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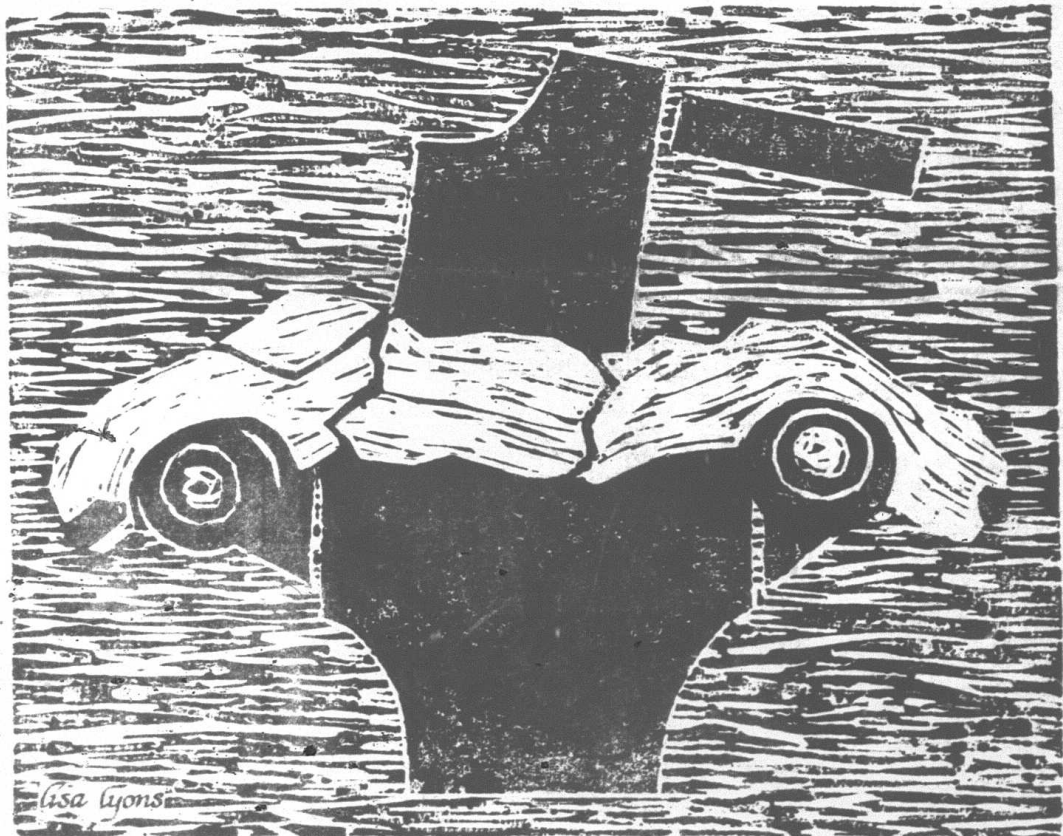


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Auto: Organize to Win



Lisa Lyons

Chile · Yakima Valley · The Barrio
TV's Green Phantom
Jordan's Civil War

International Conference

An international conference of revolutionary socialist organizations was recently held in Europe. The conference was sponsored by three groups: the British International Socialists, supporters of the French newspaper *Lutte Ouvriere*, and the American International Socialists. Delegates were also present from the People's Democracy (No. Ireland), Avanguardia Operaio (Italy), Potere Operaio (Italy), Labor Committees (US), Workers' Action Group (Denmark), and from Spain.

The political basis which brought most of these groups together was a common commitment to proletarian socialism — to the conception that the only road to socialism, and the basis for workers' democracy, is the revolutionary self-activity of the working class.

Debate and discussion showed important differences on many questions.

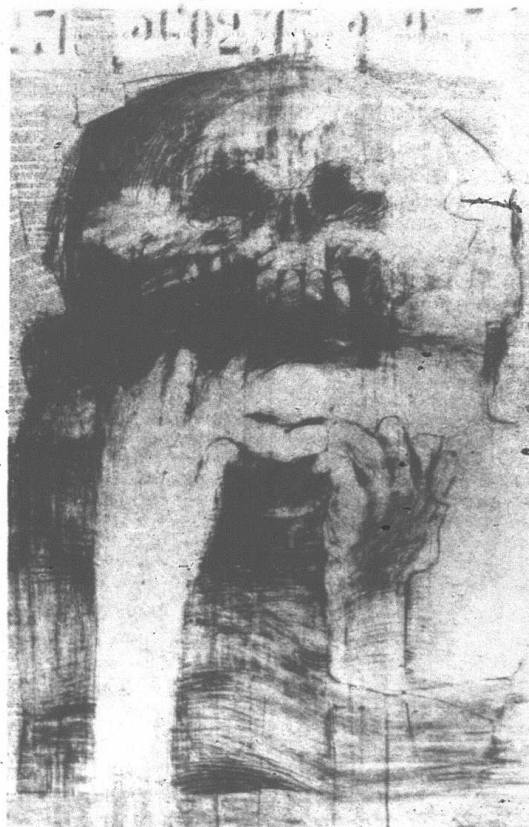
Discussed were perspectives for revolution in the advanced and under-developed countries, the nature of the state in the "Communist" countries, methods for building a revolutionary party, and international cooperation. In addition, an American IS delegate made a presentation on Women's Liberation, and its relationship to the struggles of working women and men. This is a subject which has not, or is just beginning, to be discussed in the revolutionary movement in Europe.

Although many strong political disagreements emerged in the discussion, the conference was conducted in a fraternal and friendly fashion. The delegates planned to arrange for future conferences to allow for the development of deeper and more thoroughgoing debate, and to provide the basis for greater international socialist coordination.

And Counting

Richard Lyons

He sat at his desk in his swivel chair at the loan office counting money, pleased and beaming at his dexterous fingers' flip and ripple register. All of it was green, variegated patterns and portraits of delightful touch and vintage crispness. The only things he moved all day, sitting, were his ten fingers and his mouth, counting; still, at the day's end he felt exhausted, as though he had been digging with a pick in soiled soil, dry in some distant sun, in dehydrated spirit, and he looked, surprised, at his hands, expecting to see callouses or raw white flakes of skin. But his palms were clean and soft and normal, with the wide golden band on his unbent finger and the faint green emanation on his finger tips; like suburban grass stains on the green knees of all the driven borrowers his firm had an interest in and drew interest from.



LASANSKY

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No. 22

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Auto: ORGANIZE TO WIN

Karl Fischer

"Yesterday, they were the biggest company in the world. Today, they're out of business!"

So spoke an auto worker at General Motors' Chevrolet Gear and Axle plant in Detroit, as he and his buddies poured out of the shop into a cold midnight drizzle last week to begin the national UAW strike against GM.

Workers across the country met the strike deadline with enthusiasm and determination. In plant after plant, workers on the night shift came out shouting and chanting, and immediately formed picket lines. One worker at Chevy in Detroit told a newspaper reporter, "I got out of bed just to picket tonight!" In several plants in both the US and Canada, GM workers jumped the gun and wildcatted one or two days before the September 14 deadline. Unfortunately, all this enthusiasm and determination will be frustrated if UAW President Woodcock has his way.

Four Issues

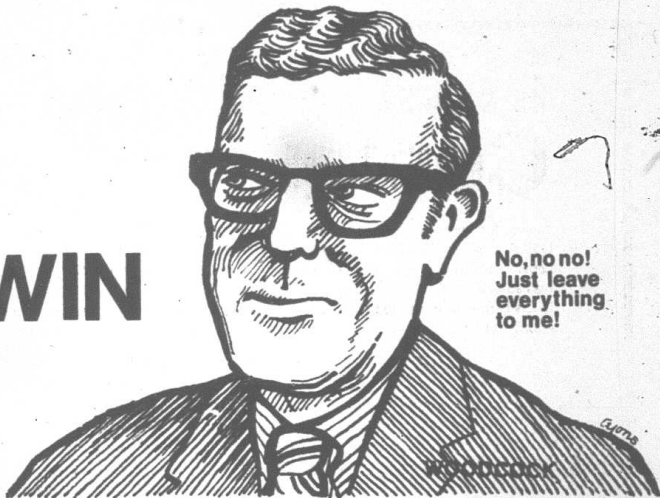
The heart of the strike centers around four major issues. In the area of wages, GM began by making an offer which would have given production workers only 26 cents an hour in the first year of the new contract; the union announced that it was demanding \$1.20 an hour. GM's next offer raised the ante to about 38-39 cents; the union then dropped its demand to 71 cents. That's where the matter stood as the strike deadline arrived.

Two important facts must be emphasized in this area. The first is that all the wage figures that both sides are toss-

ing around are phony because they include a "rollup" factor of about 20 per cent. This factor is the adjustment that must be made on certain fringe benefits — holiday pay, sick benefits, unemployment benefits, etc. — when the hourly base rate changes. In other words, the last company offer of 39 cents really amounts to only 30 cents in real wages, and the last union demand would bring only 55 cents in real money. The excess is automatically due to auto workers when their base pay rate changes. Both GM and the UAW leadership are playing this dishonest game, and the union bureaucrats because they look like they're demanding more in the eyes of their own rank and file.

The second important fact is that all these wage figures include the 26 cents an hour that GM already legitimately owes every worker because of inflation in the last three years. As discussed in the last issue of *Workers' Power*, the UAW bureaucracy in 1967 agreed to placing a cap on the cost-of-living allowance; as a result, each auto worker lost an estimated 26 cents an hour in wages in the last three years. The result is that, whatever wage increase GM workers win this year, 26 cents of it simply catches them up to where they should have been except for the beating they've taken from inflation.

So, the latest company offer of 39 cents amounts to 30 cents in real money, and a pathetic sum of 4 cents an hour in new money. The last union demand of 71 cents would bring only 55 cents in the weekly pay check, and a bare 29 cents in actual improvement. In a



year when other workers in rubber, trucking, and other industries have won wage increases of 30 and 40 per cent, the complete inadequacy of Woodcock's demands is obvious.

It should also be noted that, in terms of annual wages, the Nixon Administration has stated that an income of \$10,000 is necessary to provide an adequate standard of living for a family of four. The average annual wage in auto falls nearly \$3000 short of this minimum figure; only journeymen skilled tradesmen come even close. It would take a straight-time increase of about \$1.25 an hour to bring auto workers up to this level. The hocus-pocus with the wage increase is an indictment of both GM and the UAW international bureaucracy; the company is unwilling to pay its workers an adequate living wage, but even worse, the union leaders are unwilling to fight for it.

The second burning issue in the strike is the cost-of-living allowance (COLA). The cap placed on this allowance has torpedoed the wage level of auto workers since 1967. No matter what wage increase is finally won, the removal of the cap is a crucial demand if auto workers' wages are to be protected against inflation. GM is dead set against this. They have saved some \$300 million in wages in the last three years because of the cap, and they mean to keep it. The UAW leadership began the negotiations by demanding full removal of the cap, but that didn't last long. The last union demand called for removal only in the last two years of the contract; and how much further Woodcock will comprom-

ise away on this key demand at the end, no one knows.

The issue of working conditions has become a major national issue this year largely at the insistence of the companies. For years, working and safety conditions for production workers in auto plants have gotten worse; the main reason was the refusal of the UAW leadership to organize any real fight against speedup. They have systematically ignored this important issue, and instead have aided the companies by taking on the role of disciplining the work force on the shop floor.

Frontal Assault

But the already murderous pace of speedup simply isn't enough for GM this fall. They've laid demands on the table to discipline workers severely for absenteeism; to weaken the already inadequate steward system; to remove all right to strike over working conditions. In short, they've launched a frontal assault on the working conditions of auto workers. The response of the union bureaucrats has been silence. Woodcock has not mentioned this issue in any of the union's position papers; he has done nothing to warn the rank and file of the danger of this threat; he has simply ignored the problem in the hope that it will go away.

The last major issue is "30 and out" — retirement after 30 years service at \$500 a month pension. This has been called the "gut issue" of the strike by the union, and most of the newspaper accounts have laid heavy emphasis on this as the main issue holding up a

Things Go Better With COLA

The cost of living formula that the UAW accepted in 1967 has caused auto workers to lose out in real wages over the three-year period of the contract. The chief culprit is of course the "cap," the ceiling in hourly wage increases, but there are other important contributors.

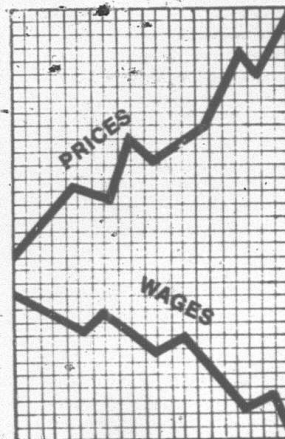
To take one example, a worker who put in 40 hours a week for a full year lost about \$120 during the first year contract because of the cap; without the cap, wages would have gone up about 14¢ an hour instead of 8¢. However, the same worker also lost an additional \$105 or so each year because of the change from quarterly adjustment of the wage rate to yearly adjustment.

Without the three-month adjustments, no COL increases have been given during the last year of the contract. (The 26¢ "average" that the union wants back is made up partly of money lost to the cap

in the first two contract years, and partly of third-year COL increases postponed to the 1970 negotiations.) Frequent COL adjustment is imperative since the cost of living is always climbing.

In addition, the formula for computing COL benefits is inadequate from the start. The formula allows a 1¢ wage increase for every .4% rise in the government's consumer price index. A worker earning \$3.50 an hour or more gains .3% in wages or less, while expenses are going up by .4%. The union's 1970 proposal would change the formula to 1¢ for every .3% rise in the price index. Even this is not really enough to enable the average production worker to keep up with inflation.

Full cost of living escalator adjustments are essential, but no proposal on the bargaining table is even close to adequate.



settlement. The last GM offer would permit retirement after 30 years, but on a pro-rated pension schedule.

In spite of all the attention surrounding 30-and-out, this will probably be the easiest demand to win. It would cost GM very little in extra money — they can amortize the entire pension program very easily. The company realizes that it must give something if GM workers are to ratify a new national contract, and they will be willing eventually to concede the least costly demand, and grant the early-retirement plan.

What this all adds up to is a real sellout on the part of the UAW bureaucracy. They have trimmed wage demands to the bare minimum, they have

the cap and leaving workers wide open to inflation. It will grant GM major concessions on working conditions. Woodcock will win one big demand — 30 and out — and attempt to sell the contract to the ranks by orating about the "historic victory" of early retirement. He will try to repeat the performance of 1967, when Walter Reuther rammed the cost-of-living cap down the throats of an unhappy but unorganized rank and file.

Whether Woodcock will get away with it or not depends entirely upon what GM workers on strike do between now and then. The real question is whether this strike will be run by the bureaucrats or by the rank and file. The pressing need at this point is for local strike committees made up of the ranks,

Motor City Blues

Karl Fischer

Eleven fifty-eight p.m. A cold autumn drizzle is falling. The low outline of the seven factories that make up the Chevrolet Gear and Axle plant in Detroit stands out against the darkness, gradually fading back into the night. Inside, the night shift is busy at grinders, forge presses and assembly lines, turning out their endless quota of auto components.

Eleven fifty-nine. Workers come pouring out of the shops, shouting to each other, laughing, slapping each other's backs. V-signs and clenched fists are raised. Dozens of workers begin walking an impromptu picket line. The UAW's nationwide strike against General Motors has begun.

Detroit is not the largest city in the country, or the most interesting, or the richest. It boasts one thing — industry. It is the greatest industrial city in the world, with more heavy manufacturing concentrated in it, on both an absolute and per capita basis, than anywhere else on the globe. Factories, foundries and mills sprawl over the entire metropolitan area; there is no such thing as the "industrial section," it's the entire city. Everything revolves around a single product: the automobile.

An auto plant was once described very aptly by the wife of a General Motors worker: "It's like a house caught fire in the night. Flames shoot out from every window. Everything is lit up. People rush about, to and fro, never stopping, always moving. Well, in an auto shop, the fire never goes out." The assembly lines move continually, never stopping, 50 or 60 cars an hour, never slowing. The production workers move constantly, fighting to keep up with the line, 8 and 9 hours a day per shift, stopping only during breaks — when a relief man steps in to do their job, while the line itself keeps moving.

Today it is different. The first day of the GM strike, a typical fall day in Detroit — the city is cast in a dull grey light, filtered through polluted air. But throughout the city, at the General Motors plants, the lines are still. The massive plants, where yesterday thousands had swarmed to build the cars, are deserted.

The noises of the air wrenches, stamping presses and fork lifts are gone; a great silence has taken their place. The cars still rest on the line, like a strung-out herd of animals frozen in time. On the

benches sit the tools, the parts, a pair of gloves.

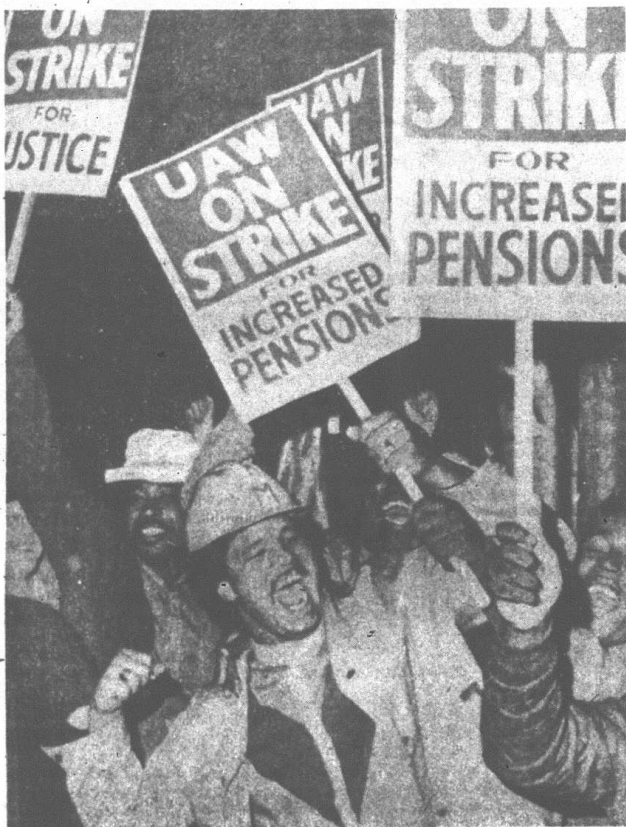
Outside, a string of workers march up and down, shouldering picket signs, glaring at the non-union office workers who cross the line, tossing jeers and catcalls at the cops who cruise past the line in blue and white cars with a legend on the back ("Protectors of Liberty," it says).

Auto workers are an anonymous lot. The 750,000 men and women in this country who build cars — blacks, whites, hillbillies, Poles, Italians — spend their lives punching the time-clock, fighting the line, downing their beers in little industrial bars across from the factory gate. They don't make the newspapers much. In the sweep of events that defines our world, our social order, our history, they are usually object, not subject. They are acted upon, and rarely actor.

But today it is different. The newspapers — which normally concern themselves with the doings of Senators, corporate chieftans, sex murderers, and an occasional student riot — are now full of news about the strike. The inevitable "human interest" stories which always accompany any major news story are full of the thoughts and feelings of these men and women on strike. For collectively they have shut down the greatest manufacturing corporation in the world overnight, and now they are news. People who have spent their entire lives watching the world sail past them every night on Huntley-Brinkley, and breaking their backs to the greater glory of God, The Flag, and General Motors — in inverse order of importance — these men and women are anonymous no more.

There is a grim satisfaction on the faces of these picketers. They are on strike for very concrete things — more wages, earlier retirement, better working conditions — and not for any existential imperatives. But they have done something — proved something — and they know it. They glance over to the silent plant and they know it.

They know now that the line does not always control them, that they can control it, and if you are an auto worker, that can be a very important thing to know. They think about the lost pay checks, the small strike pay, the weeks of enforced idleness, and they are uneasy. But the picketers look again at the plant, still and dormant, and they smile even as they tighten-jacket collars against the rain.



UAW WORKERS STREAM OUT OF CADILLAC ASSEMBLY PLANT IN DETROIT

already made serious compromises on the cost-of-living allowance, and they have all but given up the fight on working conditions. The negotiations that have taken place amount to a carefully rehearsed drama, designed to convince both rank-and-file auto workers and the public that a real fight is taking place. In reality, both GM and the union leaders are shadowboxing; the final settlement is already all but written. Woodcock will let the strike run for 7 or 8 weeks, just enough to use up the strike fund. At this point, with the 320,000 striking workers beginning to think about payless paydays, he will settle up and submit a contract for ratification.

The contract will contain a small and insufficient wage increase — perhaps 30-35 cents an hour for the first year. Woodcock has already agreed to token increases of only 10 cents in the second and third years. It will contain no real improvement in cost-of-living, keeping

organized to run the strike, call picket lines and support rallies, appeal to sympathetic unions, community groups, and students to aid the strike, and, most important, to keep the rank and file informed about the negotiations by holding discussions of the main issues in the strike.

This is the only road for auto workers. If they place their reliance in their timid and compromising union leaders, they will receive nothing for the trust but a wretched sellout. They will fight a long and bitter strike only to lose, to pay the costs of the defeat for the next three years, and to pull the entire labor movement down with them. If they organize to win, to take the initiative away from the bureaucrats, to make it clear to both sides on the bargaining table that they will settle for nothing less than their full share, they can win one of the most decisive victories in the long history of the American working class. ■



GM in 45: The Fire Last Time

The last time the United Auto Workers struck General Motors was in 1945. Judging by every scale — number of strikers (225,000), length of the strike (113 days), and the demands which the strikers raised — this was a milestone in American labor's history. Most important for us, the 1945 strike involved the same problem which faces auto (and other) workers in 1970, namely runaway inflation and a shrinking real wage.

The 1945–1946 strike was part of a great upsurge of American labor at the end of World War II — a strike wave greater than any in US history, greater even than the strike wave of 1937.

What's Good For G.M. ...

World War II was a very profitable business for America's giant corporations. Between 1941 and 1945, they rolled up huge profits, profits which were often two and three times as great as those made before the war.

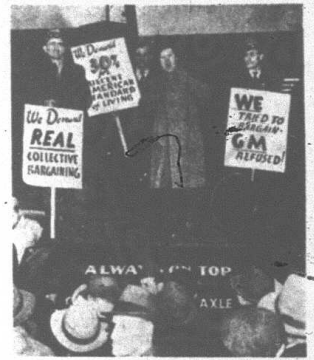
One reason for this sudden windfall was the fact that the corporation's prices, although supposedly controlled by Washington through emergency war-time powers, were in fact permitted to run wild. At the same time, the federal government assured the sale of these high-priced goods by purchasing them

for itself — using money gleaned from the American people in taxes, of course. As we say, these were fine times for Big Business.

For American workers, on the other hand, the picture was a lot less bright. Inflationary prices placed necessary goods further and further beyond the reach of their paychecks. And to make matters worse, labor's traditional method of improving its situation, the strike, had been ruled out of bounds by the labor leaders themselves when they signed a no-strike pledge as proof that American workers were willing to share the cost of the war effort. In fact, though, management's money-hungry performance during the war years showed clearly that a labor movement without the strike—power would wind up bearing the entire cost of the war by itself.

The ranks didn't like it. In several industries, union members called for modification or repeal of the no-strike pledge. Nowhere was the fight to regain the right to strike greater than in the UAW. At the 1944 convention, the no-strike pledge failed to get a majority. Only a last-minute alliance between Walter Reuther (then a rising figure in the international leadership) and forces allied with the Communist Party (which was strong in the UAW at the

Bruce Levine
James Coleman



time) managed to round up enough votes to retain the pledge.

As a result of all of this, American workers found that with their 1945 paychecks they could buy only a fraction of the goods they were buying four years before.

It is not surprising, then, that the end of the war found American workers in a fighting mood. Hundreds of thousands died during the war, and the rest returned to find themselves cheated out of a living wage by management's super-profits and super prices. The time had come to even the score.

The ranks were ahead of the international leadership. In June 1945 a meeting of 78 local presidents in the Detroit area blasted Reuther and the other top leaders, calling the UAW a "do-nothing union." Faced with pressure for action from the ranks, Reuther decided to fight.

The strike by the UAW against GM in 1945 and 1946 was the first round in labor's post-war struggle. General Motors had profited as much and more than the other giant corporations from its war business, while the real wages, the "buying power," of the average GM employee had fallen. In November, 1945, GM plants all over the country emptied. But this was only the beginning. Once the UAW showed the way, other unions followed.

By January 1946 not only auto, but the steel, packinghouse, electrical and other industries were on strike; that month over 1,650,000 industrial workers hit the bricks. Labor's cause was so popular that a committee to raise funds for the GM strikers included not only the liberal Eleanor Roosevelt, but also the reactionary Henry Luce, head of *Time* Magazine.

As labor flexed its muscles, workers gave increasing support to the idea of breaking free of the Democratic Party and forming a political party of the working class. In December, 1945, Victor Reuther (Walter's brother) wrote that the time was "ripe for labor to divorce itself from the two old parties" and build a third party. Reuther, however, only spoke of an "independent" party, not a party for the specific purpose of representing labor.

Labor Party

In August, 1946 — after the strike wave had died down, a nation-wide poll of 250,000 UAW rank and filers showed that while the majority still supported the Democrats, over 20 per cent wanted to form a Labor Party. The weakness of the labor party idea, however, was that it relied on the union leaders to take the initiative in forming the new party. Time was to show that they were unwilling to do so.

While the 1945–1946 strike wave included most of the major unions, the GM strikers led the way — not only be-

cause they went out first and stayed out longest, but because they had the most daring program. Their major demand was for a 30 per cent wage increase. Considering the beating which the workers' paychecks had been taking for four years, a 30 per cent boost was absolutely necessary.

Breakthrough

But the union did not stop at the 30 per cent demand. In 1945–1946, the auto workers advanced additional demands against GM never before made by a major union in the United States. These demands were: "Wage Increases Without Price Increases, Guaranteed in the Contract!" and "Open the Company's Books to the Public!"

The normal way in which unions try to improve the living standard of their members is by striking for higher wages. Wage boosts do help the workers for a time. But the matter doesn't stop there. Management, of course, does not wish to pay the cost of the wage increase out of its own pocket, out of profits. So, after granting the wage boost forced out of it, it simply turns around and boosts the prices of its goods (often increasing those prices by more than it had increased wages). Soon workers in other companies and other industries strike to raise their wages as well — and then their bosses boost prices, too.

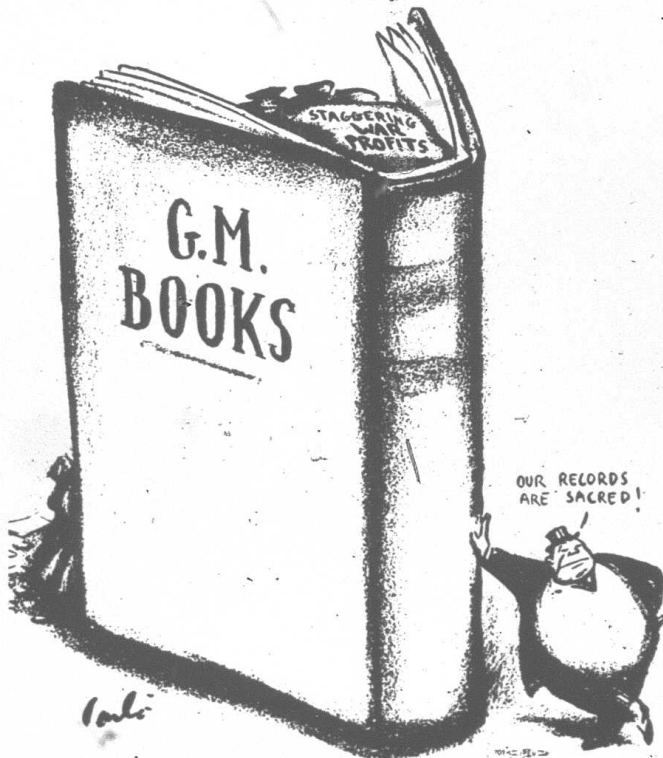
The end result of this run-around is that even though workers are now receiving a larger number of dollars in their paychecks, they still cannot buy the goods they need because of the all-around higher prices. In short, they are back where they started. They must now strike again and again just to hold their ground — and they rightly feel that they are on a treadmill, going nowhere.

"Official" government economists call this process "wage-push inflation," and their solution is to freeze the wages of the workers, thereby (they say) keeping prices down, too. This solution, of course, does not do much good for the workers whose paycheck is too small at the time of the wage-freeze.

On the other hand, as we have already seen, simple "wage-push" unionism provides relief only until the next round of price increases. How, then, can workers stop inflation without giving up the fight for a better living standard?

This question faced the UAW 25 years ago just as it does today. And 25 years ago they came up with part of the answer.

By demanding "Wage Increases without Price Increases," the workers were saying that GM's management could not pass on the cost of the wage increases to the public — that is, to the great mass of American workers. Instead, GM would have to pay the cost of wage boosts out of its own super-profits. In



Labor Action 1946

that way, prices would be frozen while wages began to catch up to them.

How did the GM management respond to this demand? Furiously. "Prices are our business, not yours," management shouted. "You stick to bargaining over wages and leave prices and everything else to us." When that cut no ice, GM tried another approach. "If you won't listen to our moral arguments," they said, "perhaps this will persuade you: We cannot afford to pay for your wage demands out of our profits — we simply don't have the cash!"

And to this, the UAW simply replied, "Prove it. Open up your books. Let us see for ourselves just exactly what you can and cannot afford!"

The fact that the UAW had raised this demand marked the GM strike as a giant step on the path of political self-confidence and awareness of American workers. It was, of course, exactly the right way to answer GM's claims of poverty. But it was more than that. Together with the demand for wage boosts paid out of profits, "open the books" expressed the workers' growing determination to take a larger part in directing the giant corporation which had for so long directed them.

Workers can get a better deal on the job. There is nothing God-given about the situation in the plants at any given time. But the workers can get a better deal only by exercising their own control over industry. The bolder and more determined they are to take matters into their own hands, the better deal they can win for themselves. In other words, the only ones that workers can trust to give them a better break is — themselves.

Workers' Control

The UAW's anti-inflation demands in 1945 were good ones just because they were based on this lesson. The demands pointed toward greater and greater workers' control over company decisions. And if the union had stuck with that lesson and continued pressing in the direction of workers' control, it could have really begun to overcome inflation — and many other problems of workers as well.

But the union leaders wavered. The head of the CIO, Phillip Murray, thought the GM strike program was too daring, and endorsed it reluctantly. And although Reuther had more courage than the other union leaders, even he was not ready for an all-out fight. He raised these demands, in part, because groups in the ranks were already raising them —

notably two Trotskyist groups which had been active in the fight against the no-strike pledge, the Workers' Party (an ancestor of today's International Socialists) and the Socialist Workers Party. As was his habit, Reuther took over his opponents' demands in order to take the wind out of their sails — not to fight for the demands. Although the demands pointed in the direction of workers' control, Reuther and the other UAW leaders were not interested in traveling in that direction.

For example: When Reuther told GM to "Open the Books," he asked what he'd do if the books really did show that GM was in the red. A labor leader moving toward workers' control would have replied that if the bosses couldn't run American industry well enough to provide the workers with a decent wage, then workers would have no choice but to run industry themselves.

"If They Can't Run
'Em, We Can!"



Labor Action 1946

But, since Reuther was not moving toward workers' control, he could only reply, lamely, that if GM's books showed that the bosses' profits were slipping, then the UAW would scale its wage demands down to whatever level the bosses could afford.

The answer was a disaster. It showed that although Reuther wanted to skim GM's cream, he would limit himself to whatever the company could afford. If Reuther wasn't ready to fight for workers' control, the only way he could get anything for the workers was to help the company make a profit. If the pro-

fit had to come out of workers' backs — too bad.

There was an even more important reason why Reuther demanded no price increases. When the strike began, wartime wage-price controls were still in effect. After the fighting stopped, however, the government made one small concession — wages could go up if this didn't lead to price increases. So — Reuther demanded wage increases without price increases. In other words, his concern for the public was all show. In fact, just as during the war, he was unwilling to buck the government.

But the companies were not so unwilling. All through January 1946, heads of industries — led by the president of US Steel — visited Washington to lobby for an end to restrictions on prices. We don't know what they said to President-Truman. We do know that in February, Truman authorized price rises.

Immediately Phillip Murray's United Steelworkers settled with US Steel; a few days later, US Steel raised prices. Other settlements followed. The United Electrical Workers, which represented some GM workers, settled without even consulting their fellow strikers in the UAW. Even the UAW Ford and Chrysler divisions (led by Reuther's rivals) settled, leaving the GM Division to fight alone. Reuther, who had identified himself with the "no price increases" program, could not back down so easily. But in another few weeks, in March 1946, the GM strike ended. The demand for a 30 per cent wage hike was dropped.

Instead, GM granted 18½ cents. The demand for no price increases was dropped; so was the demand that GM open its books.

The strike wave was over. In defeating it, a major role had been played by President Truman and the Democratic Party. American labor leaders have always followed the strategy of trying to win by getting the government on their side. To do so, they have backed the Democratic Party. In answer to those who have called for labor to form its own party, they have said in effect: "After all, if the bosses back candidates and get favors in return, why shouldn't labor do the same?"

1945—1946 showed how foolish this logic was.

Democratic President Harry Truman (the "friend of labor") told the GM workers to "return to work immediately" in the "public interest" and condemned their strike as a "major obstacle" to national prosperity. The Democrats in Congress picked up their cue and began work on new anti-labor legislation designed to choke off this new upsurge of labor militancy. The strikers defied Truman's back-to-work demand, but the constant attacks by the government not only on the GM strike but on other strikes as well hurt morale and helped lead to defeat.

Twenty Years After

After the GM strike ended, Truman didn't change course. During 1946, most price controls were ended, and in November, Truman broke the coal strike, ordering his Attorney General to "fight John L. Lewis on all fronts." Once again the Democrats had proven that, in politics as in economics, workers could safely depend only on themselves, that neither management nor the capitalist parties would serve the workers' needs.

It would be twenty years before Labor would again approach the militancy of 1945—1946. In twenty years, the 1945—1946 strike wave has been almost forgotten. They don't teach about it in school — the lessons we would learn would be too dangerous. But these lessons — about the strength of a united working class, the need for labor to adopt a broad program in the interest of all working people, the need to break from the Democratic Party "friends of labor," the need for the ranks to rely on themselves and not on their "leaders" — these lessons could make all the difference to struggles going on today. ■

A Little Help From GM's Friend

Kate Spieler

What does the New York Times say about wage increases? It seems to vary, depending on whether there's a strike underway. The Sunday before the UAW strike began, their labor specialist (A.H. Raskin) wrote in a philosophical mood:

With inflation eating up wage gains, unions are still pressing for ever-bigger settlements and backing up their demands with a readiness to strike if necessary. Indeed, in one major dispute out of every eight, the rank and file outdoes the leadership in militancy. That represents the ratio of contracts recommended by union negotiators and voted down as inadequate by the members.

In both the threatened auto and rail strikes fear of possible membership rejection is one of the spurs driving the unions to hold out for substantial settlements. The other major spur is the bite inflation has taken out of past increase...

In other words, Raskin recognizes that the wage gains made in the last con-

tracts have fallen away and that real wages have dropped due to inflation, although he does not go on to place the blame for inflation on excessive profits and the permanent war economy.

But once the auto strike actually burst forth the Times took a different view. On the very next day (the eve of the strike) their report from Detroit treats the wage issue as follows:

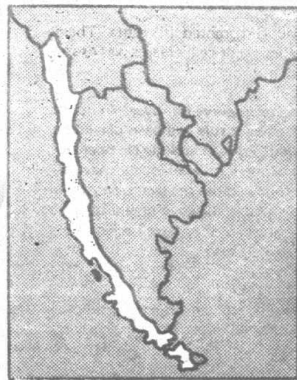
Whatever the final settlement, it is certain to be considered inflationary by conventional standards. The rejected offer of the car makers [the reporter here calls the company heads "car makers," which will be news to the workers!] added about 7.5 percent a year to hourly labor costs over three years, while the nation's and the auto industry's annual productivity gains are believed to be about 3 percent.

This is another way of saying that the companies fear that the price to them of the contract the workers are likely to win will be greater than the worth of the.

increased work they'll be able to squeeze out of the labor force during the run of the contract. If the Times were to put it plainly they would say that the companies fear they may have to part with a piece of their vast profits. The report concludes:

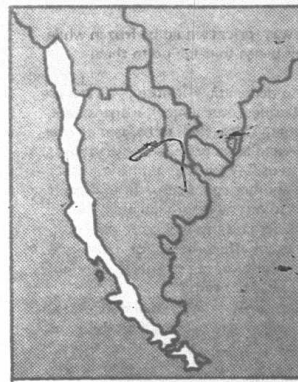
The cost of the eventual settlement in the auto industry is already being reflected in the price increases announced on 1971 cars. Chrysler raised the prices of its low-price models about 6 percent and the price of the new GM mini-car came in about \$200 or 10 percent higher than forecast.

Between Sunday and Monday the Times changed its tune. For the Times, on Sunday inflation eats up wage increases but on Monday wage increases cause inflation. What caused this switch is the pressure of the strike. The mobilization of hundreds of thousands of workers on strike brings the "impartial" friends of the companies out of the woodwork. ■



Chile: Ballot Box Revolution?

Derek
Briscoe



A radical nationalist candidate may take office as Chile's new President. In recent balloting, Salvador Allende, candidate of a six-party coalition, came out first in a field of three, on a program of radical land reform, nationalization of key industries, and recognition of all Eastern bloc countries, including Cuba. His actual inauguration as President depends on confirmation by Chile's Congress, since he did not obtain an absolute majority of the popular vote; in such cases, Chile's constitution call for the Congress to choose between the two front-runners.

Traditionally, the leading candidate in the popular vote has always been confirmed by Congress, but Allende is no ordinary candidate. Supported by the reformist Socialist Party, the Moscow-oriented Communist Party, left Christian Democrats, and the middle-class Radical Party, Allende has campaigned on the promise of radical reforms which threaten both Chilean landowners — a few families control vast areas of agricultural land — and the US copper interests, who have long controlled Chile's major export item.

To keep Congress from confirming Allende, Jorge Alessandri, the runner-up in popular votes and candidate of the conservative forces in Chile, has promised to resign immediately if elected by Congress, to permit a new election to be held. In this new election, Eduardo Frei, the incumbent President, would be free to run; technically, he would not be succeeding himself, and thus would be eligible under the constitution, which forbids a president to serve successive terms. Most observers believe Frei could win, in spite of popular disenchantment with his Christian Democratic Party, whose candidate, Radomiro Tomic, placed a poor third behind Allende and Alessandri.

Broken Promises

Frei and the Christian Democrats took office in the last election (defeating Allende) on the slogan "A Revolution with Liberty." The implication was that Frei could bring about land reform and a fairer deal on copper exports, as well as other needed reforms, without imitating the measures of repression in Castro's Cuba (these were repugnant to many citizens of Chile, which has a long history of fidelity to democratic procedures).

But Frei carried out no real reforms; he made a deal with the copper companies for the government to assume 51 per cent control of existing mines, some of which are already played out,

and only 33 per cent control of new mines. Because they control marketing, credit, and technology, and also have interests in other, competing countries, the mining companies retain effective control over prices and profits in the copper industry. Chile remains economically dependent upon a few US corporations.

Land reform is an urgent necessity in a country where a few families still control the rural areas and their power is enforced by the rural police or carabineros. Frei's land reform was a farce. Only a few farms were expropriated as "pilot projects." Generally, the worst land on the hillsides was taken in exchange for payments by the government which permit the landowners to obtain better profits in non-agricultural zones. These projects were meant primarily as tokens to let off steam in areas of high unrest; there has been some tendency for peasants to take over landed estates on their own.

Thousands of peasants have been migrating to the cities, especially Santiago, the capital and largest city. Lacking housing, and usually too poor to pay exorbitant rents, the urban poor have been carrying out expropriations on their own, taking over vacant land belonging to government and large landlords. Sometimes this has led to bloody clashes with the police, but usually the squatters are allowed to remain — there is nowhere else for them to go.

So Chileans voted for Allende because they felt that the Christian Democratic promises had not been kept. None of the problems of Chilean society had been solved. The country remained poor, dominated by a few foreign corporations and an oligarchy of a handful of families. Working people in the cities and the country, and small farmers as well, were left out in the cold, in many cases not able even to vote because of literacy requirements. Even Chile's social legislation, which looks good on paper, has turned out to be mostly a way of making jobs for government bureaucrats, while few benefits reach the people.

Don't Hold Your Breath

Allende has promised to solve these problems, if he is given the chance, by amending the constitution to elect a Popular Assembly and carry out land reform, nationalization, and so on. The betting is that he will be allowed to take office. Chances are, however, that his rule will bring about considerably less than the revolution that the copper companies and landlords fear and the workers

hope for. Both the US and its Chilean friends, and the Soviet Union and the Chilean Communist Party which follows it slavishly, have their own reasons for not wanting things to get too far out of hand.

The US does not want a precedent set for expropriation of its companies or for a break by a Latin American country with US Cold War policies and the boycott of Cuba. On the other hand, busy in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, divided at home over foreign adventures, the US is in a weaker position for direct intervention than it has been for years.

Limited Leeway

The US will probably be forced to allow Allende some leeway, just as it did when the Peruvian military junta nationalized an oilfield belonging to the International Petroleum Company, and some plantations belonging to other US interests. Pressure was applied, negotiations took place, and the plantation owners were compensated for part of their losses and allowed to invest in other areas. Nationalization is sometimes acceptable to US interests. For instance, following Cuba's seizure of power plants belonging to the American and Foreign Power Company, Brazil and Argentina, among others, were encouraged to nationalize American and Foreign's interests in their countries, pay compensation, and allow the money to be invested in more profitable industries, while the government took the losses.

At the same time, the US can apply pressure on Allende not to go too far. The Chilean Army, under Frei, received extensive US training and equipment. While not traditionally prone to intervene, the Army or the carabineros just might (the Brazilian Army was widely touted as "non-political" but took power in 1964 and has run the country, in the interests of foreign capital, ever since). Moreover, the US control of international monetary and credit agencies permits it to apply selective pressures to Allende, as it did to the Peruvians during the long negotiations over the junta's nationalizations.

One of the three largest, and the best organized, of the parties behind Allende is the Moscow-line Communist Party. Russia has spent a great deal subsidizing Castro's Cuba, and probably does not want a distant, poor-client state like Chile, requiring equally massive subsidies, and becoming equally difficult to control. Also, Moscow probably does not desire a confrontation with Washington over so non-strategic an area. Thus, Moscow, and the Commun-

ist Party, will probably exert their influence toward a relatively cautious policy on Allende's part.

Furthermore, Allende's victory can be used by other Communist parties to justify the Moscow line of avoiding militant tactics in favor of electoral reformism and alliances with liberal capitalist groups (the Popular Front), playing down workers' demands. If Allende's victory were to lead to a confrontation with Washington it might discredit the Popular Front strategy.

So there is a good chance that in spite of occasional tough talk and a crisis atmosphere, Allende will take office and carry out some — but nowhere near all — of his reforms. It is doubtful that, even if carried out, the reforms would permit real autonomous economic development to take place in Chile, since Chile will continue to depend on foreign technology and markets even with nationalization and cooperative farming. On the other hand, they would make it harder for other Latin American governments, such as Argentina and Brazil, to rule by repression and to deny expression to the demands of workers and students for national economic independence and social reforms.

In the Wings

Meanwhile, there is a workers' movement in Chile. Plant seizures and strikes have been frequent in the past four years, and it will not be easy for any one to restrain the working class until its aspirations are realized. While these aspirations are not expressed through an independent workers' party demanding workers' control, a confrontation between Allende and the right could unleash forces that neither the Army, the conservatives, nor Allende himself, will be able to control. ■



ALLENDE



Background To a Civil War

Robert St. Cyr

When the US-sponsored cease fire was declared in the Middle East, many of the participants in the war refused to go along. Israel, Egypt, and Jordan accepted the truce, but Syria and Iraq did not. The Palestinian guerrillas proclaimed their intention to sabotage the talks.

Furthermore, Iraqi forces stationed in Jordan did not observe the truce, their government in Baghdad having announced that these troops were taking orders from the Palestine Armed Struggle Command (PASC directs the activities of most Palestinian resistance groups, particularly Al-Fateh's military section, and is dominated by Al-Fateh).

The peculiar situation of the Iraqis in Jordan gives some indication of the precarious position in which the Hashemite monarchy has labored since at least the June War of 1967. The basic factor which has undermined the current peace gesture and created the present crisis is not the opposition of Syria or Iraq but the same one which has plagued King Hussein all along in his attempts to

"come to terms" with the Israelis: the Palestinians, who constitute the majority of the people living under his jurisdiction.

It is not difficult to understand why the Palestinian resistance, and particularly those organizations within it which are most independent of the UAR and Jordan (including, obviously, those dependent on Syria or Iraq and also those who rely on no foreign state), opposed the cease fire. The Palestinians, the oldest and chief victims of Zionist colonization, are not recognized as direct or active participants in the war with Israel so far as the peace-making discussions of the Big Four at the UN have been concerned. Rather, they are seen as refugees, who "obviously" exercise no national rights, and their resistance forces have been viewed officially as auxiliaries of the armies of the established Arab states.

It has been a cardinal tenet of Zionism, and a chief feature of Israeli foreign policy, that the Palestinians ceased to exist with the extinction of the British Mandate for Palestine in early 1948. Since then, as "official" Israel sees it, there are only Arabs and Jews.

Some Arabs remained within the confines of the Jewish state. Others who had been included in the Palestine Mandate were incorporated into the Jordanian Monarchy by its annexation of their territory, or were put under Egyptian authority via Egypt's occupation of the Gaza Strip. Then, "unfortunately," there were other Arabs (some 900,000 in number) who fled or were driven from the Jewish State into the surrounding countries. These became the refugees who, with their children, number nearly 1.5 million today.

Expropriation

Israeli law concluded that any Arab who left his home after November 27, 1947 — even if he returned before May 15, 1948, when the Zionists declared Israel's independence — lost all rights to it and any property he may have owned.

In general, Western opinion agreed with Israel's interpretation, and so "Palestine" passed out of the political vocabulary. Some attempts were made to aid the "former" Palestinians who had fled from the Zionist forces, but only as claimants on international charity, not as a people with political rights.

Israel announced that, although they

hated to see them flee, these Arabs had become infected with anti-Jewish hatred while outside the Jewish State and therefore could not be allowed to return to their homes. Besides, Israel was busy trying to attract Jewish immigrants (many of them, of course, refugees from other countries) to take over their farms and houses.

This is the situation against which the Palestinian liberation movement has been struggling. Until 1967, the Palestinian people clearly expected their liberation to come, if at all, at the hands of the existing Arab states, particularly Egypt. But the June disaster proved the emptiness of this hope to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. The years since then have witnessed a national renaissance among the Palestinian people, especially among the youth and those previously most desperate of all, the ones in the camps.

Even the Arabs who had remained behind under Israeli rule from 1948-1967 — those who were considered "reliable" enough for Israel to free them from military jurisdiction in 1965 — show signs of political militancy. This revival of hope and determination is very largely an achievement of Al-Fateh,

the Palestine National Liberation Movement.

The seeds of this organization were planted among Palestinians from Gaza in the aftermath of the 1956 disaster. For years this small group worked secretly to obtain money, arms, and training. Their main arena of activity was among Palestinians who had gone to the oil rich Arab Gulf to find work. On New Years in 1965, they claimed to have pulled off their first raid into Israel.

Self Reliance

The message which Fateh preached was that the liberation of Palestine must be accomplished by Palestinians themselves, and not by reliance upon — though hopefully with the assistance of — the existing Arab regimes. The task they set for themselves was to create one united liberation force, including all political opinions which agreed that military struggle against Israel was the top priority.

Since Fateh had received refuge and supplies from Syria prior to June 1967, they were able to launch a number of operations against Israeli forces as early as the summer of that year, and to establish bases among the Palestinians in Jor-



WHO'S WHO

Ten different groups are represented in the Central Committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. The largest and best known is Al Fateh, whose strategy is to subordinate all social questions to the struggle for national liberation.

Two smaller groups, both splits from the former Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (at one time a rival of Al Fateh for the leadership of the

guerrilla movement), have challenged Fateh's approach to Palestinian liberation.

The present PFLP, well-known now for its recent hijacking of four airliners, has distinguished itself from Fateh primarily on a tactical basis. Headed by Dr. Jnrji Hab'ash, it is known as the most terrorist-oriented of any of the guerrilla groups.

A leader of the earlier Arab Nationalists' Movement, Dr. Hab'ash seems to retain the notion that the Jews as *colons* simply have no legitimate place in Palestine and should be removed by any means necessary. Though giving lip-service to a Marxist analysis of Arab society, the PFLP rejects the relevancy of this approach if applied to this "foreign colony."

The Democratic Popular Front, led by Naif Hawatneh, split from the PFLP in early 1969. It describes itself as Marxist-Leninist, but is a politically heterogeneous grouping which embraces Maoists as well as Trotskyists and other tendencies. The DPF has stressed political

dan. These activities provided the spark of hope for the Palestinians amidst the shock of defeat. Fateh's increasing strength also constituted a challenge to Hussein's authority in his own country.

Having failed to establish a *foco* (guerrilla base) in the Israeli occupied homeland, Fateh established an approximation of the same on Jordanian territory. At first this was met with the armed opposition of Hussein, but as Fateh became more effective, while other commando groups politically to Fateh's left also organized among the Palestinians, Fateh and Hussein established the *modus vivendi* which saw Fateh serve as the mediating agency in clashes between Hussein's Arab Legion and leftist guerrillas earlier this year.

However, Hussein's acceptance of the cease fire with Israel presented the guerrillas with a difficult choice: either they must bow to the diktat of Cairo, which would be unlikely as long as Syria and Iraq remain opposed, or they must resist — possibly overthrow — the Hashemi regime. Fateh, unlike the left wing of the liberation movement, has always insisted that it does not interfere in the internal affairs of other Arab countries. When the future of Palestine is in question, however, the circumstances change.

Hijacking

For a while, dickering between Israel and Egypt occupied center stage. Then, just at a time when the Middle East cease fire seemed to be threatened by Israel's objection to Egypt placing Russian-built missiles near the Suez Canal, the attention of the world was directed once again to the essential factor underlying the whole dispute, and the one for which conventional international relations finds no place. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the most terrorist-oriented of the resistance groups, hijacked four airplanes.

Their first attempt to seize an El Al (Israeli) airliner was prevented by the murder of the male hijacker and the capture of Leila Khalid, the woman who had been part of a PFLP hijacking team earlier this year which took a TWA plane to Syria. The hijackers then destroyed one of Pan Am's giant new 747's at Cairo after releasing the passengers.



JORDANIAN ARMY TANK KNOCKED OUT AT RAMTHA

They took Swissair and TWA planes to a deserted, former British RAF base in Jordan, and finally added a BOAC plane to their catch.

In general, these acts served as a manifesto of the Palestinian resistance. The cease fire terms and the planned peace talks, in which the Palestinians had no place, represented a move by the major powers, along with Israel, the UAR and Jordan, to remove the Palestinians from active political consideration. The guerrillas were determined to prevent this.

Specifically, the PFLP announced, they were holding the planes and passengers in return for PFLP terrorists held in Swiss and West German prisons. The BOAC plane was added to gain the release of Leila Khalid, whom the British arrested when the El Al plane landed at London. Israeli and American passengers were held for an ill-defined number of prisoners in Israel.

This sort of spectacular operation has been the specialty of the PFLP. Their grandest undertaking to date, this has been, so far at least, more humane than many of their previous acts, like firing at passenger planes in Europe or bombing the El Al office in Athens. Although such acts reflect both their political and military weakness they gain them a lot of attention both in the Arab world and outside. The Central Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, representing nine other resistance groups, suspended the PFLP for the

hijackings and placed pressure upon them to release most of the hostages.

After destroying the three planes at the desert airbase, the PFLP released all but 50-odd of the passengers; men representing all five nationalities involved (38 of them American) plus five Israeli women were taken to a secret hiding place in Amman.

All this was a side-show in comparison to the war which was simultaneously building up between the Palestinian forces and those of the Arab Legion loyal to Jordan's King Hussein.

The form of dual power which had been established — after recurrent outbreaks of fighting — in this sparsely populated and economically unpromising kingdom of two million (60 percent of them Palestinian) left the various elements of the Palestinian resistance with the upper hand in many of the towns, and in the poorer districts of Amman, where Palestinians, reinforced by tens of thousands of post-1967 refugees, are the overwhelming majority. (Amman itself has grown from a desert fringe outpost before 1948 into a significant metropolis today; its population is between 6-700,000.) Hussein's army held sway elsewhere, with their monopoly of tanks, artillery, and air power.

As the Palestinians increasingly encroached upon Hussein's rule in the urban areas, the army was called away from the front to encircle the towns. When Hussein broke with the moderate guerrilla (or *feda'iyyin*) leadership of Fateh to embrace the cease fire along with Nasser, trouble was certain.

The PLO asserted that Hussein demonstrated his treason to the Arab cause by withdrawing his troops from the front to threaten the *feda'iyyin*. They demanded that the troops be returned to face "the enemy." Hussein countered by demanding that the guerrillas leave the cities and fight the "enemy" themselves instead of his authority.

The Jordanian army has been remarkably loyal to Hussein because he has been very careful in its selection. Even before 1967, when Jordan controlled a large part of Palestine (i.e. the West Bank), relatively few Palestinians were recruited; they were regarded as politically unreliable. Relatively few peasants or town-dwellers at all were taken, the army being primarily composed of professionals recruited from the beduin tribes whose shaikhs are involved in personal alliances with the king — many of several generations duration. Thus, in addition to high pay (provided by US subsidies), thorough training, and desert conservatism, traditional family obligations are added to assure loyalty.

The current war was sparked by the massacre of isolated Palestinian units

by bedu soldiers — inspired, it would seem, by extreme right-wing commanders eager to put the *feda'iyyin* in "their place" once and for all. Retaliation followed and by September 16 the Palestinians were exercising direct control over central Amman and a number of towns in the more populated North.

Hussein had his prime minister negotiating with Arafat but when he saw the terms proposed he reportedly (NYT, Sept. 17) cried that he had been betrayed, dismissed the P.M. immediately, and proclaimed army rule with martial law, the PLO refused to accept military rule and was supported by the trade union movement which called for a general strike.

Showdown

Thus the tanks began to roll. For a week the Palestine resistance fought, almost toppling the monarchy, winning the North and controlling most of Amman. At that point, combined Russian-American pressure on Syria, to withdraw the tanks Syria has sent in as assistance for the guerrillas, led to Hussein's victory. The bravery of the resistance was unequal to the tanks and planes of the regular army.

Hussein's victory was bought by enormous losses in material and civilian lives. The American government immediately announced its intention to replace all material losses of the feudal despot. It will be unable to replace the thousands of Palestinians killed by Hussein's army, earning for him the nickname of "butcher of Amman."

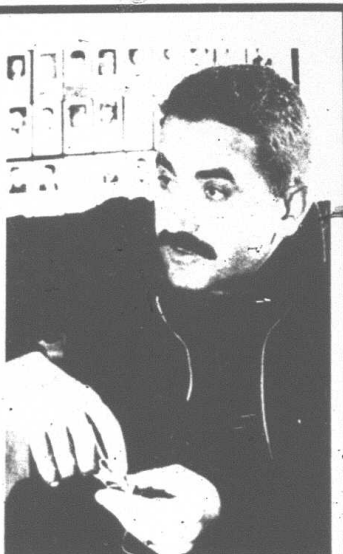
Hussein's regime remains precarious, despised by most of its subjects. It exists on the sufferance of its foreign protectors, America and, at least for the moment, Russia. The Russians preferred the victory of Hussein, America's client, to the victory of Fateh, supposedly their own ally. The victory of any Palestinian group jeopardized the chances of a big-power Russia-America imposed peace in the Middle East.

Internally, the Hashemite regime is weaker than before the civil war erupted. The other Arab states will not allow Hussein to carry through a total bloodbath to eradicate the guerrillas. But neither can the precarious dual power situation and mutual toleration continue. Inside the resistance movement, the left-wing tendencies hostile to the existing Arab regimes are gaining ground, and have been strengthened by the civil war. ■

work among peasants and workers along side of military training, and is oriented to the need for social revolution before the struggle against Zionism can succeed.

The DPF does not confine its work to Palestinians, but includes other Arab workers, peasants, and intellectuals in its ranks. The DPF also recognizes class antagonisms within Israeli Jewish society and works toward democratic, socialist revolution throughout the Middle East.

Believing that it is important for Arab Marxists to know that anti-Zionist activity is being carried on by Israeli Jews, the DPF publishes articles from the Israeli Socialist Organization, an Arab-Jewish group, in its Lebanese-published paper "Al-Hurriya." For complementary reasons, ISO publishes DPF articles in its own journal "Matspen" whenever Israeli censorship permits. Both organizations share a commitment to international, revolutionary socialism and the right of Hebrew political and cultural autonomy within one United Socialist Arab East.



POPULAR FRONT'S GEORGE HABASH



AL-FATAH'S YASSER ARAFAT

LIFE ON THE LINE

John Weber



When a new hire comes into our plant (GM auto assembly), management presents him or her with a book of shop rules and shows a short orientation film. The new hire is then delivered to a foreman to begin work. A month passes before the workers is officially made aware of the union's existence. This important occasion occurs, when the foreman hands the worker the fourth or fifth paycheck. On the paycheck, under the heading union dues, is a \$27 deduction — a \$20 initiation fee, and a \$7 monthly dues. With this lack of ceremony, the new worker is initiated into the union.

Thus, for the first month of work, he or she is not a member of the union and has no rights. During this period, the worker is not entitled to be represented by the union, and can be fired with no reason given. After 30 days, union membership goes into effect. With union membership comes the right to union representation.

However, for the first 90 days of work, the new hire has the status of a temporary employee. Though he or she has the right to some union representation, there is still little real protection the union can give. The company must give a reason for firing a temporary employee, but the contract does not give the union the right to challenge the reason given and protect the job.

The First 90 Days

While these are important things for the new hire to know, the union does nothing to get this information out. If you are lucky and chance to meet someone who knows the contract and is willing to take the time to explain it, you know the score. Otherwise, tough luck. And, of course, since little is done to educate the membership in general to the provisions of the contract, it is easy to get mis-information, which if taken seriously, could cost you your job.

During the first 90 days of work, if you want to keep your job, you have to take any shit that's handed you. The word of the foreman is the word of god. If you talk back, if you complain about being given more work than you can handle, if you object to the way you

are being treated, it can easily cost you your job. In fact, it's usually not a good idea even to ask the foreman legitimate questions — about how to do the job or where to get extra parts and so on.

New hires are on their own. They never know what is expected of them. Messing up on a job (something that can happen to anyone), or missing a day of work, throws the temporary employed into a panic, fearing for the job. The

foremen understand all of this and take advantage of it. They try to keep you off balance and guessing.

One reason for this company practice is an attempt to weed out those unable to adjust to the tough discipline of the line. There is another reason though, that is more subtle, and probably more important to GM. They understand that if they can destroy a man or woman's spirit during the first 90 days, they will have established a pattern in the person's mind that is then hard to break.

Once you have your 90 days in, all rights of a union member come into effect. If a problem develops with your job, or your foreman, you have the right to call your committeeman. There is one committeeman, however, for every 200 to 300 workers. The only way to call a committeeman, moreover, is to tell your foreman you want the committeeman.

This, in itself, can be very intimidating. If you are not sure of yourself, the foreman senses it and can sometimes

talk or scare you out of it. This becomes a particularly serious problem if you don't have confidence in the committeeman. When you aren't sure that the committeeman will back you up, calling him can just mean asking for trouble with the foreman. For this reason, even those who have the right to union representation will often take a lot of shit before getting up the nerve to file a grievance. The company knows this and takes advantage of it.

But even when you call the committeeman, he has very little power. After explaining the problem to the committeeman, he tries to settle it on the spot with the foreman. This usually takes the form of a shouting match between the foreman and the committeeman. When you first see one of these, it's impressive. It makes you feel good to see your foreman getting his ass chewed out.

After a while, however, you come to understand that the shouting match is often little more than a show, which might make the foreman uncomfortable, but doesn't necessarily solve the problem. It's a way that a committeeman can make it seem to the ranks that he is a fighter. Sometimes, the most doing nothing committeemen put on the best shows. If the matter is not settled on the spot, the committeeman writes up the grievance and turns it over to the shop committee. They try to resolve the issue by negotiations with management.

The grievance procedure has many serious problems. One of them is that a grievance, as soon as it is filed, becomes the property of the committeeman and the shop committee. It can be withdrawn without the permission or even the knowledge of the member who filed it. This leads to a practice of trading grievances. The committeeman and shop committee agree to drop certain grievances in return for action on others.

This practice can encourage a great deal of corruption. Well publicized grievances, or grievances filed by friends and supporters of the committeeman, can be won at the expense of other legitimate grievances, and often at the expense of more important one. The members have no easy way to protect themselves against this.

Playing Ball

Another problem with this procedure is that it gives GM the power to make a committeeman look bad or good. If you have a committeeman who wants to fight, the company can make sure that he is unable to win on any important grievances. This makes him look incompetent and ineffective, particularly if the shop committee won't back him up. On the other hand, if a committeeman is willing to play ball with

A Steward For Every Foreman



In which war was the American casualty rate as follows: 55 dead and 27,000 wounded for each day of the conflict?

Answer — the class war.

These are the statistics compiled by the government based on reports of deaths and injuries that occur on the shop floors of factories in America. As if this wasn't bad enough, a recent Jack Anderson Column refers to a report which claims that faulty statistics may be missing as many as 200,000 injuries per year. This casualty rate is higher than the Vietnam war's at its peak.

There is now discussion of a national health plan. This is a response to the

growing statistics on injuries. But even if this passes, which is doubtful, it is not enough. What is necessary are national safety rules to cover all shop situations.

Workers should fight for such rules by refusing to work on unsafe jobs, and demanding compensation for time lost from the companies. But this is not enough — the problem can only be solved politically. Last year, West Virginia coal miners held huge demonstrations at the State capital, demanding safety laws for the mines. Workers in other industries should follow their example, demonstrating to demand a national safety law covering all industries and the right to strike to enforce it.



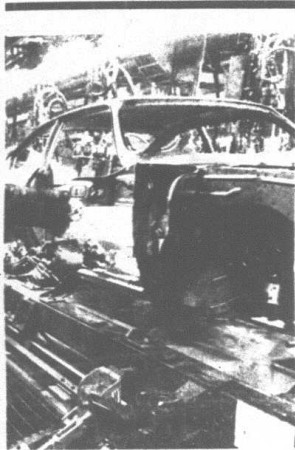
QUIZ

Michael Urquhart

the company, they can make him look good by letting him win certain grievances. Cronies of a kiss-ass committeeman receive all kinds of favors and can get away with anything.

The committeeman's job is almost fulltime. As a result, the post is very attractive to those looking for some way to get off the line. And once off, the fear of going back to the line is a real threat to them. This threat, together with the companies' power to make a committeeman look good or bad, is a powerful tool in the hands of GM. It usually works. Most committeemen, even if they have good intentions to start out with, become corrupted.

The individual committeeman who tries to do a good job is often destroyed. If his pride or principles prevent him from becoming a company kiss-ass, and if he doesn't learn the methods of organizing and fighting which get around the official grievance procedure, he finds himself demoralized and ineffective and so usually either gives in or quits.



VEGA ASSEMBLY PLANT

In our plant, the demand for a shop steward for every foreman has recently become very popular. There are about fifteen workers under every foreman. The proposal is that each such group elect one of their number to be shop steward. The steward would have many responsibilities. A steward would give an orientation to every new hire that comes into the plant. He or she would be a person who understands the contract, educates his or her co-workers on its provisions, encourages the work group to fight back as a unit when necessary, by means of official channels or otherwise.

The steward would be a person who works regularly on the line in direct view of the co-workers he or she represents. Each worker would have easy access to a steward for advice, help, or action. The close contact would make it easy for the workers to control their steward, enabling them to put pressure on the steward to keep him or her effective, or alternatively enabling them to easily recall a steward not doing the job effectively. This close contact would limit the ability of the corporation to corrupt the stewards as they do the committeemen.

The steward system would give the union a real fighting presence on the shop floor, something that does not now exist. It would be an outstanding step in the direction of rank and file control of the union. Most auto workers at present are at best apathetic about the union, which they see as something

they have little control over and which they feel does not represent them effectively enough.

The steward system would help to change this. It would also provide the basis for stewards' councils, which could meet on a departmental, shift, plant, or even regional basis. Such councils would be union bodies in direct contact with the ranks, which could both represent and lead the ranks, on a wide variety of issues.

It is no accident that the demand of a steward for every foreman is not being fought for by the current union leadership. A vital and functioning steward system would challenge entrenched centers of power that now exist in the union. It would drastically change the nature of the entire union. Both the union bureaucracy and GM fear such changes.

Some of us have discussed pursuing this program of a steward for every foreman in the likely event that it is not won in the current contract. We plan to continue explaining and building support for this program. We believe that with enough support from the ranks, a steward system which could have an important effect could be set up even if it was not officially recognized in the contract.

Even if the majority of the leaders of our local oppose it, we hope that we can get the support needed to start organizing steward elections and get the system functioning. We know that the best official steward structure is weak if the ranks don't understand or want it. On the other hand, a steward system which grows out of a genuine rank and file struggle and movement can have a great impact and be an important step in changing the inhuman conditions of life in the plant.

Innocent Till Guilty

Another demand that has great appeal to workers in our plant is innocent until proven guilty. At present, if GM disciplines a worker, that disciplining goes into effect immediately and stays in effect until and unless it is overturned by the settlement of a grievance. A person can be suspended, lose pay, or even get fired merely on the basis of management claims.

It takes months to years to settle a grievance. By then the matter is forgotten and it is difficult to get people excited about it. This makes it easy for important grievances to be dropped, and permits management a free hand in doing what it wants to the workers. It takes the gut out of every attempt to protect workers. If someone is thrown out on the streets, the time to fight that is immediately, not to wait for two years. The main effect of the official channels is to dissipate the struggle.

If we win innocent until proven guilty, management could not put its discipline into effect until the entire grievance machinery had been exhausted. This would make it much more difficult for GM to unfairly discipline us and would make it more difficult for the union to permit important grievances to be swept under the rug.

While the union officials at least pay lip-service to this important demand, we doubt that they take it seriously enough to put up the kind of fight necessary for winning it. For this reason, many of us consider the fight for a steward for every foreman to be doubly important. It is only with such rank and file organization that our people can be defended and we can begin fighting back against the inroads GM has made against our working conditions and against our dignity as workers. ■

The Barrio

Emil Guerrere

"East Los Angeles, loosely defined, is an area in which 'Mexican-Americans' (or persons of Spanish surname) predominate, covering Boyle Heights, City Terrace, and East Los Angeles. In 1965, the total Spanish-surname population was approximately 170,000, 76 percent of the total population of East Los Angeles.

"The ghettoization of Mexican-Americans in the Los Angeles area is not complete as in the case of Negroes. Today, roughly one-fifth of the Spanish-surnamed population of the Los Angeles Long Beach Metropolitan Area is concentrated in East Los Angeles.

"Persons of Spanish-Surname" is a title used by the Census Bureau to denote all person of Spanish or Mexican origin. Since most of the Spanish-surnamed population of ELA, are persons of Mexican descent, the designation "Mexican-Americans" is used by Census reports to refer to the same population group as the Census Bureau calls "persons of Spanish-surname."

So say the census reports. Regardless of the accuracy of such census figures, there is an incredible naïvete in the general population in Los Angeles that goes far beyond the mere lumping of nearly one million people into an undefinable homogeneous mass. There is also a strong tendency to dismiss this community as a sleepy, ignorant bunch who are politically impotent, and can be nothing more than servile instruments of the Democratic Party.

This attitude has left Los Angeles with a rather limited perspective on how to deal with the mass uprisings that have occurred, both on August 29 during the National Chicano Moratorium Committee's anti-war demonstration, and during the Mexican Independence Day Parade on September 16.

Until now, it has been pretty easy to "deal with" the "Chicano problem." Certain carefully chosen city officials with "Spanish-Surnames" are appointed or elected, thus giving Chicanos a "strong voice in the decision-making process." Chicano povertyocrats circulate among the population, with funds for everyone to fight over. To this is added a strong measure of police harassment and outright repression, whenever Mayor Yorty, Sheriff Pitchess, or the police chief deems it necessary.

East Los Angeles, in that sense, is no different from any other large urban

center with a rotting inner city and all the problems that entails. However, what has developed here is the most active of all the third-world communities in the US, with hundreds of organizations.

Most of these organizations are strongly nationalistic in character, pointing toward identity with and pride in "La Raza" as the cornerstone for any Chicano group. The awareness of a need for collective mass action, together with the frustrations of dealing with the poverty program bureaucracy, has given birth to an avalanche of organizational activity.

The eruptions during the 16th of September Independence Day Parade were almost incidental to the main thrust in the community. They were merely reflections of the city's complete inability to accommodate even the most modest of the Chicano community's demands.

The list of groups in motion range from welfare rights organizations to Chicano caucuses in large plants throughout basic industry in Los Angeles. In every phase of Chicano barrio life, some group is organized and ready to confront the injustices inflicted on it.

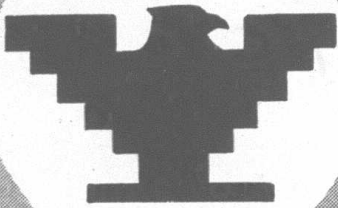
The murder of a person of the stature of Reuben Salazar on August 29 by sheriff's deputies symbolized to Chicanos the common frustrations they share at the futility of dealing with, and trying to work within, this thoroughly repressive system.

The Los Angeles District Attorney's Office hopes to turn the inquest into Reuben Salazar's death to its own advantage. It seeks: 1) to convince the society-at-large that the city administration is actually willing to mete out justice to the perpetrators of such a crime as murdering a Chicano, and 2) to lead the Chicano community down that well-known labyrinth of specious argumentation and judicial acrobatics.

Trying to wear down the highly sensitive nerve endings of an exasperated barrio seems a curious way for this donkey city administration to solve its problems. The Barrio people are masters at spotting the double-talk hustle of the Mayor's office. The City will accomplish nothing except to further incense the Chicanos; by highlighting its ineptitude at dealing with the problem of justice, and its utter disregard of Chicano culture and spirit. ■



Los Angeles Chicano Moratorium Aug. 29



Huelga in Yakima Valley

Wes Everest

On Friday afternoon, September 4, a spontaneous strike began in the hop fields of the rich Yakima valley in Washington state, the nation's largest hop growing area. Initiated by a few Chicano farm workers at one of the Yakima Chief Hop Ranches, the *huelga* soon spread to other hop ranches in the valley.

The main demands of the strike are: 1) a minimum wage of \$2.00 an hour (up from \$1.50 to \$1.65 an hour); 2) the right to hold elections for union representation and collective bargaining; 3) no reprisals against the striking farm workers; and 4) appointment of a grievance committee for field workers, with a committee chairman at each ranch. Although the farm workers had no strike fund and no outside support, they could no longer tolerate the low wages, long hours (12-15 hours a day with no overtime) and lousy working conditions.

When 30 of the 40 workers at the "Little Chief" ranch first walked out and set up picket lines, the owner of the ranch brought in workers from the nearby "Big Chief" ranch to try to break the strike. When these workers saw there was a strike going on, most of them joined the picket line and within a few hours had picket lines up at the "Big Chief" ranch as well.

As the strike was spread by farm workers going to other ranches and talking to the workers, the owners brought in high school student scabs to harvest the hops. This scab herding bought the employers a little time but didn't solve their problem. The students were much slower than the experienced workers, and school started on Tuesday, September 7. Since the hops dry out and fall off the vines in one to two weeks, many of the growers have been forced to negotiate, some within a few hours after a walkout and a few even before a walkout occurred.

Hop Patrol

The last strike in the Yakima valley was met with ruthless suppression. In August of 1933, farmworkers in the hop fields struck for higher wages and an end to the miserable and inhuman living conditions in the camps. An army of growers and vigilantes descended on their camps with clubs and pick handles, rifles and shotguns. The strikers tried to defend themselves with rocks, but were hardly a match for well-armed vigilantes on horses.

These farm workers were driven on foot about 10 miles down the valley

into a stockade erected by the county jail. Here they were held from August 1933 to the spring of 1934, with no formal charges filed against them. They were then released a few at a time, escorted out of the valley by vigilantes and told never to return. Several were tarred-and-feathered.

Many of the valley's most "prominent" and "respectable" residents were involved in the vigilante groups. For several years after, a "Hop Patrol," made up of State Highway Patrolmen was maintained to prevent "labor disorders." The Hop Patrol and company spies continually harassed the migrant farm workers and drove anyone who even mentioned the word "strike" out of the valley.

After years of this harassment and intimidation, the local farm workers in the valley initiated their own struggle: Inspired in part by the farm workers' organizing drives going on now in grapes and lettuce in California. At the time of this writing, at least 13 of the valley's 170 or so hop ranches have been involved with the strike, primarily the larger ones. Contracts have already been signed with at least 12. A meeting has been set up with the Washington Hop Growers Association, where all the growers may be asked to sign contracts or face a strike of the whole valley. At the request of the local farm workers, a representative of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC) came up from California to aid in the unionization of the farm workers in the

valley.

One of the biggest problems facing the local organizers is the reluctance of the migrant workers (a minority of the work force) to go on strike for fear of being evicted from the shabby, run-down shacks the growers provide for them. The growers themselves are using the old line about "outside agitators" in an attempt to discredit the strike, even though the first walkout was led by a local farm worker (who dropped out of school in the ninth grade to work in the fields) and the first contracts signed were written out longhand on notebook paper.

The organizing drive is still going on among hop pickers, but the hop season will be over in a couple of weeks. The next crops to be harvested in the valley are grapes and apples. The racist nature of the hiring practices in the valley is most clearly illustrated during the apple harvest. The apple pickers are mainly Anglos (whites) — schools are let out during the apple season — while the harder "stoop labor," like the hop harvest, is left mainly to Chicanos.

This sort of division of the work force along racial lines has, of course, been used by employers time and again in the history of the labor movement to play one group of workers off against another and keep people from uniting against the common enemy, the employers. However, it is to be hoped that the Anglo apple pickers will be en-

couraged by the militancy and gains made by the Chicano farm workers to organize for their own benefit and unite with all farm workers in a common struggle against the growers. Asparagus in the early spring is a crop which is mainly harvested by Chicano labor. There is little doubt that the farm workers in the valley will continue to organize in preparation for this harvest.

The organization of farm workers is one of the most important organizing drives going on in the American working class today. The migrant nature of the labor force and the great number of small farms led to the failure of similar organizing attempts in the past. Today, the increasing absorption of small farms by large corporate "agri-business" and the less transient character of the labor force opens the possibility of the successful organization of all the 2 million or so farm laborers in this country.

Political Offensive

Inevitably, the growers will use their flunkies in government and the courts to mount a political and jurisdictional attack on the organizing drive. Anti-labor legislation and injunctions are already being handed out to the growers in California. Farm labor has long been specifically excluded from most of the legislation on minimum wages, working conditions, etc. that is on the books right now.

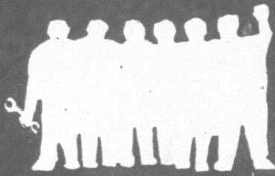
The support of all working people will be necessary to stop the political offensive of agri-business. A crucial first step is breaking from the Democratic Party and "friends of labor" like candidates Unruh and Tunney in California. When the crunch comes, they always end up giving just as much support to business as the rest of the establishment politicians.

When the word went out that there was a strike in the Yakima valley, a support group formed in Seattle to aid the strikers by sending money, food, and clothes. The Western Washington Huelga Support Committee, made up mainly of Chicanos who have come from farm worker families in the valley, is continuing to give aid to the organizing efforts of local farm workers in Yakima. Contributions can be mailed to them at: 4709 36th N.E., Seattle, Washington, 98105. ■

[Wes Everest is a graduate student at the University of Washington and a member of the Seattle International Socialists.]



IS West Coast News Service



Nixon's Labor Barbeque

The outbreak of "hardhatism" — the public and sometimes violent expression of self-defeating reactionary attitudes by building trades workers, particularly in New York City — has created a crisis which ever more clearly displays the bullet-headed ignorance of the policies of the George Meany leadership of the AFL-CIO.

There is not a reactionary jingoist or fascist hopeful in the nation who has not felt his or her adrenelin pump fast with hope as they see those workers take to the streets in support of nose-end patriotism and the Nixon-Agnew Administration. The main problem of the reactionaries in the power groups that rule the nation has been that they could find no mass base of support for their ideas.

Their own upper class is, as always, too small. The traditionally conservative small shop keepers are no longer a dominant force within the middle class. Many professionals have been alienated from the status quo. Large numbers of the new middle class white collar workers have been radicalized by the Vietnam war and the general deterioration of American life. Middle class youth are in open revolt.

Most importantly, the blue collar working class — all the ponderous pronouncements of establishment sociologists like Seymour Martin Lipset notwithstanding — has never been receptive to conservative programs for shoring up the institutions of capitalist society.

Now the "hardhat" demonstrations seem to have changed the picture. For the first time, the small group of people who employ the labor force of this country, and get rich off it, see the possibility of finding significant numbers of troops that will follow them, destroying the unity of labor and protecting them from the wrath of the multitude of less skilled workers and the working poor. AFL President Meany's remarkable response to "hardhatism" has been to encourage it, to try to use it to back up his own political position in the labor movement.

Tea Party

Last Labor Day, without embarrassment, Meany brought over seventy top officials from the Washington headquarters of AFL-CIO affiliated unions, together with their wives, to a White House dinner hosted by the Nixons. Later, on the White House lawn, crack military personnel performed a musical, marching re-enactment of important moments in American history for four thousand staff members and clerical workers (and their families) from the union international offices. From the veranda of the White House that faces south, the diners watched the tableau as they smoked and sipped after dinner drinks.

The "fraternization" symbolized by this first-of-its-kind Labor Day demonstration was followed by official praise for the Nixon dinner by Al Barkan, the director of the AFL-CIO's Committee for Political Education (COPE).

Barkan offered no clear-cut endorsement of Nixon or the Republican Party. That would have been tactically stupid for Meany and the future of his policies. Just a week earlier when Meany held a long press conference — offering among other things his idea that organized workers have become a conservative section of society — he was fairly clear about his criticisms of the Nixon Administration's domestic policy despite full agreement with its foreign policy. Although he made no mention of the Nixon administration's treatment of coal miners, railroad workers, blacks, and students, Nixon is not spending enough money inside the nation to suit Meany and it is a sure bet that he was referring to spending for construction and the resulting jobs for building tradesmen; they are his main power base in the federation.

In all probability, Meant does not view the Labor Day dinner as a genuine "love feast." He no doubt feels he has "cut a fat one," that he is making the most of a bad situation and is pulling off a maneuver that, given the limits of his consciousness, is in the best interests of the people that in his vision are the labor movement.

But Meany's sincerity is not the issue. No matter what he thinks he is doing, the events building up to and climaxing on the torchlit and magnolia-scented veranda of the White House revealed that the AFL-CIO is attempting to build an open working relationship with the Nixon-Agnew administration. More-

over, the dinner gave an unqualified and official go-ahead to "hardhatism."

Meany and his handpicked successor, Land Kirkland, are by no means the type of leaders who are willing to enter struggles that might make it necessary for them to call upon labor's ranks for help. They know that a mobilization of the ranks can lead to demands for union democracy and militancy. Therefore, in order to win any crumbs whatever for the ranks, they need a working relationship with whichever party is in power.

History is being harder on Meany than on some of his earlier counterparts. With the advent of minimal welfare legislation, the big city bosses have gradually lost their power. More generally, the continuing and growing crisis in American society have more and more undermined the political machines of both parties, particularly the Democratic.

There is no longer anything to sustain the Democrats when they are not in power. Out of power they can provide no meaningful rewards for their traditional supporters. Things are no better for the Republican Party when it is out of power. Under pressure from below, both parties are now so weak that they are capable of creating a machine only when they are in power and have the taxpayers' money with which to buy people and publicity.

Thus, squeezed by the ranks to produce some gains, Meany can get no help from Hubert Humphrey, Lyndon Johnson, Edward Kennedy, or Eugene McCarthy. He feels he has to build a working relationship with the party in power. In the absence of that, he has only two options; he can stand still and stagnate without a program, or he can take the

lead in building a labor party.

The latter is too dangerous for him because it too would open the door to all kinds of rank and file initiatives. Standing still and stagnating is just what he has been doing for some time. He began to stir a little three years ago when the UAW and the Chemical workers left the AFL-CIO to form the still unborn Alliance for Labor Action. But obviously he would not be happy making Reuther-like attempts at rhetorical militance and social progressiveness.

"Hardhatism" provided George Meany with the base of support that he needed in order to supply the kind of leadership that obviously comes naturally to him. "Hardhatism" gave him something to bargain with. He was able to approach the Republicans for the first time and show some proof of his ability to deliver votes to them and not just to the Democrats.

The President of the United States and all his retainers are no less anxious than Meany. They responded eagerly to his overtures. Secretary of Labor James Hodgson is now speaking regularly before business and industrial groups, to proclaim that the "blue collar man is with us all the way." In his September 10 speech in Springfield, Illinois, Spiro Agnew claimed that his party was now going to represent the "Workingmen of this country, the forgotten men of American politics, white collar and blue collar," and asked that they support the candidates of his party.

Tiger By the Tail

What Agnew in his cynicism cannot understand is that his tirades (like those of George Meany) against intellectuals, the young, and the poor, are not enough in themselves to build a firm reactionary base within the "aristocracy" of the American working class. The main well springs of "hardhatism" are not to be found in the reactions to youth protests against the war or pressures from blacks and Chicanos for jobs. Like blue-collar support for Wallace in the last election, "hardhatism" is a distorted, racist response to the worsening position of American workers. It is the system which Agnew seeks to defend that is responsible for the inflation, job insecurity, and urban decay that oppress the construction workers. Once they are called into motion, it may be hard to slow them down. And once they begin to fight for their real needs, they may well discover who their real enemies are. ■



CONSTRUCTION WORKERS'

MARCH ON LOWER BROADWAY

In a future issue, this column will discuss the economic and social issues behind "hardhatism," and the accelerated process of division in the top leadership of the international unions, due to George Meany's policies.

TV GUIDE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

everyday life. The Green Phantom is the advertisers' image of your wife, your husband, your boyfriend, your girlfriend, your neighbor, your boss, your kid. It is the secret of the television commercial.

In his book *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, the sociologist Erving Goffman shows how most Americans are caught up in maintaining the appearance of being moral characters. Morality in this case means pretending to be "normal." If you drink too much you take Certs and hide the bottle. If you hate married life, you smile and put on a good show for the public. If you hate your job you still act busy and interested around the boss. These are performances, much like an actor gives on the stage.

Performances

Most of us do perform a lot, and most of our performances are routine. We comb, bleach, and dye our hair, clean the house for visitors, dress up to go out. Although these are routine devices, we feel they are necessary. We perform just to get along, sometimes to get along a little better.

The more a person's life becomes a series of performances, the more fragile it is. An alcoholic can't fool everyone for very long. Nor can an unhappy wife fool

her friends. Some performances are difficult to maintain. They take consistency and a lot of effort.

It is here that the Green Phantom strikes. TV advertisers are counting on the hope that everything you do is mere performance, the manufacture of illusions about yourself. And they are counting on the hope that you will do nothing more about it than consume their products. TV commercials operate on the belief that mil-

lions and millions of people feel they really don't have much going for themselves, but still want to get along.

The Green Phantom exploits two kinds of fear: 1. Fear that the performance you are giving might be disrupted. 2. Fear that if you don't give a better performance than you already are, you won't get along. The first is by far the most important. Most drug commercials exploit the fear that your performance will be disrupted; the drugs are supposed to allow you

to continue in your role without breaking down. In one Anacin commercial, for example, a housewife suffers "nervous tension" from heavy work and crying babies. She pops some Anacin. Then she reappears, well-dressed and relaxed, ready to perform the most important scene of her day — greeting her husband. Deodorant, mouthwash and hair preparation commercials follow the same theme. Hour-After-Hour deodorant features a dumb and litling wife, who runs about doing chores in a track suit. Because of Hour-After-Hour, at the end of the day she is able to wear an evening gown to welcome her husband.

No doubt the Green Phantom has worked so far. Certainly, it has worked well enough to enrich plenty of drug and cleanliness firms. The Green Phantom's success shows how inventive capitalism can be. Thirty million people get headaches from their jobs. The answer: Make a profit on it! Sell them Excedrin.

Dream World

Advertisers, like employers, see people in terms of the market. They are only interested in those qualities people have which would make them susceptible to buying products. The advertisers think about these qualities. "What kind of person would buy our detergent?" they say, then make up a commercial about that person. That is why actors in commercials never seem even remotely like real people. They reflect only those qualities that advertisers feel are directly related to the market. The actors never portray real people, only abstract, perfect consumers. They are visions of how the advertisers would really like us to be. Commercials are the dream world of American capitalism. ■



...feedback...

Child Care

In regard to the lead article on the UAW in the September 11th issue of *Workers' Power*, I feel that the IS should not call for child care only for women workers, but, rather for all workers. The importance of child care is not simply that it makes things easier for women, but that child care must become a social responsibility, not the responsibility of individual women. Raising the demand only for women workers perpetuates the idea that children are the responsibility of the mother. Furthermore, it tacitly implies that we accept the idea that if women don't work there is nothing wrong with them staying home taking care of the kids all day — we should be for wives of male auto workers being freed from this burden as well as women auto workers.

Also, on a concrete level, most women don't work in the kind of very organized mass industries where child care can be won (and financed), and thus demanding child care only for women auto workers doesn't speak to the needs of large sectors of the working class.

It's much the same as the demand for paternity leave (a demand also neglected in the UAW article) — we do not limit demands relating to children to demands for women. Secondly, it is also necessary to raise along with the demand for company financing of child care the demand for workers' control of that care.

Eilene Coopersmith

Rejoinder

I agree with Eileen Coopersmith; on this point, our article was badly thought out. In fact, I would go further. Because so many working class women are not employed, any working class women's movement based in the shops would have to put major emphasis on reaching beyond the shops to involve non-employed women. It would have to fight for the working class movement as a whole to commit itself, not just to equality for working women, but to the liberation of all working class women.

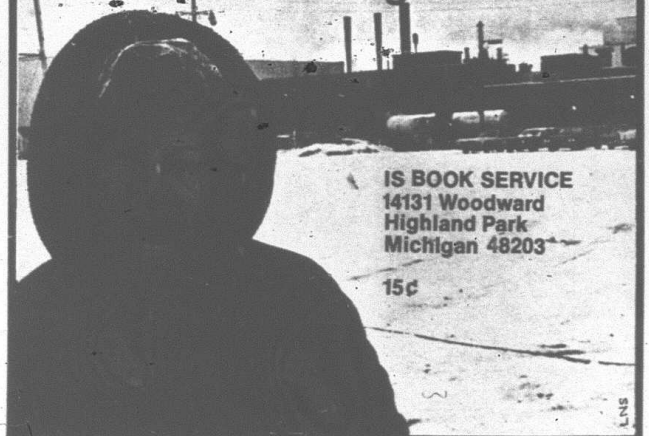
At the same time, we expect that women workers would take the lead in

demanding child care, if necessary without waiting to convince males. It is, first of all, women's right to be freed from the burden of child care, and soci-

ety's responsibility to take the burden on.

James Coleman

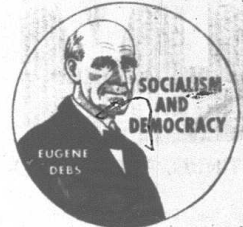
Women Workers The Forgotten Third of the Working Class



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Socialist Songbook - 50c

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 Native Americans; 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.

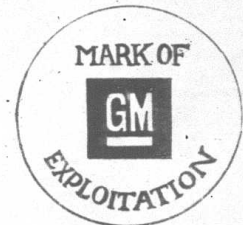
The struggle for workers' power is world-wide. Class oppression and exploitation is the common condition of humanity. US corporations plunder the world's riches and drive the world's people nearer to starvation, while military intervention by the US government, serving these corporations, awaits

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.

Auto Strike Buttons



TV GUIDE

Every night a lot of us TV addicts sit down in front of our sets and wait for the entertainment to begin. Occasionally the entertainment does begin — but there are all those interruptions. They keep stopping the show to sell us things.

I once knew a man who tried to stop the interruptions. He wired a gadget to the TV speaker, a switch to shut off the sound. This was before TV manufacturers invented remote control. Whenever a commercial came on, this man would flip the switch and smile, like he won. But it didn't really work. The show was still interrupted. The man gradually gave up using his switch and started watching commercials again.

The real use of entertainment is to maintain your attention between commercials. Television is a commercial medium. The industry aims to sell, not to entertain or inform. Dramatic shows, for instance, always build to a peak, then suddenly cut to a commercial. You can always tell when a commercial is coming. It comes at the most exciting part.

Hard Sell

I studied some 160 prime-time commercials to find out what they are about and who they are intended for. I excluded several types from the study: public service announcements, such as warnings against smoking; institutional advertising, such as commercials that tell how Borg-Warner helped put men on the moon; and internal advertising, commercials urging you to watch certain TV shows. Public service announcements and institutional advertising make up an insignificant amount of total prime-time advertising — probably less than five per cent. Internal advertising is heavy at this time because of the new shows.

The commercials I studied are those intended to sell products to people. Two facts are overwhelmingly obvious: First, the products are cheap, the vast majority selling for two dollars or less. Television orients toward impulse-buying, which means that when you're shopping and you see an item you weren't especially planning to buy, something clicks. It's cheap, it may be useful, you buy it.

Secondly, commercials orient primarily toward women. Fifty four per cent of prime time commercials are for women exclusively; thirty four per cent, or roughly one-third, are for both men and women. Just twelve per cent are for men exclusively. Of course the proportions change depending on the audience that the sponsors anticipate. Commercials during football games are mostly for men. But on the whole ad-

vertisers look upon women as their major audience of consumers.

Advertisers try to reach women through the traditional inferior roles that women are supposed to play. They believe that women as consumers act, either as man-trapper, housekeeper, or mother-wife. These categories are not easy to keep separate. For instance, good housekeeping is supposed to be the mark of a good wife. However, if we consider these categories as rough indicators, women's commercials divide equally among them, approximately one third falling into each.

Because women and TV will be the subject of another column, my remarks will be brief. The main point is that not only do commercials show women playing inferior roles, but even more, they show women as inferior people playing inferior roles. Close to eighty per cent of all commercials for women portray women as childish or debased. Most housekeeping commercials, for example, show women as completely caught up in trivia. For Cold Power, a woman confesses that she once turned her husband's underwear pink. For Clorox,

a woman feels overcome by a "hopeless wine stain" on her husband's shirt. For Dash, a woman complains with hands on hips that her wash isn't cleaner with her new washing machine.

In nearly all women's commercials, the voice of authority is that of a man. The actual pitch, or voice-over, is made by a man. The expert who drops by the house is a man. Lasting Beauty, for instance, introduces someone called David Lawrence, who became famous by "helping women look prettier."

It is interesting to note that except as the voice of authority, men in commercials often fare poorly. They are mostly pampered idiots or pretty boys who rarely speak any lines. This indicates that where women are presented as inhuman, men will be too, although in different ways.

Slow Death

Television advertisers are obsessed with your body. Almost ninety per cent of all commercials are for products to be applied directly to your body, or taken internally. In fact, it is safe to say that the only products they do not tell you to put on or in your body, are ones that would kill you outright. For example, they do not tell you to drink Clorox bleach and Lysol disinfectant, or to bathe in Vanish toilet cleanser.

Instant death is the limit of the advertisers' humanitarianism. For they do tell you to put smoke from Pall Mall, Salem, Tareyton and numerous other cigarettes into your lungs. They tell you to put Coca-cola, 7-Up, Wink, Rol Aids and Hawaiian Punch into your stomach; to put Close-Up, Ultra-Brite and Doublemint into your mouth; to put No-Doz, Bufferin, Anacin, Excedrin and Excedrin PM into your bloodstream; and to coat your intestines with Pepto-Bismol. For the outside of your body, they tell you to dissolve the hair off your legs with Neet. They tell you to put Protein 21 and Vitalis on your head; to bathe with Dial and Safeguard deodorant bars, and spray yourself with Right Guard.

Of the preparations TV advertises for your body, some seventy-two per cent are harmful. These range from cigarettes that cause lung cancer, to phoney drugs

that make you sick and sluggish, to deodorants that cause skin rash. Advertisers do not want to kill you outright, but they are willing to kill you slowly.

It is no wonder advertisers want to destroy your body — they hate it. At least, they want you to hate it. Over half the commercials concerning your body convey an image of the body as bad. Excluding cigarettes, which are a peculiar category, preparations for the body make up some seventy per cent of body commercials.

There are three major images of the bad body, which get roughly equal attention. The first is the body as a House of Disease. The diseases are minor ones, amenable to treatment by super-market medicines. These include headaches, colds, sleeplessness and assorted aches and pains. The second major image is the body as Source of Odor. Odor has long been a theme of TV advertising. It often seems as if the sole mission of Americans — especially women — is to eliminate odor from themselves, their families, their homes, and the entire United States.

Odor first came from the body in general and armpits in particular. Then it was discovered that odor also comes from the mouth, and with color. TV came color mouthwash, red, yellow, and green. More recently advertisers discovered that odor comes from the feet. They show a man who causes people to faint when he takes off his shoes. The most recent discovery is vaginal-odor, delicately described as "a woman's special problem."

Bad body commercials are designed to make you stand in fear. They are like miniature horror movies, except in this case you are not supposed to tremble, you are supposed to buy. There is really no such thing as the Green Phantom, yet millions of people were so frightened by it that they ran out and bought mouthwash.

The Green Phantom is the wife who faints when her husband takes off his shoes; the husband who gags when he tastes his wife's coffee; the boy who wrinkles his nose when he smells his home; the neighbor whose wash is whiter; the boss who frowns when his secretary can't work fast enough because her stomach hurts. The Green Phantom is everyone around you in

Continued on page 14

TV's Green Phantom: The Commercial



Charles
Leinenweber