary to allow the worker to acquire the skill necessary to operate the machine safely.

5) There are virtually no personnel trained in first-aid, in case an accident should occur. Management claims that there is one supervisor per shift who is trained in first-aid. What that means in practice is that they can dispense aspirins and band-aids.

6) The first-aid room is kept locked, and only the foremen have the keys. The official reason given is that the workers would swipe the aspirins. The effect, of course, is that if there is an accident, there is no

quick way to get at first-aid materials.

7) Speed up is a constant threat. Foremen have the "right" to regulate the equipment for experimentation, repairing and training. Increasing the speed of operation is "experimentation" and it is done all the time, forcing the workers to accommodate themselves to the machines and also making the work more dangerous.

8) 21 turn. The company proposed that the workers work an around-the-clock schedule, running 3 shifts a day, 7 days a week, with no extra pay for work on Saturday and Sunday.

9) All of this enforced by an authoritarian structure in which there is a long list of things men are not permitted to do - and points are given for violations. Enough points could result in an employee's dismissal. For instance, one worker was late to work because he went to see a company doctor about a painful injury received on the job. He was given a point. 9 points in 12 weeks lead to a warning the first time, dismissal the second time.

The deal between Kaiser and the USW was apparently in force from the beginning. Out of the first 30 men hired to work in the plant, 15 were confirmed Steelworkers, 10 were uncommitted, and 5 had loyalties to 3 different unions among them. 3 guys came to work in the plant who were related to steelworker big-wigs. One is now the son-in-law of one of the steelworker district bureaucrats, who negotiated the final settlement of the strike. The other 2 were sons of the International Leadership. All 3 went to work in the plant just before the election which took place July '69, and quit when the strike began on September 12.

The ILWU, which along with the IAM was fighting for the right to collect the men's dues, felt that the case indicating collusion was strong enough to file a grievance with the NLRB, charging unfair labor practices on the parts of the United Steel Workers and Kaiser. This action put a freeze on the election for a year - which meant that for a year the workers at Kaiser were forced to work without a contract and without elementary union protections. Eventually, the NLRB, as usual unwilling to open such a can of worms, ruled against the ILWU.

Shortly after the ruling the election was held; the USW won by a large margin. Part of the reason for the one-sided vote was resentment felt toward the ILWU for having caused the men to work so long without a contract.

Once the USW was in, the men began to prepare for the strike they had been anticipating. The strike vote was unanimous. Now was the time for the union to deliver its share of the bargain. The workers, anxious to begin the strike, did not wait to accumulate a local strike fund. Instead, they relied on getting help from the International.



Help had been promised them if they joined. They were told that no one would get hurt in the strike, that the USW would pay rent if the men couldn't afford it, and that car payments would be made, etc. It was only after they were out on strike that they found that the 'benefits' consisted of a meager \$10 per man per week.

The USW has never offered to pay regular strike benefits out of the national treasury. This fact has been the source of much organized resistance to the leadership and battles were fought and lost on it at the heavily-stacked conventions in 1942, 1952, and 1958. Since then some sort of a strike fund has been set up. However, most of it is now tied up by a court order secured by a local in Pennsylvania. This is another ploy used by the bureaucracy; when this claim is settled, it will be tied up by another local court order, just as has happened in the past. In the meantime, of course, the money cannot be dispersed.

## Passive Role

When the strike began the USW leadership advised the men to go get other jobs. In fact, the strike was premised on most of the men doing so; food vouchers were available only to those few who could not find jobs or other means of support. It was clear from the beginning that the last thing they wanted was for the workers to play an active role in the strike.

During the entire 13 weeks of the strike, not one meeting of the local was called. The only thing workers were expected to do was to put in 4 hours a week of lonely picketing at an isolated plant gate. In the meantime, negotiations went on and the workers had no clear knowledge of what was happening and no way of controlling their negotiators. (Negotiators were elected, but once the strike began, they could not be changed according to USW by-laws, even if meetings had been held - a nice way of ensuring that the rank and file cannot control those who are supposed to be their representatives.)

Efforts on the part of individuals or small groups to pressure the district leadership into calling a meeting were brushed aside. The excuse was that it was too expensive to rent a hall in which to hold a meeting, although the AFL-CIO Labor Temple in Oakland would have been available anytime for free.

It is easy to see why the union leadership would act this way. As far as they are concerned, the strike is the affair of 'labor' (meaning the official union bureaucracy) and management. The last thing they want is a third force sticking its head in - i.e., the collective power of the workers. So they send the workers home; they make it impossible for them to come together and act independently.

The idea is to use the workers as a battering ram rather than to make it possible for them to act in their own interests.

Whether or not Kaiser and the USW were in cahoots, both of them have a common line of interest: to maintain the rule of the bureaucracy over the men. Yes, limited struggles will be conducted. But only in such a way as to not upset the applecart - no one gets hurt except the workers.

As the strike wore on, the workers grew more demoralized. Few had any sense of what was happening, or of how Kaiser could be beaten. Week followed after week; the plant remained closed, men were running out of money, and still nothing changed. Kaiser was not budging on the major demands of getting rid of the 21 turn, increasing pay, bettering safety conditions and providing training time for new personnel on the machines. It all appeared futile. Men began asking, "Why stay on strike?" and this in turn became another reason why the bureaucracy failed to call a meeting. They didn't want the men to vote to end the strike; they wanted to maintain it on their terms.

Late in the strike - about the 9th week - a couple of union militants decided that either the conduct of the strike had to be changed (get the workers actively involved; start making efforts to broaden the struggle, to link up to other Kaiser plants, and to make a political attack on Kaiser) or it should be ended. Merely continuing to picket one small plant, with no aid or support from outside was a dead-end. So they decided to begin efforts to force a union meeting and to begin an attack on Kaiser which could show the way toward a winning strategy.

Calls began going out of the office, trying to get union members to a demonstration against Kaiser at the Kaiser Center, a plush complex of offices and stores on Lake Merritt in Oakland. On Wednesday, November 26, the day before Thanksgiving, about 15-20 men showed up, a few with their wives and children. They were joined by about 10 members of

the International Socialists. The entrances were picketed and leaflets appealing to Kaiser employees and others to help were handed out; some trucks were turned away.

After a few hours of this, everyone got together in front of the center for a press conference and a demonstration. All the press had been called, but only channel 7 came and filmed people marching around chanting "On strike! Shut it down!" "If the boss gets in our way we're gonna roll right over him." Kaiser officials appeared and stood there, glowering. (The news on channel 7 showed no trace of the demonstration. Edgar Kaiser is a very powerful man in the Bay Area, where he lives, and not one to be lightly crossed. Publicity was what was wanted; publicity would be hard to get.)

The demonstration was small, but it was a good beginning. The morale of those who participated was higher. Word had reached the men that if they arrived early in the morning they might be able to halt the construction of the Kaiser annex that was being built across the street.

Everyone recognized the need to unite with other Kaiser workers. There was talk of trying to get in touch with other plants whose workers faced many of the same problems and who might see the need to unite and fight. But to do this it was necessary to mobilize a large number of union members, which made the fight for control of the union that much more important. Another demonstration was planned for the following week. In the meantime, plans were made to get a petition going to demand a union meeting.



The union leadership was not sitting idly by while all this took place. One of the men who was calling others from the union office to get them to come to the next demonstration was thrown out of the office for 'using the phone for non-union business.' Rumors began to spread around of threats against the lives of the local president and others if they participated in this activity.

Veiled and not so veiled threats were circulated that those who stepped out of line would be fired and blacklisted, so that they could not get a job anywhere the USW had either jurisdiction or influence. The efforts on the part of rank and file members to organize independently were not taken lightly by the union bureaucracy; they understood the threat it presented to them.

The second demonstration was about the same size as the first. It began early on Wednesday morning, with pickets at all the major entrances. A few trucks refused to come through the lines. One man who was delivering pies to one of the stores in the Kaiser Center, and had come in before the lines were set up, handed the pickets a sample pie as he left.

One of the construction workers came to find out what was happening; when he learned Kaiser was being struck, he said he and his fellows would refuse to cross the line. Kaiser officials became very upset; they came down to talk to him, arguing that this was not a sanctioned picket line - by the local, the International, nor by the Alameda County Central Labor Council. Therefore, the construction workers had no right to refuse to cross the line (meaning they would be fired if they did refuse).

A principle tool used by the corporations to weaken and divide the workers is to split them into small unions and then pit each group against every other group. "No-strike" clauses are put into contracts which prohibit workers from refusing to cross picket lines of other workers. This, of course, weakens the bargaining power of all workers, and only the corporations benefit. The labor bureaucrats, concerned only with their own petty jurisdictional squabbles, have

gone along with it, and have even encouraged it.

Corporations are huge and powerful creatures. Moreover, in important issues they are usually aided by the government. For example, in the current "war" against inflation, Nixon basically has 2 options - to weaken the bargaining power of workers or to hold back rising prices by price freezes. For the obvious reason that the government is allied closely to big business, he has chosen the first and is now trying to "cool the economy off" - meaning to cut back employment levels, and to lower the standard of living of the majority of people in the country. Faced with such powerful enemies the last thing workers need is to be split into small, ineffectual sections.

The construction worker was not satisfied with the word of the Kaiser official. He called his union headquarters and had the word confirmed. And so he and those with him reluctantly resumed work.

The demonstration broke up after awhile. Everyone went home. Still another demonstration was planned. But the simple taste of potential worker solidarity was enough to shake up Kaiser officials. That morning they called up USW headquarters and offered to resume negotiations that had been broken off weeks before. Their offer was to keep the 21 turn, to raise pay levels, and to pay time-and-a-half for Saturday and double-time for Sunday.

USW officials were reluctant to accept the offer. For their own reasons they wanted to get rid of the 21 turn; doing so would give them a strong selling point in picking up other locals. But they wanted to do it within the rules accepted by them and Kaiser - by trying to outwit the company. They hoped to use the men as pawns, and projected a strike lasting perhaps another 3 or 4 months time.

But the petition demanding a union meeting was being circulated. The men were tired of staying out of work and getting nowhere. If a strike was to be had that would hurt Kaiser - fine! Otherwise, back to work! Feeling this pressure the USW settled, on substantially the terms offered by Kaiser. The vote to return to work was almost unanimous.

Unions were built by and for workers, and it took a bitter and often bloody struggle to get them. They were built to defend workers against miserable and unsafe working conditions and speed-ups, and to raise the standard of living outside the plant by increasing wages. Most important, they were built by the active participation of workers who knew that the struggle for the union was necessary for survival.

For a variety of reasons, the union bureaucracy has become independent of the rank and file, and stands as a force over and against the workers. They have continued to wage struggles, sometimes militant struggles, but this has always been because of pressure from below. What they have done is to try to confine the struggles to wage and benefit increases, and have avoided taking on the issue of deteriorating working conditions.

Increased wages is the easiest demand employers can encounter. Because the large corporations are virtually in a monopoly position they can pass those increases on to the consumers (another word for workers) and thus nothing really changes. That is one reason why real wages not only have not risen in the past 5 years, they have dropped so that workers today can buy less than they could in 1965.

This situation will not change until workers can successfully demand of their employers that wage increases be tied to contracts that guarantee no price increases. But this last demand is one which the union leaderships are unwilling to take on because it involves more than a minimal defense of workers' interests; it involves an aggressive attack on the power and profits of the corporations, challenging the present structure of the status quo of capitalism.

## Working Conditions

In the meantime, while the wages issue has become paramount, working conditions have been ignored by the unions, and they have steadily deteriorated. Speed-up is common in the shops and there is little protection for the worker. These are usually local issues; the initiative for raising them and fighting them must come out of the workplaces themselves. But this is just what the bureaucrats are opposed to; they have been constantly seeking to take power and initiative out of the hands of the rank and file. Hence the concentration on wage demands which can be settled at the national level, and which do not raise the issue that threatens to upset the whole structure of which they have become a part: workers' control of working conditions.

The unions have taken on the task of disciplining the workers within the confines of the contract; smashing

# FRUEHAUF: WOMEN ON STRIKE

Sara Buckley

wildcat strikes, forcing the workers to cross the picket lines of other workers, weeding out troublemakers, etc. What "settlements" come down to is a deal - management 'gives' some increase in wages and benefits and the union promises that workers won't do anything (like strike) to change working conditions during the contract period.

It is for these reasons that there has been increasing resistance to the union leadership at a rank and file level. Struggle committees, radical caucuses and other organizations have been springing up all across the country. Wildcats, often directed both at the unions and management are as common today as official strikes, and 14% of all contracts negotiated at the upper levels are rejected at least once by the rank and file, who feel with good reason that the unions are not doing an adequate job.

When the men went back to work in Union City, they found that conditions had not improved much. Kaiser has been continually harassing them and seems to be pushing to see what the limits they can get away with are. They have not yet printed up the contract so that the men can see what rights they are legally entitled to.

People are bounced from one job to another without regard to seniority, and such reassignments can only be changed by going through the grievance procedure - a process that takes at least several weeks. In the meantime, a man is stuck with his assignment.

Promotion has been on the basis of favoritism, not seniority (the contract says seniority is supposed to prevail insofar as it is consistent with "fitness and ability"). Management has chosen to interpret this to virtually read seniority out of existence.

The point system is being used viciously. One man who was 1 minute late to work got 3 points - a penalty which is normally reserved for a full day's unexcused absence.

Foremen have been working on the equipment - a right which is traditionally reserved to the men, who feel quite correctly that they are the ones who have to work on the machines day in and day out and they should have control over those machines.

Some of the men have even found that the pay increase has been minimal - in certain cases as little as 5¢ per hour.

## No Leadership

The reaction of the rank and file has been grumbling and griping. There has been joking talk about wildcats and walk-outs. The men recognize that the only way their grievances can be satisfactorily resolved is by collective action. The reason why a wildcat strike is only being joked about is the understanding that for it to be successful, it would have to have committed leadership. And it is perfectly clear to everyone that the union will not provide such leadership.

Popular graffiti in the Kaiser bathroom illustrates the confidence the men have in the union: "The USW is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Kaiser Aluminum."

This estimate is quite realistic. The USW negotiated a 3-year contract. As far as they are concerned, all struggle is over for 3 years. They will quietly sit back as Kaiser gnaws away at the rights and working conditions of the men. Not only will the union not lead a struggle, they will actively oppose any efforts on the part of the rank and file to attain some measure of control.

It is obvious that if anything is to be done about these conditions, the men will have to organize their own leadership and seek to challenge the dominance and control of the USW bureaucrats. In the short-run, this means fighting for control of the local with a program of workers' control over working conditions. No one but the men who work in the plant should tell them how their work should be done.

Of course, such a struggle cannot be resolved in this plant or in this local alone. It will be necessary to develop ties to other locals in the USW and other plants owned by Kaiser. It is only by linking up with similar struggles that workers - black or white, man or woman - can have a chance to really improve their own conditions.

The struggle to take over the union and make links with other workers won't be easy. It is obvious from the USW reaction to the small rank and file rebellion that took place during the last strike that such efforts will be met with repression. The USW - the only CIO union organized from the top down - has a rigid hierarchy that runs the union with an iron hand. But this fight and others like it are absolute, necessary for workers to become strong enough to wage their struggles for a decent life in and out of the workplace.

Employees in Fruehauf's home office in Detroit, about 80% of which are women, organized UAW Local 889 in May, 1969, as a means of forcing management to recognize their bargaining unit. Fruehauf Corporation is the country's largest manufacturer of truck trailers. The production workers in Fruehauf's plants belong to the United Auto Workers, while the office staff have been unorganized. The workers in the Detroit home office are attempting to change that situation.

For the most part office workers everywhere, many of whom are women, are unorganized. They lack the protection and security which a union can bring. Without a strong union, the employer can reward or punish as he pleases. Increasingly, office workers have tried to organize, but employers put up a determined resistance.

One factor delaying attempts by the UAW to unionize the office department of the auto industry is that when production workers receive wage gains through new contracts, increases are automatically given to the office workers.

After over two years of attempts at organization, the secretaries, janitors, clerks, and technical workers organized a UAW unit, won a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election, and began negotiations.

These workers had decided that collective action was the only way to get better working conditions. At Fruehauf, the workers were underpaid, forced to work extra days without overtime, were transferred or promoted to other jobs irrespective of seniority, had practically no retirement benefits, and were subjected to other arbitrary abuses.

Management has treated this newly-formed bargaining unit in a manner reminiscent of the tactics used during the 1930's against the unorganized male industrial labor force. That was an era when unionization was a relatively new thing. Unions now are a force to be reckoned with; but what of an organizing push into new territory, especially where a large percentage of workers are women?

Employers, even in the auto industry where production workers have been organized for over 30 years, are fighting against the organization of office workers. It is significant that, in a city like Detroit, known as a union town, there has been practically nothing reported in the newspapers on the Fruehauf strike, one which involves a new sector of the labor force and has been continuing despite frigid weather, the Christmas holidays, and constant harassment since November 19.

In an attempt to break the strike, scabs have been hired to replace strikers at the same or even higher rates of pay. Promises of special favors to individual strikers have been another tactic, but the general rule seems to be intimidation. Three strikers were hit by a car driven by a company man (the driver slowed down, took aim, then floored it into the strikers). This incident triggered strike support from UAW production workers and from Women's Liberation.

Fruehauf approached bargaining with a closed mind. A formal complaint was brought against Fruehauf by the NLRB on December 1 with the following charges: 1) refusal to bargain in good faith on matters relating to union security; 2) threatening to discharge union members and replace them with strike-breakers, and 3) taking action on wages without negotiations with the union. (Fruehauf's executive vice president, it should be noted, also occupies the post of a commissioner with the Michigan Employment Security Commission. As such it is

supposed to be his duty to uphold Federal and state right-to-organize laws.)

Detroit police have been called in by the company to protect the scabs (many of which were Fruehauf employees prior to the strike). At times as many as 200 police converged on the pickets. The cops carried night sticks, tear gas, thick wood riot batons and shotguns. The close association between the company and the "protectors of liberty" (slogan painted on Detroit police cars) is quite obvious.

A major weakness of the strike is that the employees are not united. Out of the original 300 workers (before the strike began), as of the end of January about 190 were out on strike. Scabs have been hired so that the office workforce is complete.

Despite this, the Fruehauf strikers are confident of success. Morale is high. The women actively attempt to prevent scabs from crossing the picket lines despite the presence of police officers. Squirt guns filled with putrid-smelling fluids were used on the scabs. Songs and chants have been made up.

One woman striker gave this explanation of the attitude of the non-striking women employees: the women are brainwashed about the position of women. They feel that their earnings are only a means of helping their husbands support the family. They don't care how much they earn or how secure their job is, since their husbands will support them anyway.

The traditional dominance of men over women has created a passiveness which will be a major hindrance in organizing women workers, particularly among women office workers where another factor complicates the situation, i.e., the fact that the job has traditionally meant more status than, for example, the job of lower-level hospital workers.

The spread of information on strikes and organizing efforts involving women is an important means of building confidence and unity among various types of women workers. Women office workers must become conscious of their need for liberation both as women and as workers before they can fight effectively for either.

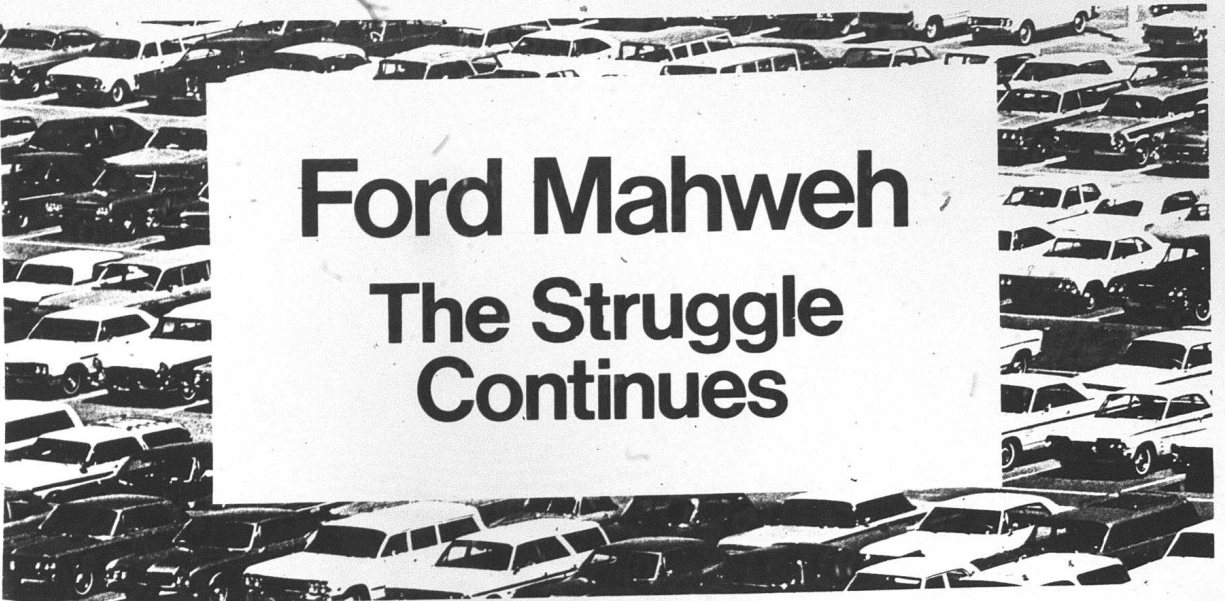
## Strike-breakers

Events on February 5 and 6 offered an additional demonstration of the strike-breaking role of the Detroit police, who stood by as a 58-year-old picketer, known to have a heart condition, was slugged and knocked to the ground by a young scab using brass knuckles. The scab escaped to the safety of the Fruehauf building while a cop watched, who then took his time about summoning aid for the old man.

The union has asked for support from other locals, and some have responded. The strikers want and need massive support to stop the scabs. About 300 people from the surrounding universities, plants, and offices came down to the line on February 6, including about 35 I.S. members from Detroit and Ann Arbor. The strong support displayed definitely raised the morale of those on strike.

Scabs were pushed and shoved. Executive cars were hit and kicked; their antennae were broken. More of the same is wanted. The only way the strike can be won is by shutting the place down. Rank and file support must be mobilized to achieve this end. The Fruehauf strikers must pressure the union to demand the presence of workers from other area locals; together, they can prevent the office from operating at all.





# Ford Mahweh

## The Struggle Continues

The following is an interview with a young worker, now a member of International Socialists, who entered a Ford plant in New Jersey in 1964 upon graduation from high school. In 1968 he ran for committeeman with the support of most of the young white workers and black workers on an oppositionist platform, but lost by a small margin.

**Q.** What was the situation like in the shop when you first entered?

**A.** The men felt that the union was all-powerful. They had a lot of faith in the union, and believed that the union was a strong tool that would work for them.

**Q.** Did they differentiate between the local union and the International?

**A.** No, they didn't. They took it all as a whole.

**Q.** What were conditions like on the job?

**A.** Just bearable. There were numerous health and safety violations everywhere. For example, nauseating plant fumes, high noise level, and faulty equipment posed health hazards to the men.

Line time was set so you performed your function every minute and a half, non-stop for eight hours minimum, except for lunch. We produced one complete car every minute and a half.

Overtime was compulsory. From 1965 to 1967 we worked between 10 1/2 and 12 hours a day, six days a week. This was mandatory. In addition, there was optional overtime.

**Q.** Did you consider your contract a good one?

**A.** No, although it was relatively more decent than others. It's a three-year contract. We had a cost-of-living clause which we received in our pay on a weekly basis. It was computed hourly. If the cost of living went up for a given quarter, we got the percentage increase converted into hourly terms.

**Q.** What changes have occurred?

**A.** The majority of the men still have the same attitude towards the Union, but are not now and had not been active in the union. They live in fear of losing their job and management in general.

A lot of new people, hired in the last year and a half, were more aware than the twenty-year men of how the management was oppressing them and how the union was copping out. However, production on the new model has been reduced and people with less than three years seniority were laid off. This included approximately 99% of those willing to speak out against the company or union.

### Wildcats

**Q.** What about wildcats?

**A.** There were a lot of wildcats in 1965 and 1966. For example, the day before Thanksgiving, 1965, 300 night shift workers forced the gates closed at the end of the shift, temporarily locking in the night shift management and workers who did not support them. These people were locked in the parking lot and couldn't get out.

The main grievance centered around the fact that the company refused to give out paychecks, which were already prepared, on Tuesday instead of midnight Wednesday; since most of the workers lived from week to week on their paychecks and this week was Thanksgiving, this meant that they would not be paid in time to buy food to give their families a decent Thanksgiving.

The company brought in the police to put us off of company property, but when workers attacked one of the cops they retreated back to the public street. The plant security and several management people tried to forcibly open the gates, but were stoned by the men into retreat, thus creating a stalemate.

To get the workers to leave, management promised to pay us Wednesday at 10 o'clock a.m. Our local union bureaucrats verified this and the men left their positions at the gates, whereupon management cut off the locks. However, the day shift had already been barred from entering work, so the plant was shut down for the day.

When it came time for the company to make good their promise they reneged and closed the plant until the following Monday for a cooling-off period. Nothing was said about disciplinary action, until the following January when the company started having disciplinary hearings. At least 150 men, myself included, received two weeks disciplinary layoff and several were fired. The union entered grievances on our behalf, but that's the last we heard of it. To this date, the grievances are still pending.

Although there were many earlier wildcats, none of this proportion have occurred since. However, there have been several instances of unorganized walkouts, such as after King's assassination and the Newark riots.

### Hand in Hand

**Q.** Has anything been organized out of this?

**A.** No, lately the local union bureaucracy has been working hand-in-hand with the company officials to remove anyone who presents a threat to the union bureaucracy. There are no caucuses within the union, and any attempts to develop organization within the union are dealt with severely. Then too, the layoff of the young workers makes it difficult to develop an oppositionist organization.

**Q.** What are conditions like now?

**A.** Production has slowed down with the new model, causing a reduction of the work force. The line speed has been slowed to one car every two minutes, but the work load on the remaining workers has been increased. That is, the number of cars per hour has been decreased, but the amount of work required per man has been almost doubled.

Health and safety conditions are about the same -- still deplorable.

**Q.** Do you still have the escalator clause?

**A.** As far as the contract goes, the union seems to be willing to surrender the escalator clauses too easily, rather than negotiate for more. For example, the company has taken our cost-of-living and is holding back forty hours cost-of-living and pays it to us quar-

terly. Anything beyond forty hours we get in our check. They invest the money and we get nothing for it, and when it's given to us in a lump sum (unlike the old hourly arrangement), there's more taken out in taxes.

**Q.** When did you first become active in the shop?

**A.** During April and May, 1966, I witnessed the company's harassment of a fellow black worker. When I became interested and tried to help him fight for his rights, the company began harassing me.

I was working on the line in May when my foreman, who was screaming at me, accidentally spit on me. The black worker I had previously defended in turn came to my defence at which time the foreman told him, "Get out of here, you little black son of a bitch." This almost precipitated a walkout.

**Q.** What reaction have the company and the union had to your activity?

**A.** Since I became active the company has continually harassed me in every way conceivable, for every infraction of the rules no matter how minor. Despite this, it took them a year to give me a bad work record. They then moved me from one of the cleanest operations, paint repair, to the filthiest job in the department, underbody paint spraying. As a paint sprayer, I worked in complete isolation from the entire shift, unable to leave my job or talk to anyone because of the job location. The nearest co-worker was two hundred feet away.

Their harassment has not been limited to mere isolation. On one occasion I was ordered by the foreman to wipe compound off a car which was on the line. I was in a position where it was difficult for the line operator to see me. The same foreman gave the line operator a direct order to move the line while I was bending down wiping the compound off. The line operator questioned the order, but was told by the foreman, "I gave you a direct order to move that line, do it." Had I not jumped out of the way I would have been hit.

When I ran for committeeman in 1968 against the local bureaucracy, the bureaucracy turned against me. I don't know whether they considered me a threat, but in the future they refused to aid me in any way in my fights against the company. They refused to help me get any positive results out of my many grievance proceedings.

Last fall, I decided to participate in the November 14 moratorium march in Washington; I gave the company three-weeks notice that I would be out of work that day, and they said it was O.K. When I returned to work, I was given a disciplinary hearing and suspended for the balance of the shift and for the next three days without pay.

Despite the fact that the official UAW and ALA position was to support the moratorium, the local bureaucracy supported me only to the extent of filing a grievance in my behalf, which, like all other grievances I have filed, is still pending, doomed to be filed in the wastebasket. The local, while not opposing Reuther on the International level for supporting the moratorium, did nothing to support it on the local level.

Q. Do you feel that the treatment awarded you is typical of the treatment shop activists can expect?

A. Sure, the company and union resent anything different than they're accustomed to. The older workers feel their position is relatively safe, that they've done enough. They can't understand my association with and closeness to black workers and other young white workers who actually try to improve their lot. The older workers have a strong tendency to back those in their own age group, most of whom are World War II veterans who unionized the plant in 1948. There is a generation gap.

In addition, recent layoffs, both locally and nationally, hit the younger workers first. Since they tend to be more militant, this gives the company a firmer grip on the remaining workers.

## Workers and Students

Q. What is the attitude of the workers to student radicals?

A. The average worker in my plant is hostile to campus demonstrations, because they feel that radicals are destroying institutions which they have paid for, but never had the chance to attend.

Workers also quite rightly resent efforts like those of RYM and PL to force their programs down our throats.

On the other hand, certain attempts by radicals to work with labor, in support of the GE strike, for example, are being accepted more readily, in response to the willingness of some student groups to work along the lines of workers' programs rather than insist that the workers follow the students' programs.

Q. What about the middle-class anti-war movement?

A. The majority of workers I've spoken to support the anti-war movement in general, on an individual basis, but they are totally unwilling to organize for it because they feel it would be unpatriotic to do so.

Q. What perspective do you think student radicals and the anti-war movement should adopt today?

A. The left should orient toward the working class. I'm in favor of student groups continuing to grow on the campuses, but they should attempt to build bridges to labor through programs in support of strikes and of attempts to build organization on the shop floor. The student movement should assist the organizing efforts of radicals in the shops -- they have the time and the tools.

We need support--we need help in getting out newspapers, leaflets and other material. Students can do research that we do not have the time for, and when necessary give active support. In certain cases, they can do such things as put up picket lines so the company can not retaliate against us. They can engage in direct action projects jointly agreed on.

Of course, students who have the commitment and the guts should enter the shops and become part of the working class.

## Intensifying Struggle

Q. Do you think that struggle in the working class is intensifying?

A. Yes, there are more and more rank-and-file groups springing up, like the United Caucus, the United Black Brothers, the Black Panther Caucus, and numerous others without formal names. They are challenging the International bureaucracies of their individual unions.

Young workers are increasingly willing to oppose locals which have gotten bogged down since their initial gains. They're looking for more things and better lives for themselves and their class. They want better working conditions and resent the fact that Internationals are giving up escalator clauses in the contracts rather than adding to them. They are very hostile to the idea that the unions let the company force us to work ridiculous hours. Inflation, the surtax and the war, on an individual level, are the objects of constant complaint. Everyone resents the cutback in social benefits and the fact that the International bureaucracies are as removed from the local level as foreign governments.

People are showing they will not put up with this kind of thing much longer, and are beginning to look for new answers and new leadership.

# Flint: Revolt Against Speed-Up

Karl Fischer

Auto workers in General Motors' giant Chevy complex in Flint, Michigan, are waging a bitter struggle against company-implemented speed-ups of production assembly lines, and the layoffs that resulted from increased automation. In spite of company intransigence, and a union "leadership" more and more willing to sell its rank-and-file down the river, the strike entered its fourth month in late January, with the workers hanging tough.

The strike battle is being fought in the same city where massive sit-down strikes first forced recognition of the UAW 33 years ago. The plant on strike - Fisher Body No. 2 - was a key battleground in the sit-downs which started in December, 1936.

The present strike began in September, 1969, as the plant returned to operations after the model-year changeover. Before changeover, the production lines had been running at 44 1/2 cars per hour. When workers returned from the changeover period, they found that the company had restructured the lines, installed new automated spot-weld equipment, and speeded up the lines to 55 cars per hour.

In addition, the automation had resulted in a total of 700 workers - out of a plantwide total of 2300 - being laid off indefinitely, with little prospect of getting called back. The speed-up was all the more blatant in that the company had not even gone through the motions of time-studying the new job assignments, as prescribed by the contract, which is the usual method employed to squeeze more production out of workers.

As a result, a strike vote was taken and carried overwhelmingly, and the plant walked out. Faced with such solid militancy from the ranks, the local leadership supported the strike, and entered into negotiations with General Motors.

In early November, the uncompromising militancy of the strikers was dramatically confirmed when the company laid a new offer on the table. The offer called for a return to the old line speed, but also for a time-study of the new jobs to determine the final line speed, and to settle the issue of how many workers could be "legitimately" laid off. The workers saw through the thinly-veiled attempt to get them to submit to the company's methods of manipulation, and voted down the offer. They demanded no speed-up, no layoffs, period.

The hollowness of the union bureaucracy's militant phrases was exposed in early December, when UAW International President Walter Reuther entered the negotiations with GM. As talks began, Reuther insisted on the "democratic step" of a complete news blackout on the parlay. However, it was announced by the union that the "general objective" of the UAW was the return of the line speed to 44 1/2 cars an hour.

But, said Reuther, the contract "requires" a time-study. Therefore, it will "probably" be necessary to agree to "some" increase. Therefore, it will "probably" be necessary to have some layoffs - which "we hope to limit to 300". The benevolent leadership was, in effect, accepting the company's offer of the previous month - an offer which had been emphatically rejected by the ranks. This, however, would be a "victory" since it would "limit the company's prerogatives" in this area - ignoring the fact that the Flint workers had swept away those prerogatives through their militancy and determination.

The result is a situation quite familiar in the auto

industry; a voracious management that constantly attempts to apply the screws to its workers through speed-ups, layoffs, and job reassignments; a working force increasingly willing to struggle militantly against such exploitation; and a union leadership adept at mouthing tough rhetoric, but tripping over its own feet in its haste to sell out, once behind closed doors with its senior partners from management.

This is nothing new. It happened last spring in New Jersey, when a strike of Ford workers against company-enforced racism was opposed by the union leadership. It happened last March in Detroit, when a wildcat by Chrysler workers against unsafe working conditions was met with such frantic hostility that Reuther put the local union into receivership, and shoehorned workers back into the plant. And it happened in 1967, at the last national contract settlement, when Reuther agreed to the sell-out of the cost-of-living clause, following his time-honored maxim of "Sell out what they've got; give 'em what they don't need; and tell 'em it's a historic victory."

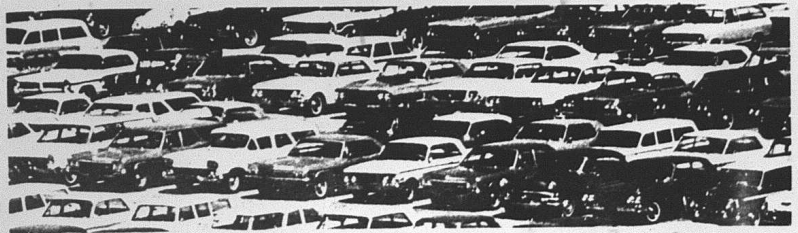
Next September, all national contracts are up for renewal in auto. This comes at a time when wages are being torpedoed by runaway inflation (the sellout on the cost-of-living has cost each auto worker over \$1000 since 1967); a time when the working conditions in auto plants are constantly being worsened by company-enforced speed-ups and layoffs; and when black workers, from one end of the country to the other are organizing and fighting back against racism on the shop floor.

Three years ago, Reuther was able to ram a miserable contract down the throats of the ranks. He was seriously challenged; there were wildcats and rebellions across the nation; but in the end he came out on top, and workers came out on the bottom. This fall, it may not be so easy.

The answer to such manipulation and sellout - not only for auto workers, but for workers in every mass production industry in America - is struggle; militant and uncompromising struggle for what is rightfully due. The prescription is not new; it is as old as the American working class itself. Workers in this country must and will organize themselves and fight for what they need; and what they need is workers' power - the right to collectively control their destinies as human beings.

That is what is really at issue in America today. In each factory and mill, the management continually reaffirms by their actions that workers are machines; that they can be bought and sold, hired and fired at will; that, like a machine, they can be simply speeded up to increase production, and laid off when a cutback is necessary. What workers are saying, in a thousand ways, is: No. We are not machines. We are human beings, and we will fight you in every way possible to win control over this system which oppresses us.

What these struggles are leading to is, indeed, workers' power; the right of America's working people to directly control the shops where they work, the neighborhoods where they live, the schools where they are educated, the government, the state, the economy, the entire society. What the working class is struggling toward is, in the best sense of the word, Socialism; and the auto workers in Flint, through their militant battle to win control of the factory they must work in, have set an example worthy of such goals.



# Swedish Miners' Strike: End of a Myth

Anders Melander

On Tuesday, December 9, at 6 a.m., 75 men staged a sit-down strike in the Svappavaara iron-ore mine in Sweden. 1150 followed them on Wednesday, and within two days 4,800 workers in Svappavaara, Malmberget and Kiruna had stopped work.

The men have been on strike now for two months. They are employed by LKAB, the state-owned iron-ore mining concern 1000 miles from Stockholm.

The workers demanded the abolition of a clause in the firm's controversial 'working laws' which says the employer has 'the right to lead and distribute the work and to employ labour'. The disputed clause is frequently used against individual workers to force them to do dangerous jobs against regulations.

Discontent with working conditions and wages had been growing for some time. Wages increased more slowly than for other workers and actually decreased compared with the rising cost of living.

The strike was prompted by anger over a promised wage increase that was smaller than expected.

The miners are also dissatisfied with the study techniques which work in the bosses' favour and harsh working conditions that prohibit conversation and drinking water during working hours.

Workers can only visit the lavatory in their own time and the meal-time lasts from 11:30 am, to 12. Workers who lose a minute's work are stopped an hour's pay.

The strikers demanded that they should elect their rank and file negotiators for future talks with LKAB. They have no faith in their union representatives. The strike committee elected Thure Rantatalo as their negotiator.

The miners also called for LKAB to leave the powerful employers' organisation SAF. The Swedish Communist Party, VPK, has attempted to introduce a Bill to this effect in parliament but the Social Democratic government has blocked it.

Press, radio and television have mounted a campaign against the strike, putting the employers' and union arguments, but barely mentioning the strike committee's complaints and demands. The union-owned evening paper, Aftonbladet pursues an anti-strike policy and has refused to print articles in favour of the strike committee.

But a Gallup poll in December showed that two-thirds of Swedish people support the strikers.

In the last 10 years production at LKAB has risen by more than 300 million kroner (£ kroner to \$). In the same period, the consumers' price index went up by 35 per cent, but LKAB wages increased by only 30 per cent and the workforce decreased from 7000 to 5200.

The employers' "union" the SAF is always quick to push through negotiations over unofficial strikes in privately-owned concerns, but it has held up talks at LKAB to show how much better things are run by private enterprise.

Right-wing critics are using the strike as an excuse to prove the evil and decadence of state ownership and social democratic government.

A mass meeting of strikers in the Kiruna sports hall elected a strike committee of nine workers as the right wing press denounced the stoppage as a move by the communists to regain their control of the local union, which they lost to the social democrats last year. This is totally untrue.

To show how close they are to their members, the union began talks with LKAB 1000 miles away in Stockholm.

The strikers said: 'Let them negotiate. It doesn't matter what they decide, it doesn't concern us at all. The union doesn't represent us in any way.' They demanded talks in Kiruna and nowhere else.

Massive solidarity was shown throughout Sweden by other workers, sailors, students, politicians, intellectuals, artists and housewives. Money for the strike fund started to flow in from the first day of the dispute and,

by the end of January, donations amounted to several million kroner.

At a mass meeting in Kiruna on 18 December, strike committee member Luspa asked the workers: 'will you go back to work?' Answer: 'NO.'

Luspa attacked the union for negotiating with LKAB in Stockholm without reference to the strikers. 'The union tells us to follow the regulations - then they form a negotiating delegation that is not elected by the workers themselves. They've started a wildcat negotiation,' he declared.

Three days later, a meeting turned down a union call for a return to work pending negotiations - the bosses' demand.

At the end of December a delegation of 29 men representing the strikers was formed for talks with LKAB. The delegation consisted of six union representatives, the nine-man Kiruna committee, nine from Malmberget, and three from Svappavaara.

The delegation was weak, especially as a union official was chairman, although Thure Rantatalo had been elected as the strikers' negotiator. But the talks quickly broke down and 4500 out of 4800 workers voted to continue the strike.

Under great pressure, the government announced on 22 January that LKAB and all other state-owned companies would be withdrawn from SAF. The government had consistently turned down such a demand for 10 years in parliament. It has taken massive strike action to force its hand.

On 25 January, an LKAB executive, Lundberg, flew to Kiruna to talk with the strikers' representatives. He said their list of demands would mean a 47 per cent increase in wages expenditure and were completely unrealistic.

The strikers demand:

1. Agreements reached with LKAB cannot be vetoed by SAF;
2. Minimum 17 kroner an hour underground, 15 on the surface. Abolish the time study system. Increase holiday pay.
3. Free bus service to and from work.
4. Age of pension for miners to be lowered from 65 to 60.
5. Re-write collective contract.
6. Immediate research about air pollution conditions in the mine and electric motors instead of diesel.

7. Non-company doctors and free working clothes.

8. Withdrawal of decision to increase rents in company flats.

9. Complete abolition of the 31 articles of the 'working law'.

10. LKAB head office to be moved from Stockholm to the mines.

11. Guarantees that strikers and their committees be protected from persecution.

12. The contract to be valid from the day when the strikers go back to work.

The strikers' condition for going back was that points 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 must be completely implemented.

Lundberg accepted the demand for increased holiday pay and said he will look at the time study payments. But he refused to give any definite guarantees to the workers.

Lundberg is speaking to mass meetings this week at all three strike centres and the union is expected to make a major effort to get the men back to work.

Even if they return, the LKAB strikers have decisively changed the Swedish industrial scene. Unofficial rank and file strikes have spread throughout the country in recent weeks.

On 16 January, 1500 Volvo car workers stopped work in Gothenburg. Immediate local negotiations were granted and three days later the strikers won their demands for an 11 per cent wage increase, with up to 35 per cent for some categories.

A few hours later, 1000 Saab car workers struck. 'We do exactly the same job as the Volvo workers, so we want exactly the same wages,' they declared. Negotiations began immediately.

There have been two more Saab strikes since then and a further stoppage at Volvo.

Rubber workers, electrical workers, dockers, telephone workers, forestry workers, airline workers - all have staged lightning strikes in the last few weeks.

1400 policemen have expressed their discontent and several thousand lowly-paid railway workers are contemplating strike action.

Many of the strikes have won immediate improvements, including wage rises of up to 10-25 per cent. Where results have not been won, further strikes are expected in the near future.

## Swedish "Socialism"

The LKAB miners have shattered the myth of industrial peace and prosperity in Sweden. They have shown that workers still face low wages and bad conditions after decades of 'Labour' government.

They have also shown that Swedish-style nationalisation means no change for the labour force. When LKAB was taken over by the government, the Labour Minister of Finance said it would continue to be run along strictly business principles.

The first paragraph of regulations for state-owned companies states that the most important principle to guide management is the principle of profitability.

With private bankers still on its board, LKAB has steadily increased its profits while the labour force has declined. Now the workers have hit back and threaten those profits.

No wonder Prime Minister Palme, Sweden's Harold Wilson, has denounced them.

Messages of support should be sent to LKAB Strike Committee, Kiruna Sports Hall, Kiruna, Sweden.

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# The Pill and Women's Liberation

Erica Dunn

**D**uring the recent hearings conducted by Senator Gaylord Nelson on the safety of birth control pills, a group of women from the Women's Liberation movement attempted to speak from the floor after being denied the right to testify. These women were thrown out of the hearing for being disruptive.

The fact that the birth control question directly affects their lives and health and the lives and health of millions of other women was apparently not enough reason to give them the right to speak in their own behalf.

Some accounts given by the news media were a bit sympathetic to the Women's Liberation movement, but most coverage was hostile, and little of the media coverage made any attempt to deal with the issues Women's Liberation seeks to raise in relation to the pill.

About 13 speakers were called upon to give testimony concerning the effects of the birth control pill (oral contraceptive). Only two of those doctors that did testify were in favor of the pill.

Birth control pills have been in use in the US since 1960. At the time of the hearings, about 8,500,000 women were taking them regularly (great numbers have since quit). When the FDA (Federal Drug Administration) declared that oral contraceptives were safe to use, in 1960, its decision was based on the theory that the benefits of the pill outweighed its possible bad effects. That means that to the FDA not getting pregnant and controlling the population explosion was more important than the possible side effects the pills would have on the women taking them - or on the children of these women.

But in the ten years since the pill was first put on the market, more and more women have begun to question the wisdom of the FDA's decision. Women, as well as many doctors, are beginning to wonder who in fact the pill benefits. Is it the women taking the pill? Or is it the drug companies that make the pill and collect millions of dollars in profits as more and more women take the pill? Let's see who the pill benefits and how.

The answer to that question lies in the testimony given by doctors at the hearings in Washington. For anyone outside the medical profession, it seems an almost impossible task to read through the pages of medical facts and terminology which describe the pill and its good and bad effects. Yet no attempt has been made to issue a summary of the testimony explaining it in layman's terms so that the millions of women affected could be informed about the problem.

## The Drug Companies

The doctors and senators who were there really don't think it is necessary or wise for other people to understand them. The interests of the enormously powerful drug companies are more important to the Senate than the wishes of millions of women - and it is to the advantage of the drug companies for women to be uninformed.

Throughout the hearings Senator Nelson was very careful to assure the drug companies that they would have first priority in testifying, and that the Senator would consider their testimony to be of prime importance. Indeed, the Government's role in these hearings made its position very clear. It is out to represent not the women, but the drug companies. It is indifferent to the needs of the people of the country, but an uncompromising champion of big business.

A rich, male Congress makes the rules to benefit the drug companies, and the women suffer from them. Women may have to die because of the effect of the pill on them, but that is secondary to keeping the drug companies happy.

(This is not an unusual situation in this country, of course. More and more men die in Vietnam while the war fattens the pockets of the companies that make

huge profits on the incredible waste of the war. Inflation goes soaring, and Nixon's response is to veto the health and welfare bill and to order new uniforms for the White House police, because he was impressed with how European monarchs dressed their palace guards.)

Not one woman testified in those hearings. Not one woman who takes the pill, nor one woman doctor doing research on the pill. Senator Nelson simply decided that it was not necessary and that the men could handle things and make the decisions that affect women.

The testimony offered by the various doctors at the hearings makes it clear that the pill is by no means safe, and furthermore that the original decision of the FDA to allow the pill to be sold was based on extremely little scientific study. Before the pill was put on the market, some women were indeed tested. But the sample tested included only 134 women, hardly a large enough number to show the variety of results needed.

Even if a larger number of women had been tested, the study would still have been inadequate. The main problem is that, as in the case with many other drugs, it takes from 10 to 25 years for all the possible side effects to show up in a human being. And it takes even longer to determine what effects these drugs may have on the children of women taking them.

Ten years have passed since the pill was placed on the market and a number of side effects have been observed that scientific studies blame on the pill. This

January, a letter was sent to many doctors in the country by the head of the FDA about some of the hazards that have been related to the pill.

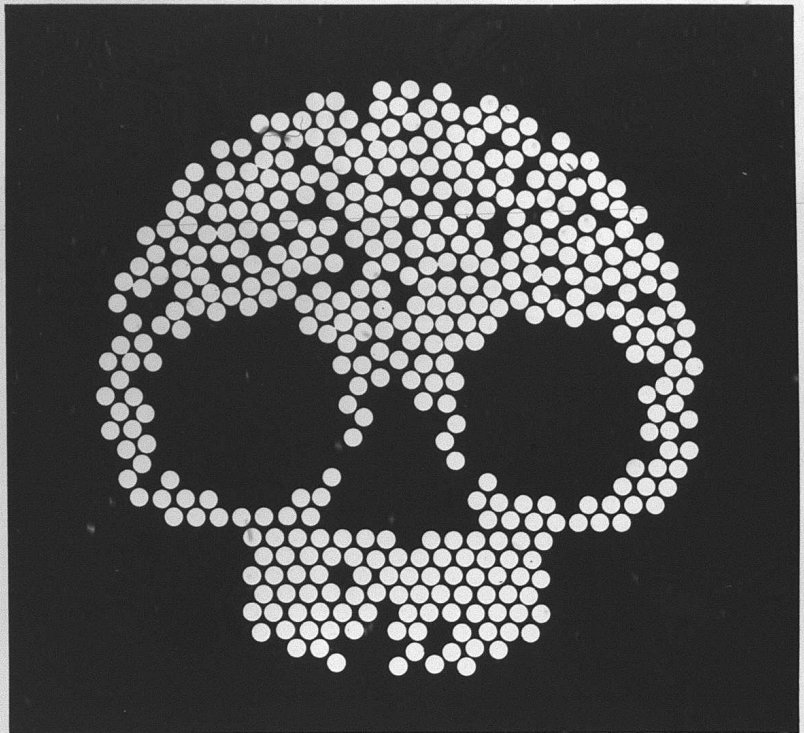
The major concern of the FDA letter was Thrombophlebitis, blood-clotting in the legs. A study made in Great Britain, says the letter, similar to studies made in the USA, shows that 47 women per 100,000 who use the pill are hospitalized with this disease, compared to only 5 women per 100,000 who don't use the pill.

The letter goes on to reveal that a disease called pulmonary embolism, which means that part of a blood clot travels in the blood stream and can eventually stray to the lungs and cause death, can also result from the pill.

## Estrogen and Cancer

Moreover, scientists fear that women now on the pill may in the future get cancer of the breast, cervix or uterus. One of the main ingredients in most pills is estrogen, a female hormone. Estrogen is a known carcinogen (something that induces cancer). Dr. Roy Hertz, an FDA advisor, testified at the hearings that at the time of the release of the pill, estrogens, which had been used by poultry growers to fatten chickens, were withdrawn from the market as additives to chicken food because they caused cancer in ten chickens. For similar reasons, cyclamates have been judged unsafe or taken off the market. Yet in that very same year estrogens were allowed in birth control pills that were being prescribed to millions of women.

The effect of estrogens on the female body may be related to not only the amount in the pill, but also the length of time that the pill is taken. What may not be harmful for a year can be very dangerous during a longer period of time. And since doctors don't know all the effects the pill has on the body, it is safe to say that the 8,500,000 women taking the pill are actually experimental animals. Yet when a woman goes into a doctor's office to get a prescription for the pill, she is rarely informed either of this fact or of the known dangers of the pill.



The pill alters the body's functioning in a variety of different ways, one of which is to stop ovulation. Among the other things it affects is the body's ability to utilize sugar, which can result in diabetes. No woman who has any diabetes in her family should be taking the pill. In addition, the pill can cause high blood pressure, strokes, migraine headaches and blindness from blood-clots. Again, if there is a history of heart illness in her family, a woman should not be put on the pill.

Because of the possible development of these dangerous side effects, it is absolutely necessary that a doctor prescribing the pill get a full history of illness in the patient's family and do follow up studies on each patient taking the pill. Yet how many doctors have the desire and/or the time to do this? Most women don't get that kind of treatment. A woman tells the doctor she wants birth control, and he pops a pill in her mouth, without bothering to ask the hundreds of questions he should ask every woman before he prescribes the pill, and without making periodic examinations to determine if side effects do develop after she begins taking the pill.

Women in industrially underdeveloped countries suffer the same kind of neglect at the hands of the same kinds of drug companies and doctors as do women in this country. After the pill was released, 1500 women in Puerto Rico were used as a test of the pill's safety. Naturally they were poor women. The US Government never asked them their case histories, and had no regard for what happened to them because of the pill.

The US Government has even been toying with the idea of putting the pill into the water supply of natives in India so that all the women there will be sure to take the pill!

### Infertility

In addition to the possible effects on the health of women taking the pill, the pill has recently been shown to cause either permanent or temporary infertility in women who have stopped taking it to have children. Dr. James Whiteland, testifying at the hearings, said that the idea that the pill makes a woman super-fertile after she stops taking it is a "myth ... originally fostered through drug advertising and accepted as gospel by most physicians in the US as well as by the lay public."

Because the pill stops ovulation, and the uterus is not used, its lining can shrink, in what the doctor calls "disuse atrophy". The same thing happens to muscles which aren't exercised. This does not mean that the uterus is going to disappear. But it does mean that taking the pill does anything but guarantee fertility.

Towards the end of his testimony, Dr. Whiteland summed up his beliefs: "It is my firm conviction that all women who have never had a child, and therefore have never proven their fertility, or women who have only one living child, should be informed of the possibility of being relatively infertile for an indeterminate time following discontinuation of the oral contraception before even starting this medication." (When the women in Women's Liberation interrupted the hearing to demand a chance to speak, they were told not to interrupt. One of them replied, "The pill is interrupting our lives.")

In addition to challenging the whole orientation of the hearings toward the drug companies, another question raised by Women's Liberation in relation to the pill was the idea of shared responsibility for birth control. It takes two to make a child, yet the sole responsibility for birth control usually falls on the woman.

The solution to this problem is not to transfer sole responsibility to the man, and women in Women's Liberation do not, of course, desire the invention of a dangerous pill for men so that all women could stop taking the pill and have the same thing that is happening to them now happen to men. However, as it is now, the man seldom has a share in the problem of how to stop pregnancy. The one or two means available to him, the condom and coitus interruptus, are unsatisfactory to most couples, and not very effective.

Science has at its disposal the knowledge to bring man to the moon, yet it hasn't placed its skills at the disposal of the masses of people who will never get to the moon and have much more pressing problems here at home. We cannot help but believe that if scientists were oriented in that direction, they could devise methods of birth control available to both men and women that would solve the problem rather than adding to it.

In part, the problem may be that these methods would not necessarily be profitable to the drug com-

### Philip Corfman, M.C.



*AP Wirephoto*  
**WOMEN who choose oral contraceptives (The Pill) may be "somehow different from women who choose other methods" of birth control and that may account for the higher incident of cancer among pill users, Dr. Philip Corfman told a Senate subcommittee last week.**

panies. Even methods such as the IUD (a coil put in the uterus, by no means problem-free either) are opposed by the drug companies. Why? Because IUD, like a diaphragm, is not as profitable as a pill. It is a one-shot deal; you put it in and hopefully it stays in. It is not a prescription that has to be renewed and paid for over and over again.

Drug companies have not only objected to IUDs, but even to pills that would be used only once a month, again because the profits are higher if the pill is taken every day. Drug companies are in the business of making as much money as possible, and not in the business of helping people. If they help people out in the process of making money, that's O. K. - if they harm them, they try to hush it up.

The immediate question is, what can women and men do until the drug companies or independent researchers come up with a better means of birth control? It is quite true that if the pill were the only possible means of birth control, it would be safer than unlimited pregnancies; the risk of death in pregnancy is one per 4,000, the risk increasing with the woman's age; one in 4,000 die during therapeutic abortions; but only 20 per million die each year from taking the pill (not counting those who may develop pill-related cancer in the future, however).

Moreover, there is no other means of birth control available at this time which is as effective and convenient as the pill, and safer as well. The IUD is just as effective, if not expelled, and perfectly convenient, but causes a good deal of initial discomfort for many women, and may involve a cancer risk as well. The diaphragm is almost as effective, when properly used and combined with contraceptive jelly or cream, and is perfectly safe. But many women find it inconvenient and unpleasant to use. Good vaginal foams are more convenient, but are not quite as effective and still seem unaesthetic to many.

The best short-range solution seems to be use of a variety of birth control methods combined, when necessary, with legal abortions.

One of the major demands of the Women's Liberation movement is free, legal and safe abortions on demand. Women must have the right to control their own bodies. It should be the right of the mother, not the state, to decide whether or not she is going to have a child. If a woman doesn't want a child, she should not be forced to have one. To do so is to create a situation that is horrible for both the mother and the unwanted child.

It is not enough to simply legalize abortions. Today the cost of a legal abortion is so high that only rich women can afford the luxury. Every woman must have the right to an abortion and she must be able to afford one once she is granted that right. Women's Liberation wants to be sure that, if abortions are legalized, that step will benefit all women, and not just the special few.

The lessons of the pill controversy speak to all women. If women do not speak up for their rights, no one will do it for them. If women don't demand adequate birth control, there will be none, and more women will suffer. Women need an independent movement that deals with the specific forms of oppression they are subject to.

Some of the demands that are central to the fight to end women's oppression are:

1. 24-hour-a-day child care facilities open to working and non-working women or men, controlled by the parents of these children and financed either by corporation profits or by the state out of taxes on corporate profits;
2. An end to job discrimination now with equal pay for equal work;
3. Free and legal abortions on demand.

Many women active in the Women's Liberation movement believe they cannot really achieve this liberation in a capitalist society, and that their liberation is ultimately tied to the liberation of all working people. Only a society controlled by working people can act in the interests of working people: women and men, blacks and whites, blue-collar and white-collar. But women must fight around their own interests to assure that they will not be forgotten in the struggle for a new society.

## New From IS Book Service

# Women Workers THE HIDDEN PROLETARIAT

Ilene Winkler

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the black man was supposedly free and a citizen, he was entitled to the suffrage rights of a citizen. Women leaders saw this moment as one which might bring the vote to women as well.

However, they severely underestimated the extent and complexity of the forces arrayed against them: the Republican politicians who wanted the black vote in the South and who feared that a women's movement might jeopardize this, the abolitionists who felt that this was "the Negro's hour" and that nothing should detract from it, and the Church, which has always reinforced women's subordination.

Thus, the suffrage movement dragged out into years of campaigning on a state-to-state basis which met with little success. The movement was successful, however, in getting the issue of women's rights into the public consciousness, and also in stimulating thousands of middle-class women into activity, women who had heretofore been politically apathetic. There were grass roots organizations which sprang up in every state to run petition campaigns and to hold public meetings and forums on the issues.

## Single or Multi-Issue

In 1869, a significant split developed among these organizations over whether to orient solely to the issue of the vote or to broaden the movement. The American Woman Suffrage Association had no interest in organizing working women, in criticizing the attitude of the church towards women, or in the divorce question. Their attention was given solely to gaining the support of influential sections of the community in order to win the franchise.

On the other hand, the National Women's Suffrage Association, led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan R. Anthony, continued to regard women's rights as a broad cause; the vote might be of prime importance, but they also wanted to continue pressing for better working conditions, job opportunities, equal education for women, and changes in the marriage and divorce laws.

Unfortunately, the National Women's Association did not become an effective national organization, so that when women workers began moving again, no connection was established between their grievances and the issue of women's rights. For them, equal rights was far more than a question of equal education or the vote; of more immediate importance was attaining better pay for their labor, protection from fire and machine hazards in the factory, protection from being molested by the foreman, and shorter hours. The remoteness of the demands of the suffrage movement is partially attested to by the relatively small degree of participation in the movement by working women.

The 1870's and 80's were a period of intense economic development and change during which there was widespread unrest. Women workers began to join the newly organized Knights of Labor in large numbers all over the country. This upsurge was engineered by the women themselves, for although the men allowed them into the union, little effort was made to actively organize women (This was the case throughout the development of the AF of L which grew out of the Knights of Labor).

Many women were awakened to the issue of women's rights by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, formed in 1874. The Union, under the leadership of Francis Willard, addressed itself to a broad welfare program which included women's suffrage as a means as well as an end in addition to the temperance issue.

In its zeal in campaigning for temperance, the Union provoked the liquor industry into opposing women's suffrage, an opposition which continued even after the WCTU disintegrated into solely a temperance movement after Francis Willard's death in 1898.

With the decline of the WCTU, many of the more politically oriented women joined the Socialist Party, where they continued to press for broader women's issues. By 1908 women's rights had become a major priority in the party, which proved to be a definite advantage in several states.

The years between 1903 and the entry of the U.S. into the First World War in 1917 saw the growth of the first labor unions composed largely of women. The natural place for such unions to originate was in the garment industry.

The earliest locals of what is now the ILGWU originated in 1897. There were bitterly fought strikes during this period; the most significant one occurred in 1909-11 among the shirtwaist-makers in New York and Philadelphia. The strike was built day by day with large mass meetings. It was the first general strike of

its kind, growing steadily and organizing all the complex machinery necessary to keep a large strike in operation. The strike proved that women could be organized, and that they could be depended upon to remain militant and to hold out for a long period of time.

During this period of increased militancy of women in labor, the suffrage movement had been stagnating. Tied to its middle class origins, which identified labor struggles with social turmoil and "radicalism," bogged down by its concentration on petitions and state referendums, the suffrage movement remained isolated from the most active sectors of women.

Ironically, it was the growing numbers of women workers who provided fresh arguments for women's suffrage and gave new impetus to the movement after 1910. Also, the large influx of immigrants brought many women with a socialist tradition into the suffrage movement, and others who were inspired to new militancy by the tactics of the suffragettes in England, who staged confrontations with the police, and who harassed public speakers into taking a stand on female suffrage.

It was World War I however that provided the most important social impetus for women's suffrage. With the men away at war, women were brought into the factories by the thousands and allowed into jobs previously barred to them. Women demonstrated their ability to take on tasks other than those traditionally relegated to them, and old taboos and customs were broken down slowly. Moreover, the women themselves were stirred to outrage at denial of the vote.



Beginning in January 1917, members of the Women's Party and the Congressional Union stood outside the gates of the White House, attracting the attention of crowds who would often try to break up their picket. Mob violence first broke out on the day when the women's banners told envoys from the Kerensky government, calling on the White House, that this country was a democracy in name only. The police, who on several occasions joined the mob to attack the women, arrived to arrest the picketers.

By 1918, state referendums were meeting with increasing success. Finally, on January 10, 1918, the House voted in favor of the Anthony Amendment to extend the vote to women; it was not until 1920 that it was finally ratified by all the states.

For many of the women in the women's rights movement, the granting of the franchise signalled the end of the struggle. The general prosperity of the country which did slightly broaden the horizons for women and the propaganda of women's magazines gave a false notion of emancipation; many thought victory had been achieved. Those more militant, conscious women who saw the need for further change were quieted by the increasing government repression of the labor movement in the '20's.

Whatever expanding role women were playing in society in the '20's was totally quashed by the Depression. It was tremendously difficult for men to get jobs, let alone women, and women returned to their traditional place in the home. They did not re-emerge again until World War II when they were pulled in very large numbers into the productive force. The newspapers, magazines, and radio made it quite clear that it was a woman's patriotic duty to go out to work in a factory or to fill some other position that had been vacated by men going off to the war.

Mothers of young children worked for the war effort as well as single women, making use of the government-provided day care facilities (hundreds more than are currently available). The economic growth stimulated by the war created thousands of new jobs which women were eager to fill.

When the war was over, however, the number of jobs available sharply declined, and the soldiers returning from overseas needed to be reintegrated into the work force. In order to phase women out of their jobs in industry without reactivating the women's movement, a massive campaign was begun by newspapers, magazines, and radio to redefine the woman's role in American society. Eight months after VJ Day, four million women had left their jobs in order to return to the home.

No longer was it proper for women to compete with men in the business world; femininity meant a split level house in the suburbs, a station wagon, and three or four children. The campaign was very successful, and the image of women as independent equal human beings did not last very far into the quiet years of the fifties.

For women who did not need to work and who were not attracted to any of the unpleasant, menial jobs available to women, their energies were channeled into clubs and volunteer work. In addition, advertising heavily promoted the image of "chick sex-pot," both to keep women pacified and to encourage them to consume.

In the past few years, however, new trends have developed. The concept that being a housewife can be glamorous, creative, and fulfilling has worn thin, and more and more women are seeking outlets and escape from their frustration and boredom. For working-class women, of course, inflation has forced thousands to go to work in order to supplement their husbands' income. 62% of the female work force is now married and living with their husbands.

One of the most important trends of the recent years has been the new beginnings of a women's movement, a movement segmented into a number of different groups. The National Organization of Women (NOW), a largely middle-class movement composed mainly of professional women, is very similar to the suffrage movement of the early 1900's in that it is focusing on legislative action as a solution to the problems faced by women. Yet it is obvious from the history of both the women's rights movement and the civil rights movement that legislation does little to change the attitudes, institutions and material base for oppression.

The Women's Liberation groups, on the other hand - inspired in part by the struggle for black liberation, in much the same way that the efforts of women workers in the 1800's were encouraged by the abolitionist movement - are oriented toward broader issues of women's oppression, such as birth control, child care and self-defense.

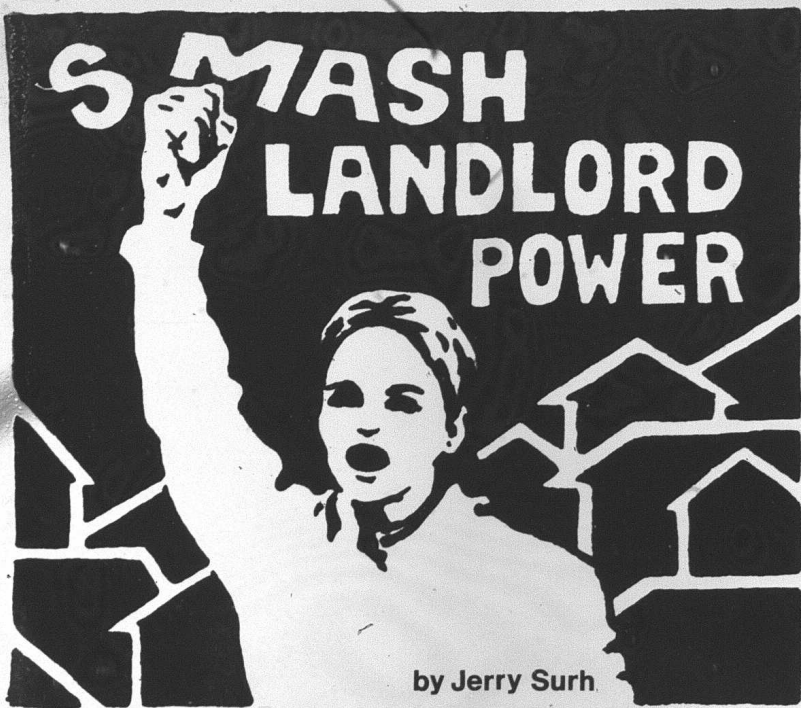
However, neither NOW nor the Women's Liberation groups have made a serious attempt to reach the only force in society which can bring about the liberation of all women, the working women. Women's groups must ally themselves with the interests of women in industry, and encourage more collective action among women in all types of work, if our movement is not to follow the disastrous path taken by the suffragettes.

Housewives are atomized and isolated; they tend to blame their oppression on individual men, if they are conscious that their dissatisfactions are a matter of oppression at all. Working women in the shops and offices are organized by the fact of work itself, even if they are not union members. The fact that their problems are collective ones requiring collective solutions, a matter of institutions rather than individuals, is much closer to the surface on the job than in the home.

## Dual Oppression

Working women experience a dual oppression, both as menial workers, and as women. Their struggles as workers and women point toward the conclusion that a top to bottom transformation of the society, led by the working class, is a prerequisite to women's liberation. On the other hand, it is only their full participation in the fight for a new society that can ensure that an end to women's oppression and male chauvinism will parallel the end of capitalism and the creation of a socialist society.

Now, with the working class as a whole beginning to go into motion after nearly two decades of relative quiescence, it is essential that women workers begin to fight around issues directly relating to their oppression as women workers. The celebration of International Woman's Day, while paying homage to courage and perseverance of women in the past, can also be an awakening for women workers and for all women to the possibilities of militant action.



by Jerry Surh

On February 1, a rent strike began in Berkeley, climaxing five months of organizing by the Berkeley Tenants Union (BTU). The question in mid-February is whether the strike itself will be an anti-climax to the organizing or the basis for new expansion and growth.

There is no question of the need for a tenants union and a rent strike in Berkeley. Rents are outrageously high (\$170/month for a one-bedroom apartment is not uncommon), and a vacancy rate of less than 1 percent puts tenants at the mercy of landlords to the extent that even some of the "nicest landlords" are guilty of gouging. The average Berkeley speculator earns a rate of return of 20% or more.

State tenant-landlord laws are so stacked against the tenant that California stands out for its extreme conservatism in a country ruled by propertied interests. Most Berkeley tenants are asked in their leases to sign away their rights under California law, including the right to withhold up to one month's rent to make repairs neglected by the landlord. Most eviction cases are won by the landlord; a tenant can be out on the streets within three weeks after the landlord sues.

The war and the tight money situation have caused a downturn in the construction of new housing in the U.S. as a whole, and the resulting housing shortage is doubly felt in Berkeley. In addition, most of those few new buildings that are going up in this university town are priced out of the range of the average student's budget. No low-cost housing is being built, nor has any been built for years. Students, university employees, and others who would prefer to live close to the campus are forced to move further and further away or pay super-inflated rents.

State and federal laws allow landlords to write the purchase price of most Berkeley properties off their income tax over a 10-year period; every rental property over 30 years old is viewed by the law as depreciating its total value in one decade. Since most rental housing in Berkeley is over 30 years old, it has been used as tax write-offs many many times. (Actually, speculators' property changes hands, on the average, every six or seven years.)

This tax advantage, plus a property value appreciation rate which is twice that of the Bay Area as a whole, have made central Berkeley a dream world for real estate speculators who are, in real life, business or professional men with high incomes and a taste for fat profits. These men are the principal targets of the rent strike.

Talk of a rent strike in Berkeley began during the People's Park crisis, and during the summer a number of law students began researching the possibility of a strike with legal guarantees. (There have been efforts to organize a strike in the past, but the BTU has been the most serious and successful to date.) But when liberal lawyers discovered that a neat and orderly strike was impossible, they lost interest.

At that time, a group of radical activists, several of them veterans of the People's Park, came to the fore to continue the momentum of building a tenants organization and a strike. Things began to happen. A BTU picket at a large expensive apartment building in late August helped persuade the management to lower rents. Organizing, research, legal aid, and fund-raising went on with gusto and enthusiasm, if not always with method and efficiency.

As the BTU took shape, landlords began scurrying around making repairs and adjusting leases. Some began to collect two and more months' rent in advance instead of the usual one month's rent. As the threat of a strike became real, rental property values began to decline, and they are still declining.

The policy-making body of the BTU has been a weekly meeting of organizers and research workers, with no formal structure and a rotating chairmanship. In mid-February, a special meeting voted to put decision-making authority into the hands of striking tenants alone, although no formal representational structure was passed. There is no formal structure for day-to-day decision-making.

This lack of formal structure has created mistrust of the BTU among some strikers. Unfortunately, they are not the ones willing to raise their misgivings at meetings.

Paradoxically, it is precisely a fear of "bureaucracy" on the part of BTU activists which leads them to resist efforts to make daily decision-makers responsible to the weekly meetings. Yet the same activists are deeply concerned that more tenants are not involved in the union's work. It is their union, but most of them do not yet feel it is "theirs". A more forthright and democratically-responsible structure would break down some of this alienation and increase participation.

By early December, it became clear that the strike would have to begin early in 1970. The strike would take several months to build, and these months would have to come before the year-end turnover in June. Although only about half the potential strikers were students, this was still a large enough number to tie BTU's strategy to the academic timetable.

January became the month of the big push, with rallies, meetings, organizing and publicity much intensified. A mass meeting of tenants on January 21 accepted the recommendation of the BTU organizers that the strike begin on February 1. About 440 units struck on that date.

The strategy of the strike had been worked out earlier, in October and November. Tenants were organized into groups or collectives around their common landlord, large speculative landlords and realty companies were priority targets, as mentioned above. The aim was to begin a city-wide strike not of all or ev-

en most owners, but to strike the ones selected as heavily as possible, in order to insure the financial loss that would force him to settle with his tenants.

Since lower rents and better leases, not to mention recognition of the BTU, cannot, on the whole, be won in the courts, strikers will have to rely on financial damage and political pressure to win. Several months must elapse between the time the strike begins and the time the cases are settled in court. Therefore, BTU legal strategy has concentrated on winning strikers that time through a series of legal maneuvers designed to do nothing more than put off the time of each tenant's trial. The larger the number of strikers, the more the court calendar will be clogged and the longer it will take for trials to be scheduled.

This strategy should obviously work best against landlords who 1) are still paying off the principal on the property, 2) have access to relatively little extra liquid capital (and therefore rely principally on rents to meet mortgage payments), or 3) own most of their property in Berkeley, so that most of their units are either being struck, or, so to speak, are within striking distance.

Although this was the best strategy possible under the circumstances, it leaves several problems unresolved. What would happen if the landlord scraped through his financial bind, did not settle before the trial, and won the suit? The tenant would be evicted and the landlord awarded all back rent plus his attorney's fees, or even up to three times those amounts, at the discretion of the judge. Persons with no significant property and those who declared bankruptcy would not have to pay up, and this includes a large number of strikers, but most of them will not be in that position. What if the trials were farmed out to other courtrooms in the county - would that not unclog the courts?

These and several other possibilities cannot be dealt with within the framework of the strategy just described, and they will have to be confronted in practice. BTU organizers have consistently raised these difficulties with prospective strikers so that no one would be deceived about the risks involved.

## Political Escalation

Most BTUers (and certainly all I.S. participants) feel that for the strike to succeed, its political dimension must be developed to the fullest, and this on several levels. First of all, the strikers must realize that the union will be truly democratic only if they themselves take part not only in decision-making, but in helping to run the union and to build the strike.

Around the time the strike began, it became obvious that many of the strikers were taking a more active interest in running their own affairs, and some of them have become active as organizers and participants in weekly meetings. But the strikers as a whole represent many different levels of political consciousness, and most of them could be a lot more active than they are, both in running their own local strike group and in relating to the union as a whole.

When the trials begin, tenants will be encouraged to defend themselves, both in order to save on legal expenses and to educate people to speak for themselves and not be intimidated by courtroom ritual.

Second, the BTU still must do most of the work necessary to bring the rest of Berkeley to its support. Rent striking is a passive and invisible act unless efforts are made to make it visible and active. Demonstrations, rallies, pickets and press conferences have been held; radio and television interviews have been arranged; a BTU monthly is printed and mailed out to members. But very little has been done so far to reach other groups of the population.

Strikers and supporters are almost all students or hippies, almost all young. The many old people and pensioners living in Berkeley have not been organized. Small homeowners are possible allies of tenants since they are discriminated against through tax rates and assessment methods in favor of larger property owners, but no bridges to them have yet been built.

Third, after evictions are handed down, the BTU must go beyond a passive response. It plans to enforce a policy of No Evictions. Evictions are what individual tenants fear most; but they are also what the political wing of the Berkeley establishment fears most.

The volatility of the radical and hip community is a political reality. After People's Park, the city lost its riot insurance, and private businessmen's insurance rates were on the rise even before that. Twelve county sheriffs have been indicted for venting their sadism too openly during the Park crisis, and the Berkeley Police were remarkably restrained during the recent TDA (The Day After - protest against conspiracy trial in Chicago) festivities.

Most BTUers hope the powers-that-be will see the justice of its cause and act honestly on that perception, but when political, economic and legal advantages are systematically screwing a large part of the population, people cannot build their politics on hope.

No account of the BTU would be accurate if it did not stress the concern of almost all participants for Berkeley as a community and a living environment. These concerns are an intimate part of the spirit and politics of the BTU. They often generate the most excitement and commitment, both in and outside the BTU.

Developers and property speculators are detested on two counts in Berkeley: for their economic exploitation of tenants, and for their systematic decimation of Berkeley's neighborhoods. Older, often attractive and well-constructed houses are torn down and replaced with flimsy and expensive apartment buildings of the California cracker box variety. Sometimes, only ugly vacant lots remain or, worse yet, parking lots are built.

The University of California does more than its share in furthering this process. The site of People's Park itself was formerly a block of older, low-cost apartments. These were demolished and an undeveloped vacant lot left in their place for almost one year before the park was begun. Now it is a university playing field and two parking lots, none of which is used.

More serious yet, the University plans to develop a 16 square-block zone in the south campus, Telegraph Avenue area into a scientific research complex, a medical center and a convention center, complete with hotels. This threat may take several years to materialize, but it is felt now because it will mean the destruction of the hip community, which is centered in that area.

Finally, the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) includes a feeder line into Berkeley, and controls a block-wide strip of land running through the city. A recent attempt to schedule a six-lane highway and parking lot for that strip was blocked by a community protest. In the future, BART promises to transform Berkeley into a bedroom community for San Francisco's middle executives. This trend goes hand in hand with the high-cost, high-rise type of rental housing now being constructed in Berkeley; many such buildings even now refuse to rent to students.

For the time being, the BTU is using these megapolitical threats in an agitational way and encouraging tenants to redevelop the community according to their own interests. Several striking tenants have begun an organic garden and play area for children on a vacant lot owned by their landlord. Others are thinking of tearing down backyard fences and creating common areas, small people's parks.

In conjunction with People's Architecture, a planning group interested in community-controlled beautification and environmental design, the BTU plans to remodel and landscape some of the properties on strike as examples of what would be possible if people really controlled their own living space.

## People's Environment

So the thrust of BTU politics is definitely towards popular control of the total environment, not lower rents and better leases alone. It is building the substructure of a real community in Berkeley, and it is the first movement effort to attempt to do so. (Many tenants are meeting their neighbors for the first time through BTU organizing.) Building a community is a tall order.

Berkeley already is a community in many respects, as the response to the Park crisis showed. But it is a community in a hostile environment, both physically and politically. The economic forces which are destroying Berkeley housing, polluting its air and the Bay, and creating its poverty are national phenomena.

Politically, the liberal establishment is threatened by the Berkeley movements, and alternately vies with Reagan and the right-wing to prove which has the better approach to crushing dissent and the movement. It was liberal Chancellor Heyns, it should be recalled, who began the first actions against People's Park.

Ultimately, to build any real and lasting community in Berkeley, the movement must broaden and link up with the struggles of working people and the other oppressed, to remake American society from top to bottom. In this the tenants movement in Berkeley can serve as an example - things can be changed when people begin to take power into their own hands and use their solidarity and numbers to defeat the power of wealth and ownership, and the institutions they control.

# The NTO and the Housing Crisis

In the continuous struggle between landlords and tenants, the latter have often followed the example of workmen, and formed unions. Unlike their counterparts in industry, however, these have often been very short-lived.

Two other struggles have recently added strength to the tenants union movement. The struggle for self-determination of the black communities naturally focused on the slum landlords as one aspect of that struggle. The unions organized in New York City by Jesse Gray are perhaps the best known of these.

During the past year the student movement has also turned its attention towards the landlords. Strikes are now going on in Ann Arbor and Berkeley, and tenants unions are being formed in several other university towns.

The National Tenants Organization headed by Jesse Gray, and the Ann Arbor Tenants Union co-sponsored a meeting on February 20 to 22. This meeting is a reflection of the growth of the tenants union movement, and it is hoped that it will further the growth of more unions throughout the country. The political statement below was presented by the I.S. to that meeting.

The crisis in housing is by now apparent to everyone. Newspapers and national magazines have run feature articles about it, and politicians have been wringing their hands over it. This meeting of the National Tenants is a further response to the crisis.

Tenants unions were first formed to fight the high rents and deteriorating conditions of existing housing. Slum landlords, out for a fast buck in real estate speculation, fleeced the public while allowing their housing to decay to unlivable conditions.

The crisis has now broadened into a critical housing shortage. Nationally, the number of new families looking for housing has exceeded the number of new homes and apartments by over half a million per year. The shortage has allowed rents to climb to an unbearable level; and if residential construction is not sharply increased, rents will continue to skyrocket.

The crisis has brought forth a well-publicized response from the politicians, both in and out of the Administration. Housing Secretary Romney has proposed all kinds of grandiose programs. The 1968 Housing Act pointed to the need for 2 1/2 million new housing units yearly for the next decade -- at a minimum. Yet housing starts have been dropping steadily (by more than 7% in November alone) to a total of little over 1 million last year.

Furthermore, President Nixon has drastically reduced federal funds for new residential construction while his Council of Economic Advisers predicts a 3 billion dollar drop in private housing construction for the coming year. Astronomical interest rates make this prediction a near certainty.

The Administration claims that it must hold back spending for housing, education, hospitals and other human needs in order to curb inflation. Inflation must be stopped, since it eats into every wage earner's standard of living. But holding down the production of useful goods is hardly a way to raise the standard of living.

The government spending that is the primary cause of inflation does not go for useful goods: housing and urban renewal, for example, take up only 1% of government expenditures at all levels. Allocations for waste production (armaments and space) make up half of the national budget. It is no coincidence that inflation has gone up as the costs of the Vietnam War have increased. Nevertheless, the government chooses to solve its inflation problem by cuts in "luxuries" like health, housing, welfare and schools.

The housing shortage is a direct result of the Permanent Arms Economy whereby the government has nothing but leftovers to hand out for human welfare. If we are to get new housing built, and end the inflation that keeps rents rising, we must force the government to turn from arms spending to production of useful goods.

The burden of government spending must also be shifted: to the banks and giant corporations that

are making fortunes on the housing shortage through mortgages and other forms of speculation. Large building contractors, for example, have no trouble obtaining financing despite the present interest rates. They have expanded into land development and real estate brokerage, taking over an increasing share of the decreasing home-building market, and prospered throughout the present slump. Such corporations, which contribute to and benefit from the high inflation, must bear the tax burden of our new priorities.

In demanding a reorientation of priorities, we must fight for an end to the war, the greatest drain of the country's resources. The war benefits only a small minority. It is not in the interest of the Vietnamese, who support the National Liberation Front in their struggles against the U.S. forces devastating their country. Nor is it in the interest of the vast majority of Americans, whose living standards are deteriorating because of it. Our interest is to fight for the IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL TROOPS FROM VIETNAM.

We must also make sure that spending is not diverted into other arms production, such as the ABM. Nixon has already announced that even the ending of the war would provide no funds for social needs; he has plans for new weapons production to take up any savings from Vietnam. If the money is to be put to public use, we must organize for it now, along with the fight to end the war. We must demand an END TO ARMS PRODUCTION, and its RECONVERSION TO THE PRODUCTION OF USEFUL GOODS.

The tenants unions around the country are not strong enough at this time to win these demands. But we are not alone in this struggle. Many Americans are already fighting against inflation, for an end to the war and arms production. We must work with them to build a stronger movement capable of winning these demands.

The black liberation movement is a necessary ally. The first tenants' movements in recent years were in the black ghettos, as the growing civil rights movement spread into the Northern cities. The current struggle of black construction workers for jobs and equal hiring must be supported by us, especially since the need for creating new construction jobs is inseparable from our demand for more housing. White workers can also be brought to join in the struggle on the basis of their interest in jobs, housing and useful production; the narrow conception of self-interest that leads them to defend restrictive hiring practices can be overcome by a broad-based movement demanding a vast increase in housing construction.

It is important to link the tenants' movement to the anti-war and working class movements. Large numbers of workers are already in the struggle against inflation. The GE strike was an obvious example, with 150,000 workers out.

Workers are now struggling only for higher wages to defend against the inroads of inflation. They must also come to realize that it is the state, through its coordination of the arms economy, that is the real enemy, and that inflation can be ended only by a political fight against the government. Furthermore, the workers and not the business owners are hit by the housing shortage and deterioration, so they are our natural allies.

Finally, we must realize that no tenants union, no matter how well organized, can win anything more than limited success unless the number of new housing units built is massive. Tenants unions cannot effect this by themselves. Only by joining with the anti-war and especially the growing workers' movement can we hope to build a movement strong enough to force real change in government policy.

Reliance on Establishment politicians, even those who express sympathy for our goals, has proved to, and must inevitably, be futile. Specifically, the Tenants Unions should not run or support candidates in the Democratic or Republican primaries. Instead, we must adopt as a long-range perspective the building of a political party of opposition, based on working people and the poor, with a program for the reconstruction of society.

# ...feedback...

## Anti-Economism

This is a dissent from Ernest Haberkern's interpretation of anti-economism in the Cultural Revolution ("Maoism and the Working Class," *I.S.*, 1/70, pp. 4-5).

It is one thing to maintain a principled and systematically critical attitude toward the Chinese Communist movement in all the phases of its development. But it is less than rigorous to slip into Mao-baiting the anti-economist movement, i.e., dismissing the movement because Mao was linked with it and, at the same time, not dealing with other aspects of anti-economism.

My concern is neither to glorify, nor to denigrate Mao Tse-tung. Our knowledge of anti-economism (as of the larger set of phenomena called the Cultural Revolution) is partial. It is only honest to note the tentative nature of some conclusions. Haberkern, for example, cites Gerald Tannebaum and Robert S. Elegant as incisive reporters on crucial developments in the Cultural Revolution. What they have documented cannot be "swept under the [ideological] rug."

However, some research on the recent anti-economism sheds a light on the movement quite different from that of Haberkern's perspective. Some of this research, interestingly, derives from comparing/contrasting policy alternatives and choices of the anti-economist attacks with Stalin's economic policies of 1931-1937. It is possible for the Movement in the United States during the 1970's to learn from the anti-economist movement in China. However, this possibility will be reduced if one evaluates anti-economism solely from Mao's point of view or solely from the intention to ascertain how many linkages there are between Mao and the movement.

Specifically, the following types of phenomena (which were aspects of anti-economist tendencies in the Cultural Revolution) deserve fuller consideration: the emphasis on the elimination of narrow self-interest and material incentives (e.g., there were attacks from many quarters on Liu Shao-ch'i who defended wage differentials quite similar to those prevalent in Russia during the 1930's); attempts to eliminate prestige and status differentiations including in the PLA; the exposure of those (e.g., Sun Yeh-fang) who wanted profit maximization to be the goal of production; and the criticisms made of plant managers who were usurping the workers' say in matters of production. The mere listing of these concerns obviously justifies no particular conclusion about the over-all direction of anti-economism. Some derivative questions must consider whether anti-economism was an opportunistic stance for some parties, while a sincere and relevant one for others; and whether it failed in some places, while succeeding in others, and for how long.

Among other sources, Martin F. Farrell, "Mao, Stalin, and Economism: A Comparative Study," Unpublished M.A. Thesis, The University of Chicago, March, 1969, should be consulted. Xeroopies can be ordered through: Photo-Duplication, 1025 East 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

Vincent K. Pollard

## Rejoinder

There are two questions raised by Vincent Pollard's letter. The first is what are the class goals of the anti-economist movement. Only after we answer that question, only after we understand the objective tendencies of the movement, can we begin to consider and judge the subjective reactions of the contending social and political factions.

Even if it were true that the Chinese working

class to a man supported the movement, that fact alone would not determine the attitude of socialists towards it. The organized working class in imperialist countries has in several instances in this century been swept up in a chauvinist wave of patriotic enthusiasm, at least temporarily, which has led it to make serious sacrifices in the interests of "their own" imperialist bourgeoisie. Revolutionary socialists, while sensitive to the tactical problems of combating this false consciousness, were adamant in their opposition to the movement itself.

Ever since the emergence of class society, every society has had to require its individual members and its constituent classes to subordinate their particular interests to the needs of society as a whole. Moral denunciations of the "greed" of the lower classes are as old as history. In that sense every class society is "anti-economist" - even to the point, at times, of disciplining the ruling classes themselves for their own good.

The most obvious example in recent times was the New Deal of Franklin D. Roosevelt, which introduced reforms necessary to preserve capitalist society as a whole. Roosevelt took some very stern measures with sections of the capitalist class, which earned him the epithet of class traitor from those businessmen whose noses were too deeply buried in the money trough to allow them to take a more farsighted view of F.D.R.'s capitalist statesmanship. There were not a few liberal and C.P. demagogues who used these denunciations as evidence of Roosevelt's "progressive" character.

The attacks on the privileges and wage differentials within the ranks of the Chinese bureaucracy represented a similar attempt to discipline and strengthen the ruling class. What is more, it was not only Liu Shao Chih and the officer caste who were asked to sacrifice material interests for the sake of a stronger China. The working class was also, and we should say especially told to accept a severe cut in its living standards on and off the job.

It is true that the anti-economists demagogically attacked some of the Liu Shao Chihists, or supposed Liu Shao Chihists, for their autocratic behaviour towards the workers. The anti-economists themselves however denied the working class its most elementary rights, often acting as pure and simple strikebreakers. The fact of the matter is that the program of the anti-economists consisted of an appeal - backed up by force - to the working class, to purge itself of its moral weakness and accept its lot as the beast of burden on whose back a strong, united China would be built.

Given this fundamental approach, the question still remains what was the position of the Chinese working class in the cultural revolutions. Obviously from a tactical point of view it is important to know what form the false consciousness of the working class takes. Are they taken in by Mao's demagoguery or Liu Shao Chi's? (Of course, if the working class is marching under its own banner, organized in soviets and led by a revolutionary party, there isn't a problem of false consciousness at all.)

Pollard argues that our knowledge is partial and "it is only honest to note the tentative nature of some conclusions." The situation is in fact much clearer than he claims. I would be very interested in the unpublished M.A. thesis to which Pollard refers, but every source I have come across so far, especially the pro-Maoist sources (of which Tannebaum and the Peking Review article referred to in *I.S.* #15 are simply among the most dramatic) makes it clear that the strength of the anti-economist movement lay in the Red Guards composed of junior and lower grade cadre.

All evidence indicates that the working class, including a major portion of the Communist party members in the working class, fought the anti-

economists violently, frequently to the point of forcing them physically and at gun point out of the factories. Attempts of the Chinese press to describe a favorable response on the part of the working class in some locality or other to the movement is usually followed within a matter of months by reports of violent confrontations between workers supporting the "capitalist roaders" and the Red Guards.

There are many things that are unclear about the Cultural Revolution. As compared with, for example, the Czechoslovak events of last summer, the conflicts between the contending factions within the bureaucracy, especially the conflicts between the army and the party, are hard to sort out. The position of the working class, however, seems perfectly clear.

In fact, this particular phenomenon, the support by the working class for the soft-liners, the "capitalist roaders", the supporters of a "material incentives" policy, seems to be pretty nearly universal in Stalinist regimes. In Kuron and Modzelewski's "Open Letter to the Polish Party," for example, there is an excellent analysis of the political and social role of the liberalizers and their supporters within the October '68 movement. The reactionary consequences of following the leadership of this faction are discussed in great detail. There is no similar discussion of the Natolin faction (the Hard liners), and there is a very simple reason for that. Nobody in the Polish opposition had any illusions about or sympathy for these characters.

All this is perfectly understandable. For a working class denied the most elementary rights of self-defense and struggle, the first explosions inevitably arise over intolerable material conditions. Only subsequently do questions of power arise and the kind of sacrifices that must be made in the struggle for power become meaningful.

It is characteristic of a moralist, lower middle class radicalism, like that represented by American partisans of the Chinese "cultural revolution," that it should conceal itself to such an extent with the moral uplift of the working class. Ironically, many western radicals fail to see that it was precisely in the "economist" strikes, demonstrations and semi-insurrections that the Chinese working class exhibited the virtues of solidarity and self-sacrifice that can only grow out of class struggle.

Ernest Haberkern



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# program in brief

We stand for socialism: collective ownership and democratic control of the economy through workers' organizations, established by a revolution from below and aimed toward building a classless society.

We stand for an internationalist policy, completely opposed to all forms of class exploitation and in solidarity with the struggles of all oppressed peoples.

We believe in socialism from below, not dispensation from above. Our orientation has nothing in common with the various attempts to permeate or reform the ruling classes of the world, or with the idea that socialism will be brought to the masses by an elite. Socialism can only be won and built by the working class and all other oppressed people, in revolutionary struggle.

We oppose capitalism as a system of class exploitation and as a source of racial and imperialist oppression. In the interests of private profit and corporate power, it presents itself in the United States as a liberal/conservative "welfare state," based on a permanent war economy. It promotes unemployment, poverty, and racism; it violently suppresses militant opposition. As an international system of imperialism, U.S. capitalism struggles to contain and absorb the colonial revolution, and continually deepens the underdevelopment of satellite economies.

I.S. is an activist organization which seeks to build a mass revolutionary movement in the United States—to train revolutionary socialists, and to develop socialist theory to advance that movement. We see ourselves, not as the revolutionary leadership, but as part of the process of developing it; we work toward the building of an American revolutionary socialist party—a party, based on the working class, which can provide the leadership necessary for the revolutionary seizure of state power by the working class.

We regard the working class, female and male, black and white, blue collar and white collar, as potentially the leading revolutionary force in society. We see great promise in the new militancy of the labor movement, including the emergence of black workers' organizations.

We support uncompromising struggles by rank and file forces against racism and bureaucratism in the labor movement, and against the subordination of the workers' interests to the demands of the state. In places of work, we fight to build workers' political consciousness, and to link their movement with the struggles of oppressed peoples in this society and internationally. We regard the development of a new radical party based on rank and file workers' organizations as a giant step in the political independence of the working class and in the co-ordination of all insurgent forces.

Workers, organized as a class, can stop bourgeois society dead in its tracks. More importantly, they can organize society on a new basis, that of revolu-

tionary socialism. In the course of doing so, they will create new instruments of democratic power, just as the workers of Paris created the Commune in 1871, the workers of Russia the Soviets in 1905 and 1917, and the workers of Hungary the Workers' Councils in 1956. Our conception of socialism is bound up with such organizations, which embody workers' control of industry and the state.

We stand together with the struggles of black people and other oppressed minorities for liberation. We support armed self-defense, independent self-organization of the ghetto, and the right of self-determination for the black community. We look to a future coalition of black and white workers; however, blacks cannot allow their struggle today to be subordinated to the present level of consciousness of white workers.

We work to build the movement for women's liberation, both in society at large and within the radical movement. We support the formation of independent women's organizations, in which women will work out the organizational and programmatic forms of their struggles. Within these organizations, we push for an orientation towards organizing working class women.

Women's oppression is bound up with the exploitation of labor in all class societies; thus the struggle for women's liberation can only be won as part of a broader struggle for a socialist society. We do not counterpose women's participation in their own liberation movement to their participation in revolutionary socialist organizations. But women's liberation will not result automatically from socialist revolution; women must build their struggle now, and continue it after a revolution, if they are to be free under socialism. This struggle, like that of other oppressed peoples, will itself be one of the forces which will begin to shake the capitalist order.

The struggles of students and young people against imperialist wars, and against education and training designed to make them the agents or passive victims of oppression, likewise are shaking society. We participate in these struggles not only for their own sake, but also because they will help bring other sections of the population, including young workers, into motion.

We are part of the international movement against imperialist exploitation and aggression. We support popular revolution against American domination, and fight for the withdrawal of American troops from all foreign lands. In Vietnam, we favor the victory of the NLF over the imperialists—but we believe that the new regime will establish bureaucratic class rule, not a socialist society.

We believe that no existing regime can be called socialist. On a world scale, the "socialist" countries constitute a system of regimes and movements in different stages of development, but with a common ideology and social origin. In place of capitalism,

this system has achieved, and now aims at, not the abolition of class society, but a new type of class system.

In some areas (e.g. France and Indonesia) the official Communist parties—both "Soviet" and "Chinese"—have held back mass energies, in a search for power through maneuvers at the top. Elsewhere, these movements have been able to organize immense popular energies in revolutionary opposition to the capitalist state; but the leadership of these movements does not organize the working class to seize power for itself, nor does it intend to establish a regime in which the masses themselves rule.

The revolutionary struggle expels capitalist imperialism and expropriates the native capitalist class, but the leadership aims at a social system in which that leadership constitutes a ruling class through its control of the state which owns the means of production, and through the repression of independent workers' organizations. Thus, where successful, these movements have placed in power, not the working class, but a self-perpetuating bureaucratic class.

Taking power in backward countries, these regimes have based their attempts to industrialize (successful or unsuccessful) on the crushing exploitation of workers and peasants. In all such cases, popular discontent reappears, but the struggle of the masses cannot be carried forward through the ruling party, but only in revolutionary opposition to it. This system is no less class-ridden, and in its fully developed form (as in the USSR) no less imperialist than capitalism.

In these countries we support and identify with the struggles—sometimes organized, more often not—of rank and file forces for their socialist birthright. We believe that socialism cannot be achieved in these countries without the overthrow of the ruling groups.

In all countries we advocate revolutionary struggles as sparks for the world revolution—it alone offers the solution to the problems of poverty and underdevelopment, which cannot be overcome in the framework of a single country. But this internationalist perspective itself depends on the mass struggles for liberation in individual countries, whether against capitalist or bureaucratic regimes. In the bureaucratic states as under capitalism, socialism means only a revolution in which the working class itself overthrows its exploiters and directly rules the state.

Based on its work on the ongoing worldwide struggles against oppression and the ideas of revolutionary Marxism, I.S. seeks to build a socialist movement which is both revolutionary and democratic, working class and internationalist: an international struggle in which the world's masses can fight for power and win a new world of peace, abundance, and freedom that will be the foundationstone of classless communist society.

# International Women's Day: Commemorating a History of Struggle

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On March 8, 1908, on the lower East side of New York City, socialist women working in the garment industry led a demonstration to protest the sweatshop conditions and child labor, and to demand the vote.

This was one of a series of strikes among garment workers in New York and Philadelphia during the period from 1908-1910. Clara Zetkin, a German Socialist leader, at a meeting of the Congress of the Second International in 1910, proposed that March 8 be declared International Women's Day in honor of the militant struggles of these American women.

Seven years later, Russian women textile workers in Petrograd called for a strike on International Women's Day. The women's march (which fell on February 23 by the old calendar) inspired male workers to join them in their protest against overflowing bread lines and the general oppressive conditions precipitated by the First World War. Within the next few days, thousands of workers were in the street demanding an end to the war; their protests forced the abdication of the Czar.

International Women's Day is celebrated in many other countries but has never been observed in the United States. In fact, very little, if anything, is known about the militant struggles led by women in this country. The standard history textbooks, as with their treatment of black rebellions, have never discussed women's movements seriously, but have dismissed them with a brief statement about their outcomes and a mention of the leaders' names.

## Rediscovering History

One of the tasks of the newly-emerging women's movement must be to rediscover our own history in order to gain inspirations and confidence, and to learn from our sisters' struggles in the past. It is crucial that women develop alternative examples to the passive weak stereotypes projected as the model for feminine behavior. All too often, women accept and internalize this image.

The fact is that women have time and again organized and acted together in their own interests, in addition to taking leadership roles in other movements.

Women began organizing around their oppression as early as 1820 in Troy, New York, where they demanded that the town council give them money for a women's seminary. Prior to this time, education was restricted to women of the upper class, and consisted only of such skills as embroidery, painting and playing the

harpichord.

The philosophy of women's education at that time had been expressed by Rousseau: "The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honored by them... and to make life sweet and agreeable to them - these are the duties of women at all times, and what should be taught them from their infancy."

The majority of women, who could not attend private schools, did not obtain the right to education beyond elementary level until after the Civil War.

Meanwhile, women were entering industry where, from the very beginning, full advantage was taken of the belief in female inferiority and the position of women as keeper of the family.

Women traditionally had earned money working at home doing spinning, weaving, and sewing. The invention of the spinning jenny and the power loom in the early 1800's brought about the end of home industry and stimulated the growth of textile mills. Women were accepted as workers in clothing factories due to the enormous demand for men as agricultural workers and the migration of men to the west.

Women, trained for no other skill than to be wife and mother, could enter no other industry but textiles. Not only were they barred from training for more skilled work, but they received much lower pay for men for doing similar work. An 1833 newspaper estimated that women earned only one fourth of men's wages. (Women have come a long way in 137 years; now they earn almost half of men's wages.)

Women in these early textile mills, working in slum buildings for as long as sixteen hours a day quickly felt the need to obtain better working conditions. There were numerous strikes, the first of which occurred in Dover, New Hampshire in 1828.

Organizations such as the United Tailoresses of New York and the Lady Shoebinders of Lynn, Massachusetts, sprang up in the 1830's. They met with little success, however, because the women were inexperienced and their organizations were isolated from each other. In addition, the men in the trade unions offered them little support out of fear of competition from the women.

In 1845, a more stable organization, the Lowell

Female Labor Reform Association, was formed under the leadership of Sarah Babley, the first woman trade unionist of note in this country. This association lasted for twenty years, but in general it was not possible for women at this time, alone and unaided, to build their own labor organizations, although they made repeated efforts to do so.

The women were faced with the difficult problems of high turnover due to poor working conditions, lack of money for dues and strike organization, and interruption of work for pregnancy and child care. It was not until the 1880's and the emergence of the Knights of Labor that the organization of women workers met with any real success.

## Abolition and Women

The activity of women in labor was stimulated by the abolitionist movement, composed largely of upper class women. In fighting against the oppression of slavery, these women found their actions thwarted by traditional concepts of woman's place, and consequently had to launch their own fight for equality. As abolitionists, they first had to win the right to speak in public, to conduct petition campaigns, and to hold public meetings.

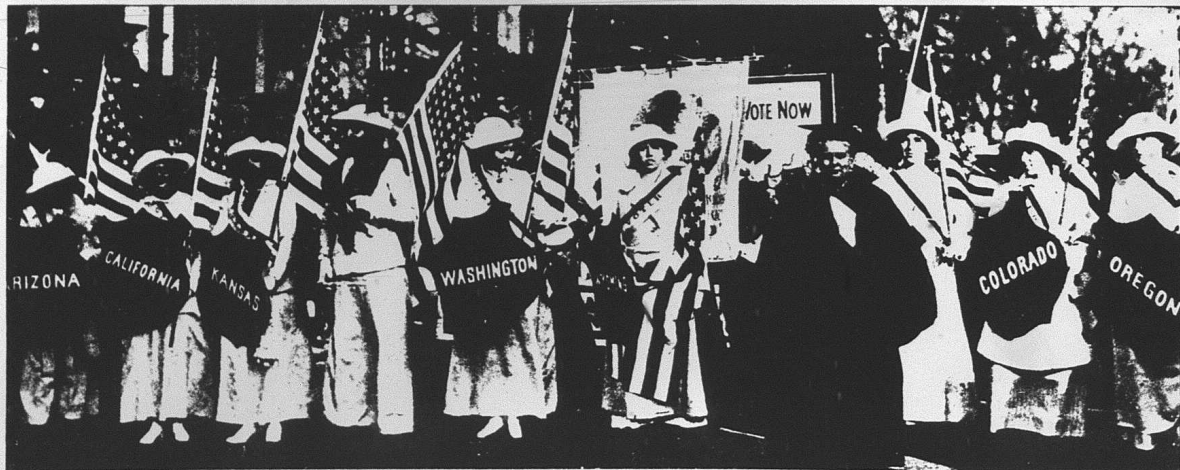
Their fight brought mixed reactions from men in the movement, many of whom thought the women were jeopardizing the cause of abolition by bringing up the cause of women's rights. When Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott were denied recognition as delegates to the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, they were moved to call the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848.

The abolitionist movement also fostered the leadership of black women, most of them ex-slaves, who played a large part in running the Underground Railroad prior to the Civil War. Among them was Harriet Tubman, an escaped slave who risked her life repeatedly to return to the South to help other slaves escape.

The coming of the Civil War affected the women's movement both through the changes it caused in industry and through the stimulus which the emancipation of the slaves gave to the emergence of a suffrage movement.

In one industry after another, nationally organized unions came into existence for the first time. With so many men sent off to the war, women were pulled into other industries and gained entrance into men's trade unions. The war also led to the formation of the Working Women's Association, which accepted women from any industry.

The emancipation of the slaves after the war brought to the fore the question of enlarging the electorate. If



Parade of delegates to a nationwide suffrage meeting in New York, 1912