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The Politics of Ecology

Lenin Centennial
1870-1970



**Black Panther Caucus at GM
Italy · Delano · April 15
Shop Struggle Committees**

Women and the SMC

Gay Semel

At the recent SMC conference in Cleveland, a resolution entitled "Women and the War" was adopted by the women's liberation workshop and then passed by the plenary. The professed aim of the resolution was to link up the women's liberation movement with the anti-war movement. However, once we get beneath the very up-to-date 1970 movement style of the resolution, we uncover a very old idea -- the "ladies' auxiliary".

In the end the resolution, rather than raising demands which relate to the oppression and exploitation faced by women under capitalism, states that the women's liberation movement should bring its "vital forces, energy and ideas to the anti-war movement". (In other words, bring more bodies to do the work.) For the women's liberation movement to link up with the anti-war movement on that basis would be a major step backwards in consciousness and place the politics of women's liberation in the same place it has always been hidden.

The resolution begins with a paragraph tracing the struggles of women in the United States. At best this chronology is an overenthusiastic, lopsided account of American history: "Historically, women have been in the forefront of every major struggle in the U.S." At worst it is a patronizing con, focussing on the few times when the struggles when the struggles of women have come to the fore and totally ignoring the conditions of their oppression and its basis in class society. The paragraph ends with possibly the greatest sham of the entire document, stating that "Women all over the country have been leaders in organizing anti-war demonstrations" -- implying that somehow the anti-war movement, as opposed to the radical movement as a whole, has managed to deal in a meaningful way with the male chauvinism within its ranks and allow women to play equal leadership roles.

Actually, the exact wording of the statement is far more accurate than its intended implication -- women probably have been leaders in organizing anti-war demonstrations in the sense of doing much of the shitwork. The question is, have women played an equal role in the theoretical and tactical development of the anti-war movement? If the SMC conference itself can be taken as an index (very few women spoke from the floor, since few tried to begin with and those that did were repeatedly ignored by the male chairmen), the answer is clearly no.

The resolution lists ways in which the war affects women, some of which are quite accurately described: war-caused inflation hits women the hardest since they make less than men, and women whose husbands are forced to go to Vietnam are faced with the additional burden of assuming sole responsibility for the children (black and third-world women are the doubly-disadvantaged -- it is they who are stuck with the lowest-paying jobs and it is their men who are called to fight the most often).

However, the list also includes ideas that are false by implication. By stating that the "War stands in the way of the just demands of women to control their own lives, as long as the money is spent on war, free 24-hour childcare facilities, free abortions... will not be implemented", the resolution implies that it is the war which keeps these things from happening, not capitalism, that once the war is over all these things will come about.

If one is to talk about why the war stands in the way of needed social reforms, one must talk about control of society -- who rules and in whose interests. More than that, one must also talk about who pays. It is working people who are paying for the war and who would still be paying for those much-needed social reforms if it were possible to simply redirect funds from the arms economy. We must not only demand 24-hour childcare facilities, free voluntary abortions, free adequate medical facilities, we must also demand that they be paid for by taxing the banks and corporations.

Ultimately, only when working people control society will we be able to redirect the nation's wealth from production for profit to production for human needs.

Since the document fails to analyze the roots of the oppression of women or the economic role that the family plays under capitalism, it gets on to shaky ground when trying to deal with the fact that wars have often allowed women greater latitude, in the ease with which they can get jobs and in the greater variety of jobs open to them. Point #6 states that war "reinforces the traditional roles of men and women; even when she does work in a defense plant performing a role formerly assigned to a man, she is covering the job on an emergency basis." This may indeed have been the only time that she could get such a job, and rather than reinfo cing traditional roles, war does tend to grant women greater leeway. But this is not to say that the key to women's liberation is to send all the men off to fight a war however. The point to make is that women are perfectly capable of doing their jobs but are pulled in and out of the labor force according to the needs of the social system, not their own needs and abilities.

The resolution continues by saying that "an end to the war would set a new stage not only for Vietnamese liberation, but for women's liberation as well" -- a statement which the author makes no attempt to prove and can only be taken as pure demagoguery (especially if one considers that four million women lost their jobs in the eight months following the end of World War II -- hardly a step forward for the cause of women's liberation).

The resolution concludes by calling for one day in the April week of anti-war activity to focus on women and the war (we can only assume that the other six days will deal with men and the war -- hardly an equal distribution). It does not attempt to discuss the politics of these activities or to raise demands necessary for the liberation of women.

Not only are the specific points (or the lack thereof) in this resolution wrong, but, in fact, its entire thrust is misguided. If we are to talk about women's liberation and the war, we must analyse the integral relationship between them, not just allude to it. Basic to the oppression and exploitation of women and basic to the war in Vietnam and the whole foreign policy that created it is the dynamics of capitalism as a social system. We must address ourselves to the whole system, not just to its various separate manifestations such as the war or the oppression of women. We must make clear where power lies, and what will be required to defeat those interests which perpetuate exploitation and oppression. We must make clear that in the end only socialist society will bring an end to war and enable women to achieve their liberation.

The anti-war movement must begin to address itself to the only power capable of overthrowing class society -- the working class. We must raise demands relevant to the needs of working people -- both men and women. We must develop links between women's liberation and the anti-war movement, but on an honest basis, continually stressing that both movements must fight the capitalist social order to win their own demands.

The anti-war movement -- if it is to bring women in on a legitimate basis, around the struggle for their own liberation as well as against the war -- must raise demands such as those pushed by IS women and other radical women at the SMC conference. We must demand equal pay for equal work, an end to sexual tracking in the schools, and on the job, free 24-hour client/staff-controlled day-care centers, free, voluntary abortions on demand. We must also demand that the funds for meeting these demands be raised by taxing the banks and corporations. Only in this way will we be able to link up the anti-war movement and the women's liberation movement in a meaningful way.

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ITALY: After the Offensive

Andrea Savonuzzi



The Italian 'hot' autumn is over. Practically all the contracts which were due for renewal have been signed. Yet it has left behind a maze of unresolved problems, a trail of dead, and a massive repression against leftists and trade unionists.

For us as socialists it is essential to analyse the history and events of the last few months to see how the perspectives outlined in the December I.S. have remained unchanged and to draw from this experience important lessons for the future.

It is difficult to express and convey fully the courage, determination and enthusiasm which Italian workers have displayed over these months. In spite of provocation from the police, the authorities and the bosses, they have managed almost without exception to remain undeterred and not to lose sight of their objectives.

It must be stressed that the impetus for the struggle came from the rank and file. Yet the movement has been directed by the official trade union apparatus. This apparent contradiction is both real and unreal at the same time.

On the one hand the pressure from below has resulted in the unprecedented unity of all trade unions (Christian Democrat, Social Democrat and Communist), an alliance which has been formed first at the rank and file level and then mirrored at the top. The apparatus has been able to regain control of the leadership of the struggle only to the extent that it has accepted and advanced the genuine demands of the base. However, once the union bureaucracy had regained control, they were able to use it to divert and dampen the struggle.

This does not mean that at the trade union level the contracts have resulted in a complete sellout. On the contrary, large (if not dramatic) increases in wages have been won. The working week will be reduced to 40 hours without loss of pay over three years. The right of the trade union to be represented in the factory through a shop and department delegate structure and general assemblies has been won. The differentials in benefits, holidays, and assistance between blue-collar and white-collar workers have been decreased.

All this goes most of the way towards meeting some of the demands of the rank and file. They are important concessions wrested from the bosses with great sacrifices. (For many months take-home pay has often been below half its normal level.) The trade union bureaucracy, however, in fighting for some of the trade union demands of the workers has managed to frustrate their wider aspirations. The struggle has effectively been politically defused.

The rift between large and small employers already apparent in September has increased over the last few months. While both sides complain bitterly about the hardship and difficulties which the concessions they had to make to workers are going to cause them, the truth of the matter is that they affect them very differently indeed.

The more modern international employers (Fiat, Pirelli, Iri, etc.) can easily afford the increased costs by raising productivity, expanding production and generally taking over a larger share of the market. Internationally, also, they are better placed to take advantage of the revaluation of the mark. Many small or medium small producers may well, instead, be forced out of production or to merge with the larger giants.

This rift is reflected in the turmoil within the Confederation of Italian Industry (Confindustria). The smaller producers are leaving it to the giants and flocking towards the Confederation of Small Industries. Even within the nationalised industries there is a rift between large and small.

The contracts which were agreed to separately industry by industry led to the fragmentation of the working-class offensive in the last stages of the struggle. The weaker sections were left to fend for themselves. The same process was mirrored within the industrialists. Yet it had a totally different meaning. The unity of the working class is its very strength. For the employers, instead, a strategy which is designed to drive the least efficient out of business or into the arms of their bigger brothers strengthens the class as a whole. The process may be superficially similar, but it is qualitatively different.

The differences between the two sections of the employing classes, today as in September, result in two different political perspectives. On the one hand the more dynamic and less economically threatened members of the ruling class opt for a reformist path, a strategy based on the integration of the CP into the government sphere in the hope of neutralising the working class. On the other, the more backward business and industrial sectors are calling for law and order and a switch to the right.

The Social Democrats are the chief exponent of the right-wing solution. By splitting from Nenni's Socialists on the issue of the CP's possible contribution to the government, they had clearly indicated over the summer that they intended to use the inevitable disorders of autumn to appeal to the country as a party of order. To this effect, a campaign was mounted to create tension

and anxiety.

The sharp contrast between the hysterical articles in the papers and the responsibility and cool determination of the workers threatened to puncture the fear of revolution that they were counting on until the death of a policeman and the explosion of a bomb in Milan. Yet the hysteria and the violence are not unconnected. The Observer wrote, 'Nobody is crazy enough to blame President Saragat for the bombings. But the entire left is saying today that his "strategy of tension" indirectly encouraged the far right to go over to terrorism.'

This strategy has, however, failed in spite of Nouvel Observateur's report that immediately after the death of the policeman President Saragat sent a telegram of condolences accusing the leftists before any proof was presented or arrests made. An attempt was made to capitalise on the bomb tragedy according to the Evening Standard: 'At the moment of panic, after the bomb, the Italian President, prompted by powerful industrial forces, planned... the dissolution of the two Chambers and a coup d'état à la de Gaulle'. But this failed.

It is impossible to say whether the reports in these papers are correct. The Italian press has remained silent on all this. Indeed, attempts were made through the various Italian embassies to silence the reporters. Yet what is clear is that a right-wing turn inspired by the more backward industrial concerns and some of the more reactionary political forces has not taken place or has been stopped. This is not accidental. The strength of the left and the margin for manoeuvre which Italian capital has for reformist policies still imply attempts to induce the CP to join, or at least support, the government in the near future.

Out of the struggle the CP has emerged as a responsible party of order. It is true that through its trade union it has largely led the trade union struggle. But what would be more accurate to say is that the party has abdicated all responsibility of leadership to the trade union. It has increased its membership - no doubt losing some of its most militant members, but recruiting from previously unorganised and unpolitical workers.

The expulsion of a group of left-wing intellectuals who had started a magazine, Il Manifesto, which expressed mildly revolutionary aspirations and opposed the policy of entry into the government, has created some unrest in the Party. Although the magazine was only for consumption by intellectuals and these dissident comrades had in no way attempted to create a working class following for themselves, or to set up a real oppositional tendency inside the Party, they have still gathered some support.

Unrest in the CP

It is a symptom of the troubled state of many CPers that in Rome, Pisa, Bergamo, Naples and Cagliari there was deep unrest. Some branch committees had to be dissolved and some provincial Federations disciplined. Yet although this may help the left groups in some ways, it paradoxically also strengthens the Party. The CP's strategy of bourgeois respectability and the attempt to enter bourgeois coalitions demanded the expulsion of these timid revolutionaries.

The loss of even a few hundred members up and down the country and the danger of the pull which these comrades could exercise outside the party is a small penalty to pay for the increased security which the party as a whole will be able to afford the bourgeoisie. In the next few months with the election of the regional governments the CP should make its first decisive step towards the government. Already they have held as an example before the eyes of all the relative quiet and calm of the Emilia region where most of the local councils are already partly in their hands.

At the present moment the two sections of the bourgeoisie are still unable to solve their conflict one way or another. At one and the same time approaches to the CP and random acts of repression are made.

The liberal government of the liberal parliament,

manned mostly by anti-fascists, is using fascist laws, in particular Article 272 which forbids propaganda for the dictatorship of one class over another, Article 305 which forbids subversive politics by association (any association), and Article 415 which forbids stirring up class hatred. Seven thousand leftists and trade unionists are now under indictment under these acts. Yet in the long run there can be no solution to the problems of the Italian ruling class with this kind of semi-repressive measure which can only heighten the class struggle.

The prospects for the Italian ruling class are still those of relative expansion in spite of a massive flight of capital abroad. So long as these perspectives hold, so does a reformist solution. Already the more progressive elements are thinking of using the Constitutional Court to declare the inapplicability of these laws.

The magnitude of the struggle and the unity of the three main trade unions which diminishes their explicit political allegiance should have opened new perspectives and opportunities for the revolutionary left. The attempts by the trade union bureaucracy to divert the attention of the workers at the height of the struggle towards protests against high rents, the chaos of urban transport, the inadequacies of the welfare state and governmental corruption, could have given the left an important leverage.

Double-Edged Weapons

Most of the weapons in the hands of the bureaucracy are double-edged. When the struggle is specific, they attempt to widen it in the hope of diminishing its intensity. But this leads them to raise more political slogans and more political demands. Such is a contradiction of the impasse and ambiguity in which they find themselves. On the one hand they rely on control of their mass base for their bargaining power with the ruling class, on the other they constantly need to prove their militant opposition to employers to retain their base.

The more political perspectives which the bureaucracy has opened up could have been better used by the left. Instead of exploiting these contradictions, they relied on blanket opposition to all actions of the bureaucracy to increase their political standing and to heighten consciousness. Inevitably they have tended to fail.

A precondition for an effective policy by the left today is the recognition of the importance of the official trade unions. Instead they simply raise the utopian call for a revolutionary trade union. Thus they left themselves open to accusations of splitting the working class just as it was enjoying its new-found unity. The problem today is not the setting up of new trade unions, but drawing up and fighting for a set of demands which will effectively attract around the left groups the most conscious elements of the class in a programme of internal

opposition to the existent union bureaucracy.

This, however, requires a clear perspective and theoretical understanding of the role of a vanguard party, the trade unions, etc. The history of Stalinism which still distorts, even if by rejection (which is not very total or coherent) the Italian left makes progress very difficult.

These inadequacies led to the relative isolation of the left groups from the struggle of the workers. More tragically, perhaps, the very same problems led to the relative ineffectiveness of the rank-and-file committees.

These are democratic institutions set up by militant workers inside factories often with the aid of outside politicians. During the last couple of years and throughout the summer they have been a very important element in the struggle. Yet during this autumn they, too, have proved unable to provide a political leadership. They, too, have been left largely watching from the sidelines as the official trade union apparatus regained control of the rank and file.

At the time of the guerrilla struggles of the summer, the rank and file committees were able to increase their prestige. They were able to inject politics into the factory, press for rank and file control and initiative, and win important concessions.

When the struggle expanded, however, the crisis of the rank and file committees became apparent. Having remained outside of the trade unions and in a sense counter-posing themselves to them, they could not lead the struggle on the factory floor. This would have required that they accept delegated authority from the rank and file to negotiate with the union apparatus and with the employers. Yet they rejected this role.

They were able to provide new methods of struggle for workers, such as the wildcat strike and more flexible opposition to the employers. But they were unable to substitute themselves fully for the trade unions, unable to provide a national organisation, unable by law to sign contracts with employers. They relegated themselves to the role of pressure groups outside of the mainstream of events. In a sense they had exiled themselves from the class to which they belonged.

Implicit in their actions is the confusion between the political vanguard and the democratic self-organisation of the class. By trying to fulfil both roles they fulfilled neither.

The left has also proved to have an ultra-left position towards the police force. This is understandable. The brutality of the Italian police is well known. After the killing of a policeman in Milan, there was a full-scale police insurrection in the barracks and a desire expressed to 'clean up the university' and do away with the left - an insurrection which might well have had fatal consequences and had to be put down by other policemen using tear gas.

Still, it was essential that demonstrators differentiate between the role which policemen play and the policemen themselves. Acute social unrest is reflected in the police force as much as in the petit-bourgeoisie as a whole. Indeed there are ample signs that there is deep dissatisfaction among policemen in Italy.

Letters have been sent to newspapers complaining about their conditions and expressing sympathy with the ideals and aims of the students. There have also been some sit-down strikes in barracks of policemen who refused to go on duty. These contradictions might have been usefully exploited with a sensitive attitude. The chance was lost.

Chronic Sectarianism

The theoretical, political and practical problems which beset the Italian revolutionaries have no easy solution. I certainly do not want to imply that they do not raise important issues of principle. One of the most unhealthy aspects is, however, the failure of the different groups to openly debate and discuss their differences in order to see common positions and solutions. Instead there is a chronic sectarianism, a failure to tackle theoretical differences. Indeed there seems to be an extreme suspicion of any theoretical approach. This is an insurmountable barrier which faces Italian revolutionaries in the present period.

At the moment, one phase of the workers' struggle is over. In the next few months other contracts are up for renewal in some of the more backward industrial areas such as textiles. The left once again will be faced with a challenge. In order to meet it, the rank and file committees will have to understand that their role is to be something like a militant shop stewards' committee within the structure of the unions. They must not be the exclusive preserve of politicians but open to all genuine militants. They must accept delegated authority. They must fight for the recognition of their role within the trade union movement.

The left groups must debate all the theoretical issues and strategies which confront them openly with a view towards unification. It is impossible to predict whether either the rank and file committees or the revolutionary groups will be equal to the task.

The Italian ruling class is deeply split on the strategy to follow and the political solutions to seek. Since the most powerful industrial groups support a reformist policy and the integration of the CP into the government, for the time being this can be the only possible solution. Much, however, depends on the international economic situation and on whether, therefore, a reformist road will remain open.

Excerpted from *International Socialism*, an English International Socialist journal, February/March 1970.

Richard Lyons

The War Came to Minneapolis

I, as citizen,
put out my hand,
part cover and part greeting.

There was a child there,
and my hand became a weight
I could not hold,

As I watched it lower,
my fingers spread like a star
and began to bend
at the joints.

The tips touched the child's head
first,
but continued to descend,
going heavily down
into the five holes
in the soft head of the child.

My fragmentation fingers
filled the ragged hollows of his head,
and the weight lifted
from off my hard hand,
transferred to the dead child,
and tightened my bent fingers
as they gripped the Honeywell wounds
like a bowling ball.

Christ, I said,
I don't want to play,
not with this equipment.



U.S. CBU (Cluster Bomb Unit) fragmentation bomb, manufactured by Honeywell in Minneapolis, Minn.

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The Environmental Crisis: A Socialist Perspective

Sara White Bob White

As environmental catastrophes occur with increasing frequency and severity, we see the beginning of a new movement with great potential mass appeal. Unfortunately, the new ecology movement, which it usually calls itself to emphasize its concern with man's relationship to the total environment, seems destined to repeat the same mistakes which have been fatal to other movements for change.

Even though their Doom's Day scenarios differ only in details - such as whether pollution of the atmosphere is going to bring on a new ice age or cause a general temperature increase which will melt the polar ice caps - leaders of the ecology movement continue to act as if traditional Democratic Party reform politics and lobbying within a basically unchanged social system hold the key to survival.

Indeed, some of them attempt to make the issue a personal, moral one and not political at all. And, after all, haven't Establishment politicians from Lindsay to Reagan, not to mention Nixon, endorsed the goals of the movement? We all have to breathe. It should be just a matter of cleaning things up once everyone realizes there is a problem. Each of us must stop his own personal polluting and vote for candidates who understand the importance of the issue.

There is, of course, a catch to this. Even forgetting about the obvious fact that many politicians are taking up the environmental issue simply to divert attention from such "divisive" issues as inflation, poverty, racism, and a losing imperialist war, there is little reason to believe that the crisis can be solved within the framework of the capitalist system. If you think that the threatened extinction of all life will necessarily shock the world's rulers into saving the day, consider the nuclear arms race. We have been threatened with nuclear extinction for years. Instead of disarmament, we see a new acceleration of the arms race with the introduction of the ABM.

The threat of the final destruction of a liveable environment will not cause the capitalist class or their bureaucratic counterparts in the "Communist" world to stop that destruction, any more than the threat of nuclear destruction has forced them to disarm. Imperialism, the permanent arms economy, and capitalist competition have a logic of their own which admits no consideration of even the end of life itself. The struggle to save the environment is a struggle against those who rule, and thus it could not be more political.

Ending pollution and reversing the process of environmental deterioration will be a very expensive process. Ecology movement leaders, politicians, and the

media alike emphasize that it will mean "sacrifices for us all", i.e., that the masses of people will have to subsidize pollution control through higher taxes and prices and a general decline in their standard of living - while the prerogatives and power of the ruling class remain untouched. Such "sacrifices" could only be imposed from above, by a state with increased repressive powers.

Reactionary as this "solution" is, even it would probably have as much chance of surviving today's cut-throat international competition as the ocean's whales, which are being slaughtered to extinction by the fleets of the United States, Japan, and Russia. Any real solution to the crisis will demand democratic planning in a social system freed from the insatiable drive for profit which characterizes capitalism.

It is easy for the individual to feel very guilty about the destruction of the environment, since most of the mass media coverage of the issue and a segment of the ecology movement have focussed attention of individual consumption as the basic cause of pollution. If you are not willing to give up "luxuries" like your automo-

bile, you are as guilty as a polluting industrialist.

This view ignores the fact that there is no mass alternative to the automobile - in part because of the power of the auto industry and in part because, except for an inadequate, bare minimum parceled out to necessary social services, taxes are spent to maintain the permanent arms economy and its imperialist wars rather than to build anything on the order of mass rapid transit systems. It is not we, but they, the capitalists, who are causing the pollution. We should feel guilty only if we aren't trying to break their power.

Although the temptation will be great to try to restrict the ecology movement to efforts to gain the ears of those in power, especially now when they seem so attentive, this is a "short-cut" to nowhere. The revolutionary changes that the environmental crisis demands will inevitably "alienate" those politicians who are now "on our side", including the Muskies and all the and all the other liberal Democrats.

The ecology movement must learn from the sad example of the anti-war movement, which followed McCarthy into the Democratic Party and ended viewing



Humphrey as the lesser evil while McCarthy carried on the struggle by going to cover the World Series. If the movement had maintained its independence, it would not have had to start all over again several months and thousands of lives lost in Vietnam later.

The Democratic Party is as much an institution for maintaining the power of the corporations as the Republican Party. The unorganized, atomized "public" is no match for the tremendous power of the monopoly corporations when it comes to influencing capitalist politicians or governmental regulatory agencies. Thus any movement which confines itself to supporting Democratic and Republican "friends of the environment" and legislative regulation of industry will end in defeat.

Moreover, the ecology movement must begin to see environmental destruction as just another result of a system which produces for profit and not for use; a system which pays farmers not to produce while people starve to death; which wastes millions of dollars on advertising trying to create new needs for useless products among those who can afford them, while the crying needs of the society go unfulfilled; a system whose imperialist foreign policy maintains the misery of the masses of the world's people; a system which spends billions of dollars on instruments of death.

The movement should begin to raise demands like the following:

- (1) An immediate end to off-shore drilling and other projects that destroy the environment, with no compensation to the corporations doing the destruction;
- (2) A 100% tax on profits of corporations that continue to pollute, plus reparations payments for past damages;
- (3) End arms production and the war in Vietnam; withdrawal of troops from all foreign countries;
- (4) Money obtained from (2) and (3) to be used for a massive rebuilding program for the cities to make them liveable, human, and green, providing a guaranteed job for everyone, planning to be controlled by local residents; for mass transit development and pollution controls and reversal programs;
- (5) Workers' control of working conditions;
- (6) End all chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons research;
- (7) Support for social revolution in the Third World; end support to all reactionary regimes;
- (8) Full agricultural production to feed starving people of the world;
- (9) Support for women's liberation throughout the world, including the right to free abortion and an end to tracking and job discrimination against women - providing an alternative to exclusive child-rearing roles for women.

We believe that these demands cannot be granted within the framework of capital within the framework of the capitalist system. But they are certainly demands that a rational human society would fulfill. We will struggle for these demands with others in the belief that many will become convinced of the need for revolutionary change during the struggle. The destruction of the environment and the real possibility it poses of an end to all life makes the destruction of the barbarous class systems of the world all the more urgent.

Notes on Capitalism and the Environment

Wayne Price

The fundamental responsibility for our "environmental" problems lies with the capitalist system and the bourgeoisie who run it. It is not simply that capitalism pollutes the air and water, and builds ugly cities, and produces shoddy goods. Rather it is that the system has developed a society fundamentally out of harmony with the non-human world upon which man's survival depends. This disharmony has now reached a point at which the survival of the species, let alone its future development, is threatened.

The ill effects of capitalism on the natural world are not, in the main, directly due to its planlessness and competition - significant as these are. The main problem is the basic drive of the system for unending accumulation, caused by competition. The world is treated as a mine, with resources to be extracted as quickly as possible, rather than as an interdependent ecosystem.

We oppose the idea that technology or industrialism has created our ecological predicament. On the contrary, technology has given us the possibility of a new harmony with the non-human world. Pre-industrial peoples such as American Indians, did not and do not live in harmony with nature - they are dominated by nature, oppressed by the external world. Modern technological potentialities point to a society with a wholly new type of human civilization: where nature will be humanized and man will be naturalized (Marx).

We reject the concept that overpopulation is the root of pollution and mass hunger. Capitalism with its drive toward limitless expansion, unending accumulation, has produced a similar population "policy" of limitless expansion. Only a society which is based on production for human need instead of imbalance, on respect for the individual instead of the degradation of the masses - only such a society can limit its population growth by voluntary means.

Many theorists chose to blame the ills of capitalism on the population increase, instead of the other way around. Since Malthus, "overpopulation" has been used explicitly to "prove" the impossibility of socialism. While opposing neo-Malthusianism, Marxists see the need to fit humanity's numbers to a finite earth. Positively, we say that socialism can ameliorate the immediate effects of "overpopulation" by decongesting cities and feeding the hungry. More importantly only international socialism can end population growth.

All attempts to regulate business "in the public interest" have failed. They had to fail because it is a bourgeois state, serving the capitalists' interests. Business, by definition, is well-organized and wealthy. It can swamp and enmesh government agencies and programs by virtue of its inevitable influence. The public is amorphous and unorganized. It cannot maintain the same steady pressure on a regulating agency that an industry can.

For the same reason, movements for "conservation", "consumer protection", or "better environment" are doomed to small victories and big defeats. However, middle-class based, single-issue movements can help stir things up until a more powerful social sector is activated. They are themselves symptoms of a widespread discontent with the quality of our Way of Life, and we support these movements, always pointing out their limitations.

The only sector both capable of making real social changes and with the interest to do so, is the working class. The "environmentalist" movement can make changes only if it orients to the American people as workers -- organized or potentially organized around their place of work - rather than as "citizens" or as "consumers".

The political-economic power of organized workers can have an effect in counterbalancing the capitalists' domination of the state. Not that

workers' organizations can change the nature of the state, but that organized workers can present a more ongoing "lobby" than consumer or conservationist groups can. We demand that union lobbies fight for a human environment. However, only an independent workers' party will be able to really represent the ecological interests of Americans.

Workers should decide to directly intervene in the economic process to stop producing and distributing shoddy or dangerous goods, to stop poisoning the environment, to not permit buildings to be erected in the wrong places. Such a program requires both collective bargaining and direct action. Organizationally, it requires factory workers' committees linked up by representatives with other committees.

While such demands will at first be mainly negative, they imply the end of capitalist management and will not be granted without continuous struggle. Such organization implies an economy run from the bottom up, democratically planned, for human needs, not profit -- socialism. It implies a state based on workers' organizations -- a workers' state.

Workers' can be organized to fight in this way, but not if the purpose is only to fight against general ecological-consumer problems. However, the problem of environmental deterioration is a very concrete one for most working people. Most adults spend most of their waking lives in their occupational environment - the deadliest of all. The issue of miners' "black-lung" disease has resulted in one example of workers' fighting for a better working environment, which includes not only pollution, but all aspects of job conditions. Environment groups should concentrate on educating workers about these facts - although there are many facts about environment which workers could teach to middle-class crusaders.

Of course, the bourgeois politicians have none of these thoughts in mind when they call for new environmental or consumer laws. Partly they are making political hay out of a groundswell of popular revulsion against being killed by poisons and dangerous cars. Partly they are sincerely trying to deal with a problem by the only methods they know. But most importantly they are trying to channel general discontent away from questions of income, race, and war toward the more co-optable area of "environment".

What we see as the weakness of this issue the ruling class sees as its virtue. We must point out and oppose the large-scale attempt to substitute "ecology" for other ongoing progressive struggles. Such substitution does "environmentalism" no service.



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eco-politics

Joe Felsenstein

Suddenly this year, everyone is in favor of ecology. Teach-ins seem to be going on everywhere. Bookstores are filled with volumes of frightening statistics on environmental crises. The mass media project gloom about the future of humanity. Democrats and Republicans are fighting for possession of the Environment issue. Nixon has announced plans to solve absolutely everything by 1976.

It is hard not to view all of this as some sort of plot to divert peoples' attention from Vietnam, racism and the economy. But that temptation must be resisted. Whatever the motives of some who have jumped onto the bandwagon, the rise of the ecology issue is a logical response to a real problem.

Environmental disasters have been occurring with increasing frequency. Each new disaster has received greater publicity than the last, and the interconnections between the different events have become clearer and clearer. With the Santa Barbara oil slick at the beginning of 1969, the volume of publicity and the number of visible interconnections became so great that the public began to see the issue as a whole. The ecology snowball is now rolling and picking up speed.

At the same time, it is true that ecology appeals to some as a means of avoiding radical politics. Many activists have involved themselves in the issue primarily to escape the frustrations of the Left. And to judge by the way the mass media publicize ecology, there can be no doubt that many politicians do see the issue as a means of diverting the energies of young people into harmless channels.

In this respect, the ecology movement resembles the McCarthy campaign. But although ecology is often said to make all previous political thought obsolete, radical politics are in fact highly relevant to ecology, which cannot usefully be treated as a purely technical problem.

Consider pollution as an example. If a firm pollutes the environment as a byproduct of its manufacturing, the competitive market economy provides no incentive for it to reduce this pollution. Pollution control devices cost money, and a manufacturer would have to be crazy not to pass these costs on to the public by continuing the pollution. Under the pressures of competition, he is under pressure to continue to pollute.

In addition, there are more subtle effects of a capitalist society. Under capitalism, people are encouraged

to define the quality of their lives in terms of the ownership of goods, rather than in terms of their relationships with other human beings. Advertising urges people to purchase goods they do not need and to discard products which still work. To the extent that this effort is successful in speeding the turnover of consumer goods, manufacturers are encouraged to make products which fall apart quickly.

Products are elaborately styled and packaged. It is intriguing to speculate about what could have been done for automobile pollution control with one tenth of the money spent on the constant styling changes which produced such wonders as the cars of the late 1950's. It is also interesting to speculate on how many less ulcers Americans would have if advertising were confined to informing the consumer about useful goods.

These are the long-range effects and side effects of a competitive capitalist economy. To deal with the crises brought about by these effects, it is necessary to step outside the framework of the market. The pressures of "public opinion" are clearly not sufficient. Any serious approach to solving pollution and resource problems must involve the creation of a planned economy. This can happen in two general ways: through a socialist revolution, or by increasing state control of a capitalist economy. The difference between these choices lies in who does the planning, and in whose interest.

Democratic Planning

Under socialism, the planning process and its priorities would be controlled democratically by the people.

A planned capitalist economy on the other hand may sound like a contradiction in terms. But in some senses, we already have such an economy. There is an elaborate system of taxes and tariffs, intended not only to raise money for the government, but also to steer the economy in certain directions. There are the federal regulatory agencies. There is an elaborate system of subsidies, from agricultural subsidies to the SST, from NDEA loans to the defense budget. And there is the greatest concentration of power the world has ever known, maintaining the greatest empire the world has ever known.

All of this functions in the interest of a ruling class - those who own and control the large corporations. Faced with environmental crisis, they will attempt to ex-

tend this sort of bureaucratic planning to meet the crisis. In the capitalist planning which would result, priorities would still be set by this same ruling class, in their interests, not ours.

Proposed solutions to environmental problems are often discussed in terms of halting economic growth. This is misleading. An economy has not only a "size" but a "shape" - that is, a particular internal structure. As far as the environment is concerned, the "shape" of American capitalism is atrocious; there is practically no recycling of resources, and competitive pressures create ever-greater depredations. Real solutions to ecological problems must involve changing the shape of the economy. A far greater proportion of economic effort must be directed towards recycling resources and preventing pollution.

It is impossible to control the growth without changing the shape of the economy. And in a society where "money doesn't talk, it swears", this is inevitably a deeply political process. The remarkable thing about ecology is not that it makes politics obsolete, but that, on the contrary, every major political tendency observed elsewhere has its counterpart in the ecology movement. The parallels are so exact as to be uncanny.

Technical Problem?

Eco-liberalism. The liberal attacks problems by attempting reforms within capitalism without attempting to change the basic nature of the system. Under this heading can be placed all approaches which view the ecology issue in isolation from its political context, as a purely technical problem. This is the most common approach to ecology, which is not surprising, since liberalism is the dominant ideology of American capitalism.

The basic outlines of any attempt to meet the ecological crisis within a capitalist framework can be discerned. Pollution would be attacked by creating comprehensive monitoring agencies. If taxes for fines for pollution were collected, their cost would be passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices. The cost of the installation of anti-pollution technology would be paid by the consumer or by the taxpayer in the form of subsidies. The priorities involved in taxation and subsidy would be set by the regulatory agencies.

Such agencies would be staffed (as they are now) by men from the large corporations, or by men who look forward to careers in these corporations. They will seek to maintain the power and the profits of the large corporations. Again, the cost will be paid by the taxpayer and the consumer - in other words, by the working class.

Techniques already exist to facilitate planning on a very large scale - notably the techniques of systems analysis. But to employ these techniques, priorities and goals must be specified. Simply pointing to problems and not being specific about the politics involved in solving them will allow the priorities of corporate capitalism to remain unchallenged. This is what will happen if arguments continue to revolve around how much the government should spend on pollution abatement, instead of around who will determine the priorities - the corporations or the working class.

Ecology activists should examine their goals and tactics to see which alternative they are supporting. There is a real danger that they will find themselves in the position of being propagandists for statified capitalism.

Eco-pacifism. The individual moral witness approach. Sell your car, then go around preaching to others to get them to give up theirs. Expect major results from consumer boycotts of products which pollute or are made by polluters.

What this approach ignores is the pressures of society. It assumes that the consumer is king. It is assumed that people do not really need cars. It assumes that people have the ready cash to substitute expensive products for inexpensive ones.

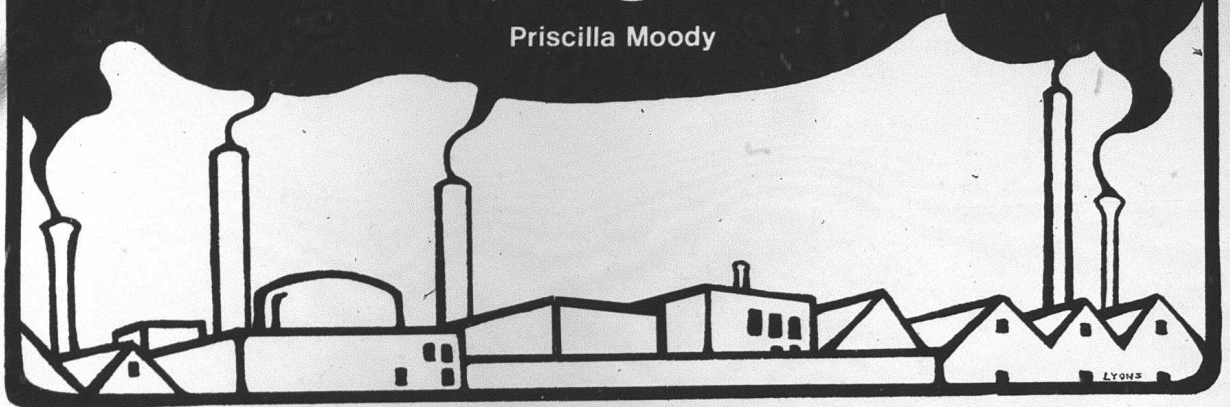
The problem is that the consumer is not king - there is such a thing as advertising, carried on a communications network controlled by the ruling class. Workers really do need cars to get to work (and really do need to get to work). So long as mass transit is unavailable, the prospect of a ten-mile march through the snow will not be a serious alternative to driving, even on a crowded freeway. As long as workers must struggle to keep up the payments on that car, they will not have the time or enthusiasm to substitute organically-grown foods for the products of agribusiness.

There is no real difference between the moral-witness approach to ecology and the moral witness approach to the anti-war movement. In both cases, individuals are blamed for the crime of a social system. But it is

(Con't on page 6)

Ecology and the Working Class

Priscilla Moody



As the 70's open, the environmental crisis is fast becoming the number one issue for politicians, the news media, and the 'public' at large. Not a day goes by without some mention of the crisis by one newly-converted 'official' or another. President Nixon devoted a large part of his state-of-the-union address this year to the crisis.

On April 22nd, colleges and universities across the country will host the First National Environmental Teach-In. In honor of this occasion Friends of the Earth and Ballantine Books have put out a book called *The Environmental Handbook*, and the Sierra Club and Pocket Books have published *Ecotactics: The Sierra Club Handbook for Environmental Activists*. These two books are chocked full of ideas for people interested in fighting around ecology issues, but the thing that will interest us here is the methodology inherent in their discussion of the issues, causes and cures.

While liberals are jumping on the ecology bandwagon as it affects the 'citizen', industrial and farm workers directly experience on a day-to-day, 8-and-12-hour level the pollution that everyone is talking about. Yet discussion of their experiences by ecology activists, if these two books are any indication, is cursory at best and totally absent at worst.

Since workers' experience is hardly touched on, it

follows that there is no discussion of the role of the working class in fighting environmental poisoning. We're all just consumers here, it seems, and we ourselves are responsible for the mess we're in anyway. Newsweek, in its cover story on the 'Ravaged Environment', summarized this approach:

"...the villain of the piece is not some profit-hungry industrialist who can be fined into submission, nor some lax public official who can be replaced. The villains are consumers who demand (or at least let themselves be cajoled into desiring) new, more, faster, bigger, cheaper playthings without counting the cost in a dirtier, smellier, sicker world."

The idea that somehow it is the public at large who is responsible for the mess is repeated again and again in the two books. Charles E. Little, in the epilogue to *Ecotactics*, refers to the danger of "...confusing the so-called establishment with the real enemy - the individual who consumes the establishment's products."

The other side of the coin is, of course, the idea that, if we all get together and stop buying or using or whatever these products, that will cure the problem. Mr. Little suggests that it's not really Con Ed's fault that it has to expand, build more power plants, etc., but that it's us with our drive to use more electric gadgets that's making Con Ed do it.

The facts, however, quickly belie this argument. In 1968 Con Edison's sales (in Kilowatt hours) were 6,853,690,572 to residential units as opposed to 15,916,112,881 to commercial and industrial units. He might better suggest that offices stop using their electrical equipment, and industry do the same. But he isn't about to do that.

Individual Action

Mr. Little may be more conservative than most, but the difference is basically one of degree, especially among those concerned with individual solutions. Searching the "Individual Action" section of the *Environmental Handbook*, one is struck by two things. First, many of their projects for individual actions are actually organizational actions, i.e., handing out leaflets concerning pollution, and applying pressure to public officials.

Perhaps these things could be done on an individual basis, but no one, including those who suggest them, thinks that this would be effective. However, given the moralistic, each-man-take-his-stand, attitude of virtually all the ecology writers, they must view group activity as individual actions. Once the idea of organization is introduced and accepted, the moral fervor of 'individuals' struggling for the 'right' would be lost in a sordid struggle for (perish the thought) power.

The other thing that strikes one is the almost childish naivete of many of the suggestions, i.e., dumping your unrecyclable cartons at your local supermarket,

mailing in prepaid envelopes you receive for ecologically undesirable products, complaining to the post office re eco-pornography.

The point is that even if all these tactics had some effect, the result, in terms of changing the structure of the system that breeds these misuses of our environment, would be insignificant. Unrecyclable milk cartons are, at best, petty side effects of the capitalist system. Concentrating on that sort of issue will side-track the movement and make it more difficult to fight the real causes of the crisis.

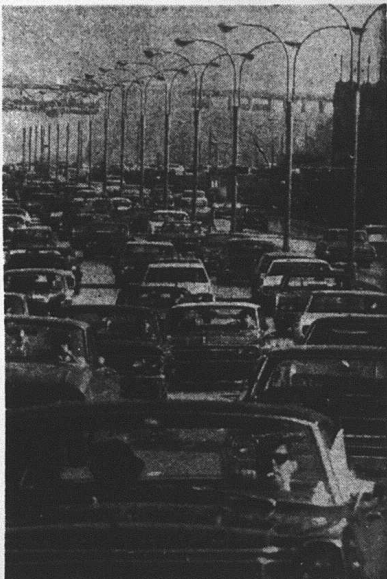
"Pitch In"

One spokesman, Cliff Humphrey, in an article in *Ecotactics* called 'Doing Ecology Action', does postulate what a worker's role as an individual could be in this movement: "...let's follow an imaginary employee of a steel plant through a day of doing ecology action. He will walk, pedal, join a car pool or ride the bus to work. If he has to drive, he will have a sign on his car telling how much air his engine inhales and the nature of its pollution. At work he will post on bulletin boards, or available wall space, clippings and pictures concerning ecological issues. He will also be on the alert for wasteful corporate methods that should be corrected, and be willing to talk fellow employees into helping him correct the deficiency. If employers are aware of a harmful process that could be corrected and management refuses to take care of it, the plant should be struck until that practice is corrected. If management wants to clean up but can't afford to pay the price, perhaps some employees will drop by on a Saturday and pitch in."

Humphrey is here talking about steel plants, probably one of the biggest polluters of the environment. To postulate individual action (or any sort of action from anything but a strong power base) against corporate giants like steel companies is absurd. As for dropping by some Saturday to pitch in and help, that's otherwise known as overtime, and it's not likely to be used to help correct a few minor pollution problems.

The "Political Action" section of the *Environmental Handbook* is consistent with the "Individual Action" section. Marion Edey of Friends of the Earth outlines FOE's plan for political action: "A branch of FOE called League of Conservation Voters will actively support candidates who are working hardest to protect the environment. In every election year the league will pick a slate of outstanding candidates who face an especially close race. Not only will we endorse them, but we will raise money and manpower for their campaigns. Thus, we can protect our allies in Congress and possibly succeed in defeating legislators whose policies are especially destructive to the environment."

She then goes on to say that we must overcome our distaste for working with politicians and follow the ex-



Workers' Power



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May 1970

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST SUPPLEMENT



April 15: Stop Work- Stop the War

Mike Friedman

In conjunction with anti-war activities taking place across the country, the San Francisco Bay Area Labor Assembly for Peace has called for a one-day work stoppage against the war on April 15. For the first time, an attempt is being made to link up the anti-war movement with militant workers in motion.

Although, for various reasons, this first anti-war work stoppage will not be massive, it does mark a significant development in the anti-war movement. Unlike past mass demonstrations, or even "no business as usual" activities, the work stoppage is a step toward the building of a militant, organized, politically conscious movement of working people, based on the real collective power they have as workers.

Unions in this area, especially those who supported last fall's Moratorium activities, were asked to endorse the work stoppage, and to help mobilize their members for it. Rank-and-file groups, caucuses and individuals in shops and unions also were urged to raise the issue. Unfortunately, for reasons to be mentioned later, the organizing work, especially with respect to the latter groupings, has been minimal.

Bay Area unions endorsing the April 15 work stoppage include Painters Local 4, Amalgamated Clothing Workers Northern California Joint Board, AFSCME 1695, Social Workers #535, Building Service Employees #400, Office Employees #29, and several AFT locals. In unions which would not endorse the action, militants and anti-war individuals are expected to participate.

ILWU Cops Out

Notably absent from the list of endorsers are any of the ILWU (International Longshore Workers Union) locals. ILWU Local 6 had passed an ambiguous motion, but later insisted on being dropped from the list of supporters. This fact is closely related to the functioning of certain members of the Labor Assembly for Peace, who attempted to undermine the work stoppage from the very beginning.

Under pressure from the ILWU leadership (which, by the way, has for too long had a reputation as "militant"), these people did what they could to prevent the necessary publicity and notifications of the work stoppage from going out. It took some doing just to get out a letter asking for union endorsement.

Their argument is that somehow a work stoppage is too radical a thing to ask for at this time, and that doing so would only alienate union leaders. Of course, this is based on a general outlook which is concerned more with maintenance of comfortable, though increasingly tenuous, political alliances with the labor establishment in San Francisco than it is on raising workers' consciousness about the war and the society.

Our job should be to point out the connection between the war in Asia and the growing economic squeeze on the rank and file working person, and to raise the question of who profits from war and who pays for inflation.

The war in Vietnam is not, after all, just an abstract "moral" issue. If it were, perhaps we would have to spend our time looking for the anguished support of "sincere" and well-meaning union bureaucrats who are as concerned as is Nixon with the social consequences of this unpopular war.

In fact, the inflation which is eating away at our standard of living is perpetuated by a war economy. Meanwhile, as the GE strike showed, the corporations are insisting on the maintenance of their profits while their workers bear the full brunt of the inflated war costs. While they are protecting their "right" to profit

off war, these corporations will cry to their workers how "unpatriotic" it is to hurt the war effort or the economy by striking.

Somehow, it's not unpatriotic to attempt to suppress a people fighting for self-determination, or to make super profits off a military venture which is killing thousands of Vietnamese and Americans. But in the eyes of the corporate magnates, it borders on subversion for workers to demand the preservation of their standard of living in the face of rising costs resulting from the war.

Such a set of values may rest well with union leader-



BIG BUSINESS (to Labor, generously): "My good fellow, you'll be well paid for your patriotic action in 'tending this glorious plant; you shall have all the fruit above the ground—I'll take ONLY the roots!"

ships who have committed themselves to support of this rotten, interventionist foreign policy - like George Meany himself - but it clearly must be rejected by any self-respecting working man or woman who is not being paid to wheel and deal with the politicians in Washington.

Many of us in the labor movement have been opposed to the war from the beginning and have participated in activities designed to demonstrate that opposition. However, so long as our activity as workers was as individuals, our effect was limited. Mass marches have been a good way of bringing people into active opposition by showing them they are not alone. But it is when we begin to act collectively as workers, exercising the power we have as the producers in this society that we will see some real results.

Last November, perhaps a million people demonstrated their opposition to the war by engaging in "no business as usual." Yet Nixon could claim to ignore these actions while appealing to a "silent majority," many of whom actually were among the participants in the Moratorium! This is partly because the demonstrations of last fall exhibited little in the way of real social power.

"We Are the Power!"

If those one million people - or even half that number - had been workers organized to stop production, think of what the effect might have been. The working people of this country collectively keep this country running. If the millions of rank-and-file workers of this land decide that the government is leading them to disaster, they have a right and a duty to do what they can to stop it. And that will very likely mean opposing their own union "leaders".

The recent city strike in San Francisco and the national postal walkout showed what the rank-and-file can do even when their leadership is firmly opposed to them. Not only are the interests of the rank-and-file different from those of the union leaders, but, moreover, the real power rests with the rank-and-file once it is conscious of this fact and is organized.

Even those union leaders who oppose the war, for their own guilt-ridden reasons, are unable to step out of their role as "responsible" labor leaders, to lead a struggle against the government and the war. Only the rank-and-file can turn the "concern of sincere men" into the anger and militant opposition of a powerful working class, fighting for its interests - the interests of the vast majority of the population.

Right now, as a beginning, working people can act in a way which points to their real power and which expresses their opposition to a dirty imperialist war by stopping work on April 15. The April 15 work stoppage can signal a new turn in the anti-war movement, away from the ritualistic "gathering of the tribes" which now occurs every year under increasingly meaningless banners.

An organized, conscious working class, acting for itself, not only provides a powerful means of opposition, but offers an overall way out by posing the question of the democratic reorganization of the whole society. Only the working class can do that, and only that is what we call socialism.

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The Molly Maguires

Jerry Hodges

Those who desire a reasonably accurate portrayal of what conditions were like in a small isolated company-owned mining town in the 1870's should see The Molly Maguires.

Vividly portrayed are the utter despair of abject servile poverty, the horrors of tunnel mining and the revolting and despicable use of child labor which was endemic to the period.

The Molly Maguires were a group of rebel miners in Pennsylvania who attempted, through the use of frequently violent tactics to redress their grievances and obstruct their oppressors. In the beginning of the film, the Mollies are infiltrated by James McPharlan, a poor immigrant who decides that the only way out of his miserable condition is through cooperating with the system in the oppression of his fellow workers. He succeeds in his plan, but in so doing is made to realize that he has lost something of much greater value, his dignity and worth as a person.

McPharlan represents all that is rotten and dehumanizing in the capitalist system. He realizes that the problem lies in the exploitation of the workers by the mine operators, and even sympathizes with the Mollies, but is still unable to make the sacrifices required to reject the system and fight alongside them. Instead, he betrays the group and brings about its eventual extermination.

One particularly effective aspect of the film was its treatment of the church as the tool of the operators in keeping the workers subdued. The town priest invokes the time-honored bourgeois incantations against the evils of violence and consistently reminds the Mollies of the horrible eternal tortures awaiting those who resort to it.

The most serious flaw in The Molly Maguires lies in its lack of any political content. In the midst of an extremely accurate and effectively presented setting, we are given a melodramatic soap opera revolving around the internal struggles of poor McPharlan and the daring exploits of a gang of rebellious malcontents devoted solely to the disruption of the mines.

In reality, the Mollies were not just a sect of bomb throwers, but a quasi-political group,

certainly not conscious revolutionary socialists, but nevertheless possessing certain clearly-defined working class objectives.

Prior to the events depicted in the movie, there had been periodic attempts on the part of the mine workers to form unions, but these efforts were almost totally thwarted. During the 1840's and 1850's, there was a series of abortive strikes in which state troopers and coal and iron police, controlled by the operators, frequently beat and killed workers, usually without the slightest provocation.

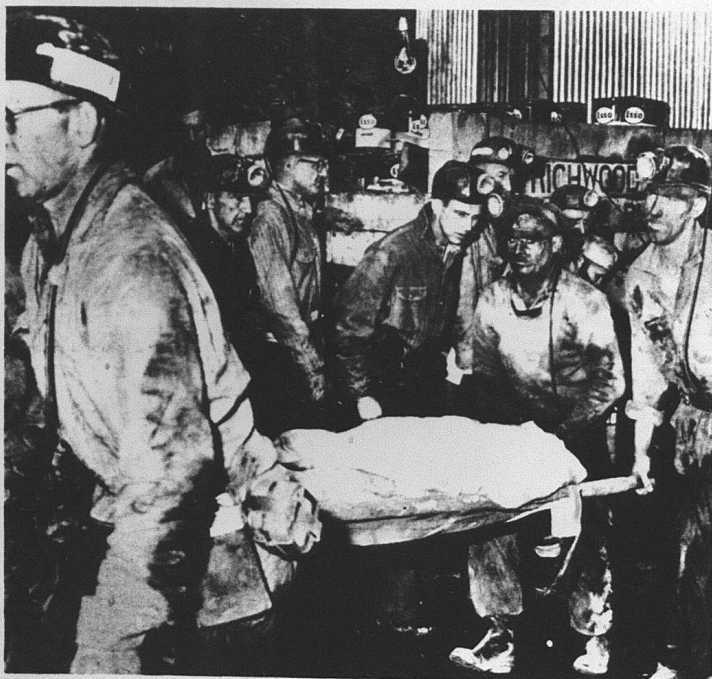
Since the miners were prevented from winning any real gains through more-pacific means of protest, the Molly Maguires frequently found it expedient to resort to terror or the threat of it. Most Molly activity was confined to delivering threats to particularly odious individuals, such as strikebreakers or especially bad superintendents.

After the defeat of the 1873 strike, Frank P. Gowan, the leader of the mine operators, decided that it would be a propitious time to liquidate the Mollies, and McPharlan was the man chosen to do the job.

One can have only one opinion of McPharlan: he was a rat, a police informer who was willing to go to any lengths to garner crumbs from the bourgeois oppressors, even to the point of betraying his own people. McPharlan was able to get nineteen Mollies tried, convicted and hanged with hardly a scrap of evidence. It was this same reprobate who would, thirty years later, employ the same tactics in an unsuccessful attempt to engineer the legal murder of Big Bill Haywood.

The attempts of the producer of this film to ignore the reality of the obscenity which McPharlan represented stems from the old ploy of whitewashing the capitalist system in the name of "objectivity". We are instead given a bland, diluted account which stresses the secondary aspects of this struggle and ignores the real cause of the atrocities, capitalism.

In short, The Molly Maguires blithely ignores the roots of the disease and concentrates gravely upon the symptoms. It sees a cancerous patient and prescribes aspirin.



Coal Miners in Pennsylvania

Metro/LNS

Major Breakthrough in Grape Strike

Anne P. Draper

An historic first occurred on April 1, with the announcement that three table grape companies in Coachella Valley, California, had signed a union contract with the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO. The breakthrough occurred as the union girded itself for a major strike in the Coachella Valley, an area south of Delano, whose high temperatures produce an earlier harvesting of table grapes.

This important victory for the grape strike is the first contract in table grapes. Consumers will be able to eat grapes with the United Farm Workers Union Label when the grapes are picked in the months to come. The contracts will cover some 750 workers at the peak season in May and June.

The three companies -- David Freedman Co., Charles Freedman Co., and Wonder Palms -- cover more than 1,100 acres in the Coachella Valley north of the Mexican border. The three vineyards are operated by Lionel Steinberg, a Democratic Party spokesman for agricultural interests and a key agribusiness adviser to Governor Edmund Brown up to Ronald Reagan's victory in 1966.

The three-year contract sets a minimum wage of \$1.75 for the first year; plus 25 cents per box of grapes picked during harvest (the current rate is \$1.65 plus 15¢ a box); ten cents per hour for a health and welfare program; two weeks' vacation for semi-yearly workers; hiring hall procedures; two cents per hour, to be used by the union for such projects now in progress as the retirement center; and a successor clause to protect the gains achieved should the property change hands.

Safety Clause

A safety clause provides that the growers must give the workers advance notice of any use of pesticides. To protect both the workers and the consumers, the contract bans the use of "hard pesticides," including DDT, Aldrin, Dieldrin, Endrin, TEPP, and Parathion.

The safety clause has become a key issue with the union. Last fall UFWOC Director Cesar Chavez initiated new approaches to the Delano growers, indicating that the union was willing to reconsider its \$2 an hour minimum wage demand, but would not yield on the pesticide clause. The growers spurned the offer at the time.

The growers have rejected union attempts to discover what agricultural chemicals and pesticides are being used in the vineyards, despite the mounting evidence of their harmful effects on farm workers and their families. The union has escalated its campaign against pesticides, and its demands that the workers and consumers be given maximum protection against pesticides.

"This is the major issue, more important than money," Chavez stated. "What good is money if you don't have your health?" The state's largest industry, the \$4 billion agribusiness employing over a half million farm workers, has the highest occupational disease rate - three times as high as the average rate of all industries. The growers have been criminally negligent where the health and safety of farm workers are concerned.

Both Chavez and Larry Iliong, Assistant Director of UFWOC, expressed some disappointment that this contract fell below the \$2 an hour minimum contained in their wine grape contracts, but there are yearly re-opening clauses on wages.

Five years ago, the grape strike began in Coachella Valley. At that time, Steinberg, leader of the Coachella Valley Growers' group and a member of the State Board of Agriculture, refused to sign a contract with the union, with a guarantee of \$1.40 an hour. The strike then travelled north to Delano, whose vineyards were struck in September of 1965.

Last year the union struck the Coachella Valley vineyards, but was unable to get a major breakthrough. The grape boycott sharply reduced the prices of Coachella grapes, and the growers, especially Steinberg, bitterly complained of their losses. Last year, it was rumored that Steinberg was on the verge of signing, since his

image as a "liberal Kennedy Democrat" was slipping.

An ironic coincidence; both Chavez and Steinberg, strike leader and struck grower, were on the Kennedy slate of delegates in 1968. The same Robert Kennedy had served as Attorney-General under President John Kennedy in 1960; neither used the power of their office to stop the infamous bracero program, which exploited the poverty of Mexican Nationals and furnished the growers with a cheap labor force and a handy strike-breaking instrument when domestic farm workers struck. But then politics do make strange bedfellows, especially when presidential candidates are courting the votes of Mexican-Americans. A major role in achieving the

March 27, just before Easter, labor leaders from throughout California, representing the AFL-CIO central labor councils, and the new head of the California Labor Federation, John Henning, met with the Delano strike leaders. Most councils, and especially the CLF under its former chief, Thomas Pitts, have failed to give the grape strike the kind of sustained, massive solid aid needed to win.

Pitts, a former Teamster official and deeply conservative, regarded the grape strike, its leaders and its supporters with considerable distrust and kept his distance. Other union officials travelled across the country to express solidarity with the grape strikers. He never



The first "Caravan to Delano" from the S.F.-Bay Area was organized by Anne Draper, pictured above delivering part of the three tons of food to Cesar Chavez. Some ten cars, carrying the badly-needed food and \$800 collected by trade unionists, Berkeley students, and strike supporters, drove the 300 miles to the strike front in the first demonstration of strike support shortly after the strike started. Since then the tradition of monthly caravans to Delano has been maintained and extended, serving to keep close bonds between the strikers and their supporters.

Coachella Valley break-through was played by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. A special committee on farm labor had been working for some months to bring the two sides together, along with the AFL-CIO's Director of Organization, William Kircher. The largest minorities on strike are Chicano and Filipino, mostly Catholic. But the Catholic Church has been sharply divided on the grape strike and boycott, and lagged behind the strong support given by Protestant groups.

The three vineyards signed up represent about one-eighth of the total grape production of about 8,000 acres in Coachella Valley. They hope to boost their sales by the use of the United Farm Workers Union Label; the black eagle on a red flag - known to grape boycotters throughout the United States and abroad.

Meanwhile, plans to intensify the boycott against scab grapes were outlined at meetings held in Delano just prior to the Coachella Valley signing. On Friday,

made it to Delano, nor did he make any serious efforts to mobilize California's two-million union membership to help the embattled farm workers win their strike.

Henning, who became deeply interested in the farm workers' cause during his years as Research Director for the CFL, pledged "an intensified program in support of the farm workers". The labor conference discussed how to make the boycott more effective, and also called for the ending of subsidies to the growers. The farm workers' strike and unionization may well become a major test of the new state AFL-CIO leadership.

At the labor conference, the boycott's director, Larry Iliong, reported on what is undoubtedly the most massive and sustained boycott ever run by any sector of American labor. Teams of boycott volunteers - in some cases farm workers and their families who had never been outside Delano - were sent to some 41 major cities in the U.S. and Canada. They succeeded in cutting by 30% the table grapes sent to those areas.

(Con't on page 11)

Black Panther Caucus at Fremont GM

The largest industrial plant in Northern California is the General Motors Assembly Plant in Fremont, located between Oakland and San Jose. In 1968 a group of black GM workers formed the Black Panther caucus. A number of the leaders of the caucus were members of the Black Panther Party, but the caucus also attracted large numbers of workers not in the Party. While the base of the caucus remains the GM plant, the caucus now has membership from a number of UAW plants in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The IS talked to Kenny Horsten, founder and Chairman of the Black Panther Caucus.

IS: Would you describe the general situation in the Fremont plant?

KH: When the plant moved from Oakland to Fremont in 1963, General Motors stopped hiring black workers. They didn't come out and say it, but they set a policy that they would not hire anyone who lived outside the Hayward-Fremont area. Well, at that time there were no black workers living in Hayward. They were all living in Oakland.

A group of brothers demanded that this practice be stopped. Management's statement was that they were having too many problems with black workers: "they were always gambling and fighting, they never came to work on time, they never paid their bills, they were always drinking on the job, and in general, they were just unreliable workers." This was the position of GM up to about 1965. But as production increased and GM found they had to increase the work-force, they started to slowly bring in more black workers.

Racism at Fremont

IS: What about racist practices once black workers do get hired?

KH: Any black worker in any UAW plant or in any union can tell you that racism does exist. In Fremont it is so subtle that some workers do not relate to it. They've even got a vice-president who's a black guy, who stands up and says that it does not exist. Our shop chairman and international representative took a position six years ago that there was no racism in the plant.

But now with the increase of black workers at Fremont, naturally the problem has come to the front. We find that the majority of newly-hired workers are black. They hire about five black workers to every two white workers. But after that ninety-day probationary period, we find that there is only one black worker left, and those same two white workers are still there.

IS: Are there some jobs that are reserved for white workers only?

KH: I think you should say 'reserved for black workers. There are such jobs mainly in the body shop, usually referred to as the sweat shop, the dark room, or the hot house. And they call it this because the body shop is where you do the welding and the sparks fly around. You get burned, and there is no ventilation. It's so thick you're actually breathing that gas. That's where most black workers go.

Or they are in the pit where the cars roll overhead and you have to work underneath, where the oil from the transmission and the gas and water drip down into the pit. For eight hours a day you have to drag around in that, and the stuff they've put on the floor that's supposed to absorb the oil. Well, after awhile, they've put so much of it down and you're dragging around in all that wet gravel and stuff and you're cussing all that stuff that's dripping on you - in your face, in your hair, and all over you.

And then there's the spray area on the production line where you have to climb inside the cab of a car or a truck and spray paint. You know how small it is inside of a car and you have to wear a mask because when you spray it comes back on your face and gets into your nose and eyes and ears. You can hardly breathe through that mask and if you don't wear it, then you

choke on the paint fumes.

Then they have other jobs that are called water jobs, with what they call wet sand. For eight hours a day you have to trudge around in about two feet of water with boots on that have holes in them. You have to be either a duck or a fish in there, but that's where a lot of black workers go, those kinds of jobs. That's where management prefers to put them.

IS: When it comes time for promotions and getting better jobs, is there clear preference by the foreman and management for white workers?

KH: Yes. It is shown by the degree to which management gives the black workers the hard jobs because they know they will have to stay there because they have nowhere else to go. They give the easy jobs to white workers because they know that if they give them the hard jobs, that they'll just quit and go someplace else.

As far as getting out of the pits, the body shops, the wet sanding area, or the spray booths, management has a provision in the contract that says they retain the right to job assignment and this means they can assign you to any job they want to. If you want to protest, you have to go through the grievance procedure, which might well take anywhere from 30 days to 7 months and by that time, they might come around and take you off the job.

IS: What percentage of skilled jobs are held by blacks?



Kenny Horsten

KH: There are about 300 or 400 skilled jobs and I think we have seven blacks. And they came within the last three years.

IS: You raise two issues in describing these degrading, dehumanizing conditions. First, of course, is fighting against blacks or chicanos being given systematically the dirtiest and hardest jobs. The other is fighting against the conditions themselves so that no one is forced to do these jobs. Is there any general struggle over working conditions?

Working Conditions

KH: There is a section in the contract on work standards which is the only clause we can strike over after the union goes through procedures. Say an individual is protesting a job; usually it is in the soft trim or the body shop. He files a grievance. The grievance is processed and it takes months before he gets a reply to it, or before he hears anything else about it.

Then there may be a settlement which works this way: if you've got ten guys working in that body shop and all of them are breaking their ass doing a job, then one of them might write up a work standard grievance. Then, if he is the fifth man in line, after months the settlement will take the work off him and put it on the ninth man in line. Then the ninth man will have to turn around and write a grievance and management will stick the work on the first man or something like that.

So it's not just enough to deal with individual working conditions. We have to get rid of those jive-ass grievance procedures, written by management and the

union. Only then can we begin to deal effectively with those working conditions, because these procedures disarm workers, making them think they have some kind of redress when they really don't.

IS: Have there been any wildcat strikes over working conditions?

KH: No. The last wildcat strike in the plant was, I think, in 1964 over something about wage scales and working conditions. The leaders of that are no longer there.

IS: What about some of the broader political issues?

What is the feeling in the plant about inflation, repression, the Nixon administration and the war in Vietnam? What's the feeling there?

Broader Political Issues

KH: The broader political issues are almost non-existent in our union. I think that these issues are almost non-existent in just about every union you have in this country, because of the bureaucracy of the union leadership. By consolidating their power the way that they have, they decide the direction in which the workers will go on the broader issues. Now when I say isolated, it's not like the guys don't know what's happening. They do know what's happening because they read their newspaper wherever they live.

If there's any position taken by the union, it is set down by Walter Reuther in Detroit in the form of a letter, and he informs the rank-and-file what their position is. They are able to do this by directly and indirectly discouraging the rank-and-file members from attaining union leadership or from even actually participating in any political program other than the Democratic Party.

They set up an organization called the Political Action Committee and the COPE Committee and all these other committees. All these are political committees that are geared for the Democratic Party. Nobody else, no other direction, no other way, and there is nobody inside those organizations that is going to take it from that. If they try then they're out. Simple as that.

IS: Is there much discussion of these issues on the job or on breaks?

KH: Well, yes, there's something like that. Everybody will say, well, yes, inflation, it's Nixon's fault. And they forget all about it. There is really no meaningful dialogue coming out of the rank-and-file concerning any of the issues outside their local union.

IS: Would you say that the bulk of the workers favor the war, oppose the war, or consider themselves part of Nixon's "silent majority"?

KH: Well, I would say that they're split for and against the war. Not necessarily for it as hawks, but for it because of their patriotic feelings - that if we were to leave, we would lose face, even though some have never seen Vietnam. Then you've got the other guys who are against the war because we're spending too much money in Vietnam, that kind of thing. Our caucus held an anti-war rally November 13, and the rally was fairly good. We got a fairly good response out of it. We didn't get as many people to attend as we wanted because of the time involved. But the guys came over to hear speeches, and that is the first time that something like this has even been done outside of the structure of the union leadership.

Women Workers

IS: How many women work at Fremont?

KH: Very very few. I think there might be 25 or 30 out of about 5,000 workers.

IS: That's not the office sections?

KH: No, that's in production. There might not be that many women; I'm just estimating.

IS: Are there any women in the caucus?

KH: At this time we're engaging upon bringing some of the women to the caucus, but they do not want to participate because of that fear. Well, they don't know yet. Most women out there have families and are work-

ing because they need the money and they don't want to be bothered with politics. That is not just the women. That's the majority of the men too. So naturally they aren't going to want to deal with the situation either. We have to start raising these questions.

IS: Does the caucus have as part of its program of demands anything regarding women's liberation, hiring of women?

KH: Yes.

IS: What kinds of things?

KH: Well, we point out the large number of women in the work force in this country and how, in effect, that the women are being deprived of the right of equal employment with equal pay. We demand child-care centers and women in union leadership positions.

IS: What about the UAW Women's Bureau?

KH: It is headed by a woman who is obligated to Reuther and that is just like setting something out in the middle of the ocean and leaving it there and hoping that it floats back to land. That's the way it's set up. Now this is the only union that has, believe it or not, a Women's Bureau. But what it deals with is pollution and conservation. They don't deal with women's liberation, and it's going to be kept that way.

But it's necessary to deal with these issues because in Detroit you have a lot of women working in factories. Whereas out here, other than in the aircraft factory in Los Angeles, women are almost non-existent in the UAW plants, in Detroit you have a large percentage of women workers.

Wallace Supporters

IS: A tremendous amount of speculation exists within the radical movement about support for Wallace among white workers. A lot of people thought that it wasn't just a sign of racism, but was also a sign that white workers were unhappy with the unions, with the Democratic Party, and so on, and that because of the unrest among white workers, Wallace was able to demagogically gain some support among them.

In Fremont, there is an actual Wallaceite Caucus functioning inside the GM plant. What exactly do they do, not only about racism, but also when it comes to the question of general workers' issues, production conditions, speed-up, and so on? What sort of guys go into that Wallace caucus? Is it guys who are militant on plant issues, or are they reactionary not only on the race question, but also on plant issues?

KH: The Wallaceite thing only grew up out of the Presidential campaign and before that, it was the Goldwater groups. So you see, the Wallaceites are the latest group that has sprung up and they deal with some issues that were relevant to the workers, but they were so small. Once or twice they came up with questions about what was the union doing with the money, where were the finances going, but all this came about in the local union elections that were held in June, 1969.

They mainly appeared during the Wallace campaign and were stirred up with the help of the local union leadership.

Now the Wallaceites were never an effective group. They were just a small group of racists. The majority were just poor whites that were out trying to protect their interests, too, because they believed the same story that management and union leadership were perpetrating, and we see these poor whites as being fooled and tricked into believing that the blacks were out to take their jobs.

But when it got down to the nitty-gritty of it, you had a small hard core of racists even in management who passed out a lot of material that vaguely hinted around to racism and this material was taken to management and management refused to get on it. Later some material came out with more explicit racist statements like, "The Lord is my shepherd, and the government makes me to lie down beside Negroes," and so on and so forth.

Self-Defense

We went to the union leadership and we told them very clearly that if anything at all happened to any black workers in that plant, we were not going to be responsible for any action that came down. Immediately, the union leadership got very excited and thought we were talking about killing everybody and blowing up everything, and we made it very clear that we do not believe in violence, but that we do believe in self-defense and if anything happened to any black worker in or outside the caucus, then we would look to them as being responsible.

At this time, management took the position that they didn't know what it was all about, and they didn't know this and they didn't know that and they were complete-

AUTO WORKERS

FOCUS

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BLACK PANTHER CAUCUS

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Union Asleep?

GM to Layoff 600 at Fremont

A cutback in production followed by an "indefinite layoff" of about 600 workers in the G.M. plant in Fremont was reported as part of a national slowdown in the company's operation. Work on auto and truck assembly was suspended Friday, February 27. Also on March 19-20 we can expect more layoffs. On March 23 there will be a 10% reduction in the work force on the passenger car assembly line. Production of the three models--Olds, Buick, Pontiac--will be cut from 32 to 24 cars an hour.

G.M. tells us that we will receive supplemental unemployment benefits which are supposed to give us up to 90% of regular pay. So far the out-pay has averaged out to each worker getting \$10-\$14. And then it's not given on a weekly basis as it should be. Only when G.M. gets good and ready do we receive that.

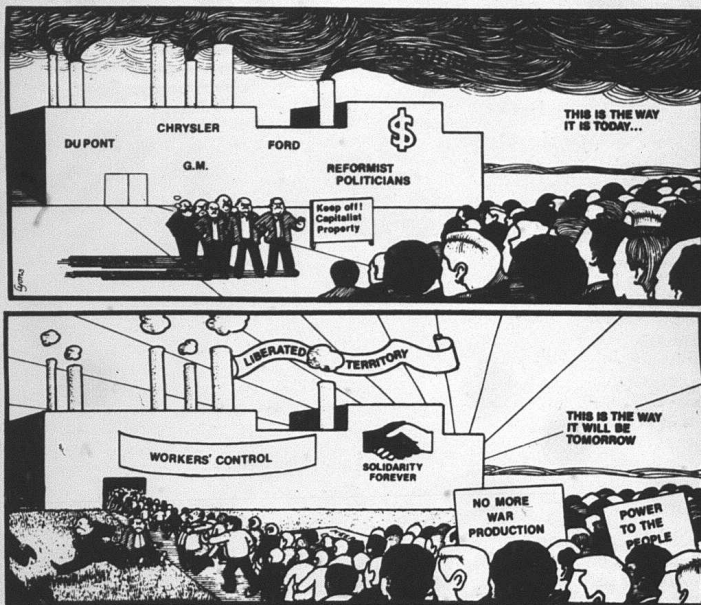
As yet the company does not need our labor, so layoff time. Right? Without workers control of production we're subject to the will of the company.

Power to the workers!

They Get Paid For Right Decisions

By AL FLEMING
General Motors' top three executives received a total of \$1,339,914 in salaries and bonuses in 1968. This is an average

cont'd. on p. 2



Reprinted from BPC Newspaper

ly ignorant -- only to find at this time that we had finally come upon documented proof that management was part of this plot that was being perpetrated against the black workers by General Motors.

It got down to one union meeting we attended and we found that the Wallaceites had gathered fully armed. Even though we were out-numbered and unarmed, we were willing to challenge these racists and to stand united against even these overwhelming odds. So it wasn't until the brothers were taking it upon themselves to arm themselves for self-defense that management felt that it was necessary for them to step in when there was a possibility of their work force in their plant being lost.

They had the Fremont Police Department standing watch, and every night, when the brothers would get off for their lunch, they would go to a bar or a liquor store or go out to lunch and they would be stopped on the street -- just the management's way of dealing with the problem that existed. They were not willing at all to come forth and say there is a problem. It would be impossible for them to do this because they were a part of it.

The Wallaceites are used to counteract any action that the black workers take against the union leadership. They're like hatchet-men sitting in a closet and any time the union needs them then they just open the door and out jump the racists. The union was part and parcel to stirring up, spreading rumors and lies about the Black Panthers' planning to blow up the union hall and blow

up the plant. This stirred up fear among the white workers that their jobs and their income would be threatened.

Then you had a few hard-core racists out there who began agitating "to bring your rifles". And while all this was going on, the union leadership was sitting back watching what was happening, gleefully satisfied that our caucus had been stopped in our organizing attempts, which was incorrect.

Only when the union leadership found themselves directly involved, where they might get hurt, did they begin to make remarks that maybe we should all be cool and we should all be together as union brothers. Because all of a sudden they found that they might hurt in the little scuffle if it ever came about.

When it comes down to it, the Black Panther caucus in Fremont General Motors pulled the sheets off the union leadership and management. And when the sheets were pulled off, we saw that they were all the same people whether or not they worked for the union or for the management. They're all the same people, because they all wear the same color sheets.

IS: What relationships have the Black Panther caucus developed with groups in other unions or other auto plants around the country?

KH: Since the beginning of the caucus, we have tried to establish communication with other black organizations or progressive organizations throughout the nation and the one black organization that we relate to the heaviest is the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement

in Detroit. We have an interchange of material. Hopefully sometime in the future, we can come together and start dealing with some of the realistic problems that have to be dealt with surrounding the United Auto Workers convention in New Jersey.

We feel that together we can put forth the demands of the black workers that have been so long neglected, not just by the white racists in the Union leadership, but by some of those boot-lickin' lackies of Walter Reuther; the black ones I'm talking about. It's evident that Walter Reuther has no intention whatsoever of elevating any more black people to the Executive Board than he wants to elevate. Better than 1/3 of the million workers in the UAW are black. Yet there's only one member on the Executive Board and there are no black regional directors.

Hopefully the Black Panther caucus and DRUM can work together because we see the dire need for Reuther's consolidation of power to be shattered and broken, and for Walter Reuther to come falling down off his mountain. That's exactly as he sits, as if he were king of the mountain. And as it stands now, he damn near is.

IS: Is there any difference in DRUM's approach and your approach as to how to organize workers?
KH: Yes. Well, I shouldn't say differences. I think our tactics are a little different because the conditions in Detroit are that a lot of the plants that DRUM has been organizing have 70% black workers. And ours here are the other way around. So our tactics and the methods that we use and our literature is different from theirs.

IS: What are some of the activities that the Panther caucus has engaged in?
KH: Well, we have had two anti-war rallies and the last election came up in June 1969, and myself and some other brothers in the caucus ran for office. Even though we lost, it caused a large turn-out. If we had gotten the same number of votes two years ago, we would have won office.

IS: What percentage of the votes did you get?
KH: I think I got 500 or 600 votes and some other brothers got 400 or 500 votes. The winners got about 900 votes.

IS: What are your political education classes?
KH: Well, we deal with historical labor material and Marxist-Leninist material. When I say historical labor material, we deal with the background and the stories of, say, the IWW and the Haymarket affair, and what led up to them, the struggles of the ILWU here on the West Coast, the struggles of the coal miners, the troubles of the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. And we take from each one of these historical events and groups and organizations some ideas and strategies and tactics that we can utilize today.

IS: Is the caucus open to chicanos and whites or is it open only to blacks?
KH: The caucus is open to all workers. It's a workers' caucus and even though this invitation was made very clear when the caucus was first formed, at this time we have very few whites and chicanos. Most of the members who are in the caucus now are younger brothers, brothers who see the need for change, brothers who have gone through an educational process, brothers who have struggled these first 2 1/2 years in the caucus.

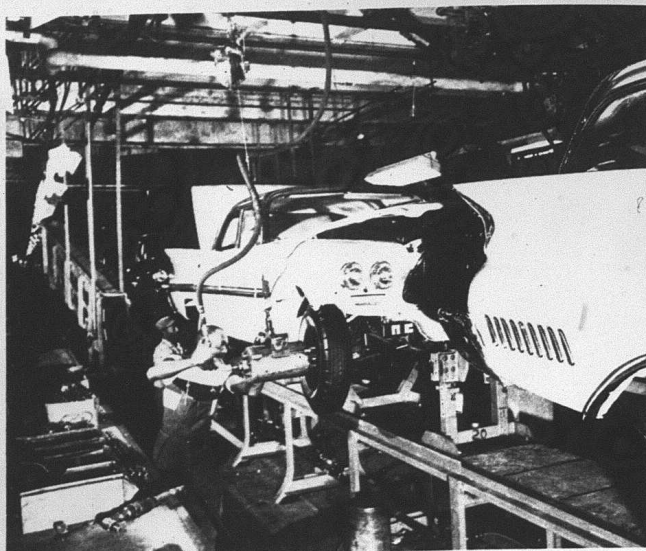
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Repression

A lot of repression has come down. There's been a lot of harassment and intimidation, even to the degree where guns were brought into the plant by management and planted on members of the caucus on several occasions. There has been material that has been planted in brothers' cars - stolen stereos and tape recorders - to intimidate these brothers and to get them to sign statements. So we find a lot of black workers, older ones, who do not want to relate to that kind of retaliation; they're not ready for it, yet. So this is why we have younger black members in the caucus and there are a few white and chicano and Chinese brothers in the caucus.

IS: Of course, the most effective form of repression in the plant is economic. We understand that you were recently fired. Could you explain how they worked this?
KH: Well, first of all, management has compiled a dossier on me dating back to 1963. From 1963 up until 1968, there were some minor infractions of their assinine shop rules, and I was disciplined for them. And then my rec-

Rank-and-file groups or workers' committees in other industries or other areas can contact the Black Panther Caucus at P.O. Box 19077, Oakland, California, 94619. The Caucus will also welcome financial contributions.



On the Line

ord was clear. I probably would have had a clear record right now if it hadn't been for the caucus, I guess, because it wasn't until after the start of the caucus that I've been disciplined systematically. It has averaged out to every two months some kind of disciplinary action has been taken.

IS: For example?
KH: Spitting on the floor, not obeying direct orders from management.

IS: What kinds of direct orders did you not obey?
KH: Well, we were working a lot of overtime and I would ask for permission to go home because I didn't want to work a certain night, and the foreman would say, yes, that I could go home; and then the next day he would say, "Hey, where were you at. I didn't tell you to go home." So, out the door. In other words, there's no redress right there. The foreman said, you're wrong, and he's right, and you are out the door.

IS: They obviously wouldn't claim that they fired you for political reasons. They would want to claim that they fired you for technical reasons, but the way the rules are, they can claim they didn't or did tell you to do something to set it up so that they can fire you. Your only defense really is the extent to which there is some organized movement inside the plant which would erupt. What is happening in your case?
KH: The union at this time is saying that they're doing something. They say it's going through the grievance procedure. To give you an example, last July 1969, I finally got a settlement on a case that was sixteen months old. The same day I got the settlement which supposedly got some time taken off my record, that same night this time was put back on my record because the foreman claimed he told me to do something I didn't do the night before that, and I was sent home for a month. And it's been a repeated thing, that entrapment kind of thing.

IS: It's impossible to get around it in a place like that because management's position is that anything that a foreman says is right. Although the union says that it is up to management to prove that you did do it, it is in fact vice-versa. It is up to you to prove that you didn't do it. That's the way it comes out.

IS: Do you expect to get reinstated?
KH: Well, at this time, I don't. I expect that they'll go through the motions and drag it out for a certain time. You see, this whole thing about a disciplinary action is used as an economic repression to where you are forced out of a job. Technically you are entitled to unemployment, but you really can't get it because the management usually turns you down. (Note: You are not entitled to unemployment if management claims that you were dismissed for "cause". Generally, unemployment offices uphold management's claim. In any case, an appeal is a long drawn-out process.)

IS: What are some of the other repressive tools that management uses?

KH: General Motors corporation has a private investigation firm located in Oakland and San Francisco and one in San Jose and it is their job to read all the radical newspapers, tail people and find out what their situation is, check on their credit and things like that and make a report. So now they find the weakest link economically in the chain and this is the guy who they threaten to discipline, knowing that he can't stand that time off.

IS: Have they been threatening radicals that got in anyway?
KH: No. They haven't really threatened them because I don't think they really know at this point who they are. But they go through all the newspapers and they clip out all the pictures and every time that there is a leaflet being distributed in front of the plant, they take pictures of each and everybody out there. One time they would drive by to take pictures. So then we brought cameras and we took pictures of them, so now they use telescopic lenses.

IS: But there still must be holes in their system, because we know of a number of white radicals who were very well publicized in the press who have gotten into GM.
KH: Well, at this time there are, but until these white radicals emerge within the plant, management doesn't feel that they are a threat.

IS: What about the GM Workers' Committee?
KH: The GM Workers' Committee constitutes a white radical organization that's trying to get itself together in the GM plant.

IS: Has it gotten itself together?
KH: Well, they're having some internal problems and they're still struggling with them. We relate to these brothers because we see that it's hard for whites with the background that some of them have to start relating to the working class.

IS: Why doesn't the Workers' Committee group join the Black Panther caucus?
KH: One of the areas that we can't work in is the organizing of white workers because a lot of white workers are afraid of the word "Black Panther". So there is a need for white radicals to come into the industry and start relating to workers at the point of production the way they should be and stop with the rhetoric and the long drawn-out philosophic conversations. They can form a caucus of their own and start organizing white workers and when they come out with something that is functional, then we can start working together.

IS: Do you find any problems involving blacks in the Black Panther caucus because the caucus also takes in whites?
KH: No. You see, we hold political education classes and we make it very clear to these brothers before they come into the caucus that if we're going to engage in a struggle, we're going to engage in a struggle to overthrow the General Motors Corporation and the avaricious businessman and to run out the bureaucrats and the ra-

cists and the fascists and the union leadership. Now in order for us to do this, we can't be talking about the color of a man's skin, about whether or not he can stand beside us because we see that the union and management use this as a tool, a very effective tool until now, to keep us apart; not just in the unions, but in the communities and this is one of the problems that we deal with from the beginning. We clearly explain and show why it is necessary for us as workers and revolutionaries to deal with that problem of racism.

IS: What suggestions would you have for those white radicals who are planning to go into plants like Fremont GM in terms of how to relate to the situation there?

KH: Well, I find that a lot of white radicals say that they understand what the working class is all about. But when they come into heavy industry and if something exciting or dramatic doesn't happen within two or three months, then they feel that that is not the place for them. Only when the white radicals begin to understand that before you can begin to wage a struggle among the masses of the people, you have got to understand the people.

The only way you're going to understand the people is to be willing to get at that point of production and be willing to bend over and break your back the same way this guy has to break his back. You begin to relate to these brothers and relate to the struggles that they have to go through, their shortcomings, and the fact that maybe they're not as educated as you are, maybe they don't have a political line as you do.

When the average worker with his eighth grade education relates to materialistic things, it is not wrong. And it is not wrong that he does not grasp things politically as the so-called revolutionary radical does. It is not wrong that maybe he does not come to all union meetings as he should. It is not wrong that he is not antagonistic towards foremen and union leaders as some radicals think he should be. He has just given up to where he is saying, "I am just a single nobody, and I can't do it".

If he wants carpeting on his floor because maybe his house is cold, then we should strive to get this. If he wants a pay increase so that he can feed his family better, then we should strive to get this. At the same time that we are standing with these workers and these brothers and we are struggling with them, it is necessary for us to politically educate them as to why they are not getting them and why they have to fight to get the things that they are producing.

It is not enough to just sit back and say how wrong the union is, but to educate them, explain to them, get them to start reading the contract, the constitution, the by-laws, so not only can they understand how wrong it is, but understand how and why a certain group of union leaders are able to do that to them and put emphasis on the fact that it is a long, long struggle and that it's not something that's just going to happen overnight.

And if white radicals and the so-called white revolutionaries do not relate to this, then they can say whatever they want to say and do whatever they want to do, but they are not going to achieve their ends. I've talked to a lot of white individuals who take the idea that, "Well, there's nothing happening here. I've got to go to some other part of the state or something more shaky than this industry." They actually believe that if something doesn't happen in six months, that it isn't going to happen. And that's wrong.

"White Skin Privilege"

IS: You mentioned earlier that you thought that it was a good thing for white radicals when they go into factories to attempt to organize and work with white workers rather than joining the Black Panther caucus, to reach workers where they're at and attempt to get them into motion. I was wondering if you had any comments about the notion that many white radicals have that you organize whites around "giving up their white-skin privilege"?

KH: What do you mean by "white-skin privilege"?

IS: Well, a whole section of the white radical movement, the Weathermen, RYM II, the RU, etc., have the position that because black people are oppressed in this society and America is an imperialist nation, that white workers are also imperialist workers and in order for them to be struggling on the right side, the first thing that they have to do is to give up their white-skin privilege - that, for example, if blacks have the shitty jobs, white workers should say, "we'll take the shitty jobs along with the blacks".

KH: Well, the position of the caucus is that this is why we feel that there is a need for a white radical caucus in the plant because there are white workers, poor

whites, who would starve without that job just like black workers would. And if they didn't work a lot of overtime, they wouldn't be able to afford some of the things that they afford. So it is necessary for these white radicals to come into the plant and start putting together something to where they can start to reach these white workers. If a black worker is not doing the shitty job, someone is going to have to do it.

Now if it's not a black and it's not a chicano, then it's a white. Simple as that. White radicals have to deal with that question of emphasizing to the white workers how they have to fight against the fact that they are being exploited just like the chicano and the blacks, and though it is very clear that whites do receive privileges, at the same time they are also being exploited.

Political Background

IS: How did you get involved in politics?

KH: That's kind of a funny thing. First of all, I was born in Detroit and my father was one of the old CIO organizers.

After I got out of the service, I went into school - of all the schools, San Francisco State. I really intended to be a social worker. But after I really began to examine some of that shit that I was taking - a course in political science, which was really, really, really fucked up - I just found myself working in a factory, something that I said that I would never do. But it wasn't quite the same. Because what we call a factory in Detroit is really a factory. It's not the same as it is out here. You know, you've got the grit and the sand and the smoke and the gas and all that shit there.

My old man used to have to work two jobs; like he worked at Dodge Main and Ford River Rouge Plant, and still we never had enough bread to make it on. Every time we needed shoes and shit like that it would be next week's pay-check. And I used to ask my old lady how come he's working 16 hours a day, and he can't feed a family of five as well as he should. We were just as poor as our other neighbors.

And he used to try to explain it. How the rising prices of food, of clothes, and the fact that black workers had to accept lower pay than these other cats, even though they were doing the same kind of work, how he had to commute farther than the white workers, how it was like dog-eat-dog to get a job and to maintain a job in a plant because there were a lot of poor whites being brought up from the South to do all that hard work and there was always that competitive thing there.

IS: When did you join the Black Panthers?

KH: I joined the Party in 1968. I had a lot of questions that were unanswered that didn't begin to become answered until I got older and went into it. And with a lot of reading, talking to different people, having a lot of discussions with different members of the Party, I began to understand about the exploitation, the avaricious businessman and what role they played in the capitalist system.

All of that has to do with why my old man had to work two jobs for us to barely get by and there was only a family of five of us; why we had to live in a rat-infested house; why his checks wouldn't always buy enough food. Most of our food at that time constituted basic black community diets. There were only biscuits and gravy to eat at the time that he was laid off because he wasn't able to work in a foundry at Ford or he wasn't able to do this or that.

One time I remember my old man got fired off his job and was ashamed to tell my mother about it because he knew we needed the money and he was too ashamed to tell her and they had a big hassle over it and I never understood what they were arguing about for a long time.

How we used to wake up at any time of the night and hear rats running around in the kitchen or up and down the hallway and shit like that. And this was a commonplace thing. How you could look out your back window and see garbage stacked five or six feet high because the garbage men would only pick up so much garbage and leave the rest for the next time around. All along the wall of our house or any house in that area, you would see rat holes. When my father did work those two jobs, we would eat fairly good, but when he lost one or lost both, and Ford would lay him off two or three months out of the year even though he had seniority, we would have to sit back and tighten up the belt again. All these things, these questions, that were unanswered at that early stage in my life, but now they are answered as to why it happened. Now I know why it happened and I also think I know at this time how to deal with them.

IS: And that's really what this whole struggle is about?

KH: Yes.

Black Panther Caucus National Workers Program

1. Organize the Unorganized - There are more than 71 million workers in the U.S. Only 20 million of them (28%) are union members. In order for the workers to have the strength and unity we need in fighting the bosses, we must organize all workers into unions.
2. Shorter Work Week - The work week should be 30 hours per week (with no compulsory overtime) at 40 hours pay, or fewer hours if necessary to guarantee full employment.
3. Stop Runaway Shops - When a boss decides to move his shop, all workers must be given a choice of: a) going with the shop at the same wages and conditions (with transportation paid by the boss), or b) taking 3 years severance pay with continuation of health and welfare plans for 3 years or until they find new jobs. The union contract must go with the shop to its new location.
4. Women Workers - 1/3 of the workers today are women. Unions must lead the fight for an end to discrimination against women. Women must have equal rights to jobs and must receive equal pay for equal work. Unions that represent women workers must guarantee leadership positions to women. As part of the struggle for these ends, unions must demand child care centers to be provided by the companies and the government for the children of working women.
5. Automation - The unions must fight to win the right to negotiate all automation with the company before it takes place. The unions shall set the conditions of automation so that there are no lay-offs and job safety is guaranteed.
6. Health and Welfare - Every year in the U.S. 14,500 workers are killed on the job; over half a million fall ill with occupation diseases; 7 million are injured; and 2 million are disabled. Unions must fight for the right to set and enforce health and safety standards on the job.

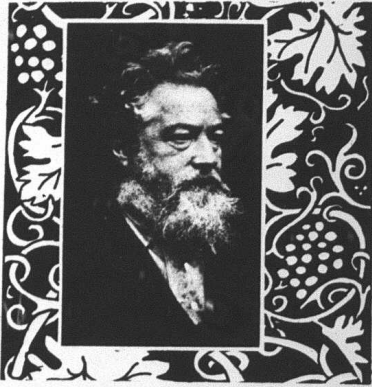
Unions must fight to win fully paid medical and dental coverage for all workers and their families. At the same time, labor must struggle for free medical and dental care for all the people.

7. Anti-Labor Laws - Labor must take the offensive against anti-labor laws by demanding their repeal and defying them when they are used.
8. End Racism - The labor movement must struggle against racism in the unions in order to effectively combat racism in the society. The unions must educate the workers to understand that racism serves the bosses by dividing the workers and preventing the development of class consciousness.
9. End the War - Labor must demand an end to the war in Vietnam and all aggressive imperialist wars. This must be coupled with a struggle in this country against racism and growing fascism. The economy must be re-directed to serve the basic needs of all the people: full employment, food, clothing, housing, education, and medical care.
10. Union Sell-Out - All of the problems we have outlined can be blamed in part on the sell-out of union leadership to class collaborationist, cold war, and racist policies. We must re-build a militant trade union movement by combatting these policies through the formation of rank-and-file caucuses and the fight for class consciousness.

Reprinted from FOCUS no. 2

William Morris: a vision of socialism

Martin Shaw



Perhaps the greatest of the early English marxists was William Morris. Poet and designer, he entered active socialist politics only in his late forties, although his conviction of the need for a fundamental change in society had been maturing for many years.

When the 1880's created the conditions for a new socialist movement, Morris flung himself into the task of socialist propaganda. But he did not just reproduce the ideas of Marx.

In his many articles and lectures he creatively developed the attack on the conditions of art and labour in capitalist society. In his articles are to be found the most concise statements of his ideas.

But in many ways the greatest of his works is his utopia, a vision of the future communist society, published at the opening of the second decade of the modern socialist movement.

This was News from Nowhere, the first instalment of which appeared in Commonweal, 80 years ago in January 1890.

It is immensely valuable to read it again today. When Morris wrote it there were many around - notably the Fabians - who identified socialism with some kind of bureaucratic collectivism.

Today the idea of socialism is identified in the minds of most people with the managerial capitalism of Labour or with the Stalinist tyranny. And of course, socialism is thoroughly discredited by being identified in this way.

Morris gives us a picture of socialism which goes far beyond any idea of state ownership or bureaucratic control.

Morris's utopia takes the form of a dream in which the narrator is transported into the communist future, into the England of the late twenty-first century which has passed through a period of thorough transformation after the socialist revolution.

He revisits areas of London and the Thames valley which he had known all too well in the ugliness and misery which dominated them in his own day - and which are not gone from us today. He meets a wholly new kind of people from the oppressed, the harassed and the prematurely aged population of 19th century England.

The visitor is amazed and confused to find the Thames clear, unpolluted, stocked with salmon. He is even more surprised to find that people do not understand when he offers them money for services rendered and goods obtained.

London, the great, dirty, crowded metropolis, has - in that form - disappeared, the result of planned transformation and not of the H-bomb or any other of the modern weapons of mass destruction.

All kinds of small changes have taken place. Parliament, for instance, is used for storing manure and as a subsidiary 'market' (the description is not exact, be-

cause although there is distribution, there is no buying and selling). Such details are absorbing, but Morris's traveller finds that very fundamental changes are behind them.

By a combination of direct exploration, as he sees for himself the miraculous difference in life and nature, and by probing his hosts, he discovers the quality and the principles of organisation of the new society. And we realise the irrationality of the old social forms of capitalism.

Several themes run through the narrative and the explanations. Man no longer plunders nature, mutilating its natural beauty, for the production of unnecessary articles. Buildings no longer stick out like sore thumbs, but blend harmoniously with their surroundings - the visitor describes houses 'new-grown' on a hill near Oxford.

The domination of the town over the country, seen alike in the hideous growth of the towns and the plunder and decline of the country and the village, has been ended. Instead the two have been merged into a garden in which the real benefits of urban civilisation have been preserved.

Transformation of Work

These changes reflect a fundamental change in the nature of work. The material needs of society having been assured, work is no longer a mechanical operation performed under the pressure of external necessity. It has had restored to it the element of pleasure associated with individual creation and enjoyment of use.

Morris wrote elsewhere that 'Art is the expression of man's joy in labour', and his indictment of capitalism was that it had made art (the visual arts) impossible and labour unbearable. Slowly after the revolution, with the achievement of the material wealth necessary for a full life for all, these evils have been overcome.

But the change in the relationship of man with his natural surroundings and in the nature of work are both cause and effect of changes in the relationships of men and women with one another.

'The great trouble,' Morris's traveller is told by an old man who knows the history of the revolution and the growth of the communist society, 'was that the onepoor had such a feeble conception of the real pleasure of life; so to say, they did not ask enough, did not know how to ask enough, from the new state of things.'

But the remedy of art, or a new pleasure in work, is only meaningful because people can now have genuine pleasure in each other's company, instead of drudgery, friction and conflict spreading from their work into all human relationships.

Morris is not a devotee of 'pleasure' in the sickly sense to which we are coaxed to it by today's advertisers. The enjoyment of and delight in life through natural human relationships lights up every aspect of his picture of a new society.

Morris appeals to the deep feelings of revulsion at the chaos, waste and ugliness of production for profit which have inspired every kind of socialist activity. By imaginatively projecting his own very strong personal convictions in the form of this dream he deepens the desires of his readers for change.

And this is why, on awakening from the dream, Morris's narrator can overcome his despair at finding the world still as it was when he left it in the 19th century: '... if others can see it as I have seen it, then it may be called a vision rather than a dream.'

Morris realises that a vision by itself is not enough. In order for a vision to find real meaning, it must be anchored in the realities of existing society and the actual possibilities of social revolution which are produced by it.

This was why for Morris, unlike the authors of other

'perfect societies,' a utopia was not a substitute for a programme and political organisation, but another way of elaborating the revolt against the inhumanity of existing civilisation. And this was why, in News from Nowhere itself, there are passages of open propaganda, explaining the class purposes of production, the state, and other aspects of life in capitalist society.

It is why Morris constructs an imaginative picture of the revolution, taking place in the middle of the 20th Century, which draws extensively on the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871 - then the major 'real-life example of workers' insurrection - as well as workers' demonstrations in the 1880's.

His record of 'the change' takes account of the resistance of the ruling class to the threat to their privileges. It does not contain the illusions of a peaceful transformation fostered by so many of those reformists who clumsily label Morris a mere 'utopian' socialist.

Capitalism, since Morris wrote, has achieved after its own barbarous fashion, some of the changes that Morris saw as the results of socialism. Take the relation between town and country - the town centres are indeed declining and the town has invaded the countryside in the last half-century.

But at what cost? Unplanned decay in the towns, ugly sprawl in the country. The basic anarchy in man's relation to his natural environment remains.

Equally the forms in which Morris saw necessary social activities being undertaken often seem old-fashioned. Take the distribution of goods as an example: Morris sees market places with small booths, where we might more easily envisage some simple, rationalised version of a supermarket, without muzak, 'free' offers or the interminable queues at the cash desks.

But the principles embodied are the same: personal wants, needs and tastes fully catered for.

More serious objections to Morris's vision can be raised in that he seems at times to suggest the total elimination of large scale production and the substitution of handicrafts. And it is probably true that he under-estimated, although he did not rule out, the continuing importance of much of the industrial technology developed under capitalism even to a communist society.

Realm of Freedom

But his dream is not so unreal in relegating these problems to a secondary position. Nor is Morris's emphasis on recreating pleasurable labour so false. The realm of freedom as a new childhood for mankind, as well as a new field of triumph for his intellect, is an idea which strikes a deep chord.

An imaginative project of communism written today would undoubtedly be cast in a very different form, and use a very different style, from News from Nowhere. Its strength and limitations are very much a product of Morris's own experience, the life and traditions he knew and developed in.

But it stands almost alone in its field - a commentary perhaps on both the state of art and of the socialist movement.

And 80 years on we still need Morris's vision. The real experience of the transition to socialism is limited to a short period in a backward country and we need to remember how much further our aims go than anything which was achieved, or could have been aspired to, in post-revolutionary Russia.

For we in Britain, and the advanced world generally, are today much closer potentially to a truly communist society. News from Nowhere is part of the tradition on which we can draw in our struggle to create that society.

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Ranks Need Independent Struggle Committees:

The Unions under Monopoly Capitalism

Kim Moody
Sy Landy

The trade unions have been and still are the only independent mass organizations of the American working class. Though the struggles of American working people have taken many forms, the unions have been the primary organizations of the defense of living standards.

Yet over the years, the unions have become more and more bureaucratic and, at the same time, less and less able to win real gains. It is no secret that even before inflation took away wage gains, working conditions in industry were getting worse. Speed-up, inadequate safety measures, over-time, and all the things that determine how workers live for eight hours or more a day have become intolerable.

Even some important income protection measures, like the cost of living escalator clauses won in the 1940's and 50's were dumped in the past few years. At the same time, the bureaucratic structure of the unions, and the enormous power of the international leaders and staff within the unions, has made it nearly impossible for the rank and file to have much influence on the content of the contract.

Legal Tangle

To make matters worse, over a long period of time the unions have become caught in an incredible web of legal entanglements. This is not just a matter of certain anti-labor laws, like Section 14B, but even of many of the laws that the labor movement fought for.

The National Labor Relations Board, for example, sets limits on what the unions can bargain over, i.e., it defines what is "management prerogative". With the power to set the size and scope of bargaining units and interpret the laws, the NLRB also reinforces the bureaucratic power of the union leaders over the ranks. This, of course, is not written into the law, but it is a matter

of consistent NLRB practice.

Under U.S. law, the labor contract is not just an instrument for protecting labor from management, i.e., from capital, but also for restraining labor. As every union member knows, the union is responsible for disciplining the rank and file under the terms of the contract. Management agrees to some increases in wages and benefits and the union promises that workers won't do anything (like strike) to change the terms during the contract period. Thus, while inflation runs wild and technology changes working conditions, workers are tied to a two- or three-year contract.

Disciplinarians

The most blatant problem with this two-sided contract is the fact that workers are virtually powerless under most contracts to do anything about working conditions. Throughout industry, and in white-collar work as well, workers must go through a long, drawn-out grievance procedure that is entirely out of their hands after the first or second step. Most contracts forbid strikes over such issues during the contract period.

All of this came about when union leaders, who accept the power relations of capitalism, agreed that the union should play the role of disciplinarian over the workers. The capitalists fight for this set-up not only to keep costs down, but to allow them to freely plan ahead for future profits without interference from the workers. The union leaders see it as a way of gaining respectability and of maintaining their power in the union.

In the decades since it developed, this arrangement has been reinforced by laws, the courts, the NLRB and the executive branch of government. The two-sided contract is not an example of "equality" between labor and management, but a mechanism that maintains the inequality of power between the two.

The labor bureaucracy has continued to enforce and defend this accommodation to the ruling class while the working people continue to suffer from its consequences: speed-up, unfair over-time, unsafe conditions, etc. Growing numbers of workers, however, have begun to resist. Through wildcat strikes, contract rejections, shop floor actions, internal union fights and in other ways, more and more workers have struck out on their own to fight intolerable working conditions and declining living standards.

Rank and File Revolt

In the 1950's wildcat strikes were unusual and contract rejections almost unheard-of. Today, wildcats are as common as official strikes, and over 14% of all contracts are rejected at least once. This growing rank-and-file rebellion is so powerful - and so respected by this nation's economic and political rulers - that it now fills pages in popular and business magazines and books and is an important consideration in management's bargaining strategy. The independent action of the workers has the powers-that-be worried.

This rank-and-file rebellion has the union leaders worried, too. They have been integrated into the system, and clearly this rebellion threatens their power and position. There can be no doubt that rank-and-file independence and initiative is the reason why some international leaders have been more willing to call strikes than in the past. It is also the background to some of the fights and new developments within the labor bureaucracy.

The split of the United Auto Workers from the AFL-CIO and the subsequent formation of the Alliance for Labor Action (ALA) were distorted responses to the same conditions that cause rank-and-file unrest. Similarly, the growing trend toward coalition bargaining by different unions, particularly in the electrical industry, is a response to the workers' demands for action.

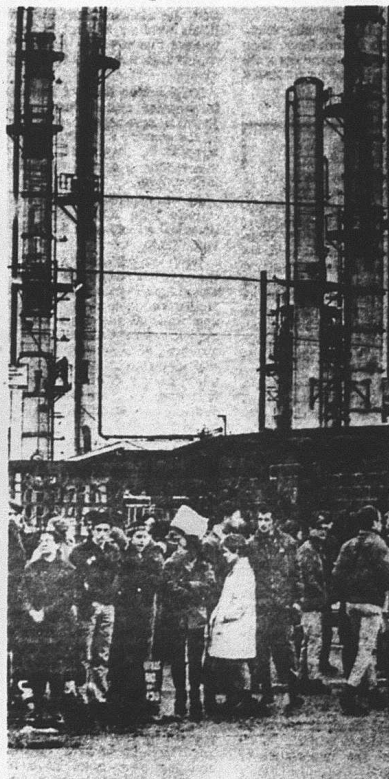
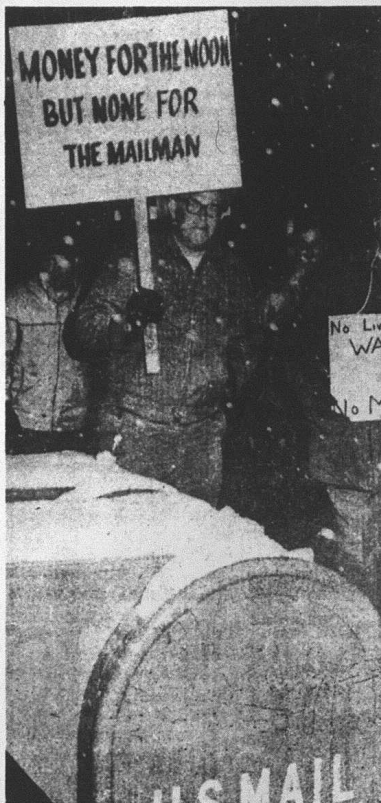
Yet, as important as both events may be, they are really attempts to maintain the power of the bureaucracy by giving these leaders a more militant or progressive "image".

This is particularly clear in the case of the ALA which tries to present a new image by putting forth some broad (and totally inadequate) social programs while still ignoring the problems in their own industries and by-passing participation by rank-and-file workers. Similarly, while the coalition of 13 unions was an important step in fighting the power of General Electric, the leaders of these unions made no attempt to build on-going unity at the rank-and-file level or even to pull together some kind of inter-union shop stewards' council. Thus, the on-going struggle over working conditions is still out of the hands of the workers and the contract still a double-edged weapon.

For One-Year Contracts

If the union and the contract are to defend the interests of the workers, it is clear that the power to enforce contract provisions must lie solely with the union ranks. In the first place, inflation and rapid changes in working conditions make a shorter contract necessary. National contracts should be limited to one year in length. Annual re-negotiations, with the unfettered right to strike, will enhance the power of the workers to change their working and living conditions.

In this context, although it is not our intention to present a full collective bargaining program, certain kinds of contract provisions can help to shift power to the workers, as well as alleviate inflation and unemployment. The cost of living escalator clause, tied to real increases in prices with no upper limit, along with the



Standard Oil Strike

right to examine company books, can be a first step toward workers' control of pricing policy.

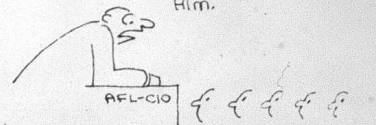
Similarly, the winning of the 30-hour week, at a 40-hour pay rate, with the right of workers in each shop or plant to control and determine the amount and frequency of over-time, can off-set unemployment to a degree and give workers some measure of direct control over the amount of time they work.

Working conditions, speed-up of production, safety enforcement, etc. even more than wages and hours, require direct control by workers at the shop level. To begin the fight for total control over these conditions, workers can demand the right to make and enforce supplementary shop-level agreements covering the regulation of all working conditions.

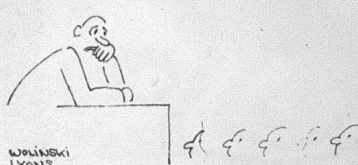
Fundamental to enforcing these agreements and to abolishing the disciplinary nature of the national contract, is the unlimited right to strike at the shop, local, regional and national levels, over all grievances and issues. More than any specific clause or agreement, the unlimited right to strike is the key to the struggle for control over the worker's standard of living at home and at work.

The condition of the unions and the absence of other independent workers' organizations raises the question of how workers are to fight for these demands. Every worker is aware that the struggle against deteriorating living and working conditions -- always a part of workers' lives -- has intensified. Wildcats, contract rejections and other means of struggle are by now widespread. And in most of these fights, the workers find they have to fight the union leaders as well as the bosses.

BROTHERS! YOU CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT THE ENEMIES OF YOUR DELEGATE, WHO LOVES YOU, DARE TO SAY ABOUT HIM.



YES, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THEY SAY.



Whether these struggles are hassles on the shop floor, strikes, or fights for union democracy, the workers are always at a disadvantage because they do not control the union and have no other expression of resistance. Whatever the level they are fighting at, it is clear that victory requires that the class be organized.

It is, of course, legitimate and necessary for workers to demand that the unions, which are theoretically their organizations, fight for the kind of programs they need. Indeed, in a thousand ways, working people do this all the time. Yet the union leaders' power over the workers, and their commitment to enforce discipline on the workers, means that the union leaders will not fight for these programs. In fact, until they are thrown out by the ranks and the unions are made democratic, the bureaucrats will fight against the kinds of demands mentioned above.

To win demands that increase workers' control over working conditions, labor is forced to organize its resistance independently of the union bureaucracy and of the whole structure of contract administration. Even the traditional shop floor leadership, the stewards and committeemen, are forced to play an ambiguous role because of their position in contract administration.

Often, of course, stewards resist this role and act as real militants. In some industries, it may be that stewards will play a leading role in rank-and-file organization, but the pressures to do otherwise are always there. Furthermore, the representation ratio of stewards is so large in most industries (300 or 500 to 1) that the

ability of the workers to control the stewards, i.e., to keep them on their side, has been watered down.

With little or no control over the union, or even its shop-floor organization, the workers are left without an on-going means of fighting the foreman, manager, boss, union bureaucrat, etc. Many wildcats and shop floor struggles are lost not because the workers have no power, but because they have no way of carrying on the struggle in a coordinated way after the initial strike or job action.

Point of Production

Control of the union and of working conditions depends on the ability of the workers to organize themselves at the source of their power -- the point of production. Ultimately, it is the ability of the workers (in the shop and nationally as a social class) to bring industry to a halt that makes the working class the most powerful social force in society. Workers' ability to control production or win political power grows from what is done on the job. The power of the unions is itself based on this fact. The fight to regain control over those unions, to control production and to organize politically, must be based on the same power.

The first step, therefore, is to organize shop floor workers' committees, controlled directly by the workers and independent of the union structure. Let the workers choose representatives who are free from the duty to enforce labor peace on management's terms and who can begin to lead -- now -- in the fight for the demands workers must win to protect their living and working standards. Let these representatives be chosen on the basis of their commitment to fight for a program that really gets to the problems labor faces.

Such an organization of shop floor struggle on a permanent basis can begin to shift the balance of power from management and the union bureaucracy to the workers on the shop floor, and this shift in power can be the basis for re-establishing union democracy and moving towards workers' control of production.

Obviously, the workers' power to affect the unions and to wrest power, industrial or political, from the corporations depends on their ability to unite shop level organizations throughout industry and to forge alliances with other groups of working people. The shop floor committee is crucial in fighting particular conditions in each shop, but it must be part of a larger movement of working people in general. Industry-wide, city-wide area councils of shop floor representatives, cutting across union and occupational lines, are necessary steps in the organization and use of workers' power.

Alliances and coalitions with particular groups of working people, such as blacks and women workers and their independent organizations, are also essential if the working people as a whole are to make their power felt. In short, the historic concept of workers' solidarity that built the CIO must be given a new living organized expression.

Working class power is not so much a matter of organizational forms or structures as it is of unity of purpose. Fragmentation along occupational, union, racial and sexual lines has helped undermine workers' power and left the field open to bureaucrats, managers, capitalists and politicians. Unity among working people, however, cannot be forged by demanding that blacks, women, young people, or for that matter older white workers subordinate their legitimate interests to some false "consensus" or unity.

Unity of Purpose

Rather, real unity of purpose and action can be forged through common struggle around a mutually-agreed-to program; a program that is in the interests of all working people, even though particular groups may have other demands beyond those mutually agreed to. If workers' committees and alliances are built on a programmatic basis, the road can be opened to all for a new and better life and the achievement of a common program encompassing the needs of all sectors of the class.

For working people, the question of struggle for a better life is not a matter of choice. Day in and day out, workers are forced to struggle to make the slightest advance, or even to defend what they have won in the past. The real question is how to organize this struggle most effectively and how to advance workers' power and control over their lives and work, so that they don't have to continually repeat the struggles or mistakes of the past.

An organized, coordinated, programmatic movement based on ever-present shop floor struggles and a strategy of alliances with other groups of working people is the first step in the fight for workers' control in industry and workers' power in society.

Workers' Power

WE STAND FOR WORKERS' POWER, that is, for socialism: the collective ownership and democratic control of the economy by the working class. Those who produce the wealth must own and control the means of production. We stand in opposition to all forms of class society, both capitalist and so-called "Communist" as well, and in solidarity with the struggles of all exploited and oppressed people.

America is faced with a growing crisis. War, racial strife, inflation and taxes are the price paid by the working class for a crisis it never created or wanted. This crisis is the result of the rule of the tiny minority that controls industry, wealth and politics alike, the capitalist ruling class. This class perpetuates its rule by dividing the working people against each other -- white against black, male against female, skilled against unskilled, etc. The result is ever greater social chaos.

Workers' power is the only alternative to this crisis. Neither the liberal nor the conservative wings of the ruling class have any answers but greater exploitation. The struggle for workers' power is already being waged on the economic level, and the International Socialists stand in solidarity with these struggles over wages and working conditions. To further this struggle, we call for independent rank-and-file workers' committees to fight when and where the unions refuse to fight. But the struggles of the workers will remain defensive and open to defeat so long as they are restricted to economic or industrial action.

The struggle must become political. Because of its economic power, the ruling class also has a monopoly on political power. It controls the government and the political parties that administer the state. More and more, the problems we face such as inflation and unemployment, are the result of political decisions made by that class. The struggle of the working people will be deadlocked until the ranks of labor build a workers' party and carry the struggle into the political arena.

The struggle for workers' power cannot be won until the working class, as a whole, controls the government and the economy democratically. This requires a revolutionary socialist, working class party at the head of a unified working class. No elite can accomplish this for the workers. Nor can any part of the working class free itself at the expense of another. The struggles of specially oppressed sectors of the class -- black people, Spanish-speaking people, women, etc. -- are in the interest of the entire class and must be supported. We support the independent organization of these specially oppressed groups as a step toward genuine class unity based on mutual respect and the struggle against a common enemy.

The struggle for workers' power is world-wide. Class oppression and exploitation is the common condition of humanity. Whether capitalist or bureaucratic-collectivist ("Communist") in nature, the ruling classes of the world fight desperately to maintain their power, often against each other, always against the working class and the people. No existing society has anything in common with socialism, the direct rule of the working class itself.

Through both domestic repression and imperialist intervention (the U.S. in Vietnam, Russia in Czechoslovakia), the ruling classes perpetuate misery and poverty in a world of potential peace and plenty. We oppose all forms of imperialism, and support struggles for national self-determination, including the struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism. However, nationalism alone offers no long-range solutions. Only socialism, established through world-wide revolution, can free humanity from exploitation and oppression; and the only force capable of building socialism is WORKERS' POWER.

Grapes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

"New York City was previously the biggest table grape buyer, but in the past two years, Los Angeles has taken first place, New York second, and San Francisco third," Itlong reported, leaving unasked the question what the big labor movements of Los Angeles and San Francisco were going to do about it. LA had formerly been in fourth place, and SF in sixth place in purchases of grapes.

As of the end of December 1968, there were 5 million boxes of table grapes in cold storage - 35% more than a year ago - a testimony to the boycott's effectiveness. The growers were unable to sell these grapes, about one-fifth of the harvest, even at prices 50 cents below 1968 prices. Eventually many of these grapes were sold at even lower prices for wine-making, or landed in the Delano dump.

When Chavez addressed some 200 caravaneers who came from every part of the state with food, clothing, and money, on Saturday, March 28, he stressed that 1970 may be the showdown year for the strike. If the growers don't sign, he stated, "it means they want to destroy themselves or the union". He correctly pointed out that their successful boycott would have driven any other group of employers to sign, but the farm workers are dealing with the state's most powerful economic and political forces.

In a somber mood, Chavez told the audience: "We will give them the best fight we are capable of. If we should be destroyed, we will have nothing to be ashamed of. What better way to go?" These remarks were made just a few days before the Coachella breakthrough, which changed the situation drastically.

Chavez detailed the appeals from groups of farm workers all over the Southwest and the U.S. for organizing aid, but the union simply does not have the financial and manpower resources to spread itself to other areas. The union is committed to win the grape strike before it moves into other areas and other crops.

Chavez projected a role for the farm workers union going far beyond what he called the traditional role of labor. "We must deal with schools, police, hospitals, community problems," and "we must build political power for minorities and poor people." One grower in Delano, he stated, nullified 1,000 votes of organized workers, because political power is a myth without economic power.

He cited his 13 years of work with the Community Service Organization, largely registering Mexican-American workers to vote. "The moment you vote, you've lost your influence. Almost always politicians forget about us." On previous occasions, Chavez has discussed the failure of the unions to build their own political party.

Chavez asked, what do votes mean when you lose your jobs through mechanization? He suggested that some kind of cooperative enterprise must be developed and that labor must find a solution to the larger problems facing workers. He warned that should the courts issue an



injunction prohibiting the boycott, the union may call for civil disobedience and he would be ready to go to jail.

The grape growers have filed a wide range of court actions to harass and tie up the Farm Workers Union. The union is being sued for \$75 million for damages as a result of the boycott and other actions. Using the National Labor Relations Act, the growers are trying to stop other unions from coming to the aid of the farm workers.

The National Labor Relations Act, passed in 1935, specifically excluded farm workers from its coverage; thus farm workers have no legal procedure through which they may select a collective bargaining agent or have the protection of the law in their attempts to unionize. But the growers are seeking to use the Taft-Hartley amendments of the law forbidding secondary boycotts against the very workers not covered by the law.

The Farm Workers Union is retaliating with a broad spectrum of court actions. Their counter-suit of \$112.5 million charged the growers with violating anti-trust and labor laws. They charged the growers with illegally conspiring to destroy the union and to destroy competition over wages so as to pressure smaller growers who wanted to sign with the union.

Another suit by the union charges that the largest grape growers are illegally obtaining vast amounts of federally-subsidized irrigation water. Federal water law limits a grower to irrigating 160 acres, and the union has charged that some growers are irrigating 1,000 acres and more.

and other concessions through strikes. 150,000 more won concessions without strikes, so great was the impact of the eight-hour struggle. In 1886 there were 665 strikes for shorter days, of which 500 occurred in May. As the movement receded many of the gains were lost, but for the first time workers in this country had forged a power that could seriously threaten the rulers.

After 1886 May 1 became traditional. The AF of L voted to revive the eight-hour day struggle on May 1, 1890 and their call was supported by the international socialist movement which urged world-wide demonstrations.

The Haymarket bomb was used as the excuse for the country's first major red scare and conspiracy trials. Haymarket also created some of our first revolutionary martyrs and labor heroes. There has been a systematic effort to make people forget about the eight-hour movement as well as other heroic efforts of American workers. Somehow they hope to convince people that

This suit was filed on behalf of two small grape growers, who charged that the big corporate growers are preventing nearby smaller growers from getting subsidized water and pushing them out of business. The Reclamation Bureau's chief has admitted that smaller growers have not been getting the water regularly while the larger growers did "because there hasn't been enough water to go around."

In another court action filed by the California Rural Legal Assistance on a class action on behalf of California's farm workers, a demand was raised to close all of the state's 42 federally-funded Farm Labor offices by July 1, 1970, or compel them to operate under a fair employment plan requiring joint farm worker-grower control.

Grower-Oriented

The Farm Labor offices are notoriously grower-oriented and anti-farm worker. They are staffed with personnel working closely with growers and completely indifferent to worker welfare and needs. They often ignore their own rules and regulations and refer workers to jobs in fields without toilets or drinking water. The CRLA action demands that no referrals take place unless the grower is in full compliance with state laws, pays the highest prevailing wage, and gives a guarantee of 40 hours work.

The grape growers, bankrolled by other agricultural interests, have hired the high-priced public relations firm of Whitaker and Baxter to counteract the sympathetic response of the American consumer and public to the farm worker's plight. This is the firm which directed the campaign against "socialized medicine" for the American Medical Association at a cost of \$3.5 million. They also did a job for the railroad industry with their "featherbedding" ads, and posters showing railroad workers singing: "I've been loafing on the railroad..."

The same firm helped California's song-and-dance Senator George Murphy to draft his "Consumer Agricultural Food Protection Act (S 2203)", which would totally emasculate the farm workers' right to strike and to boycott. The bill would place farm workers under the jurisdiction of a special Agricultural Labor Board and the pro-grower Department of Agriculture.

Whitaker and Baxter have an enviable reputation of winning for every reactionary cause that has paid them to manipulate the public. The Farm Workers do not have \$4 million to run a national counter-campaign. They plan to intensify their boycott against seab grapes by sending hundreds of boycott teams into new areas in the summer of 1970. They intend to make it a long hot summer for the growers and their supporters.

interested?

- I would like more information about International Socialism and the IS.

Name _____

Address _____

Occupation _____

IS, 874 Broadway, Room 1005,
New York, N.Y. 10003.

SAN FRANCISCO: c/o Shular, 1474
12th Ave., 94122

May Day

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

The men who were hung went to their death proclaiming their innocence and declaring that they were being killed in an attempt to intimidate the movement they were a part of. None of them seemed to feel that they died in vain, and events bear them out. In 1886 and 1887 the agitation on their behalf was a spur to the labor movement as a whole, but even before this the eight-hour movement they had helped to build bore fruit.

By May 15, 1886, 42,000 workers won shorter days

the eight-hour day (as little as it actually exists) and other gains that workers have achieved are gifts from our rulers who are really kind-hearted people.

But throughout history there has been only one way that working people could gain anything and that has been by fighting for it. In these fights other people have died besides those shot by police or hung in 1886. This year alone an opposition leader in the United Mine Workers and several Black Panther leaders have been murdered in attempts to crush discontent. 1886 was the first year in which American workers really started getting themselves together and, as anyone can see, working people still get screwed by this system.

Part of the attempt to keep people down is the attempt to make them forget their history, to make people believe that the rulers and ruled always lived in peace in this country. And part of the effort to fight the rulers is to rediscover and recreate the traditions of workers' struggle.

The Eight Hour Movement and the Origin of May Day

Kevin Richards

In Europe, Japan and Latin America, and Russia and the Eastern European countries, May 1 is a workers' holiday celebrated with rallies, demonstrations and even strikes. But few people remember that the May Day tradition grew from the eight-hour day movements of U.S. workers during the late 1800's.

In this country the holiday is officially scorned as "Communist." It's true that the so-called Communist countries - where in reality a small elite rules over the working class - use such celebrations to further the myth that these regimes are workers' governments, thereby helping to keep the elite in power. The rulers in this country have similar reasons for eliminating the holiday; the methods are different, but the purposes are the same. The United States wants workers to forget their history and traditions of struggle - so that those in power can stay in power more easily.

After the Civil War, America entered an era of rapid economic expansion in which the industrial economy first took shape. As has happened in all capitalist countries, businesses were established and expanded with the money saved by inflicting on workers long hours, terrible working conditions, and low pay. Industrial deaths and wage cuts were more the rule than the exception as the economy grew on the backs of workers.

Business Stranglehold

This situation was re-enforced by the stranglehold of business interests over the "law-making process." In Illinois the state militia was organized in response to labor "disturbances" (as the National Guard is used against rebelling blacks today) and the desire to suppress the struggle of workers for any kind of decent living standards. There were few and mainly unenforced restrictions on employers, while most states had laws severely limiting the ability of workers to organize and strike. When the employers didn't find the laws favorable enough, they could usually count on their influence among politicians and judges to secure helpful court decisions.

In response to these conditions, the labor movement - which had quieted during the Civil War - revived more militantly than ever, and at the center of its concerns was the struggle for the eight-hour day. Workers' activity continued on the rise until the depression of 1873, but few won shorter hours or other concessions.

Despite the intensity of the struggle (100,000 struck for shorter hours in New York alone), workers were not yet well enough organized to overcome the resistance of the employers and their control of the government.

During this period there were attempts to form national organizations, but the movement remained primarily local and sporadic in nature.

When in the mid-1880's, the workers' movement surged again, the quest for shorter hours remained at the heart of the struggle. Workers who fought for better pay and conditions were met by companies using trainloads of scabs and the government using troops to break up strikes. Between July 1885 and June 1886, the Knights of Labor grew in membership from 100,000 to 700,000, and in 1884 the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions resolved that as of May 1, 1886 eight hours would be the legal working day.

The Federation itself was vague and half-hearted about implementing the resolution, and most of the leadership of the Knights of Labor was bitterly opposed to using strikes as a method. Yet there was little they or anyone else could do to prevent 1886 from being an historic year for the American working class.

Along with the labor movement, a radical movement developed after the Civil War, particularly in New York and Chicago and most notably among German workers. By 1880, it had an anarcho-communist ideology, calling for the abolition of private ownership of industry and the establishment of a "free society" based on cooperation and trade unions. In Chicago lake front meetings and workers' rallies, often of a thousand or more and featuring anarchist and socialist speakers, became a part of the political landscape.

One of the most remarkable of these was a Thanksgiving Day rally of three thousand protesting the governor's proclamation. Resolutions against private property were passed and it was declared: "... that we are thankful because we have learned the true cause of poverty and knew (sic) the remedy, and can only be more thankful when the principles are put in force."

Generalized to Anti-Capitalist Struggles

When the call for the eight-hour movement was first issued in 1884, the radicals weren't really involved. But by the beginning of 1886 they had thrown themselves wholeheartedly into it, in a way that labor's official leaders never did. At this time, the ten-hour day and the sixty-hour week were standard with many workers averaging ten to thirty hours more per week. As the eight-hour struggle came to symbolize the workers' general fight against capitalism, the movement grew by leaps and bounds. And this time the struggle was national in scope and represents the first real nationwide strike activity of American workers.

In Chicago where the greatest struggles were occurring and where the workers were frequently fighting the police, everybody expected violence on May 1. No violence did occur on that day but thirty thousand workers struck while sixty thousand participated in or watched various demonstrations. Then on May 3 a fight broke out between strikers and scabs at the McCormick Harvester plant. The police came and dispersed the strikers with swinging clubs and gunfire, killing one and seriously wounding several others.

In response, the trade unions called for a demonstration in Haymarket Square on the fourth to protest police brutality. The call was supported by many of Chicago's revolutionaries, some of whom made ready to address the crowd. The rally was only one of many scheduled for that night and remained uneventful until the end, when a column of police arrived and demanded without any reason that the crowd disperse. All of a sudden, a bomb was thrown into the column and the police opened fire, clearing the square in a matter of seconds.

Hysteria

Although the identity of the bomb-thrower was unknown and remains so till today, the government and the press quickly conspired to create an anti-radical hysteria. Newspapers across the country printed outright lies about riots and non-existent proof of anarchist bomb-throwers, while the police rounded up "suspect" after "suspect". In recent months the working class and radical movements had become too threatening to business and the government, and the opportunity to attack them was seized with vigor.

Eight men were indicted and brought to trial on conspiracy-to-commit-murder charges. All were chosen because they had been in and around the radical movement; four had been prominent leaders. None of these was ever proven to have had any connections with the unidentified bomb-thrower. However, this didn't deter the efforts of the press and the police to hang them.

Their real purpose was to crush the revolutionary movement and stop short its growing influence among workers. To this end, it was far better to convict and execute known radicals than to find out what really happened in Haymarket Square. The judge ruled it unnecessary that they be proven to have had any direct connection with the actual event, since their general advice that workers use force to protect themselves and bring an end to the injustices of the society was reason enough to hang them.

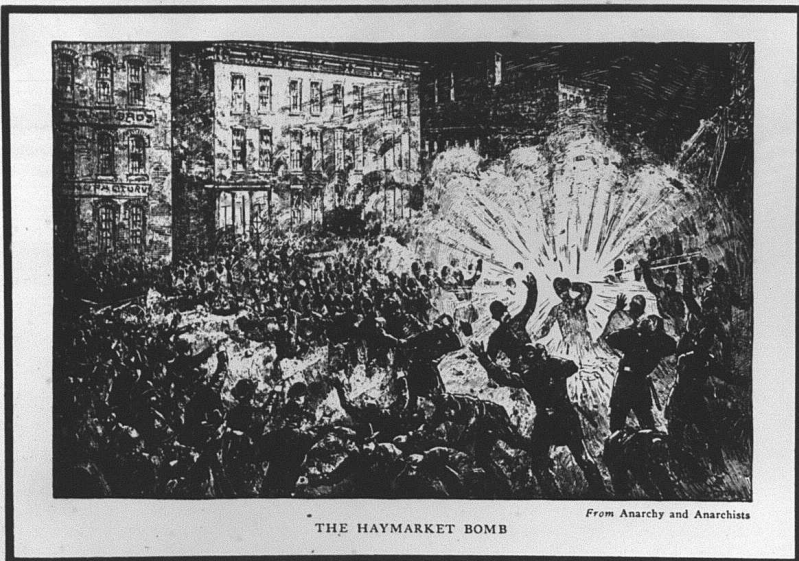
As could be expected under such circumstances, all eight were found guilty - the only surprise was that one of them was spared the death sentence and received fifteen years instead.

Organized labor's first reaction to the Haymarket Affair was to forget the attacks on workers that the police had been making and condemn the indicted men. Labor's official leaders, then as now, were frightened by the growing working class revolt and the increasing influence of the radicals among workers.

Railroaded

As time went on, however, popular opinion and with it the opinion of many labor leaders underwent a reversal. More and more people came to the defense of the Haymarket Men and when the Supreme Court refused to hear the appeal, a virtual movement grew demanding that Governor Oglesby pardon them. As a sop to rising public opinion the governor commuted the sentences of two men to life imprisonment while sending four to the gallows.

One committed suicide before he could be hanged. But in 1893, Illinois' next governor, Altgeld, pardoned the three survivors and by implication vindicated the other five. His reason was that he had examined the trial record and found that the men had been railroaded through court without there being any evidence that could rightfully convict them. (Con't on page 11)



THE HAYMARKET BOMB

From Anarchy and Anarchists

ample of the oil lobby and the AMA. How many times have we heard this before? How many movements have been absorbed into the Democratic Party on this basis? The argument of course is that somehow politicians are neutral people swayed this way and that by pressure. However, this conception is totally unreal. The oil lobby doesn't find politicians distasteful because the oil industry has long ago digested the politicians.

The major parties are, and historically always have been, controlled by big business. The structure of the parties is loose at the bottom and tight at the top, and this structure has worked just fine to absorb and neutralize every reform movement from the Populists to the labor movement, from the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, to the McCarthy campaign, as well as countless others in between. If ecology activists fail to break from the Democratic Party, they too will be swallowed up and digested.

Pressure Politics

The thing that stands out in almost everyone's discussion of the crisis and what to do about it is a fierce loyalty to the status quo. Within this context, of course, pressure politics are acceptable, and the role of the movement is to suggest ways of implementing reforms which we'll all so have to be willing to pay for.

In his discussion of recycling, Garrett De Bell says, "At present, however, the re-use or recycling of solid wastes is not economically feasible for most materials. Since it is ecologically necessary to start recycling our solid wastes, our approach is to find ways to make recycling economical." In other words, our role is to find solutions for the capitalists that we'll then be willing to fund.

"Suitable legislation can go a long way toward doing this," he argues. "At the state or federal level, legislation should incorporate the cost of disposal of each product in its price in the form of a tax.... This legislation represents a specific application of the economic theory of externalities. Instead of the usual practice of including only the cost of production in the price of a product, we also include any additional social cost - such as the cost in environmental deterioration - in the price of the product."

Time and again this argument is repeated; the public must be willing to pay for the mess the corporations have made. Donald G. O'Meara, head of a company which makes anti-pollution devices, sums it up nicely: "We have the technological ability to clean up most anything. But industry wonders who is going to pay the bill, the government or consumer? Frankly, I think people are becoming so aware of the problem

ers' death rates from tuberculosis and stomach cancer were three times as great as the latter's." And that is just the beginning.

In the cotton textile plants of North and South Carolina, Alabama and Georgia, byssinosis, or 'white lung', is the equivalent of black lung disease in the mines, and as common. Marty Wolfson, writing in the Guardian (3/14/70), says it 'is caused by breathing in tiny particles of cotton fiber dust on the job and results in difficulty in breathing, disability, and eventually death. Of the one million textile workers in the U.S., approximately 250,000 work in the cotton textile industry and nearly 100,000 workers (active and retired) suffer from byssinosis.'

To return for a minute to our ecologically-concerned steel worker, if he worked in the coke ovens in that steel mill, he would have a 62% better chance of dying of cancer than other steel workers - this as a result of breathing sulfide gases which the ovens then disperse into the atmosphere.

To preach self-righteously that we're all to blame for this mess in the face of facts like these and many more is to miss the point entirely; those coke ovens in the steel mills are only forging a small amount of that steel for the individual consumer's use.

Again in the case of water pollution, if we all stopped making so much garbage, it would still not solve the problem. Lee Webb, in the February 21, 1970 Guardian, has some interesting statistics. Of the 25 trillion gallons of water the U.S. uses annually, "... 5 trillion are used by people for drinking, bathing and waste disposal. Industry uses 3.7 trillion gallons for various manufacturing processes and another 9.4 trillion for cooling. Business-oriented agriculture uses another 7 trillion gallons for irrigation. Besides the 13.1 trillion gallons industry uses directly, much of what is referred to as municipal waste is actually industrial waste. No fewer than 300,000 industrial plants dump their effluents into municipal sewers. By one estimate more than 40% of all municipal sewage comes from industry."

In order to clean up this problem, Nixon has "... asked congress to appropriate \$4 billion in federal grants to local communities over the next eight years to help them build municipal sewage plants." Municipalities are to raise \$6 billion "... through bond issues. A new federal agency, the Environmental financing Authority, would help them by subsidizing interest payments." Since nearly 40% of municipal sewage comes from industry, the effect of Nixon's total mobilization against pollution is to force federal taxpayers and local taxpayers to pay the bill for ridding the rivers and lakes of industrial pollution.

Workers, as members of the public, are affected by this massive water pollution, but, more importantly, workers are also, unlike the "public", in a position to do something about it. Recently, Local 150 of the Operating Engineers in Chicago declared they would not work on a project contracted to the Newburg Construction Co., which would dump 2,000,000 tons of sludge into Lake Michigan. This local made it clear that it would refuse in the future to work on projects which would contribute to pollution of the environment. Only the working class is in the strategic position in production to make these kinds of strategies possible.

Strikes

A strike by auto workers, which included the demand to replace the internal combustion engine, would do more toward ending automobile pollution than all the consumer boycotts, congressional letter-writing campaigns, and pressure politics in the world.

The one section of the working class that is mentioned in the Environmental Handbook is the farm workers. In an article called 'Pesticides Since Silent Spring', Steven H. Wodka describes his plight. "The farm worker, upon whom we depend so much to harvest our nation's food supply, lives and works in near slavery. This is especially true for the migrant worker. There is work only during the warm months of the year, and even then the boss does not have to pay him the legal minimum wage (average income for farm workers: \$1,232 a year). So the whole family goes to work, including the children, to earn as much as possible. Thus the farm worker family has close exposure to dangerous pesticides - from contaminated drinking water, from living in close proximity to sprayed fields, from 'accidentally' being sprayed while working in the fields, and from working among crops on which the residues of dangerous pesticides are still active."

Wodka goes on to discuss the role of the United Farm Workers in fighting the pesticides, saying that this organization has the potential for being "... one of the most effective power blocks for controls over the use

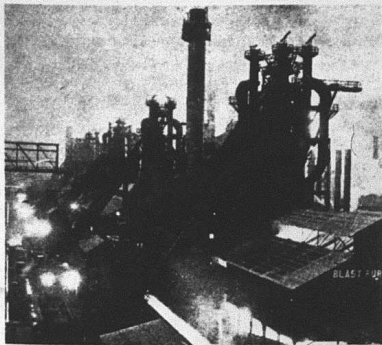
of these dangerous chemicals."

This point is well taken but it also brings us back to the question of how and through whom one exercises that power. The UFWOC leadership is firmly tied to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, and as long as this orientation is sanctioned by the bulk of the membership, no fundamental changes will be allowed. It is not in the interests of the capitalist class to abandon its efforts to obtain the most profit at the least cost, for the sake of something as 'irrelevant' as poisoning of the environment. No matter how much lip service the capitalists pay to the 'problems' of pollution, they will fight basic reforms tooth and nail, because these reforms must involve the destruction or restructuring of the institutions of capitalism.

Basic changes are in the interest of the working class, however, and workers organized on the job, in rank-and-file caucuses and struggle committees, can carry on the fight even while the union bureaucrats urge support to their local Democrats.

In order for this to happen, the ecology movement must begin to direct a large part of its effort toward workers. Workers have every reason to join us once they understand what's at stake. For a number of years, now, an important element in many strikes has been the issue of working conditions and, in the future, it will be even more important as speed-up takes its toll. We must take advantage of this fact to underline the relevance of the ecology movement to workers' self-interest.

The ecology movement, linked with the working class in struggle and in other struggles for social change, including black and brown liberation and women's liberation, soon must enter the political arena. If it is to succeed, it must fight from a position of strength, allied with a Workers' Party, separate and distinct from the capitalist parties. We must begin now to work toward that goal.



that they'll be willing to pay to clean up our water and our air." (Newsweek, "The Ravaged Environment"). In an economy torn apart by inflation, which hurts most those least able to pay, including black people, poor people and the working class in general, these kinds of solutions are absurd. Many ecology 'experts', are, unfortunately, willing to accept them.

The working class has a special place in the environmental crisis, and one that has so far been overlooked by ecology activists. It is the working class that suffers most from the poisoning of our air, water, and cities, and it is the working class that is in the most strategic place to do something about it.

The New York Times in an article published February 9, 1970, cited a study conducted by a Dr. Winkelstein over the past 10 years in Buffalo. Dr. Winkelstein compared "the health of people living in very poor areas where industrial pollution is dense with the health of people living in wealthier, relatively pollution-free neighborhoods.... Not only was the over-all death rate twice as high in the polluted areas as the rate in places free from soot and contamination, but the form-



Eco-Politics

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

imperialism which is responsible for the Vietnam war, not violence in the movies. Similarly, it is capitalism which is responsible for the deterioration of the environment, not the victims of that deterioration. The moral-witness approach, whether to peace or pollution, is based on a liberal analysis of the nature of American society. Eco-pacifism and eco-liberalism differ on tactics, but their politics converge.

Eco-anarchism. When eco-pacifism is seen to be powerless to change society, a common reaction will be an effort to escape from society. There is a lot of talk floating around about utopian-anarchist colonies as an ecological strategy. These colonies would be located away from urban areas, and in them people would try to live in harmony with their environment. This usually means a rejection of modern technology, and a subsistence existence in small communes. This may look attractive to the harassed city-dweller, but it is tenable only so long as an industrial economy lies just over the hill.

Suppose it didn't. What would you do when the baby got sick, and home remedies didn't work? There would be no doctor to call. There would be no drug industry to develop anti-biotics. The baby would simply die. Agricultural productivity would be very low, and dawn-to-dark work would be necessary just to provide essentials. When drought came, there would be famines. In short, society would have reverted to a tribal, pre-industrial level of organization.

Humanity spent thousands of years trying to get out of that sort of existence. There must have been a reason why so many people felt so strongly about it. Communes are only tenable within the interstices of an industrial society.

Eco-terrorism. At a recent ecology meeting, someone suggested that to demonstrate the uselessness of

building more freeways, the group go out and cause a massive traffic jam on the present freeway. Luckily, no one else took the suggestion seriously. But there will no doubt be some incidents of this sort of action.

In an article on "The Politics of Ecology" (*Liberation*, January 1970), Barry Weisberg says that "This winter and spring we can expect a series of radical ecological actions: the bombing of more corporate headquarters, sabotage to the industrial machinery that pollutes and obstruction at airports and other transportation corridors." The stupidity of such tactics is staggering. They are virtually designed to alienate any potential of working-class support and to set the movement up for eco-repression (which is not distinguishable from ordinary repression).

Bombing and sabotage (to say nothing of simple obstruction) have an old and honorable history in the labor movement. But they can only be valid as adjuncts to a larger movement, in very specific situations. Such situations do not now exist in this country, and the use of such tactics as bombings by irresponsible individuals is a recipe for disaster.

Eco-"maoism". This is an ecological counterpart to the notion of "white-skin privilege". American workers are held to be far too wealthy for their own good. This excess wealth is supposed to be the root of environmental problems.

This must really seem like a grim joke to the average American worker, who lives very nearly hand-to-mouth. Heated swimming pools are not at all that common. In the absence of mass transit, automobiles are a necessity, not a luxury. Entertainment and culture are structured so that a television set is also essential. The average American, who is in debt up to his ears, could very easily absorb a doubling of his real income.

Any approach to ecological problems which stresses solving environmental problems by voluntary poverty will necessarily have limited appeal. We already have involuntary poverty.

This approach also diverts attention from consideration of the structure of the economy and the distribution of power in society. It is harmful in the same way that anti-litter campaigns can be harmful when they are used as a substitute for attacks on the real problems.

Eco-socialism. There are very powerful forces at work within the capitalist system opposing any solution to the environmental crisis. Many well-entrenched in-

terests are involved. It would involve an upheaval at least as great as the New Deal. Since this would ultimately have to be enforced worldwide, it might well be defeated by the powerful forces of international economic competition. Whether or not any bureaucratic capitalist solution is a real possibility is an important subject for future debate within the ecology movement.

Whether or not planning under capitalism is any kind of solution, it is bound to be presented as such, if only to prevent consideration of a socialist solution. It is, thus imperative that ecology activists see themselves as part of the struggle to create a socialist society. This cannot be done by appeals to reasonableness of the ruling class, or by attempting to create a new ruling class of intellectuals. The only group with the power to bring about socialism is the working class: black and white, female and male, blue-collar and white-collar.

Many ecology activists, accustomed to regarding working people as somehow the cause of environmental problems, will be unable to envision them fighting for solutions to these problems. But in fact this fight has been going on on a local level for a long time. Pollution is a health hazard on the job. Ecology activists should remind themselves that the Black Lung wildcat in the coal fields of West Virginia was generally seen as part of the ecology movement in addition to being part of the labor movement.

Working people must demand not only control of job conditions which endanger health, but control of the type of goods they produce and the way in which they produce them. It is difficult to believe that anyone relishes the thought of devoting his life to the production of crap. It is in the nature of capitalism that the struggle cannot be confined to the level of the individual plant. If it is, it will be defeated by economic pressures, and it will not ever begin to touch many of the basic problems.

To deal with ecological problems, workers will be forced to generalize their demands to control of the entire planning process of society, which can only be achieved through control of the entire society. The ecological crisis, by focusing the attention of workers on the process of planning, may prove to be a powerful force for the creation of socialism.

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Population

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

imaginative -- and all aimed at punishing those least responsible for our social crisis. Ehrlich in particular shows little understanding of the realities of America's economic structure; under his regimen,

"The plush life would be difficult to attain for those with large families -- which is as it should be, since they are getting their pleasure from their children, who are being supported in part by more responsible members of society."

The plush life, as a matter of fact, is not a pressing problem for most Americans with large families; statistics show that they are predominantly among the poor. As Dubos points out, "advocates of birth control naturally find it difficult to enlist the cooperation of destitute people who regard children as the one worthwhile aspect of their lives." Unlike Ehrlich, they think the problem is their destitution.

The population control movement has a foreign policy too. Its central conception is "triage", introduced by the Paddocks and endorsed by Ehrlich. The theory requires that the United States stop sending food to those countries that Washington decides "can't be saved" -- because overpopulation, "inadequate leadership and other divisive factors" make catastrophe inevitable. In the Paddocks' opinion such countries include India and Egypt. Ehrlich modifies the theory so that it runs on a regional rather than a national basis. "The bedrock requirement of this program would be population control, necessarily including migration control to prevent swamping of aided areas by the less fortunate." It is interesting that the words "population control" have acquired a double meaning.

The Paddocks take naturally to the idea of triage because of the rampant American chauvinism that is evi-

dent on every page of their book. Ehrlich is more cautious, but only slightly. "Coercion?" he asks, referring to a proposal for forced sterilization of Indian men who have more than three children. "Perhaps, but coercion is a good cause. I am sometimes astounded at the attitudes of Americans who are horrified at the prospect of our government insisting on population control as the price of food aid. All too often the very same people are fully in support of applying military force against those who disagree with our form of government or our foreign policy. We must be relentless in pushing for population control around the world."

We are not yet as relentless as Ehrlich would like, but population control is being tied to an increasing proportion of foreign aid. The World Bank and the Agency for International Development are in favor of it, on the theory that birth control does more than economic development to raise an underdeveloped country's average income. Aside from the fact that the average level of income doesn't indicate what its distribution is, this policy is unpopular both with the recipient governments and with American corporations looking for business with the third world, who would like to see an increase in production.

But the policy has a logic of its own. A large, predominantly young population, unemployed and concentrated in the cities, may cause trouble. "In the 1970's it is liable to become an uncontrollable flood," says *The Economist*, "and threaten real, red, raw, urban revolution." Unfortunately, population control alone will not develop the backward countries, and without development the population is likely to keep on exploding even if birth control materials are available.

The population theorist is left with a dilemma. Proposals for voluntary population control appear to be ineffectual, and alternative, compulsory measures seem far too drastic. Voluntary population control is a pre-eminent example of a policy that must be instituted "from below". In a society controlled from above, a collective decision to limit population growth cannot be made.

Capitalism in particular, with its historical drive towards unending accumulation, has produced a population

"policy" of limitless expansion. At the present time, the system sees the population explosion as a threat to stability, possibly leading to a revolutionary breakdown. The ideologists of capitalism alternate between technological zeal, in periods of prosperity and expansion, and militant neo-Malthusianism when the system is on the defensive. The latter view is now in the ascendance, but its implications are too painful to make it dominant.

One population expert (Davis) confronts the dilemma this way: "... a realistic proposal for a government policy of lowering the birth rate reads like a catalogue of horrors: squeeze consumers through taxation and inflation, make housing very scarce by limiting construction; force wives and mothers to work outside the home to offset the inadequacy of male wages, yet provide few child-care facilities; encourage migration to the city by paying low wages in the country and providing few rural jobs; increase congestion in cities by starving the transit system; increase personal insecurity by encouraging conditions that produce unemployment and by haphazard political arrests."

If all this is reminiscent of home, rest assured; "No government," Davis asserts, "will institute such hardships simply for the purpose of controlling population growth." In a sense, Davis is no doubt correct. No government would institute such hardships simply for the sake of population control alone. But the inescapable fact that the "catalogue of horrors" which Davis enumerates is already an established part of our daily lives is both a monument to the gravity of the social crisis we face and a clue to the fatal weakness of population control methodologies.



Ecology: An English View

On his recent American trip, Harold Wilson offered his old buddy Richard Nixon a 'special relationship' so that their nations could get together on the two great problems of our time: race relations and pollution, the destruction of our natural environment.

The Labour government's racist ban on immigration effectively cleared the way for the ranting of the Powellites. Now our Harold has served notice that he intends to repeat this success in pastures new.

As we all know, when he moves, he moves swiftly. As a result, since his return, the pollution problem has been debated in parliament and the personnel for a permanent Royal Commission on the matter will be announced shortly.

All of a sudden our masters have hit upon the des-pollution of our lives. We must be very careful not to dismiss the discussion just because we do not trust those who started it.

Roughly the background is this. Some years ago, Rachel Carson published a little book called *The Silent Spring*.

She said that the use of chemical pest-killers in farming was finishing off man's natural allies along with the pests. Birds and beasts were being exterminated and soon spring would indeed be silent.

DDT prevents the formation of calcium. One of the results of its use in farming is that eggshells become dramatically weaker.

Food, too, is taking a hammering, with god knows what getting into it in the pursuit of high yields for high profit. Some commentators even suggested that there would soon be no one around to hear the silence of that silent spring.

A clear cut example of the human implications of the techniques of big business farming lies in the use of anti-biotics to fatten up meat and poultry. As a result, people develop resistances to the anti-biotics in their food.

If hospitalised, from a quite unrelated illness, they are found to have a mysterious immunity to the healing power of those self-same anti-biotics. Sometimes they meet an equally mysterious death.

Pesticides

Perhaps the most dramatic case of the moment is the strike of the Californian grape workers. Mainly Mexican immigrants, their five-year old strike demands a ban on the use of such pesticides.

After five years - including four of government financed strike-breaking by buying up all the boycotted grapes - the bosses thought they might agree to some sort of increase in the basic wage, even union recognition. But talks broke down on the question of pesticides.

Californian grape workers lose their hair, their fingernails and their lives as a result of their continual contact with these pesticides. Needless to say, such crimes are not classified as the logical-product of capitalist farming.

It may be that if and when there is some temporary conclusion to this five-year struggle, these crimes will be officially camouflaged as 'accidents'.

Some workers will receive a few pennies compensation if they lose the required number of fingernails. America's moneysharks will thump their chests in reforming pride and other workers will continue to lose their hair and their lives.

In some of its sectors, agriculture is consumed by a need for vast yields to satisfy the grab-motive. When it is not, big business agriculture is concerned to avoid American or British overproduction which would sadly upset the market price.

In Britain, the Milk Marketing Board pours millions of gallons of milk it has purchased down disused Cornish tin mines. One theory is that this cuts down the freight charges for not giving aid to the world's hungry.

America has a more advanced form of disorganisation. Vast government grants - financed by the poor, the hungry and the various other sections of the American working class - are doled out to the big farmers to make it worth their while not to grow anything.



But side by side with an agriculture consumed with profit-hunger and other forms of madness, there operates another monster: industry.

It is this that the press and the TV see as the final threat. Industrial waste is consuming us, we have 10 years to live.

The machine has taken charge and it's all Bond Street to a packet of Woodbines that we've had it. Our cities are being made into gas chambers by exhaust and industrial fumes. Our technology is out of control.

First we must register surprise at this sudden discovery of the filthy conditions of our lives.

Vast sections of the world's population have long been aware of the miserable conditions of their lives, have known slums and shanties, have been maimed by industrial 'accidents', struck down by industrial diseases, slaughtered by poverty, starvation and war.

They have struggled relentlessly over the last 150 years to get themselves out of just such conditions, although they have not yet successfully concluded their fight.

Of course, it's not our technology which is out of control. We produce it and so we can change it.

It is not production itself which is killing us, but its social goals, the method and style of production which inevitably accompany the relentless pursuit of private profit and the endless accumulation of capital, the prime purposes of capitalism.

The story goes that we are killing ourselves by our industry and our technology. It is not ours. It can be, and we can lay down different social goals as soon as workers seize the power.

'Our' rivers are indeed poisoned, 'our' countryside raped and ravaged. So too are our people, the victims of terrible mental illnesses, industrial diseases and injuries in our artificially shortened lives.

Capitalist industry and agriculture are no longer progressive. At every level the possibility exists to eliminate every 'accident' whether it be to a hillside or to a human limb.

If we rack our memories we will remember an accident to a man-made mountain of waste. A gigantic coal-tip above the village of Aberfan slid into the valley below, engulfing the village school and killing 116 children and 28 adults.

A 'disaster'? Even the word is politically loaded. No, no disaster, but rather the inevitable result of our system of production.

Men had put the tip where it was, many dying to dig it from the bowels of the earth. Other men knew it was likely to collapse, for they had studied its structure.

After the slaughter men are now flattening it, a construction firm got an unexpected and profitable contract and doubtless building workers could be maimed and injured in ending the monument to private profit that is Aberfan.

Aberfan was 'pollution', Aberfan was 'industrial damage' or any other of the obscene veils for the systematic rape of man and nature.

Aberfan and other so-called disasters are just one aspect of the devastation of our lives which - through the social revolution - will become boundlessly lovely, capable of raising vast sculptures of mental and physical delight out of a landscape which sometimes seems able only to stifle and to kill.

Capitalist production, while at one stage revolutionising man's relationship with nature, proceeds without any concern for social production. It is an anachronism, overdue for replacement by communism, the superior

and truly human form of society which will issue from a worker's state.

Since it has no concern for production for use and need, the normal state of capitalism is a highly organised form of chaos. Contemptuous of man, it is no surprise that it should be contemptuous of nature.

It can never be reformed. An economy cannot just switch production for war to production to combat poverty and scarcity. The society itself must be reconstructed and revolutionised.

Capitalism must waste in its mad quest for the accumulation of capital through private profit. It must tax the working class to pay for its vast indulgence in permanent terror and violence. It can never reconstruct itself in a fundamentally different fashion.

Capitalist production does not reign unchallenged, the mole of revolution digs deep. When, after many years, the readers and writers of *Socialist Worker* (and other papers like it) have succeeded in their struggle to build a mass revolutionary party - that vital excavator which will enable us to reach the daylight and bury the stinking system of capitalist production relations forever - there will be no pause for self-congratulation.

Even the morrow of a successful revolution will be an occasion of renewed activity. We will need to begin to move towards a total alteration of our relationship with nature.

For the first time in history there will be a human nature, neither above nor beneath man. We will humanise nature in our journey to humanise ourselves.

As Leon Trotsky wrote in 1924:
'The present location of mountains and rivers, fields and greens, steppe, forest and maritime coasts, should by no means be considered as final. Man has already carried out some far from negligible changes in nature's map. But these are only school-boyish essays in comparison with what is to come.'

'If faith could only promise to move mountains, technology, which takes nothing on faith, will really pull them down and shift them. Hitherto it has done this only for industrial commercial purposes (mines and tunnels).'

'In the future it will do it on an incomparably wider scale, in accordance with comprehensive productive-artistic plans. Man will make a new inventory of mountains and rivers. He will seriously and more than once amend nature.'

'He will eventually reshape the earth to his taste ... and we have no reason to fear that his taste will be poor.'

Reprinted from *Socialist Worker*, an English International Socialist weekly, February 19, 1970.

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THE POLITICS OF POPULATION

Walter Daum

A new population control movement has come into being. It is partly a branch of the growing environmental movement, and partly descended from the older family planning organizations. But in focusing narrowly on overpopulation as the world's critical problem, this movement is really tangential to both of these streams, and very much in the Malthusian tradition.

Its leading spokesman is Paul Ehrlich, a biologist whose book *The Population Bomb* is circulating in an edition of a million copies. Ehrlich's thesis is twofold: 1) population growth is rapidly outrunning food production, and therefore mass starvation is unavoidable in the near future; 2) overpopulation is the root of all problems of modern society, including the shortages of housing, schools, hospitals and transportation, air and water pollution, crime, riots, slums, governmental repression, the gap between rich nations and poor, and the war in Vietnam.

It follows from these two assertions that the only solutions worth considering are those that directly control population growth, and that these solutions must be massive and immediate.

Under the circumstances, it is not hard to believe that the proposed solutions range from the permissive to the authoritarian. Some of Ehrlich's suggestions coincide with the programs of movements for social change; others however stand directly opposed to these movements. The urgency of the population problem can be used to divert attention from issues of war, racism and welfare. It has been used to give reactionary politics a liberal platform.

Demography and Society

Happily, Ehrlich's case is far from airtight. His first thesis requires a projection of present rates of population growth into the future, a notoriously unrewarding task. Projections made by demographers during the depression years of the thirties forecast the depopulation of Western Europe. Estimates in the early forties predicted a post-war baby boom, but nothing like the one that occurred.

The difficulty is that the rate of population growth depends on social conditions. Typically, industrialization and urbanization first cause population to spurt by lowering the death rate, and later bring about a slower rate of growth by reducing the birth rate. The developed nations of the world have reached the second stage. The post-war industrialization of Japan and Italy, for example, was followed by a noticeable decline in birth rates.

The extraordinary increase in world population is taking place largely in the underdeveloped countries,

chiefly because of medical advances, public health programs, and technological developments that have improved food distribution. In the third world, the second stage has not been reached. One explanation is that of Rene Dubos:

"Under the social and economic circumstances that control human behavior in most of the underprivileged parts of the world today, and for that matter prevailed almost everywhere in the past, children constitute the easiest and most rewarding source of emotional satisfaction, as well as a kind of insurance against the future. Only in prosperous countries have other incentives weakened this fundamental human urge."

The claim that population will continue to grow at the present rate relies, therefore, on the assumption that the third world will remain undeveloped. Because of the existence and consequences of imperialism, this assumption is not unreasonable. But there is the alternative of social revolution - an alternative that the population controllers do their best to avoid.

Spokesmen like Ehrlich insist that taking the underlying social context into account would waste valuable time. As will be seen, the population control experts are on friendly terms with imperialism, and are willing to live with underdevelopment. Their "inevitability of overpopulation" argument begins with a bias against social change, and thus necessarily misses the point.

Another proposition required by the mass starvation thesis is the idea that food production cannot be greatly increased. Although new technological procedures are possible, Ehrlich argues that bringing new lands under cultivation or developing new fertilizers and protein foods would be economically unfeasible. Perhaps so, but there is a choice being made between alternative uses of resources. Ehrlich does not, for example, point out that the arms budget appears to be permanently feasible for American capitalism. The development of agricultural resources is just one more category of useful production given a low priority in our society.

A curious statement that keeps turning up in *The Population Bomb* is that America's food surpluses cannot be used to feed the poor countries for much longer because they're nearly all gone. The source for this information seems to be a book that Ehrlich depends on for many of his arguments -- William and Paul Paddock's *Famine--1975*. The Paddocks reason that our surpluses are "gone" because they've been shipped out of the country under the Food for Peace program. And since they've been disposed of there's no need to produce them again; so we can cut back agricultural production to meet only the needs of profitable domestic consumption and foreign trade. In other words, our farm surpluses will be "gone" if we make them so.

As it happens, the United States continues to reduce farm production in the face of world-wide undernourishment. Wheat acreage allotments were cut by 12% for this year because of a world "surplus". While it is very unlikely that even full use of American agricultural resources at present levels could provide the world with a decent diet, Ehrlich and the Paddocks exaggerate the problem by treating unprofitable production as unproductive.

It should be pointed out that Ehrlich's pessimism is not universally accepted. The British business journal *The Economist* reports that "food production has been growing 1 3/4 times as fast as population since the mid-1950's ... however much our own ineptitude may produce conditions in Bihar, Mississippi and Biafra that often make the world seem doomed to eventual famine."

In sum, Ehrlich's mass starvation via overpopulation thesis rests on a number of unproven assumptions and overlooks the problem of the organization of society. His second thesis - that overpopulation is the root cause of all evils - suffers from the same flaws and moreover is supported by no evidence at all. Ehrlich simply asserts it, over and over again.

It is obvious that unlimited population growth would ultimately become THE problem, because of the finite size of the earth. But these limits have not been reached. Overcrowded conditions resulting from high population density are an old phenomenon in human civilization; they existed in the ancient world and in medieval cities. Today's "overpopulation" as well is a social problem, not a biological one.

Atmosphere of Panic

The atmosphere of panic evoked by the population control enthusiasts enables them to put forth proposals that would worsen the social crisis mixed with measures aimed at ameliorating it. On family planning matters, they are naturally in favor of voluntary birth control and abortion, but involuntary control also turns up. Compulsory abortion for illegitimate pregnancies is one proposal. Ehrlich laments the "criminal inadequacy" of research into sterilization agents that could be added to water supplies.

Some propose reducing paid maternity leaves and oppose child-care centers! Others urge that the birth control pill be made widely available without medical information or supervision, despite the pill's record of dangerous side effects. Dr. Alan Guttmacher, head of Planned Parenthood and an ardent population control advocate, told a Senate subcommittee that "the dispenser of therapy should be educated, not the recipient."

Liberating women from the pressure to define themselves in terms of the family, and eliminating unequal job opportunities and wages for women have been proposed in the same breath as compelling women to work outside the home - either by law or by lowering all wages so that each family needs two incomes. (Kingsley Davis, in *Science*, 1967).

This suggestion is modeled on the population policies of several Eastern European "socialist" countries. Whether designed to increase the available labor force or to decrease the population, such manipulations work in the interest of elitist control. The population experts favor the liberation of women only to the extent that it fits their convenience.

Taxation and welfare policies put forward by the population controllers would concentrate their impact on poor and working class families. The major legislative proposal of Zero Population Growth, an organization whose president is Dr. Ehrlich, is to eliminate tax exemptions for each family's "excess" children. ZPG would deny that their proposal carries a class bias, and in fact it makes an exception for families below the poverty line. Yet it would hurt mainly those with low incomes, and would not inhibit the wealthy from having as many children as they wanted.

Other ideas around the population control movement are to cut off welfare benefits to mothers of more than some fixed number of children, and to stop awarding public housing on the basis of family size. All very

(Con't on page 6)



The Split in The NUC

Judith Shapiro

On February 1st, the National Committee (quarterly council) of the New University Conference, with about 200 people in attendance, expelled the Progressive Labor Party and the Worker-Student Alliance Caucus.

On February 1st, the National Committee (quarterly council) of the New University Conference, with about 200 people in attendance, expelled the Progressive Labor Party and the Worker-Student Alliance Caucus.

NUC, the less than two-year old national organization of radicals who work "in, around, and in spite of institutions of higher education" thus clearly showed that it was not sheltered from the powerful divisive currents now flowing through the entire Left.

Amazing Assortment

The expulsion motion was introduced by the executive committee in a rather top-down fashion, and afterwards blandly apologized for as a regrettable necessity. There was no opportunity for chapter discussion before the meeting. The alignment of forces against PL was an amazing assortment, ranging from culture freaks to the edge of RYM II. If the sectarian mood prevails, it is unlikely that this combination can hold together.

But NUC, which had frequently been described inaccurately by the mass media as the "adult arm of SDS," displayed considerably more subtlety and finesse in Baltimore in February than was shown by the RYM forces in Chicago last June. Manipulation by the executive committee majority (called "giving leadership") was far more smoothly carried out, and a great deal of time was given over to post-mortem regrets - after the expulsion, and after the doors were (physically) barred to PL and the WSA - and there was much less hysterical rhetoric. Also, there was a clear majority for expulsion, 42 delegates to 15.

Most important of all, the expulsion was ostensibly for disciplinary reasons which it might have been possible to support if there had been adequate proof. The executive committee, meeting before the council plenary, rejected most political bases for its proposal, and emphasized instead allegations of interference with chapter operations, especially at Columbia and Harvard, secondarily at MIT and the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle.

As the Motion put it: "Meeting in emergency session the Executive Committee of NUC has come to the conclusion that membership in PLP and/or WSA is no longer compatible with membership in NUC. We recognize the serious problems raised by this recommendation, and the necessity for making very clear the reasons for it. Our objection to PL-WSA membership in NUC is not based on their discipline, organization, or adherence to a unified line; it is rather the hostile and destructive uses to which these are put. It is not their claim to be "Communists" that we oppose, or indeed any single position that they hold, but rather their consistent disruption of discussion and program in NUC."

Politics not Discipline

But the discussion at the national meeting itself demonstrated that it was not organizational discipline, but politics, that provided the thrust for the motion; the charged disciplinary infractions were far from substantiated. The charges, in general, of "forcing heavy debates" in chapters were very vague and at MIT, at least, the evidence of people opposed both to PL and the national leadership seemed to indicate that there was no basis whatsoever to the charge.

On the other hand, many speakers, including Heather Booth who helped motivate the motion for the executive committee majority, seemed to stress political differences with PL, and there were many times during the conference when evidence for the familiar PL charges

of "anti-communism" and "anti-working class attitudes" could have been collected.

The motivation of those who actually wanted to base the expulsion on political differences was very different from those who honestly felt that there was evidence of undemocratic maneuvering. The leadership of the former position, John McDermott of MIT, has put forward a proposal for the turning of NUC into a "cadre organization", presumably with McDermott's politics.

The executive committee introduced the motion at the very start of the plenary, intending to ask all PLers and WSAers to leave if the motion passed. It was clear at the beginning that the votes for expulsion were present and the ensuing debate was extremely sloppy on the part of the supporters of expulsion. There were, however, several excellent arguments against expulsion made by independents. At the end of the debate it would have been apparent from any transcript that the charges of "obstructionism" were just not substantiated. There will always be conflicting testimony, but the evidence as presented was exceptionally shoddy.

Rather than risk having to drag out those who had been expelled by force (although there seemed to be no objection to the shouting down of Hilary Putnam, a member of the WSA, by the chairman), the leadership cleverly decided to adjourn for one-half hour. Afterwards the group was told to reconvene in another room of the building in which we were meeting. PL/WSAers including chapter delegates who stayed were barred at the door by guards. Food had been ordered in, and separate trays were left outside the locked doors for the pariahs.

The workshops later in the day made it clear to all doubters that any real political bonds uniting the anti-PL side were extremely thin. For example, although NUC declared itself last June to be working for a "new American form of socialism," a number of members and delegates attending did not yet consider themselves to be socialists. The majority seemed to favor some kind of "new working class" ideology, of the sort which was extremely popular in SDS just before the hardening of RYM (Remember that Bernadine Dohrn ran for inter-organizational secretary of SDS on a new working class platform).

Elitism

It may be tempting to simply dismiss the troubles of the NUCers who supported the motion to conclude that their vague and unsubstantiated charges were utterly groundless. Their difficulties in combatting PL did lead to some outrageously elitist statements on the part of the national leadership. And the idea that PL had been systematically and deliberately attempting to obstruct NUC seems to have little basis in fact.

But there were, no doubt, real problems with PL, even if expulsion was not the answer. We have not yet resolved the question of how to carry on debate with in the movement, and the actions of some disciplined caucuses with a hard and deliberately simplified line can cause honest distress in new organizations.

The most outrageous of the elitist statements of the leadership came from Richie Rothstein, one of the two national secretaries of NUC. In an evening discussion of the morning's hatchet job. A great deal of rank and file discomfort came bubbling up, and the leadership took the floor to put it to rest.

Most people seemed to feel uneasy about "the way it was done," not the expulsion itself. Rothstein explained to them that it was necessary to act quickly,

before PL paralyzed the organization. After all, we had "many unsophisticated and inexperienced chapters" with "naive organizational ideas." Among these ideas was the quaint notion that "civil libertarian standards as set by courts in a bourgeois state are applicable to private organizations."

Although there was considerable dissatisfaction expressed from the floor with what was termed, at one point, "PL paranoia," and although there was uneasiness about the doctrine of stepping in to protect the unsophisticated professor or graduate student, most found on the whole considerable relief in just talking out their doubts.

Most left the Saturday night session feeling satisfied with what Rothstein had called the "admittedly heavy-handed and authoritarian action - leadership-oriented action - we had to face." In short, they accepted the leadership's explanation of their haste in bringing the subject up, precipitated by a split in the Columbia chapter, despite the fact that the executive committee had received a "confidential memo" about it over a month before. (The memo, incidentally, cautioned that the matter should not be brought up unless it was certain to pass.)

The flurry of excitement over PL overshadowed other NC actions. The NC Report lists these as "a staff structure for 1970-71 including six full-time regional organizers; rules for the NUC convention in June; an internal education program for chapter implementation; a spring anti-corporate action program; and a program for the next National Committee meeting emphasizing women's caucus meetings, a male liberation session and education discussions on ecology issue actions." As usual, the women's caucus was the healthiest part of the weekend.

Fearmongers

In assessing the events of the meeting it is important to add that PL played right into the hands of the fearmongers by going beyond just bringing as many people to the meeting as they could, which seemed entirely justified if there was any possibility of expulsion. For example, there seems to be some evidence that they did attempt to create a "paper chapter" at Princeton. Since members could not vote, only speak, the rush of PLers signing up for new memberships, not as chapter delegates, was hardly significant, but it did help to solidify opposition.

It is possible to set up rules for accreditation which avoid most of the problem. But the NUC leadership seemed to feel there could be no democratic way to deal with attempted packing, and that it might be forced to "form its own paper chapters and bring its own ghost voters to the convention." Democratic ways of dealing with difficulty just don't seem to be on the menu, and those who ask for it are termed "unrealistic".

Unrealistic or not, it would seem to be the job of revolutionary socialists and all others committed to building NUC to work for more rank and file democracy, more membership control, and a program which can both speak to the problems of university people and orient them toward the ally which has the potential power - the working class. There are many NUCers with this perspective, and they need all the help they can get.

Rank and File Democracy

Perhaps, back at the chapter level, the membership will overcome the tendency of the leadership to elitist manipulation and unprincipled action. Several chapters have already refused to implement the national decision. It is the ongoing program and discussion of the rank and file that will be critical in the months to come.

Judith Shapiro, elected to the NUC national executive committee in June, is a member of Seattle International Socialists.

...feedback...

Support the Conspiracy 10

The Gerson and Haberkern articles on the Conspiracy trial in the March IS were not really on the Conspiracy Trial - a more accurate title would have been "A Polemic Attack on the American Left". The article talked little about the Conspiracy trial itself and even less about support for the Conspiracy 10.

Instead of dealing with the politics of the Conspiracy, the articles slur over politics by tying the Conspiracy to Weatherman tactics, Maoists talking about white-skin privilege, and Yippies muttering "incoherent phrases about destroying a monster by burning dollar bills and listening to acid-rock."

The biggest error was in stating that the Conspiracy calls "for the overthrow of AMÉRICA (indiscriminately lumping together the ruling class and the oppressed," and that "In Chicago ... a political defense was never waged." These charges are absurd.

Right from the start, the Conspiracy made it clear: they would show that the real conspiracy was the ruling class. They stressed they would not try to win by narrow courtroom procedures. Members of the Conspiracy have spent as much time as possible making speeches before, during and after the trial. They may not agree with IS, but they have said who the enemy is, and that we must win over masses of Americans to our side.

But back to the waging of the trial itself. Take two instances:

Poet Allen Ginsburg was a defense witness who described what he did at the convention; the prosecutor had him read some of his homosexual poetry. This is probably considered to be "cultural" and "freaky" and therefore "non-political" by Gerson and Haberkern. But when IS branches pass resolutions supporting Gay Liberation, this falls within the IS' narrow definition of politics.

Defense witness Linda Morse explained how the Democratic Convention had revealed the nature of the state. An ex-pacifist, she had taken up self-defense.

The contempt sentences were for political acts. Bobby Seale was sentenced to contempt for defending himself. Others had charges relating to showing solidarity with Bobby and with each other, refusing to respect the decorum of the court and the judge, trying to explain points to the jury after being ruled out of order. There is a clear political point in this: don't let the system railroad you to jail without fighting, even if you have to break their regulations.

Attorney Kunstler got contempt citations for many things - among them asking (political) questions of witnesses that already been overruled by the judge.

This list could go on and on, but IS articles are already too long and boring as it is. I would merely add that political differences between us and the Conspiracy should not be overlooked. But criticisms should be made in a comradely way. We should spend more time doing what they're not doing (such as showing the connections between the struggles of the Conspiracy and the struggles of workers) and less time chastizing them for not doing it.

The following note was written by Abbië Hoffman, Tom Hayden, Rennie Davis and Dave Dellinger, while they were waiting to be shipped from the courtroom to jail:

"All goes well.

"They can never hurt us, no matter what they do. For what they have jailed on this most infamous of Valentine's Days is not men, but an idea.

"The dream of freedom is in prison now, but there are no prisons in the land strong enough to hold it ... for its time has come. Seize the time!"

Abbie T. Donovan

Moby Dick

Re Charles Tweed and Marx on women, together in a twisted one night stand in I.S., #18, April 1970. They hit the heart of it, from opposite directions.

TO MOBY DICK FROM THE OCEAN

We once gave life to each other--
How did we get so turned around, you and I?
You, who's nature was to plunge, deep-sea
dive in salty water; me, who's nature was
to sustain weird sea creatures, crash, foam,
splash, and to rage and storm.

Now you are me and I am you, but opposed.
Even worse, the motherfuckers have turned
oceans into freeways, whales into cars, and
I only am escaped to tell thee Ishmael
from sailor into prisoner.

Fuck it. Let's get back to nature or do it in
the road.

Carmen Morgan

Letters from Abroad

England

I enclose my subscription for 10 issues of I.S. Congratulations on the standard of your publication, which was matched by Kim Moody's article on the American Workingclass in our I.S., 40. Your I.S. seems to have a vitality in most of its content that is, perhaps, sometimes lacking in some of our material.

I was particularly struck by the description of the split in SDS which, it seemed to me, combined a racy and almost breathtaking commentary with analyses of great depth and perception. The latter brought home the seriousness of events which, from this distance at least, seem lurid and almost unreal.

But I fear that the rise of the new stalinism in the United States will probably have its British equivalent, though no doubt it will be a very different form. Your description of the organisation common to RYM and PL reminded me of the rigidly centrist Socialist Labour League with its high turnover of membership and fatal tendency to accuse all other groupings of counter-revolutionary leanings.

The internal ructions within the Communist Party of Great Britain will certainly not have ended with the last congress. It would not be surprising to see the emergence of a super-stalinist wing in the Party over the next year or so. The idea of a "stalinist group without a country" might well prove curiously attractive.

But the trouble with idle speculation is its inher-

ent bias towards total idleness. The American experience is vastly different from the British. The tasks that face you must be, by all accounts, a thousand times more difficult than those which face us.

I think that I.S. here is successfully emerging from a period characterized by a certain introversion on account of the massive influx of members after May '68; and the internal debate on democratic centralism. One of the features of this emergence is the renewed emphasis on serious and systematic industrial activity. Another may increasingly become a growing interest in the history and activities of revolutionary socialists in other countries. You'll forgive me if I say that although the copies of I.S. that I've seen are very informative in their way, they don't tell us much about I.S. itself.

With the very best fraternal greetings,

Peter Glatter

Richmond I.S.
(Great Britain)

P.S. - If one of our members hasn't done so already, I'd like to say that Hal Draper's "Two Souls of Socialism" is undoubtedly the miniature classic of post war Marxism. In our branch at any rate it goes first on the reading list for new members. The only criticism I would make would be that the fact that he doesn't give the historical reasons for supporting revolution from below might leave the impression that it is a moral rather than a scientific preference.

The Moon

The best way to organize kids is through actions not leaflets. By actions we mean taking over a classroom with a racist teacher and explain in a hard way why imperialism & racism have to be smashed. You can also march through your school with an NFL flag chanting and probably get busted. We believe that white people have to be polarized. They must know that there is another side - a white fighting force supporting 3rd world & black liberation. Many fights can occur but working class kids will begin to listen to you if they see you are willing to fight for what you believe in. Even giving out leaflets can be different. Confront people with their racism, push them up against the wall, they will listen. We use the NFL flag because we support the struggle of the Vietnamese and publicly do so. The people who do reach by this method will be fighting street people instead of intellectuals and are valuable to the revolution. Don't apologize over your ideas, push them out. You won't immediately organize thousands but when you know you are right you won't get discouraged.

A Weatherman

The Feet of the Great Helmsman



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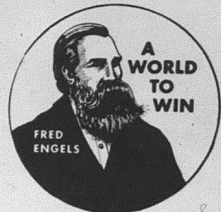
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Two Souls of Socialism, H. Draper—25¢
The Dirt on California, H. & A. Draper—35¢



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 coordination 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 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.

LENIN

Leon Trotsky



Lenin expounds his theories on April 4, 1917

Lenin's internationalism needs no recommendation. It is best characterized by Lenin's irreconcilable break, in the first days of the world war, with that counterfeited internationalism which reigned in the Second International. The official leaders of "Socialism" used the parliamentary tribune to reconcile the interests of the fatherland with the interests of mankind by way of abstract arguments in the spirit of the old Cosmopolites. In practice this led, as we know, to the support of the predatory fatherland by the proletarian forces.

Lenin's internationalism is in no sense a formula for verbally reconciling nationalism with internationalism. It is a formula for international revolutionary action. The world's territory in the clutches of the so-called civilized section of mankind is regarded as a unified arena where a gigantic struggle occurs, whose component elements are constituted by the individual peoples and their respective classes. No single major issue can be kept restricted within a national framework. Visible and invisible threads connect such an issue with dozens of events in all corners of the world. In the evaluation of international factors and forces, Lenin is freer than anyone else from national prejudices.

Marx concluded that the philosophers had sufficiently interpreted the world and that the real task was to change it. But he, the pioneering genius, did not live to see it done. The transformation of the old world is now in full swing and Lenin is the foremost worker on this job. His internationalism is a practical appraisal plus a practical intervention into the march of historical events on a world scale and with world-wide aims. Russia and her fate is only a single element in this titanic historical struggle upon whose outcome hinges the fate of mankind.

Lenin's internationalism needs no recommendation. But at the same time Lenin himself is profoundly national. His roots are deep in modern Russian history, he draws it up into himself, gives it its highest expression, and precisely in this way attains the highest levels of international action and world influence.

At first glance the characterization of Lenin as a "national" figure may seem surprising, but, in essence, this follows as a matter of course. To be able to lead such a revolution, without parallel in the history of peoples, as Russia is now living through, it is obviously necessary to have an indissoluble, organic bond with the main forces of the people's life, a bond which springs from the deepest roots.

Lenin personifies the Russian proletariat, a young class which politically is scarcely older than Lenin himself, but a class which is profoundly national, for recapitulated in it is the entire past development of Russia, in it lies Russia's entire future, with it the Russian nation rises or falls. Freedom from routine and banality, freedom from imposture and convention, resoluteness of thought, audacity in action - and audacity which never turns into foolhardiness - this is what characterizes the Russian working class, and with it also Lenin.

Combined Development

The nature of the Russian proletariat that has made it today the most important force of the world revolution, had been prepared beforehand by the entire course of Russian national history: the barbaric cruelty of the Czarist autocracy, the insignificance of the privileged classes, the feverish growth of capitalism fed by the leeches of the world stock-market, the eschewed character of the Russian bourgeoisie, their decadent ideology, their shoddy politics. Our "Third Estate" knew neither a reformation nor a great revolution of their own and could never have known them. Therefore the revolutionary tasks of the Russian proletariat assumed a more all-embracing character. Our past history knows no Luther, no Thomas Munzer, no Mirabeau, no Danton, no Robespierre. Exactly for that reason the Russian proletariat has its Lenin. What was lost in tradition has been won in the sweep of the revolution.

Lenin mirrors the working class, not only in its proletarian present, but also in its peasant past, still so recent. This most indisputable leader of the proletariat, not only outwardly resembles a peasant, but there is something inwardly in him strongly smacking of a peasant. Facing the Smolny stands the statue of the other great figure of the world proletariat: Karl Marx, on a stone pedestal in a black frock coat. Assuredly, this is a trifle, but it is impossible even to imagine Lenin putting on a black frock coat. Some portraits of Marx show him wearing a dress shirt against whose broad expanse something resembling a monocle dangles.

That Marx was not inclined to foppery is quite clear to all who have an inkling of the spirit of Marx. But Marx was born and grew up on a different national-cultural soil, lived in a different atmosphere, as did also the leading personalities of the German working class, whose roots reach back not to a peasant village, but to the corporation guilds and the complex city culture of the middle ages.

Marx's very style, rich and beautiful, in which strength and flexibility, wrath and irony, severity and refinement are combined, also contains the literary and aesthetic accumulations of the entire German socio-political literature since the days of the reformation and even before. Lenin's literary and oratorical style is awesomely simple, utilitarian, ascetic, as is his whole make-up. But in this mighty asceticism there is not a trace of a moralistic attitude. There is no principle here, no elaborated system and, of course, no posturing; it is simply the outward expression of inward conservation of strength for action. It is the peasant's practical proficiency but on a colossal scale.

Theory and Action

The entire Marx is contained in the Communist Manifesto, in the foreword to his Critique, in Capital. Even if he had not been the founder of the First International, he would always remain what he is today. Lenin, on the other hand, is contained entirely in revolutionary action. His scientific works are only a preparation for action. If he never published a single book in the past, he would forever enter into history just as he enters it now: the leader of the proletarian revolution, the founder of the Third International.

A clear, scientific system - the materialist dialectic - is necessary for action on such a historical scale

as devolved upon Lenin - it is necessary but not sufficient. Needed here in addition is that irrevocable creative power we call intuition; the ability to judge events correctly on the wing, to separate out the essential and important from the husks and incidentals, to mentally fill in the missing parts of the picture, to draw to conclusion the thoughts of others and above all those of the enemy, to connect all this into a unified whole and to deal a blow the moment that the "formula" for this blow comes to mind. This is the intuition for action. In one of its aspects it merges with what we call shrewdness.

Science and Intuition

When Lenin, screwing up his left eye, listens over the radio to a parliamentary speech of one of the imperialist makers of destiny or goes over the text of the latest diplomatic note, a mixture of bloodthirsty duplicity and polished hypocrisy, he resembles a very wise mouzjik whom words cannot cajole nor sugary phrases ensnare. This is the peasant shrewdness elevated to genius, armed with the last word of scientific thought.

The young Russian proletariat was able to accomplish what it has only by pulling behind itself, by its roots, the heavy mass of the peasantry. This was prepared for by our whole national past. But precisely because the proletariat has come to power through the course of events, our revolution has been able suddenly and drastically to overcome the national narrowness and provincial benightedness of Russia's past history. Soviet Russia has become not only the haven for the Communist International, but also the living embodiment of its programme and methods.

By paths, unknown and as yet unexplored by science, by which the human personality is moulded, Lenin has assimilated from the national milieu everything he needed for the greatest revolutionary action in the history of humanity. Exactly because the socialist revolution, which has long had its international theoretical expression, found for the first time in Lenin its national embodiment, Lenin became, in the full and true sense of the word, the revolutionary leader of the world proletariat. And that is how his fiftieth birthday found him.

Pravda, April 23, 1920

