

Workers' Power

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COAL SETTLEMENT:

'IT'S A COMPANY CONTRACT'

By Jim Woodward

IN VIRGINIA and Ohio, local leaders of the United Mine Workers union were burning copies of the new coal contract. Almost no one could be found who liked it.

"It's a company contract," said a West Virginia miner. "In most areas, it's a step backwards from the '74 contract."

Objections were particularly heated over contract clauses dealing with safety, health and pension benefits, and "labor stability."

But after three months on strike, and with the threat of government intervention hanging over the coalfields, no one was taking bets on whether the contract would be approved.

If the miners reject the contract, they will have plenty of reason for their action. Here's one example:

In dark, underground mines, where the danger of roof falls, explosions, floods, electrocution, or machinery accidents is ever-present, the role of the union safety committee is critical. Last year, 142 miners were killed—or about one every other working day.

In coal mining, safety clashes directly with productivity; that is, with company profits. That is why

the miners have insisted on the right to refuse to work in unsafe mines.

Since the late 1940's, whenever the union safety committee believed miners were in "imminent danger," they had the right to stop work in the endangered area.

The new contract waters down this right by requiring the agreement of a government inspector to keep the area closed. It also says that the safety committeeman can be removed for the life of the contract if an arbitrator rules they have abused their positions.

These provisions leave the miners' safety up to people who do not work in the mines and who do not have an immediate knowledge of the safety hazards of a particular area. That spells danger.

More terms of this contract, and why it is a step backwards for the miners, will be found on page 3.

OPENING SHOT

But the issue goes beyond the miners' union. Some miners feel it's the opening shot in an attack on the entire labor movement.

David Lamm, a miner from Bell, West Virginia, explained how he sees it:

"The most important thing for the miners and for everybody else to understand is that if we reject this contract we'll be up against the army, probably Taft-Hartley. The main question then is which direction to go.

"Other workers outside the coalfields [should understand] that the attack on the UMW isn't an attack on the UMW. That's only the union they've picked.

"They've picked it for certain



These Ohio miners made their contribution to the coal shortage by burning copies of their proposed contract.

historical reasons—it's one of the most militant, independent unions in the country. If they can attack the United Mine Workers, they can attack any union.

"And this is just the beginning. The political, international, economic situation is changing very rapidly, and they can't afford the kind of trade union policies any longer that industries in this country had in the past.

"They're going to start pulling in the reins. We're just the first one to be attacked.

"It's my feeling that people

should see the rejection of this contract really means that the mine workers are going to lead the fight in defense of the American trade union movement.

"It no longer becomes a question of us getting a contract. It becomes

a question of an attack on labor, and it's just as much an attack on auto workers and steel workers and any other union in this country as it is on the mine workers. I'm convinced that's what it's all about."

MORE ON THE MINERS

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"It no longer becomes a question of us getting a contract. It becomes a question of an attack on labor, and it's just as much an attack on auto workers and steel workers and any other union in this country as it is on the mine workers."

Victory for South Africa Solidarity

PITTSBURGH — After several months of pressure, coin dealer Charles Litman, owner of the Coin Exchange here, has agreed to stop selling the Krugerrand. Members of the Free Southern African Committee, who have been picketing the downtown shop since after Christmas, agreed to stop picketing.

This victory came as boycotters

were gathering on the 25th of February for what had become a weekly parade in front of the store.

The owner came dashing out, pleading that the committee focus on some other shop and leave him alone. After a short argument, he agreed to stop handling the symbol of South African racism.

The Committee was earlier able to stop the sale of South African

fish at a major fish market, but this was its first attempt at removing the Krugerrand from Pittsburgh stores. The boycott will now focus on another dealer, and an earlier success is expected.

The group is also working with several other organizations on the boycott of banks doing business with South Africa. Reports from preliminary negotiations indicate

that headway has been made with Pittsburgh National, while Mellon Bank is stalling.

There should be no doubt about the importance of the Krugerrand to the South African economy.

Fully 14% of South Africa's gold production is exported in the form of Krugerrand coins. Last year a total of 3,331,344 of the coins were sold—nearly double the 1976 total,

according to the Star Weekly of South Africa.

The United States makes up one of the biggest Krugerrand markets. The biggest victory yet for anti-Krugerrand campaigners in this country was won in December, when Merrill Lynch stopped selling the coins, citing "financial reasons."

"RIGHT TO LIFERS" FIREBOMB OHIO CLINIC

by Caroline Greene

CLEVELAND—A week of harassment against abortion clinics by right-wingers who claim to be "pro-life" climaxed in the fire-bombing of an abortion clinic here February 18.

Concerned Women's Clinic staff member Aurelia Elliott, 48, was treated for chemical burns of the face and chest after the incident. A patient having an abortion had to be rushed to a nearby hospital.

Ten days later, Akron anti-abortionists scored a victory. On February 28, the City Council passed, 7-6, a strict abortion control ordinance requiring doctors to notify the parents or husband of a woman who asks for an abortion. They must tell the woman she is guilty of trying to kill a live baby.

Joseph Meissner of the Right to Life Society of Greater Cleveland said the firebombing could have been avoided if Cleveland's abortion law required such advance notice. Police supported, without evidence, the claim that the bomber was a man who was angry because his daughter or wife had chosen not to bear a child.

WEEK OF HARASSMENT

For three days in the week of February 13, anti-abortionists had picketed the Cleveland Center for Reproductive Health, carrying religious signs and pushing their way into the clinic's waiting room.

On Wednesday, February 15, vandals smashed equipment and splashed brown iodine around the Concerned Women's Clinic.

Three days later someone posing as a deliveryman firebombed the same clinic, throwing gasoline into a staff member's face and gutting the entire clinic.

William A. Baird, founder of the Abortion Freedom League, stated that the attacks are part of a national campaign of violent opposition to abortion, encouraged by the Roman Catholic Church. (See accompanying article.)

Meissner said his group would pressure Cleveland's city Council to enact a strict ordinance.

Eighty Cleveland anti-choicers went to Akron by bus to join a rally of 500 others on the day of the Akron vote.

PRO-CHOICE!

But abortion supporters are organizing in Akron too.

A broad-based Akron Pro-Choice Coalition (APCC) has been formed to block the ordinance.

Davis Cup Boycott Organizer Stabbed

South Africa protester accused of "assaulting himself."

The Committee for Justice for Richard Lapchick issued a statement this week, expressing outrage over threats to prosecute him for "assaulting himself."

Lapchick, a professor at Virginia Wesleyan University, is a leading organizer of a boycott and demonstrations to be held March 17-19 against the South African Davis Cup team at Vanderbilt.

On February 14, he was attacked in his office by two men who carved the word "nigger" on his abdomen with scissors and told him, "you



Cleveland Concerned Women's Clinic after firebombing.

clinics face wave of arson, death threats, assaults

The Cleveland firebombing is not the only case of violence and harassment against abortion clinics. Other instances include:

- Northern Virginia Women's Medical Center, Fairfax. A year of picketing, during which pickets several times barged in, harassed patients, and took over telephones, saying the clinic was closed.
- While a dozen anti-abortion picketers were charged with trespassing, two Fairfax County judges acquitted them in October on the grounds that "they had a good-faith belief that their actions were necessary to save lives," according to Judge Lewis Griffith.
- On February 11, clinic Administrator Sharon McCann was thrown to the floor. A nurse was injured. A woman guest, six-and-a-half months pregnant, was "trampled on", McCann said. The center has finally obtained a temporary injunction against the pickets.
- Planned Parenthood Clinic, St. Paul, Minnesota. February 23, 1977: fire caused \$250,000 damages. Two weeks ago, an unexploded bomb was found outside the building. Lives of two board members' children have been threatened, according to Tom Webber, executive director of Planned Parenthood of Minnesota.
- Northwest Women's Center of Columbus. A January 8 fire caused \$200,999 damage. Police say it was arson.
- Ladies Clinic, Omaha. At least four bottles of gasoline thrown through a window caused a fire destroying 75 percent of the clinic.
- Vermont Women's Health Center, Burlington. Destroyed by fire last May.
- Margaret Sanger Clinic, Cincinnati. Last November, a firebomb thrown through the window did not explode. Daily picketing by "Concerned Citizens."
- Women's Center, Cincinnati. A chemical bomb thrown through a window last month did not explode.

The self-named "Right to Life" movement is showing its true colors.

Three hundred people rallied from around the state February 11 and forced Akron Mayor John Ballard to state publicly his support of women's right to choose

safe and legal abortion.

The odds are that Ballard will veto the ordinance. If he does, the right-wingers won't have the nine votes necessary to override his

veto. The APCC believes that the ordinance is illegal and they say they will fight it in court if necessary.

Clevelanders need to take a lesson in fighting back from the struggle in Akron.

A spokesperson for Pre-term Clinic, which got a bomb threat on February 18, said, "We don't want to create a toe-to-toe atmosphere. If other people want to organize counter-picketing, that's okay, but we're too busy. Meanwhile we're scared and we're increasing our security."

Women in Cleveland need to fight back, especially the working class and Black women who will be hurt the most by right-wing persecution.

We will have to meet pressure with pressure, picketing with picketing, rallies with better rallies.

STATEMENT

The statement reads in part: "We are appalled by the brutal

"Try it, you'll hate it"

GOVERNMENT REPORT

In January, Wages Down, Prices Up

by Karen Kaye

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO Mark Spitz, toasters without ovens, "try it you'll like it," disaster movies, the 10c cup of coffee and President Carter's campaign promise to hold inflation to 6% a year?

Well, disaster films got replaced by outer space wars and encounters. Inflation, however, is going into outer space too, where consumers will make some close encounters with the disaster of falling real wages.

The government's Labor Department tells us that in January, consumer prices went up .8%, the largest hike in nine months, and equalling an annual rate of 9.6% inflation.

What's more expensive now? Meat, poultry, eggs, fresh fruits, vegetables, sugar—food went up 1.2%. For food and beverages, it was an annual rate of 14.4%, compared with December's 4.8% and November's 6% annual rates.

Medical care went up .8%, fueled by higher fees for doctors, dentists, hospital care and medicine. Used cars are up 2.5%. Schoolbooks reported "large rises."

WAGES DOWN

Price hikes you can live with if wages keep up. But the Labor Department also reported the largest drop in real wages since they started keeping records in 1964.

In January, real wages (income adjusted for the effects of inflation) plummeted 3%—an annual rate of 36%!

Bad weather layoffs were given part of the blame for the earnings drop. That line reminded this reporter of a Detroit DJ who showed a right-on attitude about this topic during our blizzard, when he dedicated a hit song to "all the bosses who aren't paying their absent employees today": the song was, "Take This Job and Shove It."

But most of us aren't really in a position to do that. So no wonder the coal miners are upset that their proposed new contract has such an inadequate cost of living clause. (Does yours?)

Another portion of blame for falling spending power was pinned on the rise in Social Security (FICA) taxes.

As for Mark Spitz, he had a good image, but no ability once he left swimming. And Carter's campaign promise? Good image, but once it left his mouth...

In his January 20 State of the Union Address, the President suggested voluntary wage and price restraints to curb inflation. So far, it's wages down, prices up. □

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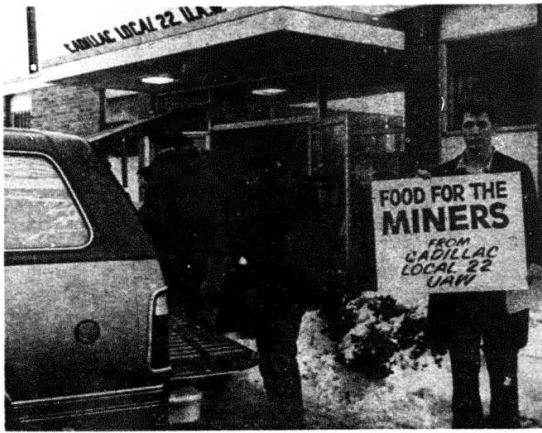
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Unionists Pull Together For Miners



DETROIT—The coal strike has begun to raise the banner of solidarity long missing from the American labor movement.

Members of the United Auto Workers Local 22 [shown here] collected \$10,000 worth of food and clothing, plus several thousand dollars cash for the miners, according to Local 22 President Frank Runnels.

UAW members drove 65 vans and campers to deliver the food and clothing to UMW District 17 miners in Cannelton, West Virginia February 25.

Ken Barnett, a West Virginia miner, returned to Detroit with the auto workers to express appreciation for the contribution.

Local 22's example has prompted other UAW locals to do the same.

Fleetwood Local 15 sent a delegation to Pikeville, Kentucky, with \$3000 and some canned goods for miners in District 30.

Ford Local 600 is sending the miners \$10,000.

Other UAW locals taking collections in Detroit include Local 235 and Local 51.

The Local 51 collection is set for March 3-6. The union appealed to the membership: "As Union brothers and sisters, we must be concerned with the fate of our brothers and sister of the United Mine Workers. A bad settlement for the miners will be a defeat for all of organized labor."

In the Chicago-Gary steel mills, several West Virginia miners are set to speak to local union meetings at Inland Steel, Youngstown Sheet & Tube, Interlake, and Bethlehem Steel to drum up support for the strike. Steelworkers Local 1010 at Inland is also showing the film "Harlan County, USA" to its membership.

NEW YORK

New York City trade unionists held a rally March 1, and voted unanimously to send President

Carter a telegram, asking him not to intervene in the miners' struggle.

The 1300 persons attending raised close to \$5000 for the strike.

Speakers at the New York rally included Henry Foner of the Fur Workers, who extended support for the New York labor movement, and Jose Solare, of the Puerto Rican Trade Union Committee Against Repression. Solare brought solidarity from striking Puerto Rican workers, and noted that one of the first workers killed in the miners struggle in Colorado in the late 1880's was a Puerto Rican.

The main speaker was Jim Hepe, an Ohio miner, who pointed out the weaknesses in the proposed contract.

Referring to President Carter's threat to invoke the Taft-Hartley Act if the miners reject this contract, Hepe said, "Taft can mine it and Hartley can haul it." □

If the coal contract's rejected, the miners can tell you why...

by Jim Woodward

JIMMY CARTER went to church last Sunday and led his Sunday School class in a prayer that the nation's 160,000 striking miners would ratify their new contract.

But if God wanted the strike ended, He didn't get the message through to Elmer Webb.

Webb worked in the coal mines for 38 and a half years, until his doctors made him retire in 1972 because of black lung. Contacted at his West Virginia home, Webb declared: "We'll eat the bark off the trees before we'll accept enslavement. And that's all [this contract] is."

"Our main objection is to get out from under this yellow-dog contract," Webb said.

"What I mean by that is that there stability clause. They can take and fire you if a man's belly growls and the boss hears it growl. He can say he was agitating a strike, and fire him.

"Us old timers, we come out from under one yellow-dog contract back in the old days. When you hired in you had to sign a statement that you wouldn't be engaged in any union activity. We don't want to see the membership go back under it."

SUB-STANDARD

David Lamm, a young miner, agreed. "The fundamental problem with the contract is it's sub-standard for the industry. The non-union operations offer better benefits, better wages than this contract does.

"But wages ain't the main question because [the non-union mines] will raise wages if they have to to get non-union workers," Lamm told Workers' Power in a telephone interview. "Mainly what we need now is a contract that'll put us in a position: to be able to organize.

"That doesn't just mean economically, but it means that it'll ensure that the union is capable of fighting for the things that people

need, even outside of the contract.

"That's why the right to strike is so basic to the contract, and this idea of stabilizing the workforce and taking power away from the union is the crux of what they're trying to do."

Lamm listed the contributions the UMW had made in recent years:

"The UMW fought for and won Black Lung. The UMW fought for and won state mine safety laws in West Virginia and Illinois. And the threat of a national strike brought about federal safety acts.

"All those are an expression of the way the union used its ability to withdraw its labor to force political action as well as getting a good contract.

"The stability clause is basically trying to take all that power away from the coal miners," he said. "If we accept this contract [the union] is going to get broke, because we won't be mining more than 20-25% of this country's coal."

The UMW now mines only 50% of this country's coal, down from over 70% five years ago. The reason is that UMW organizing has just not been able to keep up with the growth of non-union mines.

TERMS

If this situation is to be turned around, the UMW has to have a first rate contract to offer non-union workers.

Here are the major contract provisions that Lamm, Webb, and thousands of miners across the country think are sub-standard:

- The "labor stability" clause, which would allow companies to fire any miner who organized or instigated a wildcat strike or anyone who walked a picket line in an unauthorized strike.

Because the grievance procedure is a joke, wildcat strikes are literally the only weapon miners have to enforce the contract. Under terms of the labor stability clause, the burden of proof would be on a miner to show that he didn't



instigate a strike or walk a picket line, rather than on the companies to prove he did.

- The lack of progress in equalizing pensions. Old timers like Elmer Webb, who built the UMW and who retired before 1974, get pensions of only \$250 a month. A new pension plan covering those who retired since 1974 pays an average of \$500.

Equalizing pensions has been a major issue in the coalfields, but the new contract doesn't even attempt to do that. It offers only a flat \$25 a month raise (over three years) for everyone.

The contract also increases by 45% the number of hours a miner

must work per year to qualify for pension credits for that year.

- Health coverage is another major issue. Nearly 90,000 miners wildcatted last summer when medical benefits were cut.

The new contract institutes deductibles, estimated as high as \$375-\$700 a year, in place of health coverage which used to be completely free.

The contract also allows coal companies to opt out of the UMW Health Funds, by arranging health insurance with Blue Cross or other private insurance companies.

Some observers fear this could seriously damage the non-profit

health clinics which provide the only health care in some Appalachian communities.

"It's simply a tragedy," says Don Conwell, administrator of the New Kensington, Pennsylvania Miners' Clinic. "I can think of nothin worse than putting health care in the hands of private carriers."

- Miners dismiss a small change in the bogged down grievance procedure—which now takes 44 weeks to process the average grievance—as meaningless because the new contract will generate so many more grievances that the system will remain next to useless.

- The cost of living clause, which is applicable only to the second and third years of the contract, has a cap of 30¢ a year—enough to compensate for only 3.3% inflation.

A LITTLE FREEDOM

The miners have been on strike for three months now, and Elmer Webb hasn't gotten a pension check since the first of January. Still, he thinks the strike should continue:

"I've always had to struggle all through my life," he said. "I'm not ashamed of it. I've made an honest living. And I wanted to work—always wanted to work.

"But I wanted to work with a little freedom and not be oppressed, like a slave. I would much rather never take and have this pension check if they're going to do those people that way."

On February 24, when Jimmy Carter announced the tentative contract settlement, he said to the miners: "Whenever there has been progress in the mines, whenever there have been improvements in pay or in safety conditions or in health conditions, it's been because you fought for it."

Carter may find, to his dismay, that this was one of the more truthful statements of his Administration. □

New General Strike Hits Nicaragua

FOUR NIGHTS of heavy gun battles between Nicaraguans and the country's National Guard broke out February 26 after dictator-president Anastasio Somoza announced that not until 1981 would he step down and hold free elections.

A two-week general strike by both labor and business had demanded Somoza's immediate ouster and free elections following the killing of opposition leader and newspaper editor Pedro Joaquin Chamorro a month ago. But the strike, which had shut down the country, faltered when business pulled out, hoping to sell themselves as the answer to a peaceful transition to a modern democratic country.

Somoza's February 26 announcement from a bulletproof glass booth in the capital city of Managua was met with cries of "Death to Somoza! Somoza resign. We want democracy."

The Democratic Liberation Union, a coalition of liberal business groups, two labor federations and the Nicaraguan Communist Party, apparently called the mass demonstrations that turned to battle as enraged citizens took to the streets following the announcement.

Fights with the Somoza-controlled, U.S.-trained National Guard left 43 dead, 70 wounded, and hundreds arrested.

A one-day general strike was called to protest the killing of three students by the National Guard.

SOMOZA OUT—HOW?

"Right now, Somoza himself is the biggest instability factor [in Nicaragua]," according to a high-placed U.S. official.

Until recently, the U.S. government had backed Somoza as the man to keep Nicaragua and all of Central America safe for U.S. interests.

Now, his corruption and repression clearly threaten to explode the entire country.

All groups in Nicaragua agree Somoza must go. The question facing the labor federations, business groups, the civil service and the guerrilla movement (the Sandinistas), is how to do it and who should lead.

Business showed their fear of relying on labor's power when they betrayed last month's strike.

The workers and peasants who fought three nights for democracy, and the construction workers who organized support for Somoza's victims, are showing that they want their chance to run Nicaragua for the people, and not for the Somozas or the U.S.

South Africa Black Leader Dies

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, the founder of the Pan-African Congress (PAC) of South Africa, died of lung cancer Monday at age 53. He died in Kimberley, South Africa, where he was not allowed to leave his house at nights or on weekends. Under the ban widely used against Blacks, Sobukwe was not allowed to attend meetings or to be quoted in the press.

His last public statement was made in 1960, while he was on trial for organizing Black South Africans to defy pass book laws.

After the government massacred 69 unarmed Black people at Sharpeville, Sobukwe was sentenced to three years in prison for organizing the demonstration.

After those three years, the government enacted a new law to keep him in prison for another six years—with no new charges or new trial.

Finally in 1969, Sobukwe was released and allowed to live, under severe restrictions, in the remote area of Kimberley, in central South Africa.

"A warning to Arabs," says Israeli MICHIGAN STUDENT TORTURED BY ISRAEL

by Dan Posen

Suppose that an American citizen, of Russian descent, went to the Soviet Union to visit relatives. Immediately on landing in Moscow, he is arrested by Soviet security police.

He is taken to prison with no lawyer, systematically beaten and tortured for a week. Finally he is forced to sign a "confession" in a language he cannot read or write.

He is then threatened with 15 years imprisonment. However, he is not accused of committing any crime inside Russia.

The charge is that, in the United States, as an American citizen, he has expressed opposition to the policies of the Soviet government.

To top off this incredible story, suppose that official government representatives of the Soviet Union announce that this case is a warning to all American citizens of Russian or Eastern European descent, not to engage in any political activity disapproved of by the Soviet Union.

Believe it or not, this is not an imaginary case, but a true story—with only one exception. It doesn't have anything to do with Russia.

The American citizen, a 23-year-old graduate student named Sami Esmail, has been jailed, tortured and charged with "membership in an unlawful organization"—by the so-called democratic state of Israel.

Esmail was born in the United States of Palestinian parents. Last December 21, he was arrested as he stepped off a plane at Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv.

TORTURE, THREATS

Esmail had flown from the United States to visit his dying father on the Israeli-occupied West Bank of the Jordan River.

Sami Esmail's family was not notified of his arrest. By the time he was allowed to see a lawyer, Israeli civil rights attorney Felicia Langer, Esmail had been tortured for seven days with no more than two hours of sleep at a time.

Under constant questioning by Israeli police he was punched all over his body, spat on, had his hair pulled, was told that his dying father was "not worth ten cents," and that his family would be tortured in front of him if he refused to "confess."

After this treatment, Esmail signed a statement in Hebrew, not knowing a single word of Hebrew.

Finally, he was allowed to see his father once—for ten minutes. By then, the dying man was in a coma and probably never recognized his son.

VIOLATIONS

Originally, Sami Esmail was charged with being on a "terrorist mission against Israel." The charges have now been changed to "membership in an unlawful organization" and "contact with an enemy agent."

The basis for this charge is that Sami Esmail is alleged to have distributed literature supporting the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—on the Michigan State University campus!

According to Israeli law, organiz-

ing against Israel's repression of the Palestinian people is a criminal act—even if the defendant is a citizen of a different country and carried out all the so-called "criminal acts" outside Israel.

Sami Esmail is one of 25,000 Palestinians being held in Israeli jails. Widespread torture of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, as well as other massive violations of Geneva agreements on treatment

of prisoners, has been fully documented.

But one of the shocking aspects of this case is the near-whitewash perpetrated by the Carter "Human Rights" Administration's State Department.

Ed Youmaas, from the Detroit chapter of the National Committee to Defend the Human Rights of Sami Esmail, told Workers' Power that the first State Department official assigned to the case, named

Davidson, was taken off the case as soon as he reported the brutal mistreatment of Sami Esmail by Israeli authorities.

SHOOK UP

Now, according to Youmaas, "The State Department and Cyrus Vance's office are very shook up. They don't want to come right out and say they're not doing a damn thing about it, but it's pretty close."

Meanwhile Dan Kyras, an Israeli consular official speaking in East Lansing, Michigan, stated that Esmail "did not commit any terrorist act, and is not accused of doing so."

Nevertheless, Kyras also stated that the arrest for belonging to an organization Israel considers unlawful, "ought to be a lesson and a warning to the large Arab community in Lansing."

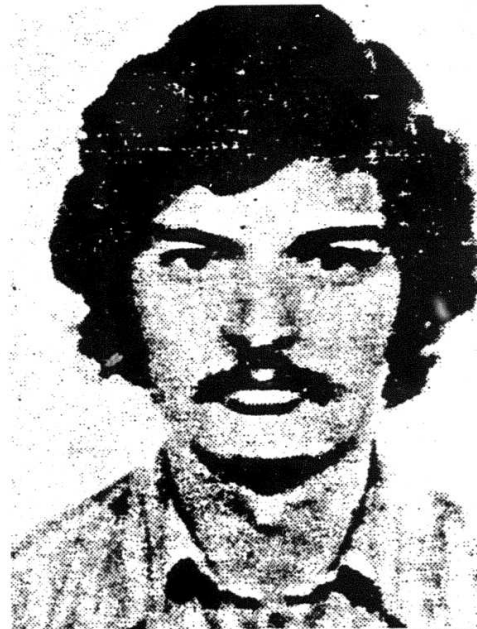
The meaning is very clear. Any Arab living anywhere in the world, who engages in political activity contrary to Zionist policy, is subject to the same fate.

It is not hard to imagine how the U.S. government would react if Russian, or Cuban, or Ugandan officials announced this kind of policy.

According to Ed Youmaas, motions of the admissibility of Esmail's "confession," obtained under torture, will be heard March 14. Almost never do Israeli courts disallow such confessions as evidence in so-called "security" cases.

The trial itself is set to begin March 16. The Committee to Defend the Human Rights of Sami Esmail is planning a series of fund-raising and publicity events.

For further information, in the Detroit area call (313) 285-7935 or 284-1450.



Sami Esmail, an American student. Israeli law claims "extra-territorial jurisdiction" to try people for political activities in other countries.

RALLY: The Detroit chapter of the National Committee to Defend the Human Rights of Sami Esmail is sponsoring a large rally for March 12, at 2:00 p.m. Speakers will include Sami's brother, Basim Esmail, and Detroit attorney Abdeen Jabara. The event will be held in the southwest Detroit or Dearborn community. For details call 285-7935 or 284-1450.

Russian workers' union leader arrested, missing

by Marilyn Danton

The leader of the Free Trade Union of the Soviet Union, Vladimir Klebanov, a former coal miner, has disappeared. No one has heard from him since his seizure by Russian security police in Moscow on February 7.

Klebanov was fired from his job as a safety engineer at a mine when he protested that miners were collapsing and suffering serious injuries because they were being forced to work 12 hours, instead of the regular six-hour shifts.

Four other members of the union have disappeared after being arrested. Authorities reportedly committed two others to psychiatric hospitals.

The Free Trade union was organized and a charter adopted by 43 members on February 1. It has a membership of 200.

"We don't intend to stop now,"

Valentin T. Poplavsky, one of the organizers and a former construction engineer from the Ukraine told foreign reporters in his Moscow apartment.

Anyone "whose rights and interests have been unlawfully violated by administrative, governmental, Party or judicial agencies" may join the union.

It is concerned not only with firings and discipline brought on by protesting working conditions, safety violations and wages, but with general human rights as well.

The union was formed as a separate organization after the more prominent dissident intellectuals, like Andre Sakharov, refused to help the workers.

CROCK

Sakharov specifically told a waitress, who worked at a restaurant reserved for Communist Party

members, that he could not help her because the dissident movement was not for ordinary workers.

The waitress, a member of the union, was fired for protesting the deduction of the cost of supposedly broken crockery from the workers' wages.

In fact, there was no broken crockery—rather, missing crockery. Management, it seems, had been stealing it and selling it for a profit on the Black Market.

Poplavsky and another union member, Vavara I. Kucherenko, said of the intellectual dissidents: "Those people are swindlers. We're a union of free workers."

The union is growing as word spreads across Russia. While the intellectuals look down on "ordinary workers," they are the only ones who have the power to overthrow the bureaucracy and make the Soviet Union a workers' democracy.

Cheating On Pregnancy Pay

WOMEN WORKERS suffered a blow a year ago when the Supreme Court ruled that your boss does not have to include pregnancy benefits in your health insurance package.

But some states have passed laws that over-ride the Supreme

Court decision. New York is such a state.

In New York, the Court of Appeals on December 21, 1976, interpreted the state's 1965 Human Rights Law to mean that all employers, private as well as public, must include pregnancy disability in their employees' insur-

ance coverage. Not to do so would be sex discrimination.

On August 3, 1977, the New York State Legislature strengthened the ruling with a law allowing eight weeks disability pay for normal pregnancies, and up to 26 weeks when complications arise.

However, it is union officials who administer the union welfare funds. The actions of three big New York City unions reveal that without pressure from the membership, unions may do little to take advantage of the state laws.

Exactly how did the three big unions respond?

by Barbara Zeluck

NEW YORK CITY—Local 1199, Drug and Hospital Employees, is officially "complying" with the New York State regulations on pregnancy benefits—but they have used complying as an excuse to cut over-all benefits.

While changing the benefits plan to include pregnancy, the Local cut back the normal period for disability benefits from 13 to 8 weeks. The grounds were that otherwise the relatively rare claims for 26 weeks would bankrupt the welfare fund!

TEACHERS

The New York United Federation of Teachers (UFT), 60% of whose 50,000 members are women, still specifically excludes pregnancy from its insurance benefits plan, and is reportedly planning an appeal to the courts.

Women UFT members who are eligible for pregnancy coverage are upset about this. They have been forced to take the union leadership to the New York State Division of Human Rights in an effort to force the union to uphold the law. Such individual appeals can go on for years.

TEAMSTERS

The leadership of Teamster Local 237 has also refused to pay pregnancy disability benefits out of the union welfare fund, in spite of the law.

However, the recently formed Local 237 chapter of Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) seized upon this issue at the February 23 regular monthly meeting of the New York City Housing Authority Assistants chapter, part of the Local.

A TDU spokesman explained to a most attentive audience, that the "TDU is a rank and file caucus whose purpose is to turn the union into an organization that truly serves the members."

"Because we fight for the rights of both men and women Teamsters, we oppose the Local 237 leadership's position against providing pregnancy disability benefits to women workers."

At the Housing chapter's January meeting, union officials had claimed that paying pregnancy benefits would bankrupt the Welfare Fund, and refused women members' demands to make such payments.

A TDU member introduced a resolution at the February meeting calling on Local 237 to live up to its obligations under New York State law to pay pregnancy disability to eligible women members.

Arguing against the resolution, Robert Groom, the Local's Welfare Fund director, stated that Local 237's Board of Trustees had decided to join the UFT in a court battle against pregnancy benefits. Local 237 is not covered by these New York state laws because the Supreme Court ruling takes precedent, Groom claims.

A TDU spokesperson pointed out that the Supreme Court ruling was "instructive, but not binding" on the states.

Rank and file Teamsters oppose their leadership on this issue. The February meeting, attended overwhelmingly by men, passed the TDU resolution unanimously.

A petition demanding that the Local pay pregnancy disability benefits is now being circulated throughout Local 237's 15,000 members.

Latrobe: Steel Strike Enters Eighth Month

'We're sitting on a time bomb'

by Candy Martin

"Me too." The two words represent a long-time tradition in the steel industry, a tradition that employers are now trying to chip away.



Bill Ehman, vice-president of striking Local 1537. "Stakes are high."

In the past, me-too locals and companies (fabricators, suppliers, and specialty steel makers) simply accepted the same contract terms as those negotiated in basic steel, by the major producers and the Steel Workers union.

But this contract round, several thousand workers from at least eight USW locals have been forced to strike at me-too companies in

Western Pennsylvania alone.

The companies—including Mesta Machine, Latrobe Steel, and Pullman Standard—are refusing to go along with conditions negotiated in basic. They are demanding that the union at these shops agree to wipe out gains won over decades.

At Latrobe Steel, owned by Timken Co., in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, 1100 workers were forced out on strike August 1, 1977. Last month they voted to continue the strike by 1068 to 1.

Management wants to wipe out all previous local agreements made with the union. It is demanding that it have the "right" to void any arbitration decision. It wants grievances to be handled between the company and the employee, not through the union.

OFFENSIVE

"They want to be able to unilaterally fill temporary vacancies without regard to seniority," William Ehman, vice-president of the Latrobe local (#1537), told Workers' Power in a telephone interview.

"We're not going to give them contract language like that. We told them, we didn't fall off the

Christmas tree yesterday."

Timken has gone on an incredible offensive. Offering significantly less than the basic agreement and gutting the grievance and seniority procedures, is only the beginning.

The company has 20 demands (down from 22) which, according to the union, would force retreat on over 400 sections of the local contract. Management wants take-aways on wash-up periods, scheduling, overtime, coffee breaks, vacations and pension benefits.

An intensive campaign of lies, slander, and half-truths about negotiations has been waged by the company through full-page ads and letters sent to employees' homes. (Timken faces unfair labor practice charges from the union in two weeks.)

GAP

Latrobe is only one of several me-too shops where such an assault on the union is taking place. Bill Ehman thinks it's part of a general drive by employers.

"There's no doubt about it—you can even see it with coal. There's so many similarities between our condition and theirs."

"With the general economy so bad, management's taken it upon themselves, more or less through coordinated groups that they have like the National Association of Manufacturers and so forth, to take advantage of the gap in the labor structure."

"There's a gap between the top labor people and the bottom people. The general leadership of



Reprinted from the Local 1537 newsletter, the Review

"Instead of a wage increase we permit our employees to take turns at the plant gate."

the AFL-CIO on down has become somewhat fat, out of step. They're not as militant as I think they should be."

But if the employers—faced with weak opposition from top labor and driven by a crisis in their profits—have taken the offensive, thousands of strikers—driven by a crisis of survival and erosion of their income, their working conditions and job security—are just as determined.

TIME BOMB

In Latrobe, that determination comes through in the strikers' reaction to threats and rumors that the company may close up and move out.

"After seven months, going into eight," Ehman said, "We're sitting on a time bomb. It's possible that all hell's gonna break loose if they start moving stuff out."

"A lot of them have told me, if they're going to move it, move it... and we'll all suffer the consequences. I'm sure there won't be too many pieces left of whatever they try to move."

Ehman himself, who has worked at Latrobe for 16 years, says he would rather take a job for \$4.00 an hour less than go back now—in spite of threats to shut down.

"To me this is like a \$10,000 poker game. I got about ten grand tied up in this thing already. Nobody's gonna bluff me on the last card."

"I want to see it. And after ten grand, you better be able to back up that last card when you turn it over."



1100 steelworkers have been out at Latrobe since August 1. They want "No more, no less" than the basic steel agreement.

International Women's Day: A

by Elissa Clarke

March 8, International Women's Day. A holiday of struggle, a holiday that demonstrates the muscle of working class women. International Women's Day began in 1909. Workers from two shirtwaistmaker's shops had been on strike for a month.

During a meeting, one of the strikers grew impatient with the speechmaking. Clara Lemlich, a teenager, stood up and declared:

"I am a working girl, and one of those who are on strike against intolerable working conditions.

"I would not have further patience for talk. I move we go on a general strike."

The next day, 30,000 garment workers marched through New York City's lower east side. They demanded an end to sweatshop conditions, the right to a union, no more child labor, better wages. They were young; immigrants,

mostly. Many spoke no English. Many were revolutionaries.

And they were women!

Women garment workers at the turn of the century labored under unbearable conditions. Ten, twelve hours a day in tiny, dirty, stuffy factories. Doors and windows locked from the outside. No rest breaks. Often the women would go blind by the age of 25, stitching tiny beads onto the gowns of the rich.

It is out of their struggles, the struggles of working women for the things that they desperately needed, that International Women's Day was born.

In 1910, the Congress of the Socialist International (the world-wide committee of revolutionary parties at the time) declared March 8 a holiday in honor of the New York garment workers.

That is the legacy of

International Women's Day. Struggle, strength, courage, the will to fight, the determination to win—this is what International Women's Day is about.

In honor of International Women's Day, Workers' Power looks at a few of the inspiring fights that women have waged.

Women garment workers, suffragettes, abolitionists, women in the Flint Emergency Brigade, women in the Civil Rights

Movement, women in Harlan County, women marching for the right to abortion, women fighting for affirmative action, women on strike at Essex Wire, women demonstrating for the Equal Rights Amendment—International Women's Day is your holiday.

On March 8, 1978 let's commemorate our sisters who fought years ago. Let's celebrate the strength and courage of women.

And let's carry it on!



1. New York City garment workers on strike.

The 1909 garment workers' strike ended in victory. The strikers won union recognition, shorter hours, and better pay.

But it was far from the end of battles in the textile industry. At the turn of the century, it was common practice for the factory owners to lock the doors, windows and fire escapes from the outside to "safeguard employers from the loss of goods."

On April 20, 1911 one hundred and forty women died when fire swept the Triangle Shirtwaist factory. The women were locked inside.

One twisted fire escape led into an inner courtyard — a grim joke for the women who jumped from the 9th and 10th floors to their deaths. Their charred and broken bodies were lined up in coffins for relatives to identify.

The tragedy set off an uprising throughout the garment industry.



2. Children demonstrate in Lawrence, Massachusetts during the 1912 textile strike.

"Short pay! Short pay!" the women weavers cried out. They stopped their looms and walked out on January 12, 1912 in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

By the end of January, 23,000 workers were on strike. They demanded a 15% increase in pay on a 54 hour work week, with double time for overtime.

Living conditions in this textile town were horrid. One of the leaders of the strike, Bill Haywood, noted: "Those children had been starving from birth. They had been starved in their mothers' wombs. And their mothers had been starving before the children were conceived."

Over half the strikers were women and children. They carried signs that said, "We want bread and roses too."

The women were every bit as militant as the men. One observer noted: "One cold morning, after the strikers had been drenched on the bridge with the firehoses of the mills, the women caught a policeman in the middle of the bridge and stripped him of his uniform, pants and all. They were about to throw him in the icy river when other policemen rushed in and saved him from a chilly dunking."

After two months on strike, the Lawrence textile workers went back victorious. They won all their demands, and wages were raised for textile workers throughout New England.

3. Russian women demonstrate in 1917.

The usual speeches, meetings, and leaflets were planned for the celebration of International Women's Day in Russia in 1917.

But the women textile workers, weary of three long years of war which had brought nothing but death and hunger, went out on strike. Their demonstration that day sparked the Russian Revolution.

The women went from factory to factory, appealing for support. Soon 90,000 people were on strike. Women waiting in long lines for bread began to riot.

"Bread for our children!" and "The return of our husbands from the trenches" were the issues. Red banners appeared. The banner pictured here reads: "City guardians, increase pay to soldier's families." Soon the demands became "Down with the autocracy!" "Down with the war!"

The victory of the Russian Revolution accomplished more for women than any other historical event. Russian families had lived in cramped housing; they worked long hours for little pay. Years of war had killed off the men and devastated the economy. Starvation was a part of life.

Women were fired immediately if the boss found out that they were pregnant, so the women would hide their pregnancies. Sometimes the babies were born right on the factory bench.

Many times, mothers would kill their infants because of the desperate poverty that wracked their lives. One woman commented at the time: "What could be more terrible than for a mother not to be glad to have her child?"

The Russian Revolution began to transform their lives. Mothers were given 16 weeks of free care before and after pregnancy. Expectant mothers did light work, and nursing mothers were given breaks to feed their infants.

A Matrimonial Code established equality of rights between husband and wife. Marriage and divorce were easily secured by signing a paper. The Code dissolved the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children.

Years later, under the rule of Joseph Stalin, the gains of the revolution were reversed. Today, International Women's Day is celebrated in Russia the way we celebrate Mother's Day here.



4. Sojourner Truth, an abolitionist and a suffragette.

The fight for the right to vote was the birth of the women's movement in the mid 1880's.

In its early days, the suffrage (vote) movement was tied up with the movement to abolish slavery. Freedom for women, freedom for Blacks—the movements saw they had the same objectives.

But when the Civil War ended, a question arose: should Black men accept the right to vote without Black women gaining the same right?

Sojourner Truth put it this way: "There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights and not a word about colored women's rights. I have been forty years a slave and forty years free, and would have forty years more to have equal rights for all."

70 YEARS OF STRUGGLE

Sojourner Truth never voted. It was even more than 40 years before women got the right to vote. When the 19th amendment was finally passed in 1920, it marked the culmination of more than 70 years of marching, meeting, fighting with the police, arrests, jail, even death.

Celebrat



ay: A Holiday Of Struggle

Movement, women in Harlan County, women marching for the right to abortion, women fighting for affirmative action, women on strike at Essex Wire, women demonstrating for the Equal Rights Amendment—International Women's Day is your holiday. On March 8, 1978 let's commemorate our sisters who fought years ago. Let's celebrate the strength and courage of women. And let's carry it on!



5. The Women's Emergency Brigade, 1937. Bitter strikes built the unions during the 1930's. A sit-down strike against General Motors in Flint, Michigan won recognition for the United Auto Workers.

But if not for the wives, sisters and mothers of those strikers, the strike might have been defeated. The women in Flint formed a military organization to defend the strike. They called it the Women's

Emergency Brigade. Genora Johnson described the Brigade: "I asked for volunteers. I was terribly shocked because all these women got up and said, 'I'm going to be in this. I have a grandson in that plant, I know what

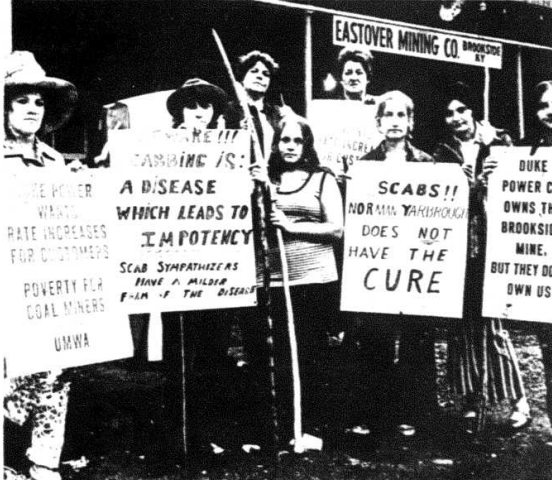
he's going through. 'Every woman took a pledge that she was prepared to die.' Years later, Johnson recounted one of the many battles that took place during the 44-day strike: "When the cars were over-turned on each side of the street, the barricades were thrown up and the police started shooting. And I don't mean only firebombs and tear gas. "When they started shooting buckshot and shells into us, naturally the men said, 'Women and children, get out of here, get out of here!' "They tried to shove me out. And I said, 'What the heck, you haven't got any guns. What do you think you're going to do that I can't do?" "I took over the loud speaker, and I said... 'I'm making a special plea to women on both sides of the barricades to come down here and stand beside your husbands and brothers and fathers.' "And do you know, at that point we saw the most wonderful miracle in the world happening. We saw women coming down and fighting with the police."

ion of International Women's Day ad brought nothing but death and Russian Revolution. 100 people were on strike. Women 'trenches' were the issues. Red dress pay to soldier's families.' the war!' than any other historical event. s for little pay. Years of war had of life. agnant, so the women would hide ' bench. erty that wracked their lives. One mother not to be glad to have her n 16 weeks of free care before and were given breaks to feed their wife. Marriage and divorce were tween legitimate and illegitimate are reversed. Today, International re.



6. Miners' wives take over the picket line in Silver City, New Mexico, 1951. An injunction was brought against strikers at Empire Zinc in Silver City. The miners were prohibited from blocking the road

leading to the mine. But the injunction didn't say anything about the wives and children of the miners. Over their husbands' objections, the women marched for nine months. They fought with the police and kept the scabs out while their husbands watched from the sidelines. If not for the women, the strike would have been broken. Instead they won! 7. 1974. The Brookside Women's Club, Harlan County, Kentucky. Miners' wives again took over the picket lines to keep scabs out of the Brookside Mine in Harlan County. An injunction limited picketing to three miners at a gate. Until the women took over, more than 80 scabs a day were crossing the lines. The Brookside Women's Club wrote a song about scabs: "You take a scab and you kill it, and you put it in a skillet, and fry it up golden brown, that's union cooking and it's mighty fine!" The women marched with their children on the line; they went to jail with their children. But they kept the scabs out, and they won union recognition. One of the women, Bessie Lou Cornet, said after the strike: "Women's husbands tried to keep



them home. My husband said, 'You can't go.' He even beat me or locked the doors. "If you were exposed to a lot of other social activities, you might begin to broaden your interests a little outside the home, and see

that you had more potential. "Now women are trying to get jobs in the mines. Like there are 16 women working there. And they're beginning to speak out more. The lessons that were learned at Brookside weren't lost."

Celebrate our history – and carry it on!



8. Hundreds of thousands of women marched to legalize abortion during the 1960's. The women's liberation movement was reborn in the 60's. It was an exciting, spirited time. Women were in the streets, marching, demonstrating. We were winning! But the movement collapsed during the last five years because it failed to take on the issues that affected the lives of Black and white working class women. The movement only attracted a small percentage of the women in this country. Today, women are under attack. We have to rebuild the women's movement if we don't want to see the gains that we won in the 60's dissipate. Today, women who got good jobs at decent pay are finding that they are the first to get laid off when the economy takes a turn down-wards. Today, affirmative action programs may be wiped out if the Supreme Court decides in favor of Allan Bakke next month. Today, the right to abortion is under assault. Federal money cannot be used to pay for the abortions of poor sisters. Abortion clinics are being picketed and bombed by the right-wing. Today, the Equal Rights Amendment is about to go down in defeat. Today, the pay differential between men's and women's wages is greater than it was 20 years ago. Women are worried—and angry. Once again, women are in the streets, demonstrating against abortion cutbacks. Demonstrating for the Equal Rights Amendment. Demonstrating for affirmative action. Demonstrating against sexist judges. Demonstrating against forced sterilization. We have to rebuild the women's movement. It has to be a movement of Black women, white women, young and old, gay and straight. That is the movement that will have the power to carry the ideas of women's liberation over the top. This year on International Women's Day, let's celebrate the heroic struggles of our sisters. But let's learn the lessons of history, too. We can fight; we can win! The struggle is ahead of us. Let's carry it on!

Speaking Out

What We Think

Southern Africa Majority Rule: U.S. Flunks Test Again

Ever since the South African Sharpeville massacre of 1960, the United States has been publically "deploring" apartheid. And every year since then, U.S. corporate investment in South Africa has increased.

Every time U.S. rhetoric about majority rule in Southern Africa is put to a test, the American government flunks. It flunked after Sharpeville, it flunked after Soweto, it flunked in Angola, now it is flunking again in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).

This week in Rhodesia, an agreement is to be signed by Prime Minister Ian Smith and three Black politicians for a transitional government. Two weeks ago, when Smith announced this "internal settlement," the United States initially rejected it.

The official American position is that the guerilla war against the white Rhodesian regime can't be ended unless the leaders of the Black liberation fighters, the Patriotic Front, are involved in negotiations.

United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young stated that Smith's internal settlement was actually designed to create a bloodbath and civil war instead of Black majority rule for Zimbabwe.

The New York Times echoed this sentiment in a February 20 lead editorial, pointing out: "The provisions already announced (by Ian Smith and his Black political allies) make it plain that real Black control of the new state of Zimbabwe would come only after ten years."

But the unofficial American position may be different. It was only two or three days later that statements made by the United States and its close partner, the British government, began to quietly change.

A U.S. State Department official said that the U.S. "would not stand in the way of any step leading toward a peaceful settlement and majority rule in Rhodesia." British Foreign Secretary David Owen, who worked closely with Andrew Young trying to pressure the Patriotic Front into a cease-fire, was even more open in welcoming the Smith announcement.

MINORITY RULE

But does Ian Smith's internal settlement mean either peace or majority rule? The new 100-seat assembly is to include 28 seats reserved for whites, most or all of whom will be elected by a special whites-only voter roll. The four per cent white minority, which owns all the factories and the prosperous agricultural estates will be guaranteed the ability to block land reform, nationalizations or changes in the white-run government bureaucracy.

The Black politicians who negotiated with Smith — Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Rev. Ndabingi Sithole and Chief Jeremiah Chirau — have called on the freedom fighters to

"peacefully return home" and surrender their weapons to the white-run Rhodesian Army. This army, a few weeks ago, murdered at least 17 Black villagers in an attempt to gun down two guerillas it said were hiding in the village.

Smith and his Black puppets know there is no chance whatever of the freedom fighters surrendering to them. That's not their strategy. Instead, they believe the freedom fighters can be defeated if the United States and Britain give their support to the deal.

A SHIFTING POLICY?

Small shifts in stated U.S. government policy on Zimbabwe may be very significant. The United States cannot afford to openly endorse an "internal settlement" that so openly perpetuates white economic and political control. But without supporting Ian Smith's deal officially, the United States could put pressure on African states like Mozambique and Zambia to re-open Rhodesian trade routes

and close down the freedom fighters' bases.

Even more important, the American government can quietly indicate to the racists and Black puppets that it is prepared to sponsor massive investments in Zimbabwe by American corporations.

The United States government which continues to make pious statements supporting "majority rule" for Southern Africa, is the same government which vetoed economic sanctions against South Africa after the murder of Steve Biko.

It's the same government which sponsored, as a substitute for economic sanctions, an arms embargo against South Africa — and then has continued to sell Cessna planes to South Africa under the guise of "freight carriers."

It's no wonder that the Black youth of South Africa and the Zimbabwe liberation fighters do not view the American government as an ally. They see American corporate interests as the backbone of the structure that oppresses them. And they are totally correct to do so.



Rhodesian officer "interrogates" Zimbabwe civilian villagers. After this photograph and other pictures of Rhodesian army atrocities were smuggled out of Rhodesia by an AP photographer, the Rhodesian government imposed rigid censorship on foreign as well as domestic newspapermen. This is why American newspapers, which are co-operating with the censors, carry practically no news about the intensified guerilla war.

As I See It

Is it "just an expression"?

by Toni Hawk

Today at work I overheard the following conversation:

"How did it go on replacing the ceiling tiles?"

"Pretty good. I only had to nigger one in. The rest were easy."

I said, "You only had to do WHAT to one of them?"

"I only had to tear one up to get it in."

"But what did you say?"

"Ah, uh, nigger it in. It's just an expression. I probably shouldn't even say it."

"Then why did you?"

"It's just a way of talking. Construction workers use the term when they mean something was done sloppy, with bailing wire and glue. It don't mean any harm."

"Would you say it around a Black person?"

"Ah, well, I guess not."

The other person said, "Heck, they call each other nigger, you know."

"So? But is it an insult the way he used it, or not? Would these construction workers say 'cracker it in'?"

He laughs. "No. Course not."

"Then why do they say it?"

"Well, I worked in construction up in New York and they said it a lot, even around Black people. A bunch of Blacks had just been let into the union. So they did say it around them. There was a lot of resentment. The whites were trying to be nasty."

...

Black workers have been kept out of the building trades since the Black migrations to the north began. When they were let on the job or into the unions they were allowed only the most menial manual labor. Apprenticeship programs were reserved for whites. Skill training has only been achieved through struggle.

The verb "to nigger" is an example in language of what Malcolm X called defining the victim of a crime as the criminal, adding casual insult to historical injury.

The person who used the term in my workplace doesn't consider himself a racist. But racist and sexist language is almost a reflex: "She jewed him down." "It was a bitch."

When the women's movement objected to terms like chairman, mankind, etc., we were making a political point.

Women had been left out of the past and we wanted in to the present and future.

The biggest, most crucial divisions workers must overcome are racism and sexism. They are institutional in this society; they go deep into the subconscious of people, and we have to be aware and weed them out.

Racist and sexist talk, even when done by ordinarily decent people, reinforces racism and sexism. We must build a solidarity of brotherhood and sisterhood in speech as well as actions.

Fighting Words

“The very moment the capitalist press credits me with being a wise labor leader, I will invite you to investigate me upon the charge of treason.”

Eugene Debs

News Analysis

What The Miners Proved

by Kim Moody

"We must come to grips with the cancer of the wildcat strike or we will assuredly face the inevitability of continuing chaos and, more tragically, lost opportunity."

"To do this, BCOA (Bituminous Coal Operators Association) must stand as a monolith in the upcoming negotiations."

"We must, as a unit, tell our union counterparts that the time has come for mutual responsibility to achieve totally effective contract terms. And having said this, we must hold fast until it is done."

The Operators

With these words, Joseph Brennan, President of the BCOA set a hard line for the 1978 contract talks with the United Mine Workers. That was last April.

By the time the BCOA made its first concessions, Saturday, February 25, hard-liner Brennan had been replaced as chief negotiator. Brennan was not hard enough for the big coal operators.

The coal operators were going all out to tame the union, break the spirit and solidarity of the miners, and take away a few rights and benefits in the bargain.

The list of "takeaway" items presented by the operators was unprecedented. Nothing like it had been seen since the Open Shop drives of the 1920's.

These included such things as: firing miners who refuse to cross a picket line; fining wildcat strikers \$20 a day; instituting incentive pay for productivity; allowing Sunday work; cutting the training period from 90 to 45 days; taking away union protection for new hires for 30 days; setting up big deductibles for health coverage which used to be completely free. The list goes on and on.

As Barron's magazine put it, the operators told the union: "Strike and be damned."

The BCOA took this hard line because they were losing money from the nearly continuous wildcats. In his April 1977 speech, Brennan complained that 5.9 million days had been lost to wildcat strikes from 1972 to 1977.

He moaned that wages had gone up 29% since 1974 and the cost of fringe benefits, 71%. The operat-

ors were paying \$750 million a year into the Health and Retirement Funds.

The operators saw these big costs as a down payment on labor peace. Brennan said: "We paid our dues for stability and even harmony with our employees. We have not received even a portion of the stability we have every right to expect."

The Union

The leaders of the BCOA saw this as the year to fight because they believed the union was weaker than ever.

The UMW's contracts now cover only 50% of the coal mined in the U.S. Many believed that this would prevent early coal shortages.

Even more important in the operators' calculations was the disunity at the top levels of the union. Miller, they figured, would give in sooner or later, and there was no alternative to Miller at the top.

The operators, like all too many people, believed that the union was virtually the same thing as its leadership. Weakness at the top must mean a weaker union at all levels.

"ONLY MILLER WAS WEAK"

But the operators miscalculated. As one UMW local leader told Business Week magazine, "The companies picked on Miller and backed him up against the wall because they thought the UMW was weak. As it turned out only Miller was weak."

In fact, the rank and file were stronger than at any time in the past. Ten years of independent action and a highly democratized union gave the ranks the power and control it needed to resist.

People often speak of the long traditions of militancy in the mines. And there is a tradition of strong unionism in the coal fields. But in the past ten years miners have created more than a few new traditions.

As one recent book on the UMW pointed out, wildcat strikes against the wishes of the top officials were "unthinkable" during the reign of John L. Lewis. Now they are an annual event.

The miners have learned how to speak them. The "stranger pic-

kets" of the 1970's roam farther than the "roving pickets" of the 1960's.

Major wildcat strikes in each of the last three years have spread to include nearly 100,000 miners each year. The issues have ranged from the right to strike to cuts in the health funds.

While there is no formal national organization, there is a network—built up over the years—that is effective in spreading ideas and actions.

So, without the help of the Executive Board in Washington, the miners closed down a big chunk of non-union coal production, something no one predicted.

Militant traditions thought to be peculiar to Appalachia appeared in Illinois and Indiana. Frequent local meetings, mass demonstrations, roving pickets.

While there's no doubt that the UMW would be much stronger if it did have a militant united leadership, the rank and file and local level of the union are strong and united—more so than any other union in America. And the operators bumped their hard heads on that unity.

The White House

With negotiations at an impasse, the Carter administration stepped up its involvement. Federal mediators had been involved from the start.

Coal is a keystone of Carter's energy policy. The government's objectives were essentially the same as the operators — stability in labor relations.

But Jimmy Carter has a different constituency than the BCOA, including especially the labor leadership. Carter's plan for intervention had to have an anti-operator facade.

The government's plan was to get a separate agreement with one or more of the operators and try to impose it on both the BCOA and the union. To get the miners to go for it, the operators had to be forced to give up some of their many takeaway demands.

Finally, the government came up with the Pittsburg and Midway agreement. P. & M. was not a member of the BCOA. The P. & M. agreement dropped the \$20 fines for wildcat strikers, but kept the operator's right to fire picketers.



Rank and file miners, like these rallying in Charleston, West Virginia, have remained united against the BCOA, threatened government intervention and a weak union leadership.

To give the government's position even more pro-labor trimming, George Meany of the AFL-CIO and Doug Fraser, President of the auto workers rushed out in support of the government seizing the mines in order to impose the P. & M. agreement.

HINTS AND THREATS

In fact, once it became clear that the miners were strong and united several weeks ago, Carter began pressuring the operators to give up some of their more extreme demands.

Chief U.S. trade negotiator, Robert Strauss, for example hinted to some steel executives that he might not be able to get them all the trade restrictions they wanted if they weren't more cooperative in the coal talks.

The P. & M. agreement gave the government one more handle to save the operators from their own stupidity.

In the end, Carter had to go on TV and threaten to invoke Taft-Hartley and seize the mines if the two sides didn't come up with a new agreement. Miraculously, shortly afterwards, the bargainners came up with a proposal along the lines of the P. & M. agreement.

To avoid any possible further snags, Arnold Miller by-passed the occasionally rebellious Bargaining Council. In the days before the actual voting on March 3-6, the union leadership is mounting a large-scale public relations drive to get the contract passed.

Country singer Johnny Paycheck ("Take This Job and Shove It") will be telling the miners to take this contract and live with it. Harry Patrick has already been dragged from his early retirement as an oppositionist to tell the coal miners to vote for the offer because it is in the national interest.

If, however, the miners reject this offer, Carter will have to make good his threat to intervene with "stronger measures," and impose Taft-Hartley or seize the mines or both.

This time, though, Carter's intervention cannot be disguised as action against unreasonable employers. This time, it will be an open act of strike breaking and a denial of the miners' democratic right to vote on their contract.

Far from producing the labor peace and production increases Carter and the operators want, such an act will produce still more resistance by the miners. It was only a couple of weeks ago that Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall was saying that he doubted that the miners would obey a Taft-Hartley injunction.

Whether or not the miners approve this offer or even if they are forced back to work under its terms, the struggle will not end. In contractual terms this offer represents a serious set back for the coal miners. But it will not be a defeat.

The miners have beaten back the most vicious employer aggression in decades. Few groups of workers and few unions would have stood up as well and for so long. In the end, the operators had to abandon their goals of a total rout for the union.

NEW RESISTANCE

But there is more to it than that. This new contract will not produce the peace the operators hope for. On the contrary, it will produce new resistance.

As former UMW research director Tom Bethel pointed out, the new contract provisions, including a supposedly streamlined grievance procedure, will produce new fights.

Grievances will pile up as both sides try to bend the new provisions to suit themselves. The result will be more struggle, more organization, and possibly more strikes as well.

If accepted or imposed, this contract will be a foot in the door for the operators.

But no one should underestimate the ability of the miners to slam that door on their feet.

Where We Stand

Workers' Power is the weekly newspaper of the International Socialists. The I.S. and its members work to build a movement for a socialist society: a society controlled democratically by mass organizations of all working people.

Because workers create all the wealth, a new society can be built only when they collectively take control of that wealth and plan how it is produced and distributed.

The present system cannot become socialist through reform. The existing structures of government—the military, police, courts and legislatures—protect the interests of employers against workers.

The working class needs its own kind of state, based on councils of delegates elected at the rank and file level.

The rank and file of the unions must be organized to defend unions from employer attacks, to organize the unorganized, to make the union effective. Today's union leaders

rarely even begin to do this. The rank and file must organize to return the unions to the members.

The struggle for socialism is worldwide. We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against workers of other countries, including racism and protectionism.

We are against the American government's imperialist foreign policies, including its support of racist minority regimes in southern Africa.

We demand complete independence for Puerto Rico. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The so-called "socialist" or "communist" states have nothing to do with socialism. They are controlled by a privileged ruling class of bureaucrats and must be overthrown by the workers of those countries.

Black and Latin people are oppressed national minorities in the U.S. They have the right to self-determination—to decide their

own future. We support the struggle for Black liberation and the self-organization of Black people. We also fight for the unity of Black and white workers in a common struggle against this system.

We support women's liberation and full economic, political, and social equality for women. We demand outlawing all forms of discrimination against gay people.

Socialism and liberation can be achieved only by the action of a mass workers' movement. The most militant sections of workers today must be organized to lay the foundations for a revolutionary socialist workers' party.

This is why the International Socialists exist—to create that party. We are open to all those who accept our main principles, and who accept the responsibility of working as a member to achieve them.

Join with us to build a movement to end exploitation and oppression and to create a socialist world.

Workers fight government to build union



Union activists Danny Kablack, Gil Rios and Miguel Cabrera. At right, translator Victor Quintana.

Today, in Puerto Rico:

- There are no fat cats in the electrical workers union, UTIER. No union officer is paid more than the highest paid ordinary workers.
- In the Teamsters Union, workers elect strike committees to help run any strike. Negotiations are conducted in the open—not behind closed doors.
- On the bad side, the Puerto Rican government, controlled in colonial fashion from Washington D.C., is carrying out a campaign of harassment against all unions. One example—Teamster organizer, Rafael Santana Caballero, was murdered by a government-supported "death squad" on October 25 of last year.
- To combat this government attack, several unions, including the electrical workers and the Teamsters have formed the Trade Union Committee Against Repression (TUCAR).

Workers' Power reporters **DAN POSEN** and **JIM WOODWARD** interviewed touring TUCAR members in Pittsburgh, where they were attending a marathon football game and rally, the Union Bowl, held to support the miners' strike and attended by several hundred workers.

GIL RIOS of the Electrical Utility Workers Union (UTIER) and **MIGUEL CABRERA** of Teamster Local 901 were interviewed. Also participating in the discussion was **DANNY KABLACK** from Pittsburgh, a member of Teamster Local 250, Teamsters For A Democratic Union, and the Committee of Concerned Trade Unionists. **VICTOR QUINTANA** of the United States Trade Union Committee Against Repression translated.

Translating for Cabrera, Quintana told Workers' Power, "The Trade Union Committee Against Repression is composed of union leaders, intermediate-level leadership, organizers and shop stewards.

"TUCAR was organized to combat the attacks of the colonial government against the labor movement—reflected in harassment, persecution and fabrication of cases against labor leaders in Puerto Rico, such as the case of Miguel Cabrera.

"He is now being accused by the colonial government of killing Allan

"The squad has committed murders and tortures, including the killing of Teamster organizer Rafael Santana Caballero.

"The government wants to convict Miguel Cabrera, to wash its hands of its guilt in the murder of Caballero.

"The colonial government, the colonial police in particular have lost a great deal of credibility in the eyes of the Puerto Rican people over this incident.

"As a result of the Caballero murder, the union movement on November 11 was able to organize a mass demonstration in front of

Teamster local in Puerto Rico went through an internal battle very similar to what we have experienced with TDU.

"They had lost 25,000 workers from the union, because of internal union corruption. Now the rank and file have won that battle and built a level of solidarity that we hope to build among Teamsters here.

"We hope to learn from them, and at the same time build solidarity with Puerto Rican workers here in the U.S.

"This is our responsibility. Since so much of the repression in Puerto Rico actually comes from the U.S., I mean things like special labor consultants and seminars in how to break the unions up, much of the support must come from here as well."

Gil Rios discussed his union. "UTIER, the electrical workers' union, organizes the workers in the Water Resources Administration who deliver, maintain and distribute electrical power throughout Puerto Rico.

"UTIER has some 6200 members. We have been on strike since December 27, because the Water Resources Administration which is a quasi-governmental agency, refuses to meet the just salary demands of our union."

At this point, Cabrera added, "the government is attempting to destroy UTIER in particular, by not negotiating in good faith for just compensation."

"UTIER is asking for an 89c hourly increase and a one-year contract," Rios said. "We are willing even to negotiate a three-year contract if it includes 89c in the first year. The WRA is only offering 24.6c an hour."

WHY THE U.S. VISIT

Miguel Cabrera explained why his group visited the U.S. "We were invited to speak to rank and file workers, union leaders and middle-level leaders about the workers' movement in Puerto Rico. "The TDU has organized a series of activities for us.

"We are speaking especially about the offensive against the trade union movement.

"Through presenting this information we hope to enlist trade union support and concrete solidarity with Puerto Rican workers. And in the future, we hope there will be active support for strike funds to carry on the struggle of workers in Puerto Rico."

Labor Notes

by Jim Woodward

Country singer **Johnny Paycheck** has agreed to appear in TV ads placed by the **United Mine Workers** urging ratification of the new coal contract. Presumably, Paycheck will not be singing "Take This Job and Shove It."



Fourteen years after the **Monroe Auto Equipment Company** ran away from Monroe, Michigan in favor of the non-union south, the **United Auto Workers** has won a contract covering the company's 1000 employees in Hartwell, Georgia. For a long time after the company moved, Monroe shock absorbers were the target of a UAW boycott.

U.S. Steel has been fined \$215,900 for ignoring Occupational Safety and Health rules at its Chicago **South Works**. The Labor Department said it found 72 "serious" violations, six "willful" violations, and 28 "repeat" violations. Dr. Eugene Bingham, head of the health and safety administration, said these violations presented "very real threats to the safety of some 8000 employees" at South Works. The fines, however, are only tentative. U.S. Steel has a long appeals procedure available, which will likely bring substantial reductions.

It's a well-established principle of labor law that a worker has a right to have his or her steward present when being disciplined by the boss. However, a recent **NLRB** ruling says a union representative does not have to be present unless the employee asks for it.

The Good Old Days: "I don't think Lyndon Johnson ever had a national strike of any kind that he wasn't telephoning me and talking about it"—George Meany, complaining that Carter hadn't consulted him on how to handle the coal strike.

Harry Patrick, an official of **ACTION**, the federal anti-provety agency, has suggested that coal miners should ratify their proposed contract "in the best interests of the country." Perhaps Patrick should stick to his \$36,000 federal job and not stick his nose into the miners' business.

What's happening where you work? Send items for this column to: Workers' Power, Labor Notes, 14131 Woodward, Highland Park, Michigan 48203. Or phone 313 869-5964.

What is Puerto Rico?

Puerto Rico has been a colony of the United States since 1898, when the U.S. won the Spanish-American war.

Puerto Rico cannot make trade agreements or treaties with other countries. Shipping, customs, air traffic, immigration control, banking, postal communications, radio and TV are under the total control of the U.S. government.

Interstate labor relations, sugar production and petroleum refining are subject to Washington's control.

Puerto Rico has no vote in Congress, only a commissioner who speaks there by invitation only.

The U.S. Supreme Court has

final say over all cases originating there.

Special tax laws and low wages mean big profits for yankee businesses. Over 100 of the top 500 U.S. industrial companies have branches in Puerto Rico. Three out of four factories and 78% of industry are North American-owned.

Official unemployment was 11% in 1972; real unemployment was nearly 33%. One-ninth of the population was on welfare, one-fourth living in slums.

Colonialism is why there is a strong movement for Puerto Rican independence. The trade unions are in the forefront of the struggle for reform and independence.

H. Randall, [Randall, a corporate lawyer in Puerto Rico, was identified as a CIA agent].

"The case is in its preliminary stages. Cabrera, who is currently free on bail is scheduled to appear in court February 21. This defense case will receive broad support within the trade union movement.

DIVERT ATTENTION

"The tactic of the colonial government is to use this case to divert attention away from the crimes committed by a government-sponsored 'death squad' in the police.

the capitol in San Juan, to denounce the murders by the government and police death squad.

"Between ten and fifteen thousand workers were mobilized by TUCAR. The demonstration was made up of some 26 unions, including some of the most militant and important unions in Puerto Rico such as UTIER (electrical workers), IBT (Teamsters), harbor workers and others."

SIMILAR TO TDU

Danny Kablack added that "About five or six years ago, Miguel's

Finally, a movie about women who are friends

by Caroline Green

In a lot of movies, men have a corner on friendship. Men are buddies. Recent films—Easy Rider, M*A*S*H, Deliverance, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, The Sting, and more—have shown friendships between males as sacred, privileged, heroic.

Hollywood, faced with the challenge of the women's liberation movement to produce strong roles for women has responded, in many films, by doing away with women altogether.



Jane Fonda and Vanessa Redgrave in Julia.

The few women who do survive in this male world loom as tight-lipped authority figures, like Hot Lips in M*A*S*H and the head nurse in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. They suffer as neurotics in films like Kluge and Looking For Mr. Goodbar or they perform as sexual service stations along whatever highways men are travelling.

Actresses despair of getting good roles because there so few of them, and women moviegoers share their frustration.

Julia, starring Jane Fonda, Vanessa Redgrave, directed by Fred Zinnemann

Women in films are almost never friends. Can you think of one film from the last ten years which is about a friendship between women? Finally, Julia is.

Jane Fonda financed Julia after reading the memoirs of playwright Lillian Hellman, "Pentimento." Fonda wanted to present images of strong women and to provide herself with a good part as Lillian.

Julia deals not only with friendship between women, but with love. The movie made me remember my best friend—my best friend all during the time I thought I liked men better than women—who was precious to me through all my ups and downs with the opposite sex.

In these monogamous seventies, Julia shows us that we can and should love more than one person at a time, and in different ways. Lillian loves both Julia, her political friend, and Dashiell Hammett, her lover and literary critic.

Julia, played by Vanessa Redgrave, is the glowing focus of the

film. She represents youth, vitality, action, political commitment. Although she comes from a wealthy, stuffy family, she decides early that a system in which the rich eat sherbet to "clear the palate" between heavy courses at dinner while their servants live crammed in cellar rooms, is wrong, and has to be fought. She decides to study medicine in Vienna, where, she tells Lillian, the workers have taken over one part of the city and made it their own. "At last, there is hope in the world again."

But it is the 1930's, and the fascists are organizing, too. Julia, in the fight to stop them, first loses her leg, then her life. In a period when movies portray very few heroines, she is one—not because she's beautiful or because she can make herself

necessary to a man—but because she is strong, active, and she fights for what she believes in.

We want to know more. We want to look through Julia's eyes, to know what it was like in the resistance, to get a better view of the rise of fascism, and what workers were doing to organize against it.

But we look through Lillian's eyes. Lillian—not political, except in a moralistic way, a liberal, not a revolutionary. Lillian—who wants to remember "how it felt to love Julia," not what Julia's struggle meant politically. Lillian—not a heroine on her shaky trip through Berlin to deliver money to Julia for anti-fascist organizing, who likes being a famous playwright, but detests many of the people who praise her.

Most activists don't write novels or

play or film scripts, at least not while they're active. They're too busy organizing.

Most novels, plays, and film scripts are written by people like Lillian Hellman—onlookers, which is unfortunate.

But Lillian, at least, admires Julia, and she admires her for her strength and her politics, even if she doesn't really understand them very well. To her, Julia is glorious, not neurotic—heroic, not misguided.

The film is a sweet reminder to women of our own beautiful and beloved women friends, friends most movies tell us we don't have, who don't exist.

We are left with Julia's advice to Lillian: "Work hard, take chances, be very bold!" □

Joan Little wins bail in extradition battle

New York State Supreme Court Judge Sybil Hart Kooper let Joan Little stay free on bail while the 24-year-old Black woman fights Governor Carey's order to extradite her to North Carolina.

Little escaped from the Women's Correctional Center in Raleigh last October after reporting harassment by prison authorities.

"I fear for my life. That's why I choose to remain in New York City leading a normal life," she said after the hearing.

In 1975 Joan Little was acquitted of murdering the white jailer who tried to rape her while she was serving time for breaking and entering. She was continuing that sentence, after being denied parole, when she escaped.

Her lawyer, William Kunstler, commented on the Governor's order. "The larger issue is whether a state like North Carolina that has... been the recent subject of so many people's attention because of the Wilmington 10 and other cases, whether they should be allowed to destroy another Black victim, a Black woman victim."

Calling the Governor a racist and a coward, Kunstler called for a "groundswell of support so that Governor Carey reconsiders the decision he made yesterday." □

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Michiganders defend affirmative action

by Larry Smith

"We have begun organizing ourselves, as women, to win our rights at every level.

"We have learned that no one can dictate to us how to organize our fight for our own liberation."

The words of Eunice Stokes, Chairperson of the women's committee of the United Auto Workers Local 235.

She was speaking at a rally and conference called by the Michigan Coalition to Overturn the Bakke Decision, held February 24-25, in Detroit.

The Bakke Decision, made by the California Supreme Court, and now

being challenged in the U.S. Supreme Court, could be the first step in outlawing all affirmative action programs—programs designed to help Blacks, women, and other minorities correct the effects of discrimination.

More than 400 people attended parts of the conference, which was endorsed by numerous community, political, and labor organizations.

The conference was educational, also action-oriented, endorsing a national day of protest and a march on Washington scheduled for April, and

called by the national Bakke Coalition.

In a discussion of workplace organizing, Darney Standfield of the Association for the Betterment of Black Employees of Edison told how Edison is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars of consumers' money in court, filing endless appeals, trying to avoid the ending of discriminatory practices.

"We think it's about time that Edison's customers say they aren't paying any more rate increases to let Edison keep fighting this case when it has already been repeatedly found

guilty," he said.

A few days after the conference, the affirmative action program for the Detroit Police Department was overturned in court.

This program, as well as others, came about as a result of the mass movements of the 60's and 70's.

The courts and government could not be relied on to protect minority rights then—and they still can't be.

Only a new mass movement can protect past gains and win future battles for equal rights. □

Workers' Power

**PROFITS
BEFORE
PEOPLE**



A DEADLY GAME

by Mike Kelly

Continuing that great tradition of American justice where profits come before people, the Supreme Court, in an 8-0 vote, has ruled that Wisconsin may not prohibit double bottom trailers on its interstate highways.

Raymond Motor Transportation Inc. and Consolidated Freightways presented what the Supreme Court called a "massive array of evidence" to prove that not only are doubles not more dangerous than

single trailers, but they are actually safer. The evidence came from a Transportation Department study that showed that doubles have fewer accidents, injuries and fatalities

per 100,000 miles, and fewer injuries and fatalities per accident.

But the heart of the argument was CF's claim that the Wisconsin ban was an unconstitutional interference with interstate commerce. CF maintained that the ban was costing them \$2 million a year because drivers in Wisconsin had to break down the pups and transport them across the state.

WILL IT SPREAD?

NELSON J. Cooney, general

counsel for the American Trucking Association in Washington, D.C., said of the decision, "there's no reason why it can't extend to other states with the same set of conditions." 25 other states currently ban doubles.

For example, CF is expected to try to use this ruling to get the right to send doubles across a 52 mile stretch of Pennsylvania between Ohio and New York, where it claims it spent \$500,000 for drivers and burns 400,000 extra gallons of diesel fuel.

The irony is: In Wisconsin doubles are said to be safer than singles, but only a couple hundred miles across the lake, in Michigan, they are deadly dangerous.

Governor William J. Milliken has imposed a six-month, 16 hour-a-day ban on fuel-carrying double bottom tankers—in Detroit's three

county metropolitan area and in all cities of more than 50,000 population. The ban was imposed after five people were killed and 16 injured in 13 double bottom accidents last year. The Governor has called the doubles "a menace." Local Michigan townships have also banned the doubles.

Milliken, who's up for election soon, said, "If it comes to a question of economic impact and human safety, then we have to err on the side of safety."

At the same time, state representative Hertel has introduced a bill that would outlaw all double trailers. What will happen to that bill depends on a study of doubles currently being conducted by the University of Michigan.

In Wisconsin, the Supreme Court—which doesn't have to run for election—has decided to err on the side of profit.

The debate over the safety of double trailers, is, however, only a rear guard action in the fight over profits and productivity being waged by the trucking employers.

In Washington state, the Washington Trucking Association and the Port of Seattle are requesting a year-long test on the use of triple bottoms.

UNION OPPOSITION

The Teamsters union has opposed this further threat to lives and jobs. Russ Lane, a truck driver, speaking on behalf of the union, said, "If a car driver feels in danger when passing us, his feeling is correct. As drivers we can't see back 105 feet because of spray alone, and we sure can't see drivers in their little cars... Put one of those 105-foot-long outfits on the highway and the average automobile driver has a good reason to feel threatened."

The trucking employers are claiming that triples are safe—in fact, even safer than doubles. "Actually," said William Hicks, the managing director of the Washington Trucking Association, "the triple trailers create less splash and spray than do the double bottoms now in use."

By this logic, if doubles are safer than singles, and triples safer than doubles, then we can only hope that we will soon go to four, five, and six trailer trains behind a diesel tractor.

Why not ten and twenty trailers? The savings in lives should be tremendous. □