



Racism And Labor

On Sunday, February 6, the United National Caucus of the UAW took the first steps toward an action program to fight racism in the labor movement and toward rebuilding an old dream of unionists: an alliance of black and white workers at the rank and file level. The occasion was a one-day Conference on Racism held in Detroit, co-sponsored by the UNC and the Rank and File Caucus of UAW Local 2.

The Conference itself attracted over 180 registrants and participants from union locals, community organizations, and radical groups. Its aim was symbolized by the keynote speakers -- three representatives from the Laurel, Mississippi woodcutters' strike of last year [see Workers' Power Nos. 47,48] -- where, in the words of Tonney Algood of the Gulfwood Pulpwood Association (GPA), "black folks and white folks were able to get together and overcome race-baiting and red-baiting to whip five of the largest companies in the US."

Andrew Bates, a black woodcutter who helped lead the strike even before the GPA became involved, described the brutality of the woodcutters' jobs, the Masonite Corporation's attempt to cut their starvation pay by some 25 percent, and the sacrifices made by the workers and their families. When Bates felt his own determination beginning to crack, he said, it was his wife who demanded that he continue the

[Continued on page 4]



UNC Conference on Racism meets in Detroit

EDITORIAL Nixon, Mao Deal Over Asia



President Richard Nixon, the American president who based his entire political career on hard-line anti-Communism, arrived in Peking on February 20 for extensive political discussions with the leaders of mainland China. The voyage was described by Nixon as a "journey for peace" aimed at "easing tensions" between the traditionally hostile governments.

Nixon's China trip is the culmination of more than two years of cautious, behind-the-scenes maneuvering leading directly to the secret journey of Dr. Henry Kissinger, Nixon's foreign affairs advisor, to Peking last July. At that time, the final plans for the Nixon visit were worked out.

To many in the United States, including many Maoists, Nixon's announcement of the moves toward a Sino-American detente came as a considerable surprise.

The rhetoric of anti-Communism has been a hallmark of American foreign policy for almost three decades. "Defending the Free World" against aggression, preserving "democracy" against the challenge of Communist totalitarianism -- these supposedly have been the basic themes of America's international role ever since the end of the Second World War.

At the same time, the language of Marxism-Leninism has been the official government jargon of mainland

China from the day Chiang was ousted. "Revolutionary struggle" against imperialism, supporting "proletarian revolution" against capitalism and its running dogs -- these supposedly have been a central thrust of Chinese foreign policy ever since 1948.

In this context, the idea of a Nixon-Mao detente may seem paradoxical -- providing one takes the rhetoric of each side seriously. Only the rhetoric is paradoxical. The reality is not.

The emerging alliance between the United States and China once more demonstrates what revolutionary socialists have always argued:

Nixon is not out to defend demo-

[Continued on page 14]



Workers' Power

WE STAND FOR SOCIALISM: the collective ownership and democratic control of the economy and the state by the working class. We stand in opposition to all forms of class society, both capitalist and bureaucratic "Communist," and in solidarity with the struggles of all exploited and oppressed people.

America is faced with a growing crisis: war, racial strife, pollution, urban decay, and the deterioration of our standard of living and working conditions. This crisis is built into capitalism, an outlived system of private profit, exploitation, and oppression. The capitalist ruling class, a tiny minority that controls the economy and politics alike, 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. We stand for the liberation of all oppressed peoples: mass organization, armed self-defense, and the right of self-determination for Blacks, Chicanos and all national minorities; the liberation of women from subordination in society and the home; the organization of homosexuals to fight their oppression. These struggles are in the interest of the working class as a whole: the bars of racism and male chauvinism can only prevent the establishment of workers' power. Oppressed groups cannot subordinate their struggle today to the present level of consciousness of white male workers: their independent organization is necessary to their fight for liberation. But we strive to unite these struggles in a common fight to end human exploitation and oppression.

The struggle for workers' power is world-wide. Class oppression and exploitation is the common condition of humanity. US corporations plunder the world's riches and drive the world's people nearer to starvation, while military intervention by the US government, serving these corporations, awaits

those who dare to rebel. The "Communist" revolutions in China, Cuba and North Vietnam, while driving out US imperialism, have not brought workers' power, but a new form of class society, ruled by a bureaucratic elite.

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. Through both domestic repression and imperialist intervention (the US in Vietnam, the USSR in Czechoslovakia), they perpetuate misery and poverty in a world of potential peace and plenty. Socialism — the direct rule of the working class itself — exists nowhere in the world today.

We fight for the withdrawal of US troops from all foreign countries, and support all struggles for national self-determination. In Vietnam, we support the victory of the NLF over the US and its puppets; at the same time, we stand for revolutionary opposition by the working class to the incipient bureaucratic ruling class. 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.**

Fordham University: STUDENTS BACK PUERTO RICAN STRIKERS

Students at Fordham University in New York are leading a successful boycott of the school cafeteria in support of striking cafeteria workers. The Puerto Rican student organization, El Grito, was asked to intervene by the workers, most of whom are Puerto Rican. The strike grew out of a continuing struggle against racism, sexism, and union collaboration with the cafeteria management.

The workers' immediate demand is the rehiring of two workers recently fired, with full compensation and all benefits restored to them. The first worker was fired after 24 years on the

job. The second was fired when he brought a student to a union meeting to translate the proceedings while he protested the firing of the first worker. (Union meetings are conducted in English; most of the workers speak only Spanish.) The firing of these two men climaxed a long period of layoffs in which the cafeteria staff has been reduced from 54 to 25.

So far, the Teamsters Union that "represents" the cafeteria staff has refused to support the fired workers. The workers are demanding immediate replacement of the union representative with one suitable to all employees.

They also want participation of delegated employees in contract negotiations. (The workers never ratified or even saw the present contract, written only in English.)

The strike has intensified a tragic polarization between the women employees of the cafeteria, who are black and white and work at lower paying jobs, and the men, who are Puerto Rican and receive higher pay for their behind-the-counter work. As he laid off men, the cafeteria owner has used the women to work longer hours (at a lower rate of pay). The women now feel they have something to lose and refuse to support the strike.

If the strike is to be successful, the Puerto Rican workers must not only continue to fight for their just demands but also broaden their struggle in order to win the support of the women workers.

Fordham University, meanwhile, aspires to play the role of strikebreaker. The university has agreed to underwrite any losses suffered by the cafeteria owner. The cafeteria management and the university have obtained an injunction against the strike and filed a contempt of court action against the students leading the boycott of the cafeteria.

Free Angela Davis



Workers' Power 52

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New York Phone Strike Ends

Brian Mackenzie

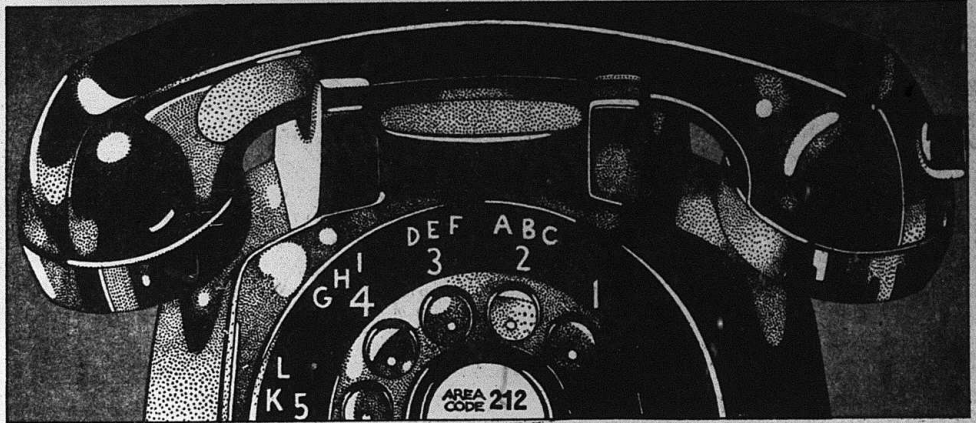
The seventh-month old strike of New York state telephone plant workers is over. Members of the 23 striking New York locals of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) voted 13,900 to 9,100 to return to work and accept the offer put forth by CWA President Joe Beirne.

The terms of the agreement [see Workers' Power No. 51] represent a defeat for the strikers. This defeat, however, was engineered by the leadership of CWA and not by the strikers themselves.

In many respects, the New York Telephone strike was remarkable. The length of the strike and the low rate of scabbing - in spite of the constant attempts of the company to organize back-to-work movements - were in themselves an impressive show of solidarity.

The growing active militancy that emerged in the last months of the strike was also impressive by today's standards. All in all, the telephone strikers proved themselves to be some of the best fighters in the labor movement.

Equally important was the fact



that the tenacity of the strikers forced the leaders of the CWA International to give financial and rhetorical support to a strike they opposed - a strike which accused Joe Beirne of selling out in July. The strikers also forced Local 1101 President Rickie Carnivale to adopt a public posture as a militant.

Unfortunately, the ranks of 1101 did not become organized enough to over-rule the do-nothing policy of Carnivale. *If the ranks showed their real and potential strength in this strike, the leaders showed their worthlessness.*

STRUGGLE CONTINUES

The return to work has not meant an end to the fight against the Bell System. Within an hour after workers returned to work on Friday morning, February 18, new fights broke out.

Most notable was a walkout in the Second Avenue district that included all sections of plant workers in that area. The strike began over the insistence of management that some foremen be allowed to perform craftsmen's work, which is forbidden by the contract. A walkout also occurred at the

East 37th Street Central Office that Friday morning.

Management seems to be experimenting with harrassment in certain districts that are organizationally weak. The workers, however, have shown that this nonsense won't wash anymore. The next step, of course, is to organize resistance and to rebuild the weakened union organization at the shop floor level.

As often happens in the aftermath of a long and costly struggle, certain maggots have appeared in search of a corpse. In this case, it is former Local 1101 Treasurer, John Smith.

Smith, who was voted out of office over a year ago and who was totally inactive in the strike, emerged in the last days to declare his candidacy for local president. His program? Why, the local, it seems, had been taken over by Commies, Pinkos, etc. Telling people to vote to go back to work, Smith called on Carnivale to resign.

In short, this cheap politician - once accused of misappropriating union funds - is trying to use anti-Carnivale sentiment to build support for an attack from the right. It is doubt-

ful that Smith will get too far.

The ability of Beirne to sell out, Carnivale to restrain struggle, and scum like Smith to get a public hearing points to the need for an organized rank and file opposition. The thousands of militants who were active in the strike, particularly the hundreds who put in nearly full-time, have existed as the core of such a movement for months.

Now the militants must rebuild the union and, at the same time, build a city-wide rank and file opposition to Carnivale, Beirne, and the likes of Smith. A first step is to support the Defense Committee recently formed by a number of Chief Stewards and militants, to protect the jobs of those who are fired for strike activity.

The Defense Committee is not a caucus in the union, but an organization for resisting the company's attempt to break the militant core of the union. Beyond this, a broad rank and file opposition in 1101 is needed to get rid of Carnivale, build a democratic militant local, and begin the fight to be rid of Joe Beirne and his machine.■

New York Telephone Traffic women (operators and clerks) have been meeting for the last several weeks to form a rank and file traffic women's group. The formation of this group is the culmination of several weeks of strike activities, led by operators at the 108th Street building and supported by operators at other buildings [see Workers' Power No. 51].

The strike itself, although it did not win its specific demands, is considered to have been a major victory by the strike leaders. The second walkout in several months at 108th St. over the questions of racism, sexism, and general harrassment, the strike put management on notice that operators will no longer tolerate any sort of crap thrown our way. We will no longer sit there passively, "picking up the lights" no matter what they do.

In addition, several of the worst management personnel have requested transfers as a result of the walkouts. 108th St. has won a reputation as a building that no one in management wants to take on.

Beyond the newly-won self respect, and the recognition that we have, the power to strike fear into the hearts of those who oppress and exploit us, has come a firmer recognition of what is

needed to carry on the struggle. The formation of a rank and file group is an important first step in the continuation of our fight against the New York Telephone Company and its company union, the Telephone Traffic Union.

The TTU did not support the strike; as a matter of fact, no one can ever remember a time when they supported any action to change our rotten conditions. In fact, the TTU has not even had a membership meeting in over 20 years.

A petition has been drawn up demanding full membership meetings in which business can be conducted. Although people are fairly skeptical about the possibility of actually getting a meeting, the hope is that the failure of the TTU to respond to the demands of its membership will further expose them (something that is continually necessary, since they recently won an NLRB election for representation against the CWA and District 65). [see Workers' Power No. 41].

A Traffic newsletter is also planned as a way of reaching many more of the 22,000 traffic women in the downstate New York area (there are almost 8,900 in Manhattan alone).

One of the most important things

Telephone Operators Organize

Rose Veviaka

to come out of the strike is the understanding of the need for women to organize. The fight against sexism is as much a part of the struggle as the fight against racism. Everyone understands that we must have an independent traffic women's group that will enable us to develop our own skill and leadership.

The development of trained rank and file leaders will play an important role in any further attempts to join the CWA, by assuring that we control the organizing campaign and enter on our terms, not on the terms of the elitist, sexist and racist CWA Interna-

tional bureaucracy.

Throughout the organization of the strike and the building of a traffic group we received help and support from craftsmen in United Action and TELRUM, for which we are all grateful. In order to beat the Telephone company a movement of all telephone workers must be built, through joint activities and coalitions.

No one group of telephone workers, or no central office alone, can win our demands. The process of making links for united action and joint activities based on mutual respect has begun and will continue.■

UNC Plans Action Against Racism

[Continued from page 1]

strike till it was won "or don't come home again."

While the account of black-white unity inspired the audience, it was Jordan Simms who brought the issues of racism home to the factories and communities of Detroit. Simms is a black auto worker, who had over twenty years seniority at the Eldon Avenue Chrysler plant. He was fired two years ago after a wildcat strike over dangerous working conditions. Simms recently challenged the leadership of Local 961 and almost won the race for local president in an election heavily rigged by the UAW bureaucracy [see *Workers' Power* No. 47].

In a powerful speech that moved from his childhood in a small black pocket of white Hamtramck, to the Dodge Main plant where all his white friends were hired while he was told no jobs were available, to the Eldon plant where he worked for 22 years, Simms outlined the transformation of his own consciousness — from "real purebred Americanism" to a new involvement with black culture and history and then to the militancy of a revolutionary black worker:

"My mother was quite proud of my diction, my knowledge of history, my real purebred American culture that I had developed at Hamtramck High . . . But I didn't know a damn thing about myself or my black history. All America had a history but me. All had substance but me. All had heritage but me."

Simms posed in the sharpest form the problem confronting the American working class today — to realize a unity of working people based on their common class struggle:

"You can call me what you want, as long as you do it in your own living room. You can think, write, do what you want in your own damn living room. But you recognize one thing — to make your America great, to make it productive, to make it serve you and benefit you — you're not going any place without me or someone like me."

Other speakers included Justin Ravitz, a lawyer who spoke of the racist structure of the court and penal systems in Detroit, and Louis Smith of Jobs, Opportunity and Betterment, a black workers' group in Cincinnati.

PROGRAM FOR STRUGGLE

The morning speeches were followed by workshops which met to discuss aspects of racism in the economy, in the shops, in the labor movement, and in the community. The workshops, and the plenary discussion which followed, centered around the resolution and program prepared by members of the UNC and presented by Art Fox.

This discussion was a test for the growing rank and file movement in the shops and factories: Could black and white militants agree on a joint pro-

gram aimed specifically against racism while at the same time advancing the needs of white workers? In several important respects, the conference passed this test.

The conference resolution, to be presented to the UAW convention in April as part of a struggle against the Woodcock leadership, included demands for "immediate dismissal of supervisors for racist attitudes and actions" and was amended to add a specific indictment of the international UAW leadership, as well as the corporations, for catering to racist practices.

A proposal for building integrated rank and file caucuses on the shop floor was also advanced, which if carried out would be a giant step toward bringing black workers and production workers into the UNC. The proposal included a call for building autonomous black and women's caucuses within the integrated caucuses.

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers proposed a substitute for the entire UNC resolution. The League's motion called in effect for scuttling the UNC and replacing it with "the formation of an independent multinational communist party." This motion was debated and rejected in the plenary session of the conference.

Speakers for the League denounced the conference and the UNC as "white chauvinist" and counter-revolutionary for failing to call immediately for "the violent overthrow of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." But other speakers, including members of the International Socialists, pointed out the sectarian character of the League's proposal, which rejects every existing expression of the rank and file revolt and separates the task of building a revolutionary party in the US from activity in the class struggle today, including

the fight against racism in the labor movement.

Although the UNC's sectarian opponents received little support, what remains to be tested is the ability of the UNC itself to advance and fight for an action program.

On one of the more important questions in the auto industry, the exclusion of black workers from the skilled trades (less than 2 percent of skilled trades workers are black), the conference passed a demand that applications for skilled trades apprenticeships be open only to blacks until racial balance is achieved reflecting the composition of the whole industry. But what is needed in the skilled trades is not exclusion of whites, but rather preferential hiring of black workers until the percentage of blacks in the skilled trades equals at least their overall percentage in the plant as a whole. This would require that blacks be hired on a basis reflecting that percentage, but would not require total exclusion of whites.

In fact, the fight against racism and for preferential hiring can win real gains only if a struggle is simultaneously fought against the current wave of layoffs of skilled trade workers in auto and other industries (against which newly hired black workers would need special protection). While black workers must organize to fight for their own needs, the UNC could help to build a genuine black-white alliance demanding no layoffs or cutbacks for anyone.

It is also necessary to confront the question of working class independent political action. The conference resolution called only in the vaguest terms for the "organization of a political vehicle which can genuinely base itself on this program (of the conference) and that overwhelming majority of

Americans whose interests it reflects." This formulation is designed to satisfy everyone, including advocates of supporting liberal democrats as the "vehicle." But precisely because it hopes to satisfy everyone, this resolution cannot help the UNC lead a political fight in the UAW.

At the forthcoming UAW convention and afterward, the UNC must become an aggressive force fighting against the endorsement of Democratic Party politicians by the UAW and other unions, and calling for building an independent political party of the American working class. The anti-racism demands of the UNC should be part of the program of such a party.

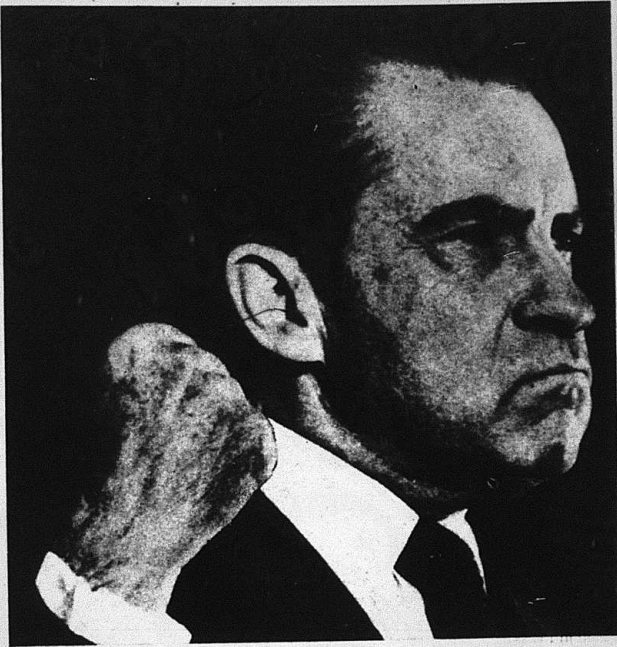
The UNC must also begin to carry out aggressive educational work throughout the UAW about the anti-labor, racist, and pro-imperialist character of the Democratic Party. Unless the UNC begins to use its own program within the labor movement as a springboard toward a break from the Democratic Party, its many excellent demands will have little meaning.

The conference began the process of building the UNC into a real force among black and production workers in auto. Its real tests lie ahead — in building shop-floor caucuses to confront racism and working conditions, in building a solid organization and representative militant leadership, and in taking the lead in the struggles against layoffs, the New Economic Policy, and the bureaucratic officialdom of the UAW.

The rank and file militants now joining the UNC can become the nucleus of a leadership capable of leading a real struggle in the auto shops. If that happens, then February 6, 1971 will have been an historic day in the American workers' movement. ■



Jordan Sims (center) and Louis Smith (right)



N.E.P. After Six Months: Profits Up, Wages Down

Michael Stewart

Wage and price controls have now been in effect for six months, long enough for the anti-labor character of such controls to be clearly demonstrated. In the media, this has been obscured by the fact that criticism of the controls has come from both sides, from business as well as labor. But business and government leaders have criticized the program because it has not been discriminatory enough.

While some important information is still not available, especially about the price board where everything is kept very secret, enough has been released to prove that the central thrust of the controls is directed against working and poor people, to the benefit of business.

INFLATION CONTINUES

"Inflation Rate Curbed," headlined the *New York Times* in an article which claimed that the price controls were working. Yet two days later it also printed an article where economists claimed that Nixon's budget could mean "more rapid inflation later this year and in 1973."

While it is true that the controls have slowed down the rate of inflation, they have hardly stopped it—and there is no guarantee it won't accelerate again. The administration is even admitting that things may get worse before they get better.

Moreover, the price board has begun "deregulating" certain industries and products from price controls. The prices of about 25 percent of the items which make up the cost of living are now uncontrolled, according to the Cost of Living Council. These include rents; some food items such as meats; taxes; and voluntary mortgage rates.

By lifting price controls on such items, the price board has struck a particular blow at the poor, for whom rents and food make up a greater percentage of their expenditures.

WAGES FROZEN

Much publicity has been given to several supposedly large wage settlements, such as in railroads and mining. The fact that very little of these settle-

ments represented "new money," an increase in the standard of living for workers, is ignored. Also ignored is the fact that most of these contracts have included provisions designed to raise productivity. These productivity clauses will help to offset the wage increases and will also result in fewer jobs.

Part of the reason that these wage increases have been granted is the government's unwillingness at this point to take on the larger, more powerful unions. Wage controls have been most effective, therefore, against the weaker unions, and especially against the majority of workers who are unorganized. Thus the aerospace contract was vetoed, and for many unorganized workers wages have been practically frozen.

In a "magnanimous" decision, the wage board exempted from wage controls anyone earning less than \$1.90 an hour, which is \$.30 above the current minimum wage. This figure underlines the callousness of the wage board and demonstrates how the controls actually result in the preservation of poverty.



lines lengthen at the job insurance and placement centers.

as the drive for more productivity continues, more people will be thrown out of work.

A virtual freeze on all federal and state government hiring continues, and in some cities, like Detroit, massive layoffs of city workers have begun. In recent senate hearings government speakers refused to provide money for federal job programs because the budget deficit was already too large.

Government economists are also changing their conception of "full employment," defining it now as 4-4.5 percent unemployment. Besides abusing the English language, such a policy is an admission that Nixon has no intention of ending unemployment in this country. Thus in the United States, the government will be satisfied with 4.5 percent unemployment, while the European countries have a political crisis when the unemployment level reaches 2 percent.

BIG WINNER

There has been one big winner during Phase II — profits, and to that extent the New Economic Policy has partly served its real purpose. GM recently announced the second largest profits in history, almost \$2 billion, and Ford later announced the highest profits it has ever received. It is estimated that overall profits for 1971 will be up 13 percent over 1970.

The response of the official labor movement to the New Economic Policy so far has been disastrous. The anti-labor nature of the program has not been lost on the unions. On February 14, the AFL-CIO again denounced the program for being "weighted against workers and their families, with the greatest burden placed on the backs of those at the bottom of the economic ladder." But this understanding hasn't been translated into any decisive action to defend the workers and poor.

OFF THE BOARD!

The labor bureaucrats have argued that they can best defend their members by remaining on the pay board. But there is no evidence to support that view, and a lot that points in the other direction. Woodcock and Smith, for example, didn't defend the aerospace workers by being on the board.

Meany and Company explain that they don't want to be responsible for destroying the board. But if the policy is so discriminatory against workers and poor people, why shouldn't it be destroyed? Indeed, by remaining on the board the labor officials only lend legitimacy to the board and its anti-working class decisions.

The failure of the United Auto Workers and the International Association of Machinists to defend the aerospace workers will only invite the board to attack other contracts in the future. The government is moving to restrict labor's ability to win anything at all at the bargaining table. Already new anti-labor legislation is before Congress which would outlaw strikes in much of the transportation industry, and other legislation is planned.

The labor bureaucrats, by failing to defend their members now, only invite more aggressive attacks by the government and employers. Their speeches are meaningless unless backed up by action. What is needed is not more denunciations of the New Economic Policy, nor lobbying in Congress, but a mobilization of the rank and file of labor to fight back now.



The Democrats, Part 1. The Muskie Blahs

Michael Stewart

Senator Edmund Muskie from Maine is the acknowledged leader in the race for the Democratic Party's nomination for president. He has recently been picking up important union backing (including the endorsement of the UAW) in addition to the support he has received from party political leaders and machines throughout the country.

At the same time, Muskie is a singularly unexciting candidate, whose campaign seems to lack any real momentum or significant issues. Previous to 1968, Muskie had never played any real role inside the Democratic Party, and was practically unheard of nationally. Even if he can make it through the primaries and win the nomination, there is widespread skepticism that he can beat Nixon. As a result, there has been a flood of other entries into the race for the Democratic nomination.

Muskie's entry into politics was certainly not auspicious. He was motivated to run for the state legislature by the fact that his law practice was not doing well, or as he put it, "I wasn't busy." After that he served two terms as Governor of Maine, and has been in the Senate since 1958.

NO ISSUES

All of his campaigns have been marked by a virtual lack of issues. In his first race for governor, he didn't really develop his program until after he was elected. And in 1958, he was able to state on TV during the middle of his senate campaign that "there isn't a single overriding issue at the moment."

Once elected, Muskie soon learned how to play the legislative game - keep your mouth shut, and compromise. A Nader report on pollution concisely captures the Senator's approach to ward politics:

"Senator Muskie has never seemed inclined toward taking a tough stand against private industry. It is hard to avoid the belief that Muskie, an extremely astute politician who by temperament avoids conflict and unfavorable odds, was influenced by a desire to get the bill through Congress with a minimum of acrimony. He therefore took the path of least resistance."

Of course, such a strategy often finds one straddling the fence on the major issues of the day. This led Stewart Alsop to complain to Muskie in

1969 that he found it "a little difficult to understand precisely where you stand on the overriding issue of Vietnam." Another commentator has argued that Muskie seems "determined to make up his mind -- last."

Muskie is not always a compromiser, however. On some issues he comes out squarely for one side -- the wrong one. He was a consistent supporter of the war up through 1968. Since that time, he is supposed to have become a dove, mainly because of his statements favoring setting a date for withdrawal. However, his vote on major issues has been consistently pro-war and pro-imperialist.

Thus, he voted against the Hatfield amendment to end the draft after June 30, 1971; he voted against the Mansfield amendment to reduce troop strength in Europe; he voted for a bill

to give \$250 million in military aid to Cambodia; and he still has not changed his view that North Vietnam is the aggressor in Vietnam, a myth which was totally destroyed by the Pentagon papers.

Muskie's famous refusal to consider a black as a running mate was not merely a mistake. On several other occasions he has voted against the rights of blacks. In 1962 he voted to uphold the poll tax, which discriminated against black voting rights; in '63 he voted against cutting off funds for segregated hospitals in the south; in '64 he made changes in the Demonstration Cities Bill which would make pressure for integration less obvious; and in '68 he voted to bar from federal employment anyone convicted of a felony in a riot (a bill aimed not only at blacks

but also at anti-war protestors).

Muskie was also a supporter of the bill giving the President authority to impose wage controls. While he now says he is critical of the lack of controls on profits, dividends, and interest rates, he supported the bill which included no provisions for such controls. Like Nixon, Muskie believes that it is the working men and women who must pay for the economic problems of this country.

The focus of Muskie's campaign, as of all his past ones, is not his stand on the major issues of the day, but his personality and image. Voters are supposed to be impressed with his "sincerity," or with his "calm, rational approach," or even with his "Lincolnesque stature."

This emphasis on the candidate's personality is not peculiar to Muskie's campaign. Indeed, one of the problems with McGovern is that he lacks an "image," so that his campaign based on issues is just floundering along, while other late entrants, like Lindsay, attract more attention and support.

TWINS

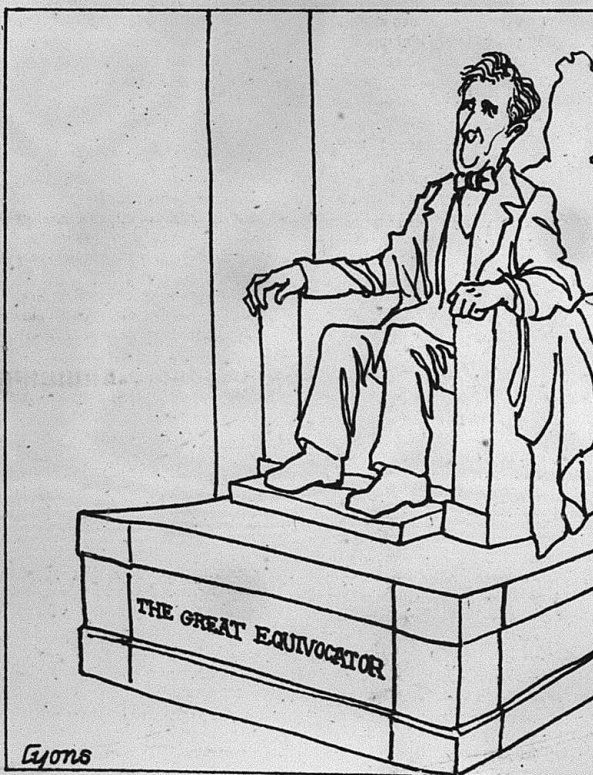
This focus on personalities, rather than issues, is often blamed on television, but the simple fact is that both major parties have the same position on most basic issues.

In the last three decades, the stability of the US economy has become more and more dependent on government intervention. As the role of the state in the economy has grown, political options for the parties of the establishment have narrowed. Liberalism and conservatism have converged.

Thus, it was the "liberal," Kennedy, who first escalated the war in Vietnam, while it is the "conservative" Nixon who imposes wage controls and opens up diplomatic contacts with China.

For a significant change in policies, for a real alternative to the politics of personalities, it is necessary to go outside of the two capitalist, ruling class parties and build a new party of the working class, a labor party.

You won't find a real alternative in Ed Muskie. The basis for his election victory for governor was the stories he told about his youth and going fishing with his father. He will undoubtedly have more fish stories for us in the months ahead. ■



WONAAC Ducks Fight For Free Abortion On Demand

Karen Kaye

Over a thousand women attended the second national conference of the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC) in Boston on February 11-13. The Coalition was formed last July at a conference in New York City around the slogans of Repeal All Abortion Laws, No Forced Sterilization, and Repeal All Restrictive Contraceptive Laws.

WONAAC sponsored demonstrations around these demands last November 20 in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco, each of which drew a couple thousand women. The purpose of the conference in Boston was to develop a strategy for winning the right of women to abortion.

The women attending the conference discussed the various proposals presented in workshops and then voted on which to adopt for the coalition. Although a variety of proposals were presented, the debate centered around two major proposals: one presented by several WONAAC members calling for a week of abortion actions, and one presented by the International Socialists.

The Abortion Week proposal, which was the one that was passed by the conference, called for a week of abortion actions to be held May 1-6 around the demands of WONAAC, and culminating in a day of regional marches and demonstrations on May 6. The suggested actions are educational programs, legislative support, and judicial actions. The proposal also called for support for a bill to be introduced into Congress by Democrat Bella Abzug of New York, which would repeal all anti-abortion laws across the nation.

FREE ABORTION CAUCUS

The International Socialists' proposal called upon WONAAC to change its major slogan to "Free Abortion on Demand - No Forced Sterilization - Free Access to Contraception," to launch a campaign to defend the New York State abortion law against the attack now being waged against it, while demanding that abortion in New York State be made free; and to defend women victimized by anti-abortion laws.

The IS proposal also said that WONAAC should not put forward as its spokewomen members of political parties that do not support free abortion on demand, in particular the Democratic and Republican parties. Finally, it asked WONAAC to adopt the following resolution:

"The Women's National Abortion Action Coalition is working to win the right of all women to obtain free, legal, quality abortions. We see this fight as one important part of the larger struggle of women to control their own bodies and lives. We recognize that even with the right to abortion, women will not have this control in our society because of the many other rights that are denied us.



KAETHE KOLLWITZ

"Every woman must have the right to have children when she desires them, and to raise them with a decent standard of living. We support, therefore, the struggles of women for free, 24-hour childcare, equal pay and equal work, paid maternity and paternity leave, and an end to sex-tracking in the schools.

"We further recognize that the government's program of wage controls will hit women workers first and hardest, freezing them into the low-paying jobs they hold. Therefore, we support the struggle for an end to the wage controls."

There were many women at the conference who agreed that repeal was not enough, and that unless abortion is made free, it will be unavailable to many poor and working women, even if legal. These women met and formed a free abortion caucus within WONAAC.

The caucus adopted the IS resolution, as well as resolutions introduced by the University Action Group (UAG). The UAG resolutions called for WONAAC to struggle equally around the demand of No Forced Sterilization along with its abortion demand, and to oppose welfare cuts.

The "Abortion Week" proposal adopted at the conference represents

another setback for the women's liberation movement. The failure to adopt the free abortion demand means that WONAAC intends to win rights for women in stages: first for women with money, later perhaps the right to abortion for working class and poor women will be won, in a struggle in the vague future.

In fact, although the leadership of WONAAC claims to be fighting for the right of "women to control their own bodies," the program they advocated and adopted does little to provide a strategy to win this right for all women. They are afraid of the demand for Free Abortion because it might alienate "some women," because it "raises the spectre of socialized medicine."

Free abortion and free health care and socialism, too, are all in the interests of the vast majority of women; the only women who could be scared off by the demand for free abortion are those who can afford all the health care they need and are afraid of a mass movement of people demanding the same.

Many women are forced to seek abortions because there is no child care available to them, because their in-

come isn't adequate to support a child - and conditions are worsening for women under Phase II of the government's "New Economic Policy." But WONAAC (once again out of fear of alienating "some women") refused to support motions that declared active support for the other struggles of the women's liberation movement, against the wage controls and against welfare cutbacks.

Without adequate jobs, pay, working conditions, and childcare, legal abortion by itself only gives upper income women the right to choose. Lower income women at best will have only the right to choose *not* to have children.

DEMOCRATIC GRAVEYARD

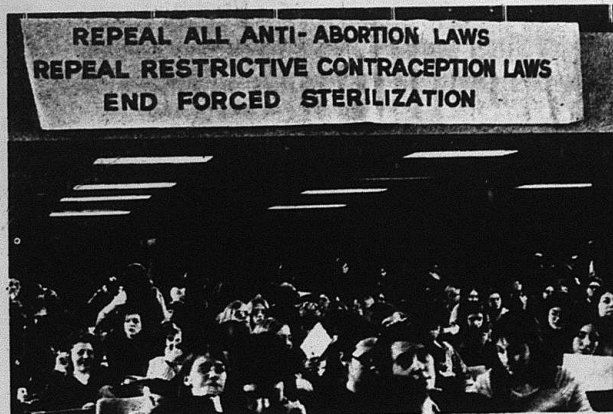
Moreover, WONAAC's failure to pass the motion barring politicians who belong to parties that do not support free abortion on demand (including the Democratic and Republican parties) means that, as in the past, Democratic Party politicians will be put forward as the leadership of the women's liberation movement. But these politicians, no matter how good they sound on narrowly defined "women's issues" can only play the role of the *undertakers* of the movement, and destroy its chances to be a force for the liberation of all women and all humanity.

Their strategy for the movement is for it to vote them into office, where they will lobby with other sections of the ruling class for a bit of the pie, and sell out our goals. They are opposed to mass, direct, militant action by women (or by anyone), and in the leadership of WONAAC, or any other organization, will seek to prevent it.

The Democratic Party has been the graveyard of countless popular movements in the past. Liberal Democrats like Bella Abzug and Shirley Chisholm merely preserve the illusion that change can be accomplished by working within it. Their "leadership" would not build the women's liberation movement - it would bury it.

Women's liberationists must support the effort to repeal abortion laws, because repeal of such laws will be an important if partial victory for women. At the same time, we must continue our efforts to win free abortion on demand, and to win the other goals of the women's liberation movement; even if WONAAC's present weak strategy is capable of winning repeal, it won't be able to lead the movement for women's liberation, and is now treading a path that may lead it away from that movement altogether.

Only by building a movement that relies on the strength of its rank and file, and not on the good will of a few politicians - a movement that militantly fights for the needs of the millions of working class women in this country - can we succeed in winning the rights we need for our liberation. ■



In a letter to Ford Motor Company dated February 4, Ken Bannon, Vice-President of the United Auto Workers, proposed that the union and the company begin talks "aimed at achieving a shorter work year, by way of a shorter work week or other means, and eliminating the monotony of the assembly line." Bannon has certainly hit on two issues dear to the heart of every auto worker.

"In my opinion," Bannon stated, "one of the most important issues at the bargaining table will be the need for taking work time out of the work year." This proposal has a long history.

When the UAW was being organized in the late 1930's, one of the union's goals which most inspired the membership was its commitment to fight for a 30-hour work week at full 40 hours pay. This goal was "temporarily" shelved during World War II, when the union officially supported a drive to encourage all-out production.

lead a real fight.

Bannon is part of a leadership which has been in power in the UAW for 25 years, which sabotaged the last movement in the ranks for a shorter work week, and has even been unwilling to defend the 40-hour week -- unwilling to challenge the practice of regular forced overtime, even with high unemployment and with lay-offs in effect.

The UAW leadership is talking about a shorter work week, not in order to lead a movement but rather to try to head one off. The popularity of this idea is again spreading rapidly in the ranks.

Even the business magazines are talking about the shorter work week. But for them, it is not a matter of being generous to us workers.

The corporations might decide that it's cheaper to shorten the official week a few hours, without a big fight, than to take the chance of allowing a powerful "30 for 40" movement to develop. They might decide on

down the program and then sell it out if he gets the chance. But on the other hand, if the "30 for 40" right is brought into every local, if the ranks demand that delegates to the coming UAW Constitutional Convention force this issue to a vote on the convention floor, we've got a real shot at a shorter work week.

It is necessary between now and the 1973 negotiations to prepare the membership of every local for this fight. We don't want "30 for 40" watered down, we don't want a compromise that can get eaten up with forced overtime, and we don't want to give the corporations new disciplinary powers in a trade-off.

The top UAW leadership will not lead us in this battle. But we can force them to follow us.

REFORM THE LINE?

Bannon in his letter also proposed to discuss with Ford "innovative ways of solving problems of assembly-line monotony and drudgery." He proclaimed: "The problems of the assembly-line workers again will be an issue in the 1973 negotiations."

The present leadership of the UAW has never been concerned with the problems of the production worker. At one time, the local union, the union stewards, and the committeemen had real powers to protect the assembly line worker and deal with his or her problems. But, one after another, these powers have been bargained away by the UAW top leadership, until today the local and the stewards are almost powerless to defend the conditions under which their members are forced to work.

When Bannon proposed discussing changes in the organization of work, he is just putting on a show. He knows it makes him sound good. But he also knows that the present UAW leadership has always accepted and has even publicly defended the idea that the organization of production is the "sole prerogative" of the corporation and is not subject to negotiation.

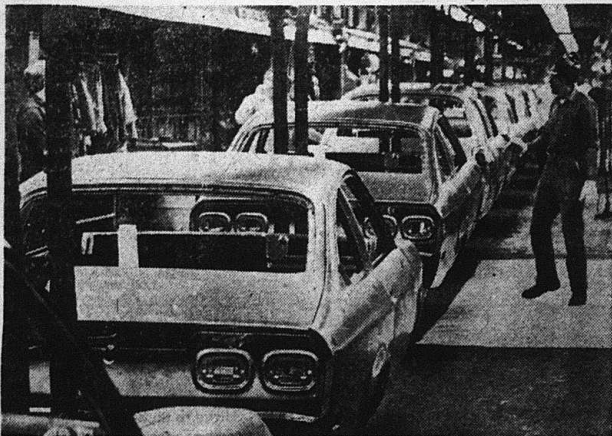
The union, through its membership, should have a say in how work is organized. But the UAW leadership does not accept this notion. When Bannon uses fancy phrases like "innovative" ways of solving problems of assembly-line monotony and drudgery, "he is just trying to make himself look good while dodging the real problems of the assembly worker."

FIGHT BACK

We need a fight: to slow down the line; to ease up and freeze production standards; to get rid of the stopwatch; to control noise, dust, fumes, etc.; to ban forced overtime; to get longer breaks; and to set up the kind of union representation with teeth that will enable us to get the foremen off our backs. It is issues like these as well as the 30-hour week over which a real fight can be waged to "solve problems of assembly-line monotony and drudgery."

Men like Bannon always talk in generalities. Their purpose is to calm us down and make us think they are looking after our welfare.

But we working people will be able to get the things we want and need only when we define exactly what we are after, organize, and prepare to fight the corporations if necessary. We can advance only through determination and solidarity. ■



The UAW, 30-for-40, and The Assembly Line

John Weber

The UAW Executive Board went on record with a promise to return to the fight for the 30-hour week once the war ended. They never did so, even though rank and file pressure for the shorter work week continued.

By 1949, Walter Reuther, who was well on his way to establishing total control over the UAW, began a slander campaign against those in the union who continued to raise this issue. He proclaimed that those who wished the union to go on record for a 30-hour week should not be considered loyal union members. As the power of the Reuther clique grew, the remaining champions of the shorter work week in the UAW were gradually silenced.

Bannon, who rose to his position of UAW Vice-President as a loyal member of the Reuther clique, has now rediscovered the shorter work week. But even though he has declared that this will be an important issue in next year's bargaining, it would be foolish to trust him to mobilize the ranks and

such a move to keep the UAW leadership looking good to the membership; they know that the more discredited Woodcock and Co. become, the less ability these guys have to control the ranks and keep us from really fighting.

Or, management might use a reduction in the official work week as a trade-off to get even greater powers to punish absentees, to discipline us and to speed us up. So long as there is forced overtime, we would probably end up working the exact same number of hours anyway.

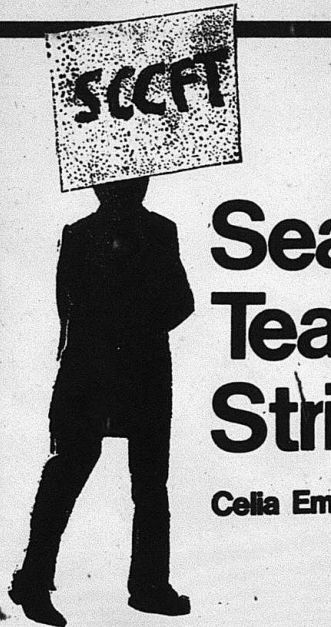
Over the past few years, several rank and file opposition groups in the UAW, particularly the United National Caucus (UNC), have been popularizing the "30 for 40" demand. It is a good sign that Bannon is now talking shorter work week. It proves that the UNC and others are having an effect and are becoming more influential.

Still, everything in the history of the present UAW leadership points to the conclusion that Bannon will water



On Sunday, February 6, the Rank and File Team (RAFT), a caucus in the United Steel Workers Union, met in Youngstown, Ohio. In spite of the bad weather and snow, over 40 people showed up from the midwest.

The RAFT caucus descended from the Dues Protest Movement of the 1950's, which led the first significant opposition to the McDonald bureaucracy and eventually paved the way for the Abel victory in 1965. While RAFT so far lacks the strength of the Dues Protest Movement, it hopes to be able to rebuild the rank and file move-



The first teachers' strike in the history of Washington State began on February 3, when the 308 full-time and 470 part-time teachers at Seattle Community College stopped classes and set up picket lines.

The issues involved included pay raises for both full and part time teachers, redefinition of part time teachers (at present over 62 percent of the teaching is done by part-timers who may teach a full course load but receive less than \$50 a week) greater faculty participation in the running of



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ment to return the union to its members.

The main business of the conference was a discussion of the productivity clause in the latest USW contract. This clause calls for the establishment of joint local union-management committees to "advise" management of ways and means to:

"(a) Improve productivity, (b) promote orderly and peaceful relations with employees and achieve uninterrupted operations at the plant, (c) promote the use of domestic steel, and (d) achieve the desired prosperity of the Company and its employees."

Meanwhile, of course, steelworkers are facing the greatest unemployment in the industry since the depression.

The main speaker at the meeting was Staughton Lynd. Lynd argued that the real problems in the steel industry were the result of the depressed state of the economy resulting from Nixon's deflationary policies, and of mismanagement by the owners. He went on to explode the myth that the industry's problems were due to either the wages or the work practices of the steelworkers.

The real fear among rank and file steelworkers today is that the union, by cooperating with the companies in the productivity commissions, will help to increase unemployment by destroying still more jobs. They also fear that the union will urge locals to ignore section 2B of the contract, which relates to work rules, and that this will not only mean less jobs but also worse working conditions for those who still have jobs.

A story told by one of the steelworkers at the RAFT meeting amply illustrates the danger. The management of one of the plants that had been closed in Youngstown for over seven months called in the grievance committee and announced that they were planning to reopen. It was made plain to the committee that it was up to them to see that the plant ran efficiently enough to stay open, a clear demand that the union must discipline the rank and file to raise productivity if they want the plant to remain open.

At the end of the meeting, RAFT passed a resolution condemning the productivity clause in the contract and urging locals not to comply with it.

RAFT hopes that this issue can serve to unite the various rank and file opposition groups in the USW throughout the country, much as the issue of dues did in the 50's. They also passed a resolution to support the Lordstown workers.

RAFT's main weakness at this point is its focus on the upcoming USW elections almost to the exclusion of anything else. Thus the resolution that was passed at the conference seemed intended more as part of an election platform, rather than a program for ac-

tion. Thus, while the meeting urged non-compliance with the productivity clause, there was no discussion about how to go about effectively opposing it, what kinds of actions to take, etc.

In spite of this limitation, RAFT is attacking the right issues, and is a hopeful step forward for the fight to build a rank and file opposition inside the USW. ■

[For more information about RAFT, write to: RAFT, Box 2221, Youngstown, Ohio 44504.]

TAXI STRIKES IN N.Y.
David Katz

In the last week, strikes described by the news media as "wildcats" have spread through about a dozen New York City taxi garages, clearing a significant number of fleet cabs off the streets.

The strikes are not official, but neither are they wildcats. They have been organized by officials of the Taxi Drivers Union. These officials encouraged newer drivers to set up picket lines over the issue of 42 percent commissions, which have been paid to drivers hired in the last year. (Drivers hired before last March are paid 49 percent.) Although the strikes are described as being run by these newer drivers, they have in fact been initiated and largely controlled by the union leadership.

Union officials have limited some garage meetings to 42 percent drivers and have fought to prevent the expansion of the strike to issues which deal with all drivers more directly. Because of this, some 49 percent drivers feel

that the strike has little to do with them and are beginning to feel resentful that they can't work.

While calling most of the shots, the union leadership is not entirely in control of the situation. A number of garages have joined the strike on their own initiative, and some have added other demands on issues affecting pay and working conditions. The Taxi Rank and File Coalition is working to spread the strike to more garages, and to include other demands which affect both older and newer drivers.

Militants should demand that the union make the strike official, and put its full weight behind it. The leadership is seriously endangering our chances of success by the underhanded way they have organized this strike. As the first step in building an effective strike, we need to have a city-wide union meeting at which we can democratically decide what we are fighting for, and how best to carry on the strike. ■

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and state American Federation of Teachers locals, and other trade unionists.

The Board of Trustees immediately went to their friend, the court, and obtained a temporary restraining order. Judge Frank Roberts, Jr. ordered the teachers to go back to work and to cease picketing and strike activity, and warned them against engaging in slowdowns, boycotts, or in any way hindering the day-to-day activities of the college.

Judge Roberts said he issued the injunction because he was convinced that the state legislature had intended to make strikes by public employees illegal. (However, there is no legislation on the books, and the legislature is not now considering such actions.)

Despite its solid support, the strike ended after only one day. The SCCFT leadership, without calling a union meeting to see if the rank and file wanted to fight the injunction, gave up and called off the strike.

A few days later, the SCCFT and the Board of Trustees announced an agreement whereby the union would not strike until July 1 (when the old contract expires) and the Board of Trustees would resume negotiations with the union. At present the negotiations are with an impasse committee, set up by the State government.

The union's leadership has put its faith either in the courts (which have already proved to be unfriendly), hoping that they may rule strikes by public employees legal, or the state legislature, which they hope might pass a

the school, and a pledge by the Board of Trustees to negotiate in good faith with the Seattle Community College Federation of Teachers, which is the bargaining agent for the Community College.

The strike was completely solid. The campus of 15,000 vocational as well as college students was 95 percent closed down. The strike was sanctioned by the King County Central Labor Council and walking the picket lines with the SCC teachers were students, radicals, members of other city

law allowing state employees the right to strike.

At a recent meeting between students, the SCCFT and the Board of Trustees, the trustees threatened that any attempt by the union to fight for pay increases for the faculty would mean a tuition increase for the students. But the union has vowed to fight for pay increases without tuition rises.

If the union is to win anything, including a strong union, it must not

fold at the first reading of a temporary restraining order. The union should go to all sections of the Seattle and Washington State labor movement, especially public employees, to fight together for the right of public employees to strike, and the right of teachers to fight for better working conditions and better schools. ■

[Celia Emerson is a member of the Seattle Community College Federation of Teachers and the Seattle I.S.]

Coal miners in Britain have just won a six-week national strike, which brought the English economy to a dead halt, threatened to bring down the Tory government, and forced wage concessions out of a government board of inquiry far in excess of both the government's basic incomes policy and the most recent offers of the National Coal Board.

The miners had been demanding pay increases averaging 25 percent; the government, in response, had been trying to hold the settlement down to its prescribed maximum of 8 percent for wage increases in Britain. In spite of the nature of the miners' work -- dirty, dangerous, and backbreaking -- they only made from \$47 a week for work on the surface to a high of \$78 a week for underground workers.

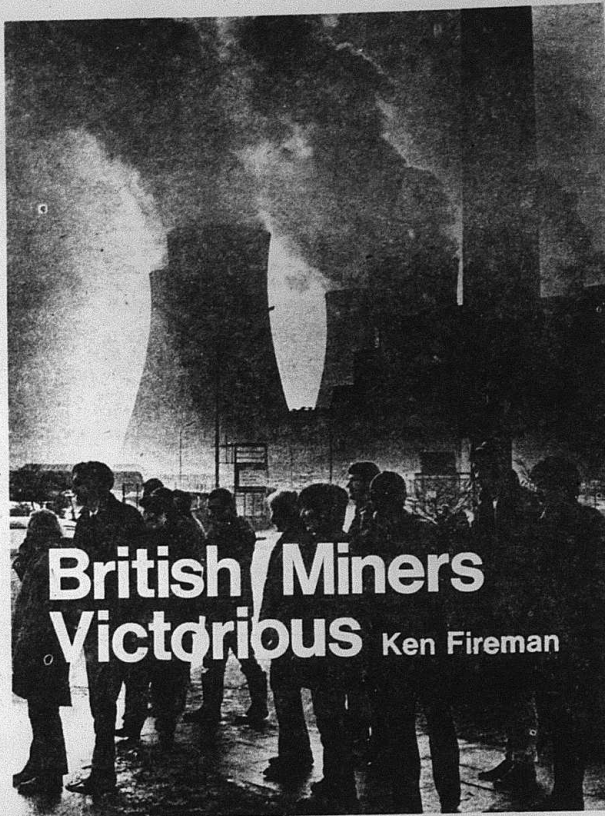
Beaten by the solid strike, the three-man board of inquiry appointed by the Heath government finally issued a report which conceded that miners deserved "special treatment" because of the nature of their work, and recommended wage increases averaging around 20 percent.

Leaders of the miners' union initially rejected the report, but later supported it after all-day negotiations on February 19. National Coal Board representatives agreed to the report, despite the fact that they had earlier rejected wage increases of the size proposed by the board of inquiry. As we go to press, rank and file miners have been voting in favor of the proposed settlement.

The miners' strike is destined to be remembered as a landmark in the struggle of the British working class. The first national coal strike since 1926, when the whole of the English labor movement rose in a great general strike, this year's walkout has had a greater impact than any labor dispute in Britain since the famous general strike.

The strike began January 9, and soon spread to include all 280,000 of the nation's miners. At the time, the government announced firm opposition to the strikers' demands, and complacently stated that the country's coal reserves were sufficient to stave off the effects of the strike for some time.

The miners shattered the government's strategy by mass picketing of



British Miners Victorious

Ken Fireman

power stations which produce the nation's electrical energy, most of which run on coal. Appealing to their brothers in other trade unions, the miners succeeded in virtually shutting off the supply of coal altogether.

When scabs were recruited to deliver coal from the stockpiles to the power stations, as well as to the many factories which run on coal, the workers organized massive demonstrations which severely hampered the scab deliveries.

By the beginning of February, the strike began to take its toll. Power cuts on a selective basis became necessary; plants began shutting down and

laying off workers due to lack of coal. Throughout it all, the miners stood firm in their determination to break the government's reactionary incomes policy.

"The candles are going to burn a long time," said a miner named Ronald Jones in East London. "I'm workin' gin the pits 47 bloody years. I got a cough and my eyes are bad. This time, me and all the lads are going to get our due."

"Sure it's rough when thousands of people are laid off and the factories are closed down because of us," said James Traynor, a 25-year-old miner who was picketing outside a silent po-

wer plant in the capital. "But the workers know that if the Government and the bosses break us today, they'll break someone else tomorrow. If we lose, the union movement loses."

Britain's working class responded to the appeal for solidarity. Public support for the miners remained high throughout the strike, despite the fact that the resulting power shortage left many Britons without electrical current for some hours each day. Workers consistently refused to cross miners' picket lines at power stations and factories, and in some cases joined demonstrations to build the strike.

A poll conducted by the *Evening Standard*, a large London daily, found over 61 percent of those questioned blaming the government for the length of the strike.

This massive public support for the strikers made the government's position completely untenable. By waiting until the end of the month, when the new Industrial Relations Act takes effect, Prime Minister Heath could have attempted to order the miners back to work. But the probability was that the miners would have angrily refused, and continued mass picketing to enforce the strike. Unless Heath was prepared to call out army troops -- and fact the risk of a general strike -- this tactic was not viable.

The basic political lesson of this great strike is quite clear. Just as American coal miners last November broke President Nixon's Pay Board's 5.5 percent guidelines, winning a settlement of over 15 percent by means of a militant 4-week strike, so Britain's miners shashed their government's incomes policy by relying on their own collective strength. The militancy of the miners -- and the solidarity of the British labor movement -- created a situation in which the government could do little else but cave in.

Union militants in this country, faced with Nixon's anti-labor offensive, would do well to study the example provided by the coal miners across the Atlantic. When the government cracks down on unionists and their legitimate demands, the only response capable of dealing with the attack is militant, mass direct action. The British miners have shown the way. ■

Fisher-Bendix: Round One To the Workers

Roger Rosewell

The Fisher-Bendix occupation is over. On February 3, more than 600 workers voted to end their month-old sit-in, against the planned closure of the Merseyside radiator factory. [see *Workers' Power* no. 51]

They have won the first round of the fight but they still have to face many dangers in the months ahead.

The occupation began when the owners of the factory -- the immensely wealthy Thorn Electrical group -- announced that it would have to close by the end of March and that at least 60 workers would be sacked immediately.

Unemployment in Kirkby was already a staggering 23 percent and the factory closure would have made the situation worse. Learning and improving on the Upper Clydeside and Plessey campaigns, the workers took over the factory on January 5.

They dramatically evicted the managers, built barricades at the gates, connected high-power hose pipes preparing to defend the factory from any at-

tacks and established a number of committees to manage the sit-in.

Last week a series of meetings were held between management and shop stewards. They were chaired by Labor leader Harold Wilson, whose constituency includes Kirkby.

After three days of talks, an agreement was reached that was accepted overwhelmingly by a mass meeting on Monday. The agreement cancelled the 60 sackings and guaranteed that the factory would be kept open at least until the end of 1973.

While this is a tremendous improvement over the company's first statements, there are a number of extra dangers still facing the workers. There is little doubt that these are a result of Wilson's interventions.

With the company reeling from the workers' determination and scared to organize a police assault on the sit-in in case their machinery was damaged, the employers seemed certain to face total defeat. Wilson's role was to try to prevent that. The final agreement states

that a joint management/union working party will be set up to examine how productivity in the factory can be improved.

The committee must report by March 5. Until then there will be no sackings. After this date the company has said that it will be unable to employ all the workers and that unless a plan to lease part of the factory to another firm is successful and employs men from Fisher-Bendix, then it suggests that redundancies will follow.

The agreement also accepts that manning levels will be studied and that the unions pledge "energetic pursuit of more economic shop floor production."

The battle of Fisher-Bendix is by no means over. The fight against any redundancies or productivity deals must be continued.

But the occupation of the factory is yet a further example of the value of this form of struggle that should be used not only to defend jobs but also to win other struggles. ■

Unrest Grows In Australia and New Guinea

Ron Flaherty



Black Power

Australian Aborigines, until recently considered the most passive and demoralized of the world's oppressed minorities, have burst into the news here in recent months with a series of militant and provocative demonstrations.

Reacting to the arrest of an Aborigine in Queensland, who was held incommunicado and induced to sign self-incriminatory statements, a group of demonstrators marched on the Brisbane office of Mr. Killoran. Killoran is the Director of the *Queensland Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Act*, a piece of restrictive and paternalistic legislation under which the man had been arrested.

Finding Killoran's office door locked and guarded by police, the Aborigines began to force their way inside. In the ensuing fighting nine people were arrested.

To back up demands for the return of tribal lands long denied them by white society, Aborigines in the Northern Territory threatened to cut telegraph lines which run for hundreds of

miles through empty desert -- a move which should bring delighted smiles to the faces of American Indian militants.

The most dramatic struggle has centered around Lionel Brockman, an Aborigine in Western Australia. Brockman had lost his job in 1970 because of the current depression in Australian rural areas. Unable to find work, he was reduced to stealing from farm-houses to feed his children.

When he was arrested for this "horrible crime" and given a three-months jail sentence, Brockman's family went to stay at a relative's house (which already housed 19 people). The Native Welfare Agency forced them to leave, but offered them no financial support.

Worried about his family, who were without money or food, Brockman broke out of jail. He and his family spent six months in the desert evading police, before finally being tracked down by an armed police party of 16 with 6 vehicles and an aircraft, and 100 farmers with 50 vehicles. He now faces three and a half years in jail.

In Melbourne 100 people rallied in the city square, burned the Western Australian premier in effigy, and demanded that Lionel Brockman be set

free. In Perth, the Aboriginal Advancement Council has organized for his defense and public pressure has forced the Native Welfare Agency to provide housing for his family.

Black Australians are acutely conscious of the need for political organization. A Black Panther Party has emerged. "Black Power" spokesman Bobbi Sykes has called upon the "Action Conference on Racism," to be held in February in Brisbane, to consider forming a national Black Party:

"To educate our own Black people politically and to become involved in all issues which affect Black people. We badly need representation in the government, people we have elected to represent us, and not puppets of the capitalists."

Liberate New Guinea

Dissatisfaction and unrest are growing very rapidly in the Australian colony of New Guinea. They were first expressed in rising crime and race riots, but have also begun to find political expression.

The British annexed the southern

portion of New Guinea in 1888, and Australia announced expulsion of the Germans from the northern part in 1914 with the Pidgin pronunciation: "No more um Kaiser. God save um King." Whatever the health of the King, Australia and other Western nations have made a healthy profit out of the area, which became an Australian Trust Territory after the first World War.

Out of 18 million acres of arable land, only six thousand are owned by New Guineans. In cash crop production, foreign capital controls 73 percent of copra, 74 percent of cocoa, 54 percent of coffee, 99 percent of rubber, and so on.

The ruling Liberal Party in Australia is not inclined to grant New Guinea independence very soon. Complaining of a breakdown of Law and Order, the right wing New Guinean United Party has requested the assistance of the Australian army in propping up the sandbox House of Assembly government that it controls.

The most militant opposition to Australian domination has been led by the Mataungan Association, formed in 1969 among the Tolai tribesmen of the Gazelle Peninsula. It acts as a "shadow government" in opposition to the colonialist "multi-racial council" set up to integrate villagers into Australian and Chinese dominated town councils.

The council has expropriated 40 percent of Tolai Land, and allowed foreign capital to take over the local industry: the Tolai Cocoa Project. The Tolais demanded \$625,000 compensation, and when it was refused last May the Mataungan Association moved in to occupy the Cocoa Project. The Association is expected to contest the House of Assembly elections early in 1972.

The Mataungan Association represents the kind of "lawlessness" that Australian troops are being called upon to repress. But a great deal depends on the coming Australian elections, since the opposition Labor Party favors early independence for New Guinea (with plenty of economic strings attached of course), and could take a "soft line" toward New Guinean militants if it gets into power. ■

In 1965, 45,000 US Marines and paratroopers invaded the small Caribbean country of the Dominican Republic. The official explanation for this imperialist adventure was the prevention of a "Communist" uprising -- but few Communists could be found. The US installed a handpicked ruler, Joaquin Balaguer -- a former henchman of the bloody dictator Trujillo, whose bandit regime ruled the island nation for many years.

The real purpose of the invasion was to prevent the election of a left populist regime which might have nationalized US corporate holdings. The US aim was to preserve the Caribbean as a US lake, a safe and fertile plantation for US profits.

To create the kind of safe investment climate US big business wanted, US military "advisers" were left to beef up Balaguer's army and police. The operation was financed by the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) and the US State Department.

These forces assumed the task of crushing internal opposition.

With this assistance, the Dominican regime has launched a terrorist campaign against the left, using the robbery of the Royal Bank of Canada in Santo Domingo last November as the excuse. Early in January of this year police and government troops combed the working class districts of the capital looking for arms and leftist literature.

Dozens of students, workers, youth, and members of the *Partido Revolucionario Dominicano* (the Revolutionary Dominican Party, the leading opposition party, headed by the ex-president Juan Bosch) were rounded up. Whole sections of Santo Domingo were sealed off.

A few days later hundreds of troops, equipped with bazookas, mortars, and tanks and backed by airplanes, laid siege to a house near the capital where four young revolutionaries were hiding. The police claimed the four were members of a guerrilla group which

the government accuses of robbing the Canadian bank.

In a day long gun battle, the youths courageously defended themselves against the overpowering force of the regime. All four were murdered, though not before fifteen troops had been killed or wounded.

This vicious assault on the revolutionary youth led students and workers in Santo Domingo to take to the streets calling for an end to repression. The massive demonstrations have successfully hampered further troop movement. They also confirm the broad scale of popular opposition to the dictatorial regime.

There is a very strong possibility that the bank robbery was engineered by the police themselves, to provide a pretext for the repressive attacks on the left. However, the "overkill" tactic has backfired on the government. The size of the demonstrations reveals the basic weakness and fragile footing of the Balaguer regime. ■

Dominican Regime Launches Terror Against Left

Eric Langdon



WHITE RULE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA:

Half A Continent In Chains

W. Enda

In the past two months the struggles of Africans against white imperialists and settlers in Southern Africa have reached a new pitch. African workers employed in the heart of white industry withdrew their labor and fought the armed white police sent to discipline them.

The latest struggles involve at least 20,000 Ovambos in Namibia (South West Africa), countless thousands of Zimbabweans (black "Rhodesians"), and at least 1,000 South Africans at Prieska copper mines. Many have been murdered.

Namibia is still at a complete standstill. The mockery of the Rhodesian "settlement" and its troop of retired colonial service opinion pollsters, the Pearce Commission, has been revealed by Zimbabwean workers for all to see (see *Workers' Power* No. 51).

APARTHEID

Rhodesia and South West Africa are the weak link in the chain of white domination of Southern Africa. The anchor of the system lies in South Africa, the most industrialized and capitalist dominated country in Africa and the most obscene in terms of its grand solution to the African "problem," apartheid, and the enormity of the repressive police apparatus designed to administer that "solution."

Apartheid, the policy of separate development, is the whites' solution to the problem of a permanent and or-

ganized African working class which has built up South African industry and wealth by sweat and blood for the last 80 years. Apartheid is designed to smash any attempt that the African working class has made to organize itself as a class for itself.

It says that the 4½ million Africans who have lived permanently in the urban areas, some for three or four generations, are not really workers but peasants just visiting the white areas, who when they are old or industrially injured - that is, useless to work for the whites - will go back to die in the bosom of their tribe. It says that Africans are not really Africans, who have become landless and can only sell their labor, but Zulus, Xhosa, Venda, Tswana, and so on.

The Bantustans are designed to be their political and spiritual homes. They therefore cannot have political, economic, or any other rights in the white areas where they happen to be living and working. Those rights are reserved for the Bantustans - which the vast majority have never seen.

During the period of the Second World War, the African working class increased in size and consciousness. A massive strike by African mine workers in 1946 shook the whites' feeling of security.

The Nationalist Party screamed that the whites would be swamped by the blacks and turned into hybrids. It would be impossible to differentiate

between master and servant just by looking.

Apartheid was the solution. Keep the blacks out. The ones already around must be atomized and turned into tribalists: Forcibly separate out the races.

GHETTOS

In power in 1948, the Nationalists quickly set down to this task. The Group Areas Act separated the urban Africans into 13 different tribal groups. It forced each group, as well as the "Coloreds" (mixed race peoples) and Indians, to live in separate ghettos set apart by the government. No mixing or intermingling is allowed.

Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, were moved, some under the guise of slum clearance. To object meant the bulldozing of your home, and it meant jail.

Next, education for the "Bantus" was redesigned by the government. Schools were purged of the kids not in the right tribal group for the area where the school was located.

The so-called tribal tongue, which so many had forgotten, was made compulsory as the medium of instruction: The Africans must be made to forget English. Subjects such as gardening and simple mechanical tasks were to dominate the time tables, to "prevent the Bantu from aspiring to jobs that were not for him."

Laws attempting to stem the flow

of landless migrants, and to kick out recent arrivals, came thick and fast, harder and harsher. Influx laws had always been applied to direct the labor force, but now it was worse.

The Bantu (Urban Areas) Act defines the African who is allowed to stay in the white areas legally as one who has resided in the same place since birth, has lived there with official permission continuously for 15 years, and has been with the same employer for 10 years.

That is, only the African who has proved himself "responsible" enough not to wander from the straight and narrow of one employer, has not got the sack by organizing for better conditions and more pay, has not moved to a different area, only he is allowed to stay and work in the white areas where all the industries are located.

All the information on residence, tribal group, employer, and so forth are printed in the notorious pass books, which grow fatter as more legislation chaining the African is passed. More than a million arrests a year, for not being where the pass book says you should be, testify to the gigantic defiance of these laws.

Sadly, they also testify to the efficiency of the whites' gigantic police machine. Like the army snatch squads in Northern Ireland, midnight swoops comb cordoned-off areas, taking detected pass offenders off to labor in prison farms, or in handcuffs to their

The Bantustan Fraud

The Bantustan fraud is pathetic. In the two which are supposed to have some form of self-government, which obviously does not include defence, education, and foreign affairs, there is virtually no industry. The mass of the populations of the Transkei and Zululand are forced to migrate to the white industries, on a contract system similar to that against which the Ovambos are striking.

The main income of the Transkei is that of the repatriated wages of migrants, followed by the pensions of those kicked out of the white areas for the sin of becoming too old to work or industrially disabled.

Strikers, pass offenders, and other dissident Africans shipped out to the homelands are kept in camps for rehabilitation.

The South African government has given a few thousand pounds to set up a textile factory, where women work

on new wooden looms of pre-industrial revolution design. This sick development fits in with apartheid's ideology that Africans must develop through the same stages as the whites.

The Bantustans, and reserves, though the Nationalists try to deny it, have not been self-sufficient in basic food requirements for over 40 years and have to import maize, much to the delight of the white farmers. People are starving, mainly the old and children, and widowed women who have no men to send back their wages.

The plan is to dump even more of these people in the reserves. The apartheid ideal is to turn the entire African labor force into migrant laborers by forcing their families out of the towns and into the Bantustans. This has already occurred to a great extent amongst African agricultural workers.

Political rights in the Transkei are a farce. Every Xhosa, including those in

the towns who have never been to the place, has a vote, and in 1964 Matanzima, now the Chief Minister, was defeated at the polls by an anti-apartheid party which did not accept the idea of Bantustans. But the South African government immediately put in its nominated chiefs, giving Matanzima's party the majority.

As in Rhodesia, all surviving chiefs are paid agents of the whites. Most have to be protected by armed white bodyguards from the people they are supposed to rule - especially, at this moment, in Ovamboland.

Buthelezi, Chief Minister of Zululand, appears more outspoken, but is really from the same mould as Matanzima. They both accept the system and say they will "fight for some crumbs."

It's left to the African working class in the towns, who won't have anything to do with them, to take the lot. ■

"spiritual homes" in the Bantustans.

African workers, although they make up at least 70 percent of the working class, are not actually classified as workers. They cannot negotiate with their bosses. Instead they are represented by a white labor official who makes up his own mind when he'll ask for a little more.

The South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), founded in 1955, was never a real trade union organization because it was never allowed to negotiate and bargain.

It is a criminal offence to strike under the Masters and Servants Act, which can send a worker to jail even for dumb insolence. Twenty thousand workers a year are convicted under this Act.

Striking leads, most likely, first to jail, and then to deportation to the "spiritual" home of the Bantustan. The Pietermaritzburg strikers last November, the Ovambos, and the Durban dockers who struck three years ago, were all "repatriated" to Bantustans.

Working class Africans in struggle against apartheid's divide and rule strategy have seen all their political organizations smashed.

SACTU, although it was only able to carry out a propaganda and general agitation campaign, was hounded to death by repeated police raids and the arrests of its leaders by the mid-60's. It was really a wing of the African National Congress (ANC), dealing specifically with the struggle on the labor front.

THE ANC.

The ANC derived from the tiny African middle class in the big towns. Up to the mid-50's, when even this tiny number were deprived of their remaining franchise and three white representatives in the white parliament, they organized on a liberal basis futilely appealing to the "good sense" of the British as against the "bad sense" of the Afrikaner.

Their tactics -- symbolic pass burnings, courting arrest by blatantly break-

ing laws -- were a reflection of these illusions. They failed to recognize that the whites could accommodate them all and more in thousands of prisons. Passive resistance was also reflected in the "stay at home" strategy in the late 50's, when the leadership of the ANC was becoming more influenced by the underground Communist Party.

At Sharpeville in 1960, when 67 people were shot down in a peaceful demonstration, the redundancy of the tactic of passive resistance was spelled out in bullets.

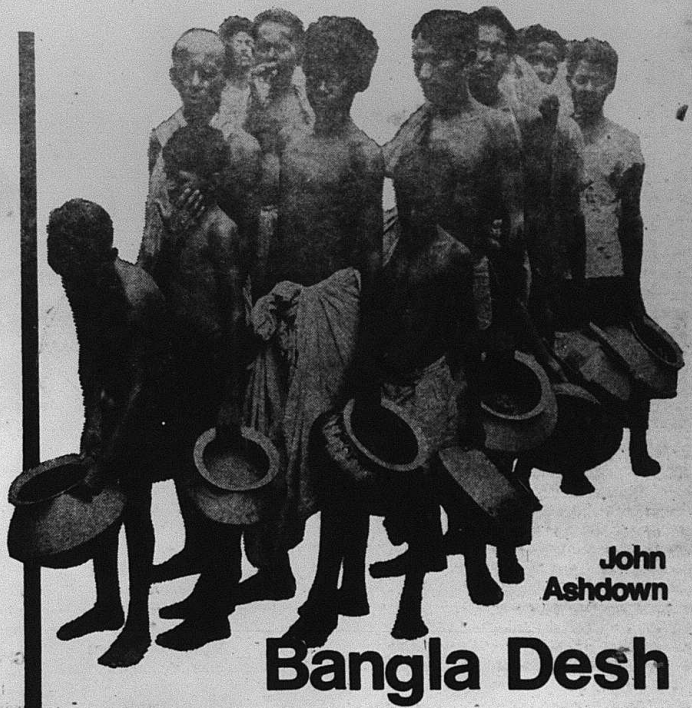
The ANC was banned, but it had neither the politics, organization, or strategy to work underground. Riddled with spies and agents provocateurs, it reversed the idea of mass passive resistance into that of bombings and sabotage. By 1963 most of its leaders were in jail or had fled into exile.

The ANC still exists in South Africa and has small cells in the big cities. Open action is restricted mainly to leaflet bombing and perhaps the occasional act of sabotage. The ANC's official line seems to be to attempt guerrilla activities in the countryside and Bantustans "where the police machine is not so effective." But this strategy has had very little effect in recent years.

At the moment 13 members of the Unity Movement, a much smaller organization which criticized the use of passive resistance as a tactic of the ANC and the Communist Party, are on trial in the Transkei Bantustan, accused of attempting to recruit peasants for military training.

The picture seems very dark. But events in Zimbabwe and Namibia give encouragement inside South Africa. Africans continue to defy and to go on strike. They now have no illusions about peaceful means.

Many young educated Africans who have been groomed to become leaders in the Bantustans reject them and become workers. New organizations of underground struggle must be formed. Perhaps they already are growing. ■



John Ashdown

Bangla Desh

The jubilation is fading in Bangla Desh. Now that Mujibur Rahman has returned from prison in West Pakistan, there is not much to look forward to except the long grim work of repairing the shattered economy.

Most of the jobs have been shared out. The Awami League has kept its political rivals away from the spoils, lest its own fragile unity be afflicted by internal jealousies.

Mujibur Rahman has reserved four cabinet ministries for himself as well as the prime ministership, not because he wants the jobs, but because he has too few people he can trust. Of the 150,000 irregular troops at loose in Bangla Desh, only eight battalions can be absorbed into the new armed forces.

For those without jobs there is not much reward except rhetoric, usually delivered by men who spent the war comfortably over the border. The new government demands that those not in the official militia give up their arms at once. Few of the young men will. Their guns are all they have to give them a little dignity in the world.

The threat of warlords controlling particular areas and of general banditry remains great. The terrible poverty makes the prospect grim -- Bangla Desh needs at least half a million tons of food from abroad to survive at the best of times; as well as 20 million homes to replace war losses and house the returned refugees.

The one bulwark against disintegration is the Indian army. Yet a prolonged Indian occupation will make it impossible for Mujibur to build a viable state out of the ruins.

To the disaffected youth this would mean no independence at all, but an Indian puppet state. The war was not for Bangla Desh independence, they will decide, but for the Indian destruction of Pakistan.

The Indian government has enough problems without taking on 78 million impoverished Bengalis. But the more unstable the new state, the more the Indian government will have to inter-

vene. And the more the Indian government intervenes, the more unstable will be the new state.

So far the issue has been a boon to Indian Premier Gandhi. The refugees gave her a pretext for virtually anything she cared to suggest for six months.

The domestic opposition was completely rattled by the war. Workers called off strikes, unions withdrew wage claims.

Gandhi called for a three-year ban on strikes, so far without success. Now she has rescheduled the state elections so that she can really cripple the political opposition.

In Bangla Desh Mujibur has talked of ending share-cropping (if it can be done, and done without injuring the Awami League's rural supporters); of housing co-operatives; of nationalizing heavy industry (hardly a major sector in Bangla Desh) and industry abandoned by West Pakistani capitalists.

Despite his popularity, Mujibur can move no faster than his political base -- small businessmen and landlords. But he can offer some show trials of war criminals.

Indian assistance, vital in the short term, has another price. Bangla Desh produces two-thirds of the world's jute (it is the only major industry). India, with poorer quality jute, is the nearest rival.

For Indian jute capitalists, one useful product of the long war in East Bengal was that they were able to scoop the world market. One of their fears was losing their share with the creation of the new state. Now India has come up with a scheme called a "Jute Community," whereby the two governments jointly control jute exports.

Sooner or later, whichever way the new citizens of Bangla Desh look, they will find an Indian big brother. The real struggle will have to begin. ■

[Reprinted from Socialist Worker, the weekly newspaper of the British International Socialists, Feb. 5, 1972]

Don't count yourself in with this lot.
Come to the Rhodesia demonstration.



poster published by London's Anti-Apartheid News shows Foreign Minister Douglas-Home, Prime Minister Heath and Rhodesian ruler Ian Smith.



Editorial

CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 1

cracy; Mao is not fighting for international socialism. In fact, both democracy and socialism are anathema to both Nixon and Mao. Nixon adopts the trappings of democracy and Mao the trappings of socialism in an effort to win popular support for their respective brands of reactionary politics.

The purpose of US foreign policy is not to defend democracy around the globe. Indeed, the US government is the mainstay of just about every right-wing military despot in the world. Rather, the US strives to preserve corporate capitalism as a world system and to defend its own position within the capitalist camp.

The purpose of Chinese foreign policy is not to advance the cause of socialist internationalism. Indeed, the Maoist regime not only suppresses all independent working class organization in China, it has also collaborated with counter-revolution in other countries (most recently in Ceylon). Rather, China seeks to defend bureaucratic Communism as a world system and to advance its own position within the Communist camp.

STATUS QUO POWERS

In the long run, a showdown between Chinese and US imperialism is inevitable, since they represent two different social systems that are almost as hostile to each other as they both are to revolutionary socialism. But meanwhile, there are profound tensions and contradictions within each imperialist camp -- and whenever the US and China find that their immediate interests coincide, they will have no compunction about making an alliance against other rivals.

This is precisely what is happening today.

Until very recently, the US attempt to defend its Asian hegemony through wholesale war in Indochina made any collaboration between the US and China a political impossibility. But it now appears that the disaster of the Laotian invasion has at last driven home the need for a new policy in Asia to even the most wooden-headed sections of the US ruling class. Nixon's

new Asian policy will attempt, so far as possible, to rely on a "stabilization" of the status quo rather than direct military force to protect America's interests.

In fact, many people have speculated that Nixon's purpose in going to China is to arrange some sort of deal to end the Vietnam war. While this possibility cannot be ruled out, it seems unlikely, if only because the Chinese have few means of enforcing any deal they might be inclined to make. (Russia, not China, has been the main supplier of arms to North Vietnam).

Indeed, if US intelligence experts are correct, the NLF in Vietnam has been preparing a major offensive timed to coincide with, or immediately

follow, Nixon's China trip -- a visible demonstration that China has no authority and no ability to sell out the Vietnamese, and a major embarrassment for both Nixon and Mao.

Whether or not the war in Indochina is covered during Nixon's talks in Peking, the underlying reality is that, as the Vietnam war draws to a close, the US and China are emerging as the major status quo powers in Asia. They have a common interest in heading off the growing strength of the other two traditional powers in the area -- Japan and Russia.

The traditional rivalry between Russia and China has been growing more and more intense in the last few years. The recent defeat of China's ally Pakistan and the stronger ties be-

tween Russia and India (China's other major rival) have only underlined the threat Russia poses to China's position.

At the same time, Japan -- reborn in only twenty-five years out of the ashes of World War II -- has become the strongest economic power in Asia and the third strongest in the entire world. The US set out to rebuild Japan after the war as a market for US goods, but its Asian phoenix has left the nest.

Japanese capitalism is now a major competitor to the US around the world. Its growth has helped bring an end to the post-war period of absolute American pre-eminence (and precipitate the economic crisis that brought on Nixon's New Economic Policies); and Japanese emissaries are now jockeying for commercial and diplomatic influence throughout south Asia, eager to capitalize on the US defeat in Vietnam -- a prospect which both China and the US find very disturbing.

In short, what Nixon's trip to China represents is the first step in a major realignment among the world's imperialist powers.

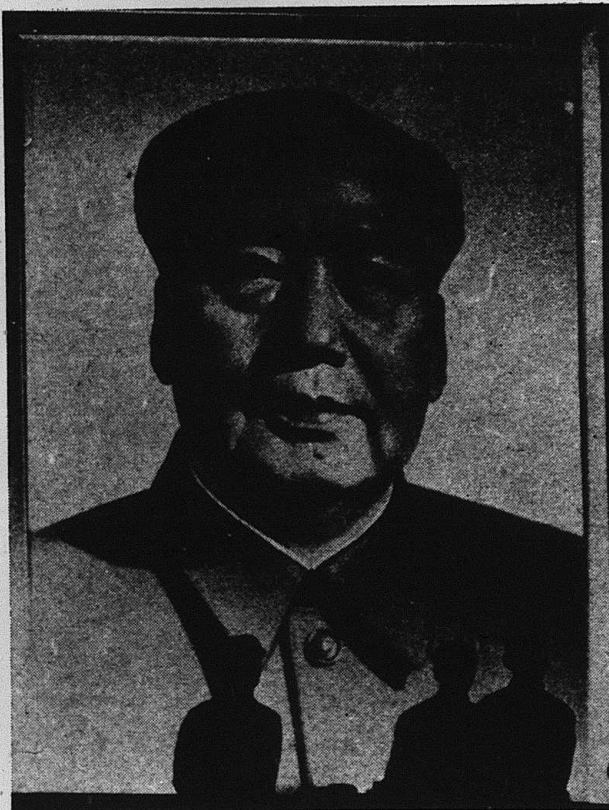
FOR THE THIRD CAMP

To the degree that the US-China detente means a short-term relaxation of tensions in the area, it should be welcomed. Any lull in open conflicts between the great powers is an opening for popular struggle, which is too often submerged by war and the threat of war.

But no one should have any illusions that the new-found friendship between Nixon and Mao represents a real opening toward peace. Any Sino-American pact will be a cynical deal between two reactionary ruling classes, aimed at furthering their respective interests against those of their own working classes and the people of the world.

No hope for peace, for democracy, or for socialism can be found in any of the imperialist camps, or in any deals between them.

If there is hope for the people of the world, it is in the Third Camp -- the camp of revolutionary socialism, of the independent working class struggle for freedom against all ruling classes -- capitalist or Communist bureaucrats. Its struggles in the last few years -- in France, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Poland, Bolivia, and elsewhere -- represent an alternative to all the imperialists, whose "peaceful coexistence" to divide the world's masses for mutual exploitation is only the prelude to new wars of conquest. ■



Chairman Mao

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Gay Alliance Turns Toward Democratic Party

Raymond West
James Coleman

Nearly a hundred delegates of various gay-rights organizations from all parts of the country gathered at the 1972 Election Strategy Conference, February 11-13 in Chicago. The conference was called by New York's Gay Activist Alliance and the Chicago Gay Activists, and clearly reflected New York GAA's political outlook.

The major positive result of the conference was a document detailing gay civil rights demands, including an end to harassment and discrimination in employment and other fields. However, the major focus was on the 1972 elections, and here the results were far from positive.

At the beginning of the conference it became clear that New York GAA and its branches and allies in other cities dominated the proceedings. The agenda was structured around New York GAA's election strategy - essentially, one of confronting and attempting to influence the major parties, especially the Democrats. The meeting moved quickly to a discussion of how

to elect delegates to the Democratic Party National Convention.

This focus reflected New York GAA's emerging overall strategy for achieving gay rights - one based on influencing the major parties. Often, New York GAA is willing to use militant tactics, but within a strategy aimed at influencing the more liberal members of the political elite.

As part of this strategy, New York GAA and similar organizations constitutionally limit themselves to considering "gay issues," refusing to discuss other social issues or make alliances with non-homosexual groups. Moreover, New York GAA puts forward a narrow conception of "gay" issues as well.

In New York, during the recent debates on a proposed city civil rights ordinance for gays, GAA attempted to silence transvestite and transsexual groups to avoid offending the City Council - only to have the attempt backfire when transvestite-transsexual groups packed the galleries during the

Council hearings to present their demands. Gay Youth groups in New York have also had to bring pressure to bear on GAA to take a stand on removing "age of consent" provisions in sexual laws - another point which is touchy with legislators.

Though GAA uses rhetoric about an "independent" gay movement when this is a convenient weapon against those who wish to consider "non-gay" issues, it is ready to subordinate the interests of some in the gay community to its goal of persuading the political parties to back moderate reforms.

DETROIT OPPOSITION

At the Chicago conference, opposition to New York GAA's strategy was led by the Detroit Gay Activists (DGA), the *Gay Liberator* newspaper, and other Michigan groups. DGA presented a four-part resolution calling for (1) no support for "status quo parties," including the Democrats and Republicans; (2) political education in the gay community; (3) exploring the possibility of initiating local independent gay-rights campaigns; and (4) a commitment by the gay movement to fight for "a new mass party whose basis is all groups struggling for economic and social justice - gays, blacks, other minority groups, women, and rank and file labor."

This resolution was received favorably by radicals at the conference, especially by those gay organizations based in industrial communities, such as New Brunswick, New Jersey, and Youngstown, Ohio. However, it received little support from the pro-Democratic Party majority of the conference.

A comic interlude in the conference occurred as People's Party candidate Dr. Benjamin Spock addressed the delegates. Spock was received with a standing ovation by most delegates. However, after giving a vague statement in favor of rights for homosexuals, Spock ignored questions about whether the People's Party would actually make homosexual rights an issue

in its national campaign.

Though Spock deserves some credit for being willing to address the conference at all, his speech showed that while he is willing to curry gay votes in Chicago, he is not ready to commit himself to using his campaign, in part, to educate the public on this issue.

GAA's Manhattan Machine faltered slightly near the end of the conference when an anti-imperialism resolution came within a few votes of passing. As with other movements, the issue of the Vietnam war most clearly indicates the need for the gay movement to take a stand on broader social issues.

New York GAA emerged from the conference with what it wanted - the leadership of the national gay movement. This outcome was predetermined by the fact that the radical elements in the gay movement - the former Gay Liberation Fronts - have disintegrated in the last year, while GAA has a strategy for nationwide activity.

NEW STRATEGY NEEDED

However, the GAA strategy, ignoring the failure of similar attempts by far more powerful "interest groups" such as blacks and labor, is to win its demands by influencing the Democratic Party. Many liberal Democrats may follow Dr. Spock's lead in seeking gay votes, but the Democrats will hardly lead a real fight for the rights of this unpopular minority.

What is needed is a militant, direct-action approach in which the gay movement wins its demands by bringing mass pressure to bear. Where necessary, the movement must take a stand on other social issues and make alliances with other groups in struggle which are willing to support its goals, and which have no stake in the status quo. The proposals offered by the Detroit Gay Activists at the Chicago conference are one part of such a strategy.

[Raymond West is a member of the Detroit Gay Activists (DGA). James Coleman is a member of DGA and of the International Socialists.]

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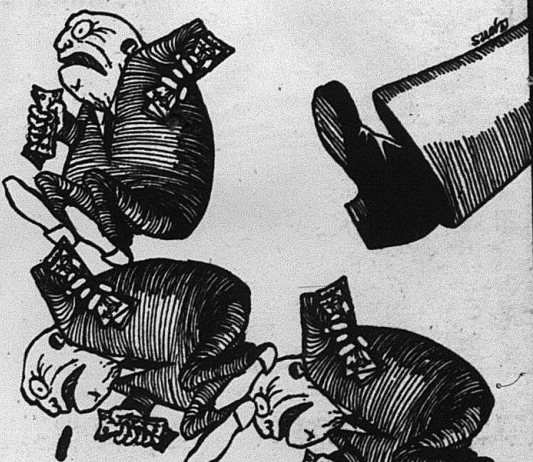
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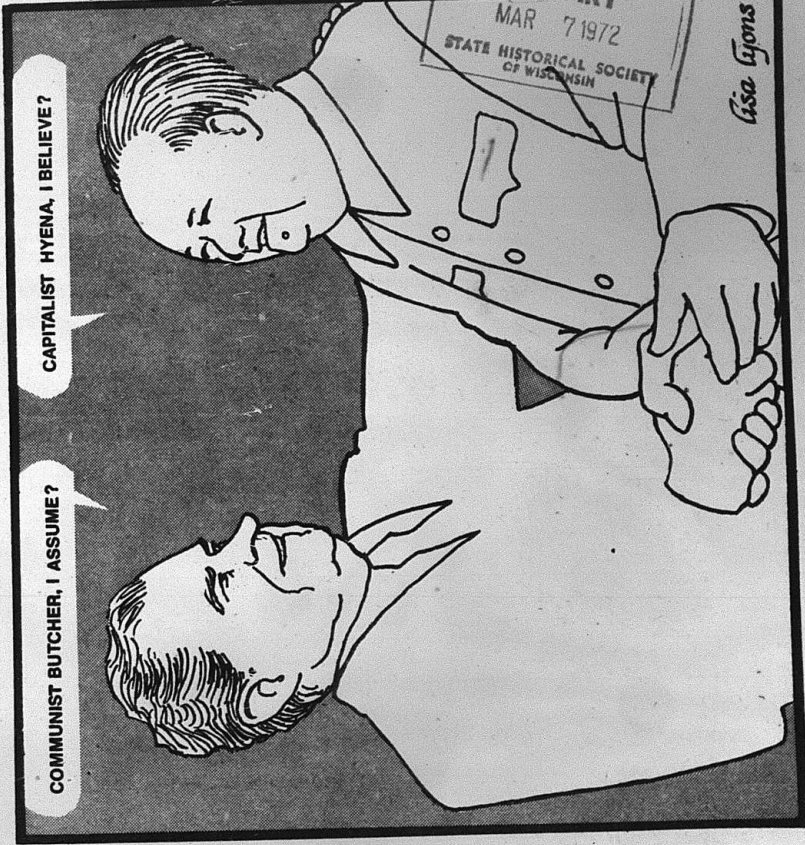
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