

Workers' Power

NEWSPAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

OCT. 12-25

25c

**MICHIGAN
TAX REVOLT—**

**WHICH SIDE
IS YOUR SIDE?**

pp. 4-5

NO MONEY NO BUNNY!

**Volkswagen workers
shut it down**

Murderer stalks the streets of Washington

The mask of the Carter Administration's southern Africa policy has been ripped away.

The US government's pretense of supporting "full Black majority rule" for Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) ended when the racist Prime Minister of Rhodesia, Ian Smith, was given a visa to enter the US. Smith is not the political leader of an independent country. He is the head of a colonial regime which has stayed in power by slaughtering tens of thousands of Black villagers.

Smith's trip to the US to "present his case" has nothing to do with free speech. There are plenty of American reactionaries and racists, like S.I. Hayakawa and Jesse Helms, to present Smith's case for him.

As far as the Zimbabwean people are concerned, it is just as if the US allowed a Nazi war criminal to "present the case" for genocide on American television. Ian Smith was invited to this country by 27 right-wing Senators—

the same bloc who pushed for lifting economic sanctions against Rhodesia.

Smith's visit gives this bloc its greatest political victory. It ensures that the campaign to re-open trade with Rhodesia will resume when Congress re-assembles.

The plain truth is that the Carter Administration wants that campaign to go on. It wants to go on mouthing rhetoric against Ian Smith, for majority rule—but it also wants to use the pressure of the American right wing to force the Zimbabwean people to compromise with Smith.

Smith's trip is a political maneuver to give his regime new confidence to continue the war. The piece of paper allowing Ian Smith into the US means thousands more Africans will die.

So much for Jimmy Carter's call for peace and human rights. (More news about southern Africa: a new Black African President re-opened his country's border with Rhodesia. See page 2.)

by Mark Levitan

Their picket signs read "No money, no bunny." Workers at Volkswagen's New Stanton, Pennsylvania plant are hopping mad. Last Sunday, these UAW members, who assemble the VW Rabbit, rejected by 1235 to 94, an agreement reached by the UAW and VW of America. On Monday, they shut the plant down in an "unauthorized" strike.

Company officials expressed "extreme disappointment" over the situation. They say, "We don't know why the rank and file rejected the proposal," but the reasons are obvious.

The tentative agreement put VW workers wages considerably behind those of auto workers at the Big 3 plants. An assembler at GM now makes \$8.20 an hour. The proposed agreement would mean that VW workers would not reach this level until 1980. The VW workers want parity now.

When the agreement was announced, UAW President Doug Fraser claimed it would "set an excellent example for other foreign auto manufacturers who may open manufacturing or assemble operations in the US." Both Nissan and Toyota, two Japanese companies, are considering building plants in America. Apparently, the UAW hopes to sway them by offering cheaper contracts than those at the Big 3. Rabbit workers don't want to be the guinea pigs in this experiment.

UNDERMINING OTHERS

The issue of parity is not just a problem for VW workers, however. If a contract without parity goes through, it would further undermine the industry-wide wage and benefit pattern. The pattern was first cracked in 1976 when American Motors was exempted from parity because of its poor financial position. Now, UAW leaders want sub-standard agreements for foreign-owned companies investing in the US.

These cut rate contracts will affect Big 3 workers in two ways. First, the fact that other auto workers are getting paid less can be used to pull down the size of the Big 3 pattern. Second, it opens up the possibility for breaking up the Big 3 itself. After all, if AMC and VW are getting a break, why can't Chrysler, which is smaller and less profitable than Ford and GM? The UAW's efforts to create a good business climate for the companies is opening up the door for future attacks on the wages and benefits of all auto workers. □



Beirut residents drink water flowing through the streets after shelling destroyed water mains.

U.S. CALLS FOR CEASE-FIRE Crocodile Tears Over Lebanon

THE FIGHTING IN Beirut, Lebanon, shows how far the Camp David agreements are from creating a "framework for Middle East peace."

It also shows the full extent of the hypocrisy of Jimmy Carter and Israel, who became humanitarians the same day they saw their allies, the Christian rightists, were losing.

To judge from their pleas for a cease-fire in Beirut, it sounds as if they are deeply concerned about the killing of Lebanese Christian civilians by the Syrian army.

But they showed no such humanitarian concern just two years ago.

GAVE APPROVAL

The United States, the United Nations, and even Israel gave their

approval to Syria's occupation of Lebanon in 1976, and to Syrian killings of civilians—so long as the victims were Palestinians and the Lebanese left.

Syria's President Assad sent his army into Lebanon to prevent the Lebanese civil war from resulting in a left-wing victory and a possible social revolution.

A large number of Palestinians at the Tal al-Zaatar refugee camp were killed by Christian militias—with Syrian backing.

There was no outcry by western governments then against Syria's participation in that massacre. A Syrian colonel, Ali al-Madani, supervised the storming of the camp.

Syrian artillery helped the Christians enforce the siege of Tal al-Zaatar for two months, leading

up to the final assault and massacre.

Now, however, it is the rightist Christian armies who are the greatest threat to Syria's controlling Lebanon—and the western powers are seized with a fit of humanitarianism.

There have been plenty of Syrian atrocities in this battle, such as firing 160 mortar shells at one hospital. But it is surprising that the Syrian military uses the same methods against Israeli-armed Christian rightists that it used against the Lebanese left before?

RIGHTIST OFFENSIVE

In the tangled mess of maneuverers and conspiracies that have torn Lebanon to pieces, it is quite possible that Syrian guns may one day again be turned against the Palestinians and the left in Lebanon.

But the plain fact is that this particular round of fighting, contrary to the western press, was not started by Syria. It was launched by the Christian right with the full backing of Israel.

The Christian offensive is aimed at three objectives. If possible, they would like to see Lebanon partitioned, with the creation of a Christian state that would openly be an ally and base for Israel.

If this can't be achieved, the Israelis hope Syria can be so tied down that it is unable to wage any struggle against the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.

Third, the Christian rightists and Israelis hope to create enough chaos in Lebanon to split the Arab world. The Arab League has to vote in a few weeks on renewing the Syrian army's "peace-keeping" mandate in Lebanon.

Ordinary Christian civilians, including those who don't support the Phalangists or other extremist Christian parties, are the current pawns in this battle.

But by pouring military and political aid for the right-wing Christian armies, creating deeper and deeper religious hatred and bloodshed between ordinary Christian and Moslem Lebanese people, the "humanitarian" governments of Israel and the United States are practically ensuring that Lebanon will never be unified and independent again.

—D.P.

With friends like Kaunda, do freedom fighters need enemies?

by Dan Posen

THE PRESIDENT of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, has re-opened his country's border with Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), breaking the African nations' boycott of the racist state.

This action is a major economic and morale boost to the Rhodesian government. It will permit rail traffic between Rhodesia and Zambia, allowing copper and import goods through Rhodesia.

Kaunda has never tired of calling Rhodesian leader Ian Smith a "rebel" and a racist, or of pledging his undying support for the Zimbabwe armed liberation struggle.

He is also the same African President who tried to trick ZANU leader Robert Mugabe into a secret meeting with Smith inside Zambia

a few weeks ago. Mugabe walked out in disgust when he arrived for a meeting with Kaunda, and discovered Ian Smith there.

But in re-opening the border with Rhodesia, Kaunda has gone beyond steady political tricks. Unquestionably, Kaunda has committed a major betrayal of the Zimbabwe liberation struggle which he claims to champion.

ECONOMIC DESPAIR

The roots of this situation, however, go far deeper than Kaunda's personality.

He has been under pressure from businessmen, landowners and conservative politicians within Zambia itself, to resume economic

ties with Rhodesia as the only way out for Zambia's desperate economy.

Without fertilizer from Rhodesia, Zambia's corn crop was in danger of total failure.

Before Kaunda re-opened the border, according to radio reports from Rhodesia, fertilizer was being shipped by a roundabout route from Rhodesia through the African state of Botswana, where Rhodesia Railways still operates, and then by road north to Zambia.

By September 15, 3000 tons of fertilizer had been shipped this way. But this was only a drop in the bucket to the 90,000 tons which Zambian farmers needed.

Following the border re-opening, the fertilizer will be shipped direct from Rhodesia to Zambia. And

Zambian copper can go through Rhodesia and South Africa, instead of piling up on overcrowded railroad lines in Tanzania.

This is just one example of why the leaders of southern African states are desperate to bring the Zimbabwe liberation war to an end—even if it means, in the end, stabbing the liberation forces in the back.

It is the same reason that Kaunda tried to trick Mugabe into secret negotiations with Ian Smith.

But Zambia's economic dependence on Rhodesia also shows that until the Black masses of Zimbabwe control their own country and their own economy, the people of Zambia and the rest of Black Africa won't really be free either. □

Reform? Don't Make Us Laugh



Pieter Botha

For about the one hundred and fiftieth time since the Soweto uprising, the South African regime has given its answer to the hopes for moderate internal reform.

The most hard-line racist candidate, Pieter Botha, has been chosen Prime Minister by the ruling white Nationalist Party. He was the mastermind of South Africa's invasion of Angola in 1975.

To the great majority of South Africa's 20 million Black people, Botha's election probably makes little difference.

But it is a great setback to the professional illusion-mongers, the editorial writers and the spokesmen for western governments who keep repeating over and over again that economic ties with South Africa will persuade the white rulers to moderate their policies.

They told us that the white government would change its policies after the Soweto massacres. When Steve Biko was murdered,

they said the same. When the regime outlawed the whole Black Consciousness movement, the same phrases were repeated.

TESTED

Finally, this summer, the theory that South Africa's policies could be changed by peaceful pressure got a chance to be tested. South Africa agreed to allow elections under United Nations supervision in Namibia. The plan would create an independent government for Namibia, a territory occupied by South Africa since 1918.

The Namibian liberation movement, SWAPO, which would win any free election hands down, also agreed. It was a major political breakthrough for American policy in southern Africa.

Now South Africa has reneged on the deal. It will not allow United Nations forces into Namibia to supervise elections.

Instead, it is going to conduct its own fake "election," under the control of South African tanks and machine guns, in order to put its puppet party called the "Democratic Turnhalle Alliance" in power.

The new Prime Minister, Botha, has reaffirmed this policy. South Africa has no intention of allowing any election which SWAPO would win.

Botha says his government will not bow to "Marxist revolutionaries." What he means is that white rule won't even be ended in Namibia, much less in South Africa itself.

It will be the Black masses of South Africa and Namibia who have the final say about that. But don't expect the professional illusion-mongers in the western press to stop preaching their stupidities about gradual change.

After all, that's what they're paid for. □

Workers' Power

Copyright 1978 by U.S. Publishing Co. Editor: Marilyn Dantor. Production Editor: David Katz. Circulation Manager: Tom Dougherty.

Subscriptions: \$10 for one year; 25 for six months. Introductory rate: \$1 for eight issues. Institutional: \$15. Foreign surface: \$15. Foreign airmail: \$20 for six months.

Published weekly, except the first two weeks in July and the last two weeks in December. Second class postage paid at Detroit, Michigan. Send notice of undelivered copies to Workers' Power, 14131 Woodsard Ave., Highland Park, Michigan 48203.

Workers' Power is a member of the Alternate Press Service. It is indexed in the Alternative Press Index and micro-filmed by University Microfilms. International Standard Serials Number (ISSN): 0019-0535.

Printed in a 100% union shop.

N.O.W. Convention Calls For Ties To Labor

"BUILDING THE ALLIANCE"

by Elissa Clarke

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The mood was jubilant as the National Organization for Women opened its issues conference on Saturday, October 7. On Friday, the U.S. Senate approved the extension of the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment for another 39 months. The Senate action clears the way for victory on the ERA.

Over the last 18 months, NOW has developed into a force with considerable political clout. NOW has grown in membership from 60,000 at its last convention in April, 1977 to more than 90,000 today. As women begin to fight the attacks on their rights, they are attracted to NOW because it is the largest, most visible women's organization in the country today.

NOW is an organization in transition. In April, 1977 when Ellie Smeal ran for the presidency of NOW she had a platform of reaching out to the housewives in the suburbs. This year, the theme of the NOW leadership was "building the alliance" between the women's movement and the labor movement.

NEW AND GREAT ALLIANCE

In her opening address, Smeal said: "We are part of a new and great alliance, an alliance between the civil rights, labor and women's movements." This theme ran throughout the conference. Later Smeal said: "We have never been so unified, we have never been so strong. We have never had such good friends and allies as we have today."

Labor legislation was emphasized. Labor law reform, repeal of Section 14-B of Taft-Hartley, national health insurance, minimum wage, Humphrey-Hawkins were all mentioned as priorities for NOW. In addition, the leadership of NOW spoke frequently about the need to organize women workers. At the Labor Workshop on Saturday night, Smeal said: "We will never close the gap between men's and women's wages) until more women are in the organized sector... collective bargaining is one major tool for the advancement of the average person. We must encourage organizing."

Today both the labor movement and the women's movement face crisis situations. The labor movement has taken quite a licking on Capitol Hill. Women's rights are also under attack. "We have common enemies and common friends," Smeal noted.

This alliance is a step forward. It will help to draw working women into the struggle for women's liberation. It will strengthen both movements and help them to win legislative reforms and beat back the right wing.

But an alliance with the labor bureaucracy will also tie the women's movement more firmly to a legislative strategy and reliance on the Democratic Party instead of mobilizing masses of women and building a dynamic movement. Ultimately, the real issues of women's liberation—jobs, equal pay, affirmative action, child care—challenge the basis of capitalism. To fight for these goals, the women's movement will have to break from the Democratic Party.

ERA

This developing alliance can be seen clearly in the fight to win the



NOW delegates applaud Ellie Smeal [upper right.]

ERA, NOW's top priority. Both the AFL-CIO and the UAW have full-time lobbyists for the ERA. At its October 7 Regional Women's Conference, leaders of the United Auto Workers said that their strategy for the ERA in the coming year will focus on three states: North Carolina, Nevada, and Florida.

The conference resolved to continue the "State of Emergency" on the ERA. Smeal laid out her strategy for winning the ERA during one workshop. She argued for continuing a national campaign, as well as state campaigns. She suggested that a single slogan be chosen for the drive (just as "No time limit on equality" was chosen for the extension) and the slogan center on the economic issues. She also suggested that NOW continue lobbying, continue the boycott of convention centers in unratified states, and continue the election strategy.

But absent from Smeal's remarks was any mention of mass actions like July 9. Despite the obvious affect that the July 9 demonstration had on winning the extension from Congress, the leadership of NOW is unconvinced that mass action is key to winning on the ERA, on abortion, on affirmative action, and the many other issues that women face.

NOW believes that the ERA will be won by electing the right politicians—even though many politicians supported by NOW have later voted against the ERA. The leadership of NOW does not see that a large, militant women's movement can force concessions from the politicians.

Even so, the membership of NOW was very enthusiastic about July 9. A resolution passed committing NOW to call a demonstration at a "politically appropriate" time.

About a hundred women attended a Labor Workshop, including members of the United Auto Workers, United Steel Workers, United Mine Workers, Communications Workers of America, 1199, Brotherhood of Railway and Aircraft Workers, Office and Professional Employees International U-

nion, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, International Typographical Union, and others. Many of the women were clericals in unorganized workplaces. "I'm an unorganized clerical worker, and I wish I wasn't," said one.

This range of union women is a new development for NOW. Many of the women said that they had come to the conference because they were excited about the July 9 demonstration. A woman from 1199 said her local had organized four bus loads. A miner said that she had brought some of her fellow workers to July 9.

But these women were not typical of NOW's membership.

by Carolyn Greene

CLEVELAND—It was too early on a cold, blustery Saturday morning, but a hundred pickets marched on October 7 to protest a day of anti-abortion organizing workshops at Cleveland State University.

They chanted and marched to keep warm, carrying signs saying "My body belongs to me" and other pro-choice slogans.

The picket was initiated by What She Wants, Cleveland's feminist newspaper, and the International Socialists. Twelve women's groups, pro-choice groups and clinics joined in the ad-hoc coalition. At the picket, old friends called to each other: "I haven't seen you for ages; it's time we did something about those right-to-lifers." People were tired of sitting on their hands while the right wing organized, and were high because they were finally beginning to act against them.

Ohio has been a target state for anti-abortion activists during the past year. Attempts were made to pass anti-abortion ordinances in several cities, including Akron and Cleveland Heights. Abortion and family planning clinics were picketed, vandalized, and bombed. During the week of September 30-October 7, anti-abortion groups held four major organizing events: a march, a speech, a debate, and workshops.

Left groups and feminist organizations have been badly fragmented, and pro-choice groups had tended to spend their energy



Although there is a new awareness on the part of the leadership of the need to reach out to minority and working women, the membership remains largely middle class and overwhelmingly white.

The Labor Workshop presented a resolution to the conference that called for (among other things): a continued alliance with the labor movement, for NOW to take action to support the organizing efforts of unorganized workers, to work actively to repeal Section 14-B of the Taft-Hartley Act, to lobby again for labor law reform in the next session of Congress, to work for passage of pregnancy disability legislation, to take a position against Weber in the steel industry, to support boycotts of J.P. Stevens and Winn-Dixie, and to organize for the November 13 Karen Silkwood Memorial Day. The resolution also called for local NOW chapters to set up Labor Task Forces to work on these issues and proposed a NOW Conference on Women in Unions and Worksite Organizing to take place in 1979.

TURN FOR NOW?

This is an impressive resolution that could mean a real turn for NOW in reaching out to working class women. But so far most of the interest in working women is confined to the top leadership of NOW.

Several of the fights on the convention floor revealed the class nature of NOW. For example, a resolution was presented on sterilization abuse that opposed a 30-day waiting period between signing consent forms and surgery. Some members of NOW opposed guidelines because they infringe on a woman's control of her body. Sterilization abuse is a harsh reality for Black women, Chicanas, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, and women on welfare.

In a sad display of a lack of understanding between middle class and poor and minority women, Jackie Washington, a Black woman and a member of NOW's Minority Task Force got up and opposed the 30-day waiting period as "paternalistic" and denying a woman's "right to control her own body." But Jackie Washington is a middle-class, professional woman. She ignored the pleas of other minority women to vote down this resolution. NOW went on record opposed to the 30-day waiting period.

Earlier in the year, a similar fight erupted at the Mid-Atlantic Regional NOW Conference. A resolution was submitted supporting repeal of the "Right to Work" section 14-B of the Taft-Hartley Act. The resolution was defeated by tabling because business and professional NOW members organized against it. At the national conference, fortunately, repeal of 14-B was supported.

The new alliance between the women's movement and the labor movement is an exciting development in NOW. But an alliance at the top is not enough.

The task for NOW today is to bring working women into the women's movement. The women's liberation movement cannot win without working women who represent not only the largest numbers of women, but the best organized and most militant women in the country. □

Women Ain't Satisfied



lobbying legislators and hoping the threat would die down. There was no visible pro-choice movement in Cleveland.

So the picket October 7 was an important turning point. It showed that Clevelanders in favor of women's rights to control their own bodies are ready to start using more militant tactics to fight back against the right wing.

One woman said, "I thought that this was such a basic right that you didn't have to organize to protect it. I'm beginning to realize that I was wrong. Those people are going to eliminate the right to get an abortion if we don't do something."

AIN'T SATISFIED

Everyone knew the fight would be a long one, but they also felt they had made a start in building a network of activists who could fight effectively against the right wing and extend abortion rights further. As the song "I Still Ain't Satisfied," which ended the rally, goes:

They liberalized abortion—I still ain't satisfied!

Cause it still costs a fortune—I still ain't satisfied!

I'm talking about control of my own womb

And no reform is gonna change my tune.

I got my cry, I won't be lied to.

I did decide, half way just won't do!

And they lied, and they lied, And I still ain't satisfied! □

JOINING THE TAX REVOLT? KEEP YOUR HANDS ON YOUR WALLET!

by Marilyn Danton

A recent nationwide survey showed that 26 states are in the process of considering or adopting some form of tax or spending limitation law. Everybody's talking about the new tax revolt.

What isn't so well known is the fact that a tax revolt has been quietly going on for the past 13 years.

With no fanfare and no publicity, American corporations have succeeded in reducing their share of tax revenues from 18.9% in 1965 to 14.3% in 1975.

It is this "tax revolt" successfully carried out in the past decade, that is at least partially responsible for the current rebellion.

But the new tax revolt doesn't promise to equalize taxes.

BENEFITS TO BUSINESS

After all, what is the meaning of tax cuts or limitations like California's Proposition 13, that give 65% of their benefits to business or commercial properties, cut the social services that working people use, and force the layoff of public employees?

What is the meaning of the fact that President Carter's current tax cut proposal would further reduce the corporate tax rate from its present 48% to 46%?

And that Carter's proposal will also give 25% of its benefits to corporate and investment interests—as much as goes to the 87% of American taxpayers making under \$20,000 a year. And that another 25% would go to those making over \$50,000, with the rest going to those who make between \$20,000 and \$50,000?

These so-called tax reforms

mean that business interests are manipulating the real problems of working and middle income people, for their own class interests.

Taken tax cuts to middle income families and the real tax breaks for business.

Rising taxes are hurting lower and middle income families. Property taxes, which affect homeowners as well as real estate moguls, have increased an average of 11% for all states in the years from 1966-1976.

If all taxes are considered, some—such as income and sales tax—have risen faster than property taxes. [See table.]

INFLATION CONTRIBUTES

A large chunk of the increase is

due directly to inflation. Today, one 1967 dollar will buy only 52¢ worth of goods and services—practically a 100% increase.

Until quite recently, wages have kept pace with inflation. But to keep pace, wages have risen in simple money terms.

But higher wages mean a higher tax bracket—hence a larger percent for taxes, all other things being equal.

For example, a family of four with a \$10,000 a year income in 1967 would have to make approximately \$20,000 a year in 1977 to maintain the same standard of living. Yet making \$20,000 a year, the family moves from a tax bracket of \$217 to a tax bracket of \$2768.

The mood of tax rebellion is real enough—and justified. There's only one serious problem—all the so-called reforms and cuts proposed so far will most benefit the corporations, people who make over \$50,000 a year, and real estate interests. (See the accompanying article on Michigan for an example.)

MODERATE REFORM?

Some may ask if it is fair to write about Proposition 13, and Michigan's Headlee Amendment and Carter's tax plan as if they were equally bad. Big employers have emphasized that they don't support the radical tax cutting measures like Proposition 13 or Michigan's Tisch Amendment. The more far-thinking capitalists fear the potential chaos resulting from such drastic measures.

To protect their profits and still

maintain some form of tax stability, these businessmen are supporting the milder tax limitation proposals.

But the Jarvis, Tisch and New Right forces are working in concert with big business nonetheless.

While the Jarvis, Tisches and Kemps argue for radical proposals, business and the corporate wealthy get "moderate" tax breaks—and working people just get taxed.

POPULIST SONG AND DANCE

The moderate business interests are also trying to harness popular sentiment against taxes for their own political and economic goals.

"The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, long the voice of big business on Capitol Hill, is singing a populist song these days," is how a recent article in the Detroit Free Press put it.

The occasion was a national tour by Shearon Harris, Chairman of the Chamber, to drum up "grass roots support" for a proposal to reduce inflation and federal spending. The goal of the tour, according to Harris, a director of General

Motors, is to make it popular for Congress to vote "cuts in spending."

What spending do they want to cut? Welfare, jobs programs, food stamps—not defense spending, now at an all-peace time high.

Underlying the entire problem, however, is the economic crisis and the never-ending search for profits.

According to the tax revolt people, cutting corporate and capital gains taxes will mean greater profits, leading to increased investment and even greater profits. This in turn, should mean more jobs, higher wages, etc.

But what it really will mean is more taxes for working people, less for the corporations, and over six million people officially unemployed.

Helping the corporations does not help working and middle income people. This society is run by and for capitalist interests.

In taxes, as in everything else, the capitalists are will try to force the working people to pay for their crisis. So far they have been successful.



SOURCE OF TAX REVENUES - ALL GOVERNMENT

	1965		1975	
	\$(millions)	%	\$(millions)	%
Total	\$144,950		\$331,650	
Individual Income	52,882	36.5%	143,840	43.4%
Corporate	27,390	18.9%	47,263	14.3%
Sales	32,904	22.7%	70,905	21.4%
Property	22,583	15.6%	51,491	15.5%
Other	9,191	6.3%	18,151	5.5%

Michigan Propositioned

by Marilyn Danton

On November 7, Michigan voters will face crucial votes on three different tax cut/limitation proposals.

All three are designed to appeal to the tax rebellion mood sweeping the country. Yet none of these proposals—Proposition E (Headlee), Proposition J (Tisch), and Proposition H (Voucher) will provide any tax relief for working people.

The only relief they provide is for the wealthy and the corporations.

TISCH—PROPOSITION J

First a look at Proposition J, popularly known as the Tisch tax cut proposal. Authored by the Shiawassee County sewer commissioner Robert Tisch, it is patterned directly after Proposition 13 which passed in California last June.

One supporter of the Tisch Amendment is Howard Jarvis, the author of Proposition 13, head of the Los Angeles Apartment House Owners Association, a one-time munitions plant owner and former-

ly a major fund raiser for Richard Nixon.

Tisch claims to cut all property taxes by 50% through reducing property tax assessments to 25% of the true cash value of the property and limiting state equalization increases to 2.5% in any one year. Currently, tax assessments are 50% of the true cash value.

In addition, Proposition J would establish a 5.6% maximum on the rate of the state income tax and prohibit legislation requiring new or expanded local programs unless they are fully funded.

It sounds good, but what will be the real effect of the Tisch amendment? According to a Detroit News analysis, the Tisch proposition will actually mean an increase in taxes for homeowners.

First, with property taxes cut in half, homeowners can deduct only half as much for their property tax credit on their state income taxes.

Second, even small savings of around \$54 will be eaten up by the increased amount homeowners must pay on federal income taxes because of lower deductions there as well.

Third, according to the Wayne County Bureau of Taxation, the county will lose over \$388 million in revenue if Tisch passes. This includes losses at all levels of government. The city of Detroit will lose \$58.4 million and the Detroit school district will lose another \$462.8 million.

The damage to public education does not end there. Tisch would also mean a total loss of close to \$2 billion to local school districts throughout Michigan.

In order to replace these funds, if programs stay at existing levels, property tax rates would have to increase as in the past. Income taxes would be needed to replace the lower yield of property tax rates.

Moreover, none of the inequities between rich and poor school districts would change. The already existing lack of funds for the public schools would only be compounded.

Finally, Tisch would mean that state taxes would actually go up an average of \$129 for many senior citizens! Homeowners over age 65 would lose the tax credit they now

receive.

If Tisch passes, in all likelihood Michigan residents will face a situation similar to that of California's cities are raising fees for sewage, parks, recreational facilities, building permits and public transit.

Already, 24,200 government jobs have been lost in California as a result of the passage of Proposition 13. It is estimated that eventually over 100,000 people will be laid off in California.

Finally, two California counties have closed public hospitals, and the state has cut another \$8.3 million for public hospitals as well as \$183 million for highway construction. Programs supported by federal aid will also suffer because state and local governments will not have the necessary matching funds.

And all of this is taking place with a \$5 billion surplus in this year's budget cushioning the blow. The worst of the cuts in California are yet to come.

HEADLEE—PROPOSITION E

But the Headlee Amendment is the moderate tax relief measure isn't it?

The answer is no—while Headlee appears more moderate, its long term effects will be similar to Tisch.

There will be tax breaks for business, no real relief for working people, potential cutbacks in services and the loss of public employees' jobs.

Proposition E, as Headlee is listed on the ballot, would limit all state taxes and revenues to the current proportion of total state personal income, now at about 9.5%.

It would prohibit local governments from adding new taxes or increasing existing taxes without voter approval. It would preserve the present proportion of state spending paid to all units of local government as a group. And it would prohibit the state from adopting new programs or expanding present local programs without full state funding.

In effect, Headlee rolls back millages for the community as a

whole only when taxes on all property in that community have risen faster than the rate of inflation.

In the Detroit area only the wealthy Grosse Pointes and several other rich communities would save anything.

Headlee will basically provide no tax relief for anyone and will continue the same tax system we have now. Moreover, just maintaining the current level of services will require increased fees and charges. With inflation rising at a rate of 10% as it is today, Headlee will also mean more cutbacks in services and fewer jobs.

Headlee would also put the public school system in jeopardy.

In the first place, the guarantee of maintaining the portion of state spending going to local units does not specifically keep that portion going to schools. This means that in the case of a program of direct aid to the cities requiring matching funds, the schools could lose funding while the cities might gain funds.

Second, passage of Headlee would make it practically impossi-

Wanted: REAL tax reform

It's clear that the current tax system is inequitable and that reforms are necessary. But what should also be crystal clear by now is that none of the proposed tax cuts on the national or state level will accomplish the needed reforms.

The problem is that 87% of the taxes are paid by those making under \$20,000 a year. If those who today pay only 13% paid their share then all the rest of us could get a real tax cut and there would be a surplus to boot.

When people like Nelson Rockefeller of Standard Oil pay no income tax in 1970 after earning \$2.5 million, you wonder. In 1966 he paid only \$685.00. How much did you pay in 1970 and 1966?

FORD—NO TAXES

Giant corporations like Ford Motor Company paid no taxes in 1974. Others in this category

include U.S. Steel, Bethlehem Steel, Chase Manhattan Corporation, Pacific Gas and Electric and American Airlines.

Incidentally, Pacific Gas and Electric got another \$130 million in tax relief from the passage of Proposition 13 this year.

Altogether, sixteen major corporations with a combined income of \$2,491,800,000 paid no taxes in 1977.

Another way of looking at this is the following taken from Phillip Stearn's book, *The Great Treasury Raid*: Of four men earning \$7,000 a year, with all other things being equal (dependents, etc.), their taxes in 1964 ranged from \$1,282 to 0 depending on the source of income.

source of title	income	amt of taxes
steelworker wages		\$1,282.00
stockholder dividends		992.30
speculator sale of stock		526.00

investor purchase of municipal bonds 0.00

Today's figures would be higher, but with the same or greater inequities.

We believe that real tax reform means forcing the corporations and the wealthy to pay their fair share. We propose the following five point program for tax reform:

1. Institute a graduated income tax to replace straight tax rates in Michigan and other states with regressive tax structures.
2. Eliminate income taxes on family income under \$25,000 a year.
3. Eliminate property taxes for individual homeowners below \$50,000 assessed valuation.
4. Institute a tax rate comparable to that on income for corporate profits, dividends, stocks and bonds.
5. Close all tax loopholes, includ-

ing the 22% oil depletion allowance, capital gains, three martini lunches, etc.

As a step toward putting this tax reform program forward we recommend that Michigan residents vote "yes" on Proposition A. This Proposition calls for a Constitutional Convention to rewrite the Michigan Constitution.

If Proposition A passes the forces in support of real tax relief must organize to elect delegates who will make tax reform the central issue at the Convention.

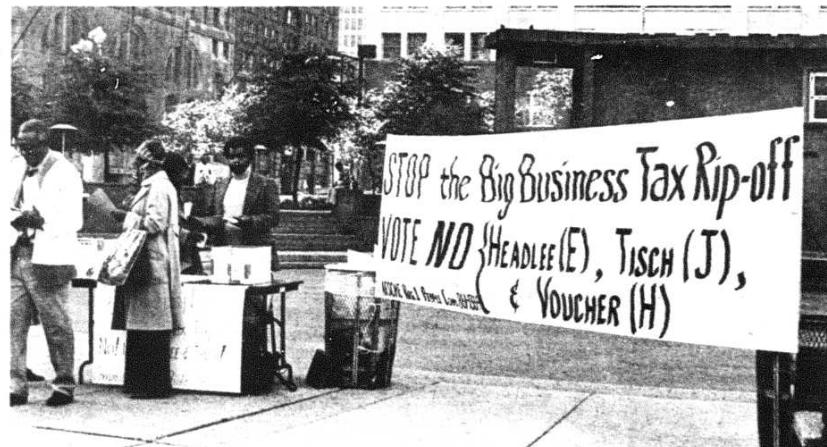
If this attempt fails, we must begin immediately after this election to build a movement among the unions, working people in their communities and other interested citizens to organize for a petition drive to get such a tax reform proposal on the 1980 ballot.

For the next month though, we have a more immediate task. According to a recent poll, Headlee is passing with 60% for, while Tisch and Voucher are toss-ups. We must organize to defeat these three tax relief frauds on the ballot.

Here's what Michigan voters can do:

- Distribute the excellent brochure "Tax Cuts or Tax Rip-Off" put out by the Committee to Save Public Services. It is available from the office of AFSCME Council 25, 16861 Wyoming, Detroit MI 48235, or call 313-861-1369.
- Attend the rally and demonstration against the three proposals to be held in downtown Detroit on November 4 or 5. Watch for more information as to exact date, time and place.
- Volunteer to get involved in the various coalitions and activities against the three propositions and publicize what Tisch/Headlee/Voucher really mean for working people.

If working people, the unions and the poor organize effectively we can defeat these fraudulent proposals. Spread the word. Vote "no" on Propositions H, J and E on November 7. □



In Detroit the Committee to Save Public Services of AFSCME, Region 1 publicizes what the three tax proposals on the Michigan ballot really mean.

By Right Wing

ble for the legislature to improve on the governor's budget recommendations. The state legislature could only accept or reject the budget—not amend it.

In effect, the legislature would have only veto power over the budget, placing a tremendous amount of fiscal power in the hands of one person.

VOUCHER—PROPOSITION H

And then there's the Voucher proposal. In a field of reactionary choices, the voucher proposal clearly wins the race for the most reactionary.

The Voucher amendment would prohibit the use of property taxes for school operating expenses, require the establishment of a program of general school taxation for the support of schools, and require the legislature to issue educational vouchers for financing a student's education at a school of the parents' choice. For private schools the voucher would pay only the cost of public school education.

In effect, the voucher plan would seriously jeopardize the present

public school system, and increase racial and class segregation of students.

The voucher system can't do away with the legislature's constitutional responsibility to maintain and support the public school system though. So what it really means is that the state would be forced to finance both public and non-public schools at a greater expense to all taxpayers.

A modest estimate says the transfer of 8,500 students from public to non-public schools in the city of Detroit would amount to \$258 million in the form of vouchers to private or parochial schools. This means that over \$2 billion would have to be raised through new state taxes to maintain the existing level of the public school system.

This \$2 billion plus \$258 million for aid to non-public schools would be raised by assessing individuals 65% and business 35%. After deducting for property tax decreases this is still a net tax increase for education. And taxpayers will be supporting parochial and private schools, many of which

will still exclude the majority of students through cost or racist or religious barriers.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

It ought to be clear from the facts that all of these so-called tax cuts are cuts for only a few and are tax increases or general hardship for many.

Either way, working people, the poor and in some cases even the middle income people will end up paying.

After all, the corporations and the wealthy don't need public parks and recreational facilities or public schools.

They have their private clubs and schools. So why should they care if fees for these services are raised or the services cut back?

And the rich don't need the jobs that will be cut back when services are lost, or when the local county or state governments can't afford to hire workers.

It is those who already have who will get more. Forty per cent of the savings will go to business—over \$700 million. The rest—around

\$900 million—will be divided among the millions of Michigan homeowners.

The biggest winners in all cases will be the largest property owners—the giant corporations like General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, the banks, utilities and real estate developers.

These corporations—especially the Big Three—often demand and get tax credits as payment for remaining in or moving to one location over another. And yet that's still not enough—they will get more.

The trend is not new. Before 1963 big business in Michigan paid 60% of the assessed valuation of their property. Homeowners paid only 25-30%. Since then, business and homeowners alike have paid 50%.

The Tisch and Headlee proposals would further shift the burden onto the backs of individuals and away from the corporate interests.

There is no doubt that our tax system is inequitable. But a vote for Tisch, Headlee or the Voucher proposal would make it more inequitable. □

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY VS. LABOR POLITICAL ACTION: WHAT'S REALISTIC?

by Sandy Boyer

MANY PEOPLE both in the labor movement and on the left are for a labor party but believe in supporting at least some Democrats until one can be formed.

Some of these people are for supporting the most liberal of today's Democratic Party politicians. People like Bella Abzug, John Conyers, and Ron Dellums. The Communist Party is one of the most important advocates of this position.

Others won't get involved with these politicians. But they feel it is more practical for genuinely radical or pro-labor candidates to run in Democratic Party primaries than to run as independents.

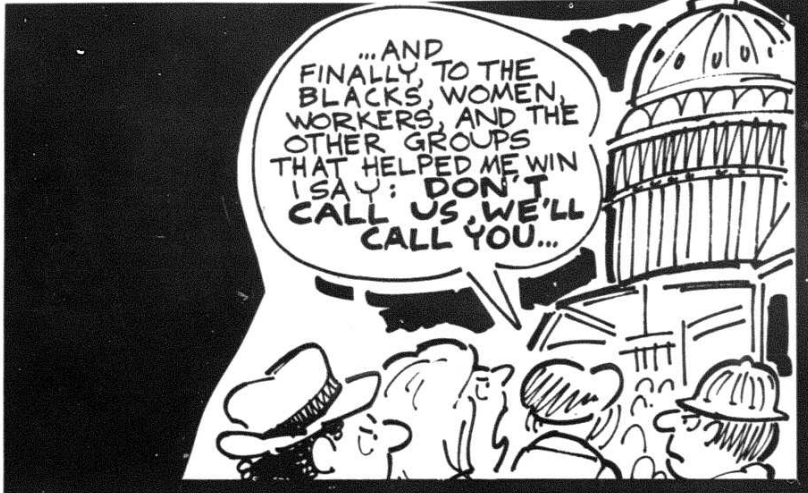
We reject both these ideas. We don't believe independent political action is something to be kept on the shelf until masses of people miraculously awake to the need for a labor party.

We can't just wait for a labor party. It will take patient organizing and explaining to bring it about.

After all when we want a better union or a better contract we don't wait for it to happen some time in the future when a vast majority of people have somehow, all at once, moved into action.

Running independent candidates with roots in the labor movement—now, and in the near future—would begin to spread the idea of a labor party as an actual alternative to the Democrats.

These campaigns could challenge the Democrats on issues like



unemployment, inflation, genuine labor reform, health insurance and coming wage controls. Through these and other issues, independent labor candidates would be presenting the case for why working people need their own party.

These campaigns would be more difficult and less glamorous than running in the Democratic primaries. And no one is going to be elected to office as an independent in the near future. But this kind of independent campaign is the most

important way to begin organizing for a labor party.

EXCEPTIONAL DEMOCRATS?

On the other hand, campaigns of liberal or pro-labor individuals that are run through the Democratic Party actually set back the growth of pro-labor party sentiment.

Liberal Democrats like Abzug, Dellums and Conyers, for instance, do much more to make the Democratic Party look like a working people's party than they do to make it one. The Democratic Party has been absorbing and taming these kind of people for at least fifty years.

As soon as someone like this gets elected they learn that you have to play ball with the party machine to get anything done. To get even token reforms adopted they have to make a whole series of compromises like agreeing to water down their ideas (as happened to the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill), supporting programs the party leadership wants, and endorsing other Democratic candidates.

The occasional maverick who won't play ball is isolated and eventually defeated. None of their programs are ever enacted. None of their constituents' complaints are acted on. If they are legislators they are assigned to the most irrelevant committees or to none at all. Finally if they seem both persistent and dangerous all the existing party machines can gang up to defeat them.

This is exactly what happened to

a radical Democratic Congressman from New York named Vito Marcantonio in the 1950's. Marcantonio, a leading spokesman for Puerto Ricans in New York who was closely allied with the Communist Party, was elected as both a Democratic and American Labor Party candidate. The Democratic Congressional leadership refused to give him a committee assignment. Finally the Democratic, Liberal and Republican parties all combined to run a candidate who defeated Marcantonio.

MILITANTS ABSORBED

Detroit Mayor Coleman Young is a fine example of the other dynamic—how the Democratic Party absorbs its left wing. There are countless others like him.

Young is a former UAW organizer and Black activist who was blacklisted in the 50's because of his close ties with the Communist Party.

He ran for Mayor of Detroit on a program of stopping police brutality and giving Blacks control of the city government (Detroit is over 50% Black).

Since being elected, Young has turned into Henry Ford's favorite politician. He has used a militant almost Black Power rhetoric to sell a program of beefing up the police force and re-building downtown Detroit with huge subsidies to business while ignoring the neighborhoods. That is what makes him so valuable to Ford and the rest of

the business establishment.

Young was an early and constant supporter of Jimmy Carter. It was Young who rushed to rescue Carter from his disastrous "ethnic purity" statement. Even when Vernon Jordan of the Urban League and other Black leaders attacked Carter for selling out the Black community, Young continued to defend him.

Radicals can't urge people to vote for liberal or left wing Democrats and at the same time talk about breaking from the Democratic Party.

WINNING... BUT WHAT?

Some radicals and union militants won't support any of the existing Democratic Party politicians. But they feel that when radicals or militants run for office it is often more practical to run in the Democratic Party primary than to run as an independent.

They point out that it is much easier to gain a spot on the primary ballot than to get on the ballot as an independent. Running as a Democrat your candidate has a chance to win the primary and even get elected.

Many people in the New American Movement (NAM) have this point of view.

The question of what's practical comes down to what you're trying to accomplish by running for office. If all you want is to get someone elected it is undoubtedly more practical to run as a Democrat.

But one radical in Congress or a state legislature can't accomplish much of anything.

If running for office is part of building a movement for social change then it is much more practical to run as an independent candidate—in spite of the difficulties involved.

The Democratic Party, after all, is one of the major obstacles to any kind of progressive social change. It can't be destroyed or reformed by running in its primaries. That has been tried sixteen ways to Sunday and has failed every time.

It is high time radicals and union militants in this country began organizing the fight for a labor party. We can't fight for a labor party by running in the Democratic Party. Instead we have to begin organizing independent labor campaigns in as many elections as possible.

If in the next year or two we begin running these campaigns we will have taken the first crucial steps toward building our own party, based on our own power, and fighting for our own needs. □

Labor Notes

by Jim Woodward

Women and minority employees of the U.S. Senate are upset that Democratic lawmakers have blocked a proposal to outlaw job discrimination by Senators. They're talking about picketing the Senate in protest, and hope that next year the Senate will agree to stop discriminating.



A House-Senate conference committee has rejected a proposal to remove Occupational Safety and Health Administration protection from millions of workers. The proposal would have exempted most companies employing 10 or fewer workers from OSHA coverage.

In a defeat for union democracy, the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) convention narrowly voted to change its method of electing top officers. Until now, IUE members voted directly for the union's president and secretary-treasurer. But after heated debate, this year's convention voted 1177 to 952 to take elections away from the rank and file. In the future, convention delegates will do the electing.

An important ruling in the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned fines of nearly half a million dollars against the United Mine Workers District 17 and against the international union. The damages had been assessed by a lower court after a series of wildcat strikes. The Appeals Court said the district and international could not be sued because they had not caused or encouraged the strikes.

Chrysler Corp. officials were a bit embarrassed when they asked Michigan Governor William Milliken to ceremonially drive one of its new luxury cars off the assembly line at the Lynch Road plant. Seems the car wouldn't start.

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

Letters

Dear Workers' Power,

I am writing about the TV movie, "One in a Million," which was shown on CBS last week. It was the story of Ron LeFlore, a Detroit Tiger ballplayer who had served time for robbery, and started playing ball in prison as a way to get out.

LeVar Burton played LeFlore, and I really enjoyed the movie, except for one thing. It pitted people against "the street" as if the street was some malevolent force that exists in ghettos and chews up young men and women, not that the malevolent force is the social system that perpetuates desperation.

On a wall in a city side street I once saw the words: "The real state secret is the misery of every day life." Truly, if the makers of bourgeois ideology (in this case, CBS) can continue to try to keep us thinking that our misery is personal, and so our solutions have to be personal, they can package it in such attractive wrappings as this movie.

They want us to think the street is the enemy, so get out of the street, rather than having us identify the true enemy, so we'll take to the streets.

Keep up the good work.

Toni Hawk
Austin, Texas

W.P.:

I just read your review of Animal House. Once again what happens to women in the name of revolution is not to be considered important.

The fact that a movie could make a joke out of a rape fantasy all as a part of BOYS (will be boys) struggle for "independence" from their dictator (father) is appalling.

I would have expected better from W.P.

Yvonne
St. Louis

INTERVIEW



Gil Scott-Heron talks about music, politics, and revolution

interviewed by Barracuda and Toni Hawk

Gil Scott-Heron and Brian Jackson recently performed in Austin, Texas at the Armadillo World Headquarters to a full and enthusiastic house. The crowd was Black, white, Chicano, mostly young.

People danced in the aisles and sang along with songs like "The Bottle." A new song about the coal miners was warmly welcomed. After the encore, Workers' Power managed to get backstage to meet with Gil Scott-Heron.

We (Barracuda and Toni Hawk) feel that music is a very fine form of revolutionary communication, communicating not only joy and fulfillment as music always has, but also specific ideas.

According to Scott-Heron, people can easily grasp and understand a political message, especially when put in terms of rhythms, so he always puts a musical covering on his political messages.

Barracuda: Your ideas of politics spring across national boundaries... some of your songs about South Africa, about Africa and

feed us or to take care of us or anything else.

It's only gonna be our own people that we can depend on, so it

"You don't have instant revolution, like you have instant coffee where you just add water and you get it."

other people struggling in the world. Do you place much emphasis on this transcending national boundaries to sort of join or express through music the struggle of other people and trying to identify them as one?

Gil Scott-Heron: When a Black American sings about Black people that's not about from one state to another, because we're not from here.

We're African people. If we sing about some shit that's happening over here, that's really crossing boundaries, you know what I mean?

Barracuda: All Black people are Africans, and there's no doubt about that: that's where it begins, that's where it ends.

Scott Heron: Our concerns should be where our people are, and what their predicament is, because when things go down strange the white man is not going to be down to protect us, or to defend us, or to

makes it logical that we should try to establish as many positive ties as we can with other struggling Black people—to show them the similarities of our problems and the mutual concern that we should be expressing for one another.

Not only South Africans, but Southeast Asians, South Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos. All of these people who are inevitably more closely aligned with our history and the situation over here...

You know, a whole lot of Black people over here couldn't get down on that until they dug "Roots," but the inevitable reality is that we all come from Africa. That we have many things that happened to us recently, but that our origin was the same, that we're coming from the same place.

MUSIC OF STRUGGLE

Barracuda: Some of your shows I've gone to have contained young people, racially mixed, very young people, Black and white and

Chicano, things like that. Do you have preferences towards, let's say, playing for working people, because most of your songs deal with people who work every day of their lives.

A lot of people say that in fact you are right at the top of the group of singers who identify with the struggle carried on by the working man in today's America, like your new song dedicated to the miners.

Scott Heron: Oh, I hear you. Well, we're not in competition with nobody else, like we Number 5, they Number 3, somebody else is Number 1. It should really be about a lot of different people working toward the same purpose.

Most of my songs as an artist come out of my experiences, and my experiences have been among the working class people.

I come from a working class background, and the people that I've been associated with, who I lived around, and dealt with most of my life, have been working class people.

So I'm just singing about what I know about, you know, what's familiar. Like, I don't try to describe different parts of Africa, because I haven't been there, I haven't travelled extensively enough to know I can describe it with clarity.

But I can describe political issues that affect both us and Africans, and then on the familiar places I've been and things I've done that I can speak on with honesty and clarity.

I work for a very small company that's Black owned and Black operated in Washington and from time to time we have tried to bring other artists into that company.

It hasn't been as positive and as successful as we wanted it to be. But I consider myself a good friend of Bob Marley, I've met him on several occasions and spent time with him and enjoy him.

Peter Tosh, met him recently at a Bob Marley concert and got down with him, enjoy that brother. Hugh Masakela is a good friend, has been for years.

There are quite a few Black artists from other than this country. I consider myself very closely aligned with Eddie Pomberrri, Joe Bataan, you see what I mean, like people in Latin music, and those sorts of situations have been as important to me and my own background and to what I'm trying to do, as American groups.

Barracuda: When you look into the future, what direction and what role do you think revolutionary music will play in the aspirations of the people, especially Black people all over the world?

Scott-Heron: I don't see nothing wrong with the direction they're going now. You know, they just have to understand that you don't have instant revolution, like you have instant coffee where you just add water and you get it.

It'll take a period of time, development organization thought, action. It takes time to change things; it takes time to change people's minds. But that's the first thing.

Toni Hawk: I have seen you several times sing before mixed audiences, especially in Texas, that were predominantly white and I never have gotten the feeling that you want to restrict your message away from whites.

We have friends in the Midwest, places like Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, who are in a youth movement, the Red Side. It's anti-racial and they are trying to combat the racial divisions the school administrators and the police are trying to develop in the schools up there.

Scott-Heron: That's to their advantage, in certain places like Chicago; it is to the authorities' advantage to keep the folks stirred up like that.

In order to change things you're not going to be able to just change one neighborhood. There's going to have to be a lot of input into all the local provinces and hamlets.

There are certain communities, where I'm not welcome with my ideas about change where you might be.

The changes that are needed aren't necessarily in our community, but in other communities where the ideas of Black people, Black people's ideas of what's right and what's wrong aren't appreciated.

It might be [possible to reach] some younger person of that same ethnic group. So we always indicate that as many people who are trying to work the changes of those minds are welcome, wherever they be coming from. It's just more expedient to have folks who are saying what's right be the ones they gonna listen to.

WORKERS' POWER

Subscribe to Workers' Power. \$10 per year. Six months: \$5. Introductory sub: \$1 for 8 issues.

I enclose \$..... Please send me a subscription to Workers' Power.

Name

Address

Trade Union

14131 Woodward, Highland Park, Michigan 48203

SUBSCRIBERS: If you're moving, notify Workers' Power of your new address four weeks in advance. The Post Office will not forward weekly publications to your new address. Undelivered copies are returned to Workers' Power and cost us money.

Carriers Ratify Contract — But Throw Out President

On October 10, the National Association of Letter Carriers announced that the membership approved an arbitrated version of their contract. On the same day,



Vince Sombrotto

the union also announced that President J. Joseph Vacca had been overwhelmingly voted out of office.

The membership voted by a better than two-to-one margin to replace him with Vince Sombrotto, president of the New York branch.

After months of negotiations, arbitration, rank and file opposition to a sell-out, and some firings of wildcat strikers, postal workers did not feel they could successfully oppose the final contract.

But their landslide vote against Vacca is surely the membership's real verdict on the agreement, which among other things allows

the Postal Service to lay-off workers hired after September 15.

Sombrotto, one-time leader of the opposition forces in the union, was a leader of the 1970 wildcats. He has a reputation for militancy and for a harder-line stance against the Postal Service.

Because of that position in the union and the expectations of oppositionists who support him, Sombrotto's victory may lead to greater openings for rank and file militancy.

But the openings will surely be limited. For the past several years, Sombrotto has followed a path of

increasing conservatism.

Having lost two previous national election contests, he decided on a quiet and conservative campaign strategy this time around. Although he supported a harder bargaining stance during the most recent negotiations, he was careful to avoid any action which might have cost him the support of more conservative members of the union.

The strategy paid off, in one sense—he won the office. But it is the reason that most union militants, quite correctly, have few illusions in what his victory will mean.

Nevertheless, the huge vote in his favor shows that dissatisfaction with current union policies continues to be significant among the postal workers' ranks. □



J. Joseph Vacca

Workers' Power

Teamsters: First Target Of Carter Wage-slash Policy

by Jim Woodward

The Carter Administration is afraid that trucking employers may not have enough backbone to stand up to the Teamsters Union in next spring's major contract negotiations. So the government has planted itself firmly behind the trucking companies, pushing them to keep the cost of next year's contract low.

The administration is taking such an openly anti-labor stand because of its concern about inflation, and the precedent-setting nature of the upcoming contract talks.

Barry Bosworth, Carter's chief inflation-fighter, explained the government's attitude to an August meeting of Trucking Management Inc., the freight industry's bargaining arm:

"It is naive to believe that government can stand aside in negotiations that are so fundamental to the health of the economy," he said. "Before next year ends, contracts covering about 4.5 million workers in major bargaining situations will expire. So what you do won't only affect your industry but several others as well..."

"It seems to me difficult to argue that the average Teamster isn't in a good position to make a contribution to help prevent the inevitable consequences of continued high inflation," Bosworth concluded.

"VOLUNTARY"

(Bosworth may be in a position to make such a contribution himself. As director of the Council on Wage and Price Stability, he makes \$50,000 in a job that paid \$39,000 under the Nixon administration.)

The specific details of the administration's wage restraint policy are expected to be announced by the President in mid-October.

Carter will probably again deny that he is moving towards mandatory wage controls, calling his policy a "voluntary" one. But advance reports indicate that he plans to use the government's economic and regulatory powers on those who do not volunteer for a 7% per year wage limitation.

In the case of the trucking industry, use of such powers has already been threatened. In mid-September, the Interstate Commerce Commission, which sets freight rates, notified trucking companies that they should not automatically expect approval of rate increases to cover higher labor costs.

This action was described in the business press as "designed to encourage a tough stance on the carriers' side of the table."

TEAMSTER CONTRACT KEY

To be sure, the administration's plan will include talk of price restraints as well as wage restraints. But they make it plain they think holding down wages is the key. Specifically Teamster wages. Picked almost at random, an October 11 Wall Street Journal article says:

"Senior administration officials are deeply concerned that the voluntary [anti-inflation] guidelines... may prove ineffective. The success of the program may hinge on whether the administration can prevail on the giant Teamsters union and the trucking industry to produce a labor settlement early next year that breaks the pattern of 10%-a-year wage increases in

major industries."

What does this mean? For one thing, it means that Fitzsimmons' pledge to match the miners' contract would be smashed. Under the administration's 7% a year guidelines, the Teamsters would get only 57% as much as the

miners won.

Still, if wages were the only issue, a 7% a year raise for relatively well paid Teamsters wouldn't necessarily be too disastrous even if inflation goes over 10%.

But wages isn't the only issue. A

hidden kicker in the negotiations, to take just one example, is employer contributions to the scandal-ridden Teamster pension funds.

PENSION FUND

A study by Wyatt Co., an actuarial firm retained by the Central States Pension Fund, said that to maintain current benefit levels, the new contract would require a 26% increase in employer contributions (from \$31 to \$39 weekly). Wyatt Co. was fired after producing this report, and replaced by a company which will undoubtedly come up with less embarrassing statistics.

The fact remains that a large part of the new Teamster contract will go for increased pension contributions which will bring the members no increased benefits. But the government and employers will count this as part of the cost of the settlement.

That, in turn, will reduce wage and cost-of-living increases and other contract expenses.

Unless, unless Frank Fitzsimmons really intends to fight for the members this time around. (Those who believe this are called business agents and other names.)

Or unless the membership follows the example of the coal miners. That does not mean a strike as long as the miners' 110 days. A nationwide freight strike has the power to back the government off in a hurry.

If the Teamsters can defeat Carter's so-called anti-inflation program, it would be a victory for more than just Teamsters. It would set back the administration's plan to fight inflation by deflating working people's paychecks. □

SUN PRESS

Battle Line The Coal Strike of '78

by Kim Moody and Jim Woodward

The story of the 110-day coal strike of 1978 reveals forces that are challenging the entire labor movement. Supported by the federal government, giant oil, energy and steel corporations lined up to crush the United Mine Workers. As the miners fought to save their union, thousands of workers from other unions rallied to their support. Veteran labor writers KIM MOODY and JIM WOODWARD have written a book that points the way for all who want to see labor become once again a force for progressive social change in America.

\$3.00 postpaid from Sun Distribution, 14131 Woodward, Highland Park MI 48203