



Military Intervention Looms in Iran

by Jim Griffin and Kevin O'Hare

In a scheme that appeared to be concocted in Hollywood, but was actually conceived in Washington, the US military staged an abortive rescue mission aimed at recovering the 50 hostages in Iran. Dubbed Operation Blue Light, preparation for the mission had been underway since November of last year. It involved a coordinated effort by a 90-man commando team flown into the Iranian desert, and US operatives infiltrated into Iran over the last several months. The plan went awry early when three of eight helicopters broke down. With the mission requiring six functioning helicopters and only having five left, Carter reluctantly cancelled it. In attempting to get out of the desert, a C-130 transport plane and a helicopter collided killing eight commandos and injuring five more. From a strictly military point of view, Operation Blue Light has to be ranked as one of the bigger botches of the century.

More important is the political fallout. Iran, its worst suspicions of US intentions confirmed, has hardened in its resolve. A peaceful solution to the hostage question, which seemed near only a month ago, is now more remote than ever. The US's Western European allies, while publicly maintaining a posture of support, are deeply disturbed by the direction of US policy, and tensions with the Soviet Union have sharpened. Cyrus Vance, the leading opponent of the "hard line" within the Carter cabinet, resigned after losing a battle to stop Operation Blue Light. As for the hostages, they are now dispersed from the embassy and have been placed in greater jeopardy by the actions of the administration. Barbara Timm, mother of one of the hostages, spoke for many hostage parents when she said, "We deeply regret the actions of our President."

ACTION A SURPRISE

The military action came as a surprise. Carter, only days before, had secured the cooperation of Western Europe and Japan in applying economic sanctions aimed at Iran. In an April 14 press conference, Carter had announced a series of diplomatic and economic initiatives aimed at escalating pressure on Iran. His timetable called for the US allies to follow suit with economic sanctions, in-



Tercer Mundo

cluding the freeing of \$8 billion in Iranian assets, in late April. If by mid-May the sanction did not succeed, Carter then expected the Japanese and Europeans to break diplomatic relations with Iran. Only if all these measures failed, Carter told the US people, would military means be considered. The very same day Carter outlined this plan, he secretly gave the go-ahead signal for Operation Blue Light.

From January to April, the US had pinned its hopes for release of the hostages

on reaching an accommodation with Iranian President Bani-Sadr. In the wake of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, US policy-makers sought to turn Iranian suspicions of the USSR to their advantage. The election of "moderate" Bani-Sadr, who is known to be anti-Soviet and soft on the US, was seen as advancing this strategy. The Carter administration sought to convince the Iranians that the USSR was a greater danger to Iran's sovereignty, and that by continuing to hold the hostages Iran was playing into the Soviet hands. Bani-Sadr was clearly sympathetic to this point of view.

In February, the outlines of a settlement appeared to be emerging. The UN commission, with the support of Bani-Sadr and what appeared to be the toleration of the US, visited Iran in order to investigate the crimes of the Shah. Many expected that some sort of US acceptance of the commission's findings would follow, and that this concession on the part of the US would be sufficient to enable Bani-Sadr to secure the release of the hostages without losing face.

Instead, the US refused to allow the UN commission to publish its findings on the Shah before it saw the hostages. This in turn led the Revolutionary Council to refuse to force the student militants to allow the commission into the embassy to see the hostages. The UN commission left without seeing them and the crisis continued.

Still Bani-Sadr pressed forward his plan for a settlement, seeking the transfer of the hostages from the hands of the militants to those of the Revolutionary Council. Bani-Sadr sought a public promise from the US to the effect that the US would not provoke Iran verbally or militarily before the newly elected parliament had a chance to consider the hostage question.

The Carter administration refused to make such a promise, thus undercutting Bani-Sadr's position. His stance of "moderation" was further undermined by the flight of the Shah to Egypt in the midst of Iranian-Panamanian negotiations for his extradition. The Shah's move was perceived by the Iranians as enjoying covert US support. Bani-Sadr has charged that Henry Kissinger was instrumental in arranging the Shah's most recent place of exile. The effect of these developments was to isolate Bani-Sadr and doom his plan for the hostage transfer.

Having failed in playing the Bani-Sadr option, Carter shifted to a "tough" stance. In this he was undoubtedly egged on by political considerations and his sagging ratings in the polls. On April 7 he announced that the US was breaking diplomatic relations with Iran and that Iranian diplomats were to be expelled from the US within two days. Carter also said that he was asking Congress for permission to use the \$8 billion in Iranian assets in the US which were impounded last November to pay for the expense of maintaining a 20-ship US fleet in the Persian Gulf and to settle lawsuits of the families of the hostages against Iran.

Then on April 14, Carter announced further moves. He cut remaining Iranian imports to the US (\$8 million a month), announced that Iranian military equipment impounded last November will be sold or used by US forces (\$300 million), banned travel to Iran except for journalists, and once again asked Congress for permission to spend the \$8 billion in Iranian assets which were frozen last November. Furthermore, Carter outlined the actions that he expected US allies to take, and a timetable for those allies to take those actions — economic sanctions followed, if necessary, by breaking diplomatic relations.

The application of economic sanctions to Iran by the Western Europeans and Japan was agreed to with considerable reluctance. The US allies did not believe that the US could force the freeing of the hostages, but they have been under enormous pressure from the US, and they hoped to forestall any military action for the present time, which they saw as potentially disastrous.

WHAT NOW?

The failure of the "rescue mission" probably means that the administration will return to the timetable and plan outlined on April 14. Iran is even less likely to be pressured by economic and diplomatic sanctions now, given the massive outcry brought on by US military intervention. Economic sanctions are not going to seriously disrupt Iran, at least not in the short run. They are far more likely to damage the oil dependent, recession ridden West.

(continued on page 12)

In This Issue

Three Mile Island Update p.14

No Strike for Steel ? p.6

Scottsboro to Boston p.11

Inflation & Recession p.16

Letters To The Editor...



More on the PWOC's "Sectarianism"...

Dear *Organizer*,

In general, your report of the recent February 2 National Mobilization Against Klan/Nazi Terror in Greensboro was politically accurate. Unfortunately, however, you chose to continue your sectarian policy toward the National Anti-Racist Organizing Committee (NAROC) by completely ignoring the important role we played in that action. You mentioned the participation of such forces as the Southern Conference Education Fund (led by the Communist Party-ML), the SCLC, and many other forces, but completely excluded mention of genuine revolutionary forces such as the NAROC (and OCIC groups such as the Louisville Workers' Collective and Atlanta Labor Group).

The NAROC won many friends in the course of the Feb. 2 Mobilization, and forged strategic working relations with revolutionary forces, including the southern OCIC groups. The PWOC is

well aware of these facts, yet reports the event as if neither we nor the OCIC groups were involved at all! Having prematurely predicted the NAROC's doom in the *Organizer* (10/9/79), it seems that PWOC wishes to fulfill its prediction by ignoring our political efforts and hoping that others do, too.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time PWOC has adopted a sectarian policy toward us. We invited PWOC (and many other OCIC forces) to participate in shaping, then founding, the NAROC as early as March 1979. PWOC refused, instead launching a manipulative effort to ensure that no OCIC groups would participate. It circulated a criticism of our efforts to OCIC groups only, belatedly offering copies to a few of the other forces involved; launched unprincipled public attacks on the effort to form a revolutionary anti-racist organization; and offhandedly criticized us in the *Organizer*. In that article it advertized its critique of our proposal to found an

anti-racist organization but failed to make our response to that critique available. All this before NAROC was even formed!

Why does PWOC report the role of reformists, left opportunists, and revisionists in February 2, but ignore us? Unfortunately it seems that PWOC has done so simply because many of the NAROC's leading activists hold the rectification line on party-building. Indeed the *Organizer's* October 9 attack on us occurred in the course of an article criticizing the rectification line, and did not even bother to address NAROC's real basis of unity: our revolutionary line on racism. PWOC's policy toward us is all too reminiscent of similar unprincipled practices among 'new communist' groups within the mass movement in the early 1970's.

Politically the NAROC and PWOC have far more unity than differences. Both hold that US imperialism is the

main enemy of the world's people, and that the struggle against racism is central to the working class struggle in this country. Although NAROC rejects PWOC's notion that *the key* to the anti-racist struggle is to 'win the white workers over to the struggle against racism', we believe that there is a firm basis for strategic unity between our two organizations and will continue to struggle to attain it. We therefore hope that PWOC reverses its negative policy toward us, and leads around the need for genuine revolutionary forces to unite in order to push the anti-racist movement forward.

In unity,

National Staff
National Anti Racist Organizing
Committee (NAROC)

The *Organizer* responds:

NAROC apparently believes the *Organizer* consciously neglected to highlight their role in the Greensboro anti-Klan action, and further, that this is part of a larger pattern of sectarianism towards them initiated by the PWOC. We think both charges are false.

The article in question made no attempt to analyse the role of different forces within the coalition, excepting the CWP. We mentioned a number of distinct organizations (SCLC, the Machinists Union etc.) in order to give some sense of the breadth of the activity. As NAROC points out we did not even mention any OCIC forces, even though a number of groups played an active role, a rather strange manifestation of "sectarianism." Indeed we did not even mention the role of the PWOC, which was active in the local coalition and mobilized for the march. Nor did we discuss the role of the CPUSA, the CP-ML or any

number of others. NAROC is simply wrong when they assert we mentioned SCEF in the article. Apparently in their rush to judgement they did not even bother to read it very carefully. Given all this, there is no significance to the omission of NAROC. Had the article set out to assess the contributions of different organizations, it would be a different matter.

NAROC suggests we have some interest in liquidating their role in the anti-racist movement. "NAROC won many friends...forged strategic working relations with revolutionary forces..." etc. We're told "the PWOC is well aware of these facts." The truth of the matter is the PWOC has made no assessment of NAROC's role, nor are we in a position to do so. We don't know how NAROC is so sure the "facts" are otherwise. Since we did not participate in the Greensboro coalition on a national level we have no basis for such an assessment.

The only area of joint work we have had since the founding of NAROC was

in relation to the Conference in Youngstown which created the Coalition for a People's Alternative (see last month's *Organizer*). Both NAROC and PWOC participated in this conference. While we shared important unity in relation to the question of the centrality of the struggle against racism, NAROC also made some "left" errors - errors that tend to confirm our original critique of the organization's line.

We deliberately did not mention this in the article on Youngstown because to do so in that context would have been sectarian, given that we did not associate the far more profound errors of others with particular organizations. Significantly, NAROC raises no objections to our omission of their role in Youngstown. Omissions of NAROC's errors are apparently permissible.

The letter also misrepresents the history of the PWOC's relations with NAROC. We did not "refuse" to participate in the founding of NAROC nor did we "launch a manipulative effort

to insure that no OCIC groups participate." We forthrightly circulated our criticism of the original NAROC proposal, put these same criticisms forward in a meeting with NAROC representatives, and decided not to attend the founding convention when it became clear that those coming were consolidated around the proposal, a decision that NAROC's representatives agreed with at the time.

We do not deny that NAROC and PWOC have significant areas of unity. We have not nor do we now oppose efforts to build unity of action. NAROC's attempt to suggest otherwise will not wash. These criticisms of the PWOC's "sectarianism", coming on the heels of similar letters in relation to the organization of national trade union fractions, indicate a shift on the part of the rectification forces tactics. Having failed in their efforts to tar the OCIC with the brush of sectarianism, the rectifiers now apparently have shifted their attack to the PWOC in an attempt to drive a wedge between the PWOC and the OCIC.

The Philadelphia Workers' Organizing Committee

Who We Are



The PWOC is a communist organization, basing itself on Marxism-Leninism, the principles of scientific socialism. We are an activist organization of Black and white, men and women workers who see the capitalist system itself as the root cause of the day-to-day problems of working people. We are committed to building a revolutionary working class movement that will overthrow the profit system and replace it with socialism.

We seek to replace the anarchy of capitalist production with a planned economy based on the needs of working people. We want to end the oppression of national minorities and women, and make equality a reality instead of the hypocritical slogan it has become in the mouths of the capitalist politicians. We work toward the replacement of the rule

of the few - the handful of monopolists - by the rule of the many - the working people.

The masses of people in the US have always fought back against exploitation, and today the movements opposing the monopolists are growing rapidly in numbers and in intensity. What is lacking is the political leadership which can bring these movements together, deepen the consciousness of the people, and build today's struggles into a decisive and victorious revolutionary assault against Capital.

To answer this need we must have a vanguard party of the working class, based on its most conscious and committed partisans, rooted in the mass movements of all sectors of American people, and equipped with the political understanding capable of solving the strategic and tactical problems on the difficult road to revolution.

The PWOC seeks, along with like-minded organizations and individuals throughout the US, to build such a party, a genuine Communist Party. The formation of such a party will be an important step forward in the struggle of the working class and all oppressed people to build a new world on the ashes of the old.

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In this Issue:

Labor Round-Up.....	p.3
Budd & the SEPTA Contract.....	p.4
Mack Truck Contract.....	p.4
History of the AFT.....	p.5
No-Strike in Steel?.....	p.6
Trade Union Politics.....	p.7
Workers' Rights Law Project.....	p.7
City Housing Funds.....	p.8
Reagan and Carter.....	p.9
Black Power.....	p.10
Scottsboro to Boston.....	p.11
May Day in Chile.....	p.12
Vietnam Veteran.....	p.13
Three Mile Island.....	p.14
Genetic Screening.....	p.15
Health & Safety for Women.....	p.15
Inflation & Recession.....	p.16
Tribute to Jesse Owens.....	p.17
Vieques Struggle.....	p.17
Citizen's Party.....	p.18
Party Building Debate.....	p.19

SUSTAIN THE ORGANIZER

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Labor Round-up

New York City Transit Workers' Contract

After 11 days on strike, 35,000 New York City transit workers went back to the job on April 11. The Transit Workers Union (TWU) executive board voted 22-22 to accept management's offer of a 21% wage increase over two years, pending a ratification vote by the rank-and-file. One member of the executive board, who would have voted against the pact, was unable to vote because he was called up for National Guard duty. He is suing the union to have another vote. Meanwhile, it is unclear whether or not the rank-and-file, which is well organized and has been challenging the union leadership for some time, will ratify the agreement.

NY City's huge transit system serves one-third of all those who ride public transportation in the US. The settlement with the transit workers is especially important for New York. It sets a pattern for upcoming negotiations with 250,000 New York City workers organized into AFSCME District 37.

About 50% of the TWU membership is Black and Hispanic, while until recently all of the leadership has been white. In recent union elections many minority workers voted for the four opposition slates which took 21 of 45 executive board seats. The old Irish TWU leaders were barely able to keep control of the union. Now the four opposition slates have united in the Good Contract Committee, which is advocating a rejection of the proposed contract.

Many observers think the pact will be rejected. The last contract submitted to ratification in 1978 was ratified by a majority of only 980 votes out of 24,000 cast. The rank-and-file are much more organized this time around. If the contract is rejected, TWU will not go out on strike again immediately, but will go

back to the bargaining table. The date for the ratification vote has not been set yet.

During the course of the strike the TWU was fined \$1 million for the first eight days of the strike — two days pay for each day each worker was out. They were fined by the courts under the state's Taylor Law, a vicious anti-labor law which in theory prohibits strikes by public workers. In practice, fines under the Taylor Law are often not paid and are put into the contract settlement. TWU President John Lowe responded to the fine by saying that "it will break our treasury, but our union was not built on money but on backbone." Nevertheless, the fines surely were part of the reason why the union leadership advocated accepting the proposed contract.

The new contract calls for "give-backs" which include 20 minutes break-time each day, and reduced pay scales for workers in three large departments which are largely made of minority workers. The give-backs are supposed to give management \$45 million extra dollars.

The union originally asked for 30% wage increases over 2 years. But 28% is needed just to get back to real wages gained in 1974. Increases since then have been eaten away by inflation. The transit workers, bus drivers and subway operators gross about \$8 an hour and take home around \$12,000 a year.

If the Taylor Law fines are applied, they will be taken out of the paychecks of the workers. For 11 days on strike each worker would be forced to pay about \$2000. If Inflation continues at its current rate, and if the proposed contract is accepted and the fines applied, transit workers would suffer a 22% decline in real wages over the next two years.



In April 35,000 NY City transit workers were on strike for 11 days. They are currently back at work but have not yet ratified a new contract.

The Call

Nurses Organize at St. Christopher Hospital

Halloween 1979 was very significant for the nurses at St. Christopher, a non-union hospital. Fed up with their working conditions, inadequate staffing and equipment, and no raise or vacation policy, the nurses came together and formed an independent organization, the St. Chris Nurses Association. Through this they hoped to have a voice in improving their working conditions and in improving the deteriorating patient care. The administration, meanwhile, had their own solution to the problems at St. Chris. They were proposing to buy two private hospitals for some \$40 million, not exactly a move in the interest of St. Chris' patients and workers.

The Nurses Association built a strong foundation by including all levels of nurses — RNs, LPNs and aides. They drew up a list of proposals for better staffing, improved educational benefits, higher wages and a grievance procedure, and demanded that administration listen to them. And listen was all administration did, knowing that this alone would not result in any major changes. Without recognition by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the independent nurses association had no power, short of a walk-out, to enforce their demands.

The stumbling block to pursuing NLRB recognition was the desire of the nurses to be represented in one unit. Traditionally the NLRB has ruled that RNs, LPNs and aides have different interests and therefore cannot be in the same bargaining unit. Of course, this is not true. Nurses do basically the same work and share common goals with other hospital workers — decent working conditions and wages, which in turn permit quality patient care. The law in this case functions to keep nurses apart and reinforces in particular the racial division that all too often pits RNs, who are mostly white, against LPNs and aides, who are mostly national minority women.

When exploring union affiliation, the organization's strength — the unity of all levels of nurses — was also a liability. The Pennsylvania Nurses Association, the professional association for nurses which also serves as a bargaining agent, will only represent RNs. And unfortunately, the

unity of the St. Chris' Nurses Association did not extend to exploring other unions. Racism and myths about the pitfalls of joining a real union blinded a majority of nurses from considering alternatives such as 1199C, which would represent all the nurses.

Without an organizational form that can win material gains from the administration, interest in the St. Chris' Nurses Administration is beginning to wane. In the beginning, 60-70 people showed up at meetings, but by early spring, only a handful turned out. At present, the Association faces a number of alternatives. It can seek union affiliation, which might be the best strategy since other departments in the hospital are beginning a drive to affiliate with the Teamsters. It can climb the legal ladder and attempt to gain recognition as an independent organization. Or it can remain as it is, an option which has already shown to have limited effectiveness.

The Association has taken a courageous and important step by unifying all the nurses. What is needed now is an organizational form which can win their demands. This cooperation with other hospital workers and community support will result in just treatment of both St. Chris patients and workers.



Sargent

Union Victory for Legal Services Workers

By a wide margin, legal services workers and their union, Washington Legal Workers (WLW), recently won their union recognition election at Evergreen Legal Services (ELS). The union won with 77% of the votes cast. The union includes clericals, paralegals and attorneys.

The election victory followed a year and a half of litigation with ELS, a state-wide program which provides civil legal services to the poor. It is funded primarily by the Legal Services Corporation, a non-profit government corporation. ELS has approximately 200 employees and 20 offices in Washington State and is one of the largest such programs in the country.

"The victory was a vindication of our efforts to build a broad-based,

community-oriented union in the face of management hostility to our efforts," said union president Kris Houser. "We now face the difficult task of negotiating our first contract," she continued.

The struggle of WLW is an important victory for CETA workers. Union attorney Robert Gibbs stated, "The NLRB for the first time found that CETA workers can be represented, and can be included in the same unit as other workers." The decision by the NLRB will be of particular importance to CETA employees who work for nongovernmental employers.

For further information, contact Washington Legal Workers, P.O. Box 2068, Bellingham WA 98225.

Gay Rights & AFSCME

Local 1723 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), which represents over 500 administrative, professional and technical employees at North Philadelphia's Temple University campus, has won a contract from the state-affiliated university that includes the phrase "sexual orientation" in its non-discrimination clause.

"This is a major breakthrough for human rights in Philadelphia," union president Gary Kapanowski told the Philadelphia Gay News. Kapanowski noted that the University had refused to accept the union's demand for the clause during negotiations two years ago despite the fact that the school

had already accepted "sexual orientation" as an amendment to its own non-discrimination policy for admissions and employment.

"But this year our negotiating team made the inclusion of this protection a priority item," he said. "Our pressure and insistence prevailed and it is now illegal for any manager or union member to discriminate solely on the basis of a person's sexual orientation."

Kapanowski said that he had informed Temple's numerous other unions of his union's victory and that he expects them "to press for similar protection when their current agreements with Temple expire."

Budd Company & the SEPTA Subway Car Contract

by S. Bunting

Should SEPTA have contracted with the Budd Co. to build the new Broad St. Subway cars? Should the City government "Buy Philadelphia" to save jobs in the city, instead of awarding the contract to the low bidder - Nissho-Iwai Co. of Japan? How is this contract related to the larger struggle to save jobs for working people in Philadelphia?

At first glance, the answers seem obvious. Build the subway cars here, keep our tax money in Philadelphia, keep Philadelphia workers employed. The company wanted the job, the union demonstrated for it; so what if it was a few million more than the Japanese bid? If we look closely, there are many problems with this approach to saving jobs in Philadelphia.

Although Budd bluffed until the last minute with threats of closing the Red Lion plant if they didn't get the job, with crocodile tears about how sorry they would be to lay off workers, we must realize that Budd has no particular loyalty to the people of Philadelphia. Its loyalty is to profit, and it will gladly take advantage of any strategy, including false patriotism, to boost those profits.

When Budd swore under oath that they would close the Red Lion plant if they didn't get the contract, many Red Lion workers skeptically shook their heads. For years Budd has been saying they are ready to go, particularly when the time rolls around to negotiate with the UAW. In fact, Red Lion isn't going anywhere, soon, and the railcar division is busy and planning to expand.

It seems more likely that Budd didn't really want the SEPTA contract, and would take it *only* if they could get it at an exceptionally high rate of profit. The proof is in Budd's performance in bidding for other contracts. Last year Budd underbid the same Japanese firm, Nissho-Iwai, for a job in Cleveland. Two

years ago Budd turned down an invitation to build cars for the PATCO High Speed Line, on the grounds that they were too busy.

Budd claimed Nissho-Iwai was "dumping" - selling below fair market value. In fact Nissho-Iwai's bid was well within the normal range, and the Treasury called Budd's claim "frivolous".

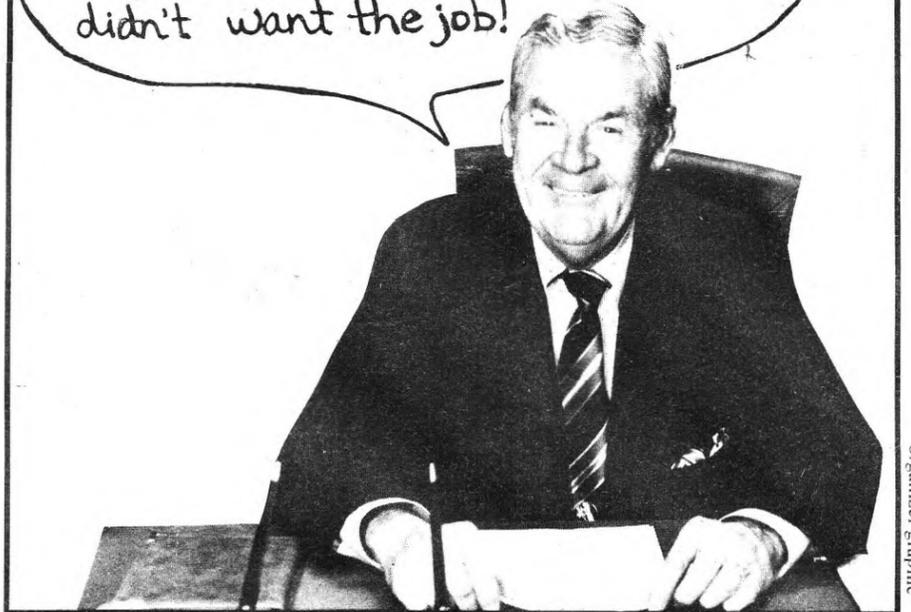
Two years ago, though, Budd did some "dumping" of its own. In competition for a job in Chicago, Budd bid 40% lower than they did in Philadelphia. The chief competitor for this job was Pullman company, located in Chicago. Budd drove Pullman out of the railcar business with that bid. If Pullman had cried "Buy Chicago", Budd would have been jumping up and down screaming "fair competition". If Chicago Transit Authority had bought the "buy local" argument, several hundred Red Lion workers would be out of work right now.

UAW SUPPORT: WRITING BUDD A BLANK CHECK

Suppose Budd had received the contract, what promises did they make to the UAW and their workforce? Did they guarantee work for three years, safe working conditions, better wages? No. In fact, while they were busy bidding for the contract, they were also busy forcing their workers out on the first national strike against Budd Co. in 28 years. Budd made noises about railcar workers not being entitled to the same wages and benefits as other Budd workers - despite the fact that railcar is a very profitable division.

Now that the automotive division at Red Lion is being phased out, the company is fighting tooth and nail to prevent high seniority auto workers from transferring to railcar to avoid a layoff, and has denied any responsibility to teach these workers the necessary skills for railcar. Not only will the company save

Hell! If we had really wanted to build those SEPTA subway cars, we would have bid lower. We didn't want the job!



Gilbert F. Richards, chairman and chief executive officer of the Budd Company.

money by replacing high seniority workers with new employees, their strategy is openly racist. Railcar has historically been mostly white, and automotive mostly Black. This historic division developed by the company has set the stage for discriminatory layoffs and for workers fighting among themselves for the remaining jobs.

Despite serious efforts recently by union leadership to oppose this company racism, years of neglect of the problem have left the local unprepared to oppose the company in a united and effective way.

In the face of the corporate strategy of attempted blackmail of the city, and intensifying attacks on the union, the UAW's strategy for saving jobs is misdirected. The fight for jobs begins by insisting that companies such as Budd accept responsibility for their workers' futures, rather than by helping to protect their profits. Thousands of Philadelphia workers by now know that higher profits don't trickle down to us - they go to build new plants in non-union states.

Protecting Budd from foreign competition does *not* mean protecting American jobs (let alone jobs of Japanese workers). Nissho-Iwai is using about 50% American parts for the job, and all the final assembly will be done here

(probably at Boeing in Delaware County, a UAW shop). UAW leaders who think they're saving jobs by cutting international trade and fighting with another UAW local over who gets the work are very sadly mistaken.

WORKING CLASS PROGRAM FOR JOBS

What do we mean by demanding that companies accept responsibility? Pennsylvania House Bill 1251, which requires advance notice of plant closings and severance pay to workers and the city when plants close, is one way. Strong contract language on severance pay, advance notice, and re-training of employees is another. (See Shutdowns: How to Fight Them and Win, *Organizer*, December 1979.)

On March 15, the UAW mobilized about 100 people, or less than 1% of its membership in Philadelphia, for a rally to save jobs at ITE-Gould and for passage of HB 1251. The labor movement must flex its muscles with demonstrations of thousands, not hundreds, to force our legislators to work for us. Not only must the UAW put forward a program that clearly challenges corporate priorities, it must actively and democratically involve the rank and file in these struggles. This approach can save our jobs. Handing Budd a Golden Goose can't.

Mack Truck Contract - A Bitter Pill

by a workers correspondent

This winter Mack Truck workers, United Autoworkers Union Local 677 of Allentown, Pennsylvania, were forced to swallow a bitter pill. After a four month extension of their old contract, the negotiators came back with what they claimed was "the best contract in the history of Local 677." The membership didn't agree. They turned down both the master and the local agreement by a 2 to 1 margin. It's not hard to see why.

Although the economic and benefit packages basically followed the Big Three Agricultural Implement agreements, none of the major union goals were reached by



the negotiators. The three key union demands were: 1) revision in the grievance procedure so that approximately 5,000 grievances could be dealt with timely and expeditiously, 2) a single local agreement for all Allentown plants, and 3) contract language guaranteeing equal representation during time studies.

"GRIEVE IT - HA, HA,"

Eliminating the backlog of 5,000 grievances was the number one priority. Since the membership's right to strike was bargained away years ago, they rely on the existing grievance procedure to enforce the contract. With half a decade worth of grievances piled up, it is very apparent to most workers that their protection under this agreement is worthless! What good is a contract if it isn't enforceable? They are all tired of hearing the bosses say, "Grieve it, ha, ha."

The next issue is almost as hot as the grievance backlog, that is the existence of separate agreements for the Allentown and nearby Macungie plants. Both agreements are negotiated by the same local but they are very different in some important aspects. It's only the second contract for the three year old Macungie plant. And why there was a separate agreement made back in 1976 is a mystery to the membership. The

present executive board blames the old regime and says the company is too stubborn to accept a change. This "pass the buck - keep working" routine doesn't cut any ice with the rank & file, but it makes the company happy.

Unequal representation during time studies was the immediate issue that sparked a two day wildcat strike this past January. A steward and a committee person were fired for getting involved during a time study. Some departments have better representation than others, but lately in those departments where the union representatives insist on the "privilege" of being in on the time studies, the company has been coming down hard. Workers on the picket line, besides defending their representatives who fought for them, were also reacting to the lack of effective union representation in many departments.

AN INFORMED DECISION

Discontent and mistrust of the union leadership prompted the rank & file to pass a measure at the November union meeting that forced the negotiators to report to the general membership any and all changes in the contract at least three days prior to the ratification vote.

The leadership found out that a little democracy is a dangerous thing when it comes to selling out the membership. On February 21, the workers in the shop received a booklet containing all the changes in contract language in the proposed agreement. This time the membership would be able to make an informed decision. And since the information they received made clear that none of their most urgent demands were met, they voted the contract down.

Even though Local 677 rejected the Master agreement, other Mack Locals around the country by and large voted yes, thus assuring its passage. The Allentown and Macungie local agreements were also rejected so the negotiators for Local 677 went back to the bargaining table. They seemed to make a token effort to improve the agreements, but the big issues were untouchable because they were part of the Master agreement.

So on March 13 Local 677 members voted again on their local agreements. This time a 2/3 majority had to say no in order to reject the agreements. With nothing of importance changed, a frustrated membership approved the marginal contract, marginally.

History of the American Federation of Teachers

Part 3

The Rise of Shanker



by Joe Zito

This is the third and last in a series of articles on the history of the AFT.

The 1960's were the golden days of the teachers' movement. It was a time of rapidly rising salaries and job opportunities, of rising self-confidence, of a belief that militant unionism would win teachers' rights and change the schools. The strikes and work stoppages of the late 40's and 50's had paved the way for a wave of successful strikes in the 60's.

Beginning with the New York City teachers' strike of 1960, the AFT began to successfully challenge the power of the National Education Association (NEA) chapters in most of the large cities. The result of that strike was a collective bargaining victory for the AFT local, The United Federation of Teachers (UFT), and a comprehensive contract for its members that surpassed that of any teachers' union anywhere. Comprehensive contracts in the public sector were extremely rare at that time.

Usually there were negotiations once a year at budget time for a salary increase or fringe benefits only. These negotiations seldom resulted in more than a sketchy note of agreement, when there was any agreement at all. Now that the AFT's big city locals were striking and militantly agitating for their rights to decent wages and working conditions, the school boards were caving in to those demands.

In the large urban school systems, the NEA began losing collective bargaining elections as teachers and school workers in those cities saw the rewards in militant action. AFT membership increased fivefold from 1964-74. Eventually, in 1968, the NEA retracted its no-strike policy in an attempt to stop its losses to the AFT. The militant tactics of the AFT had, in effect, forced the association to behave like a trade union or cease existence.

With the Civil Rights Movement providing the spark, the 1960's saw the resurgence of many movements. The anti-war movement, the women's movement, the ecology movement and many other popular mobilizations reached millions of Americans. Teachers and school employees too, found themselves unable to stand aside and ignore the contradictions of US society.

As Black and other minorities made militant demands for equality in all areas, and especially in education, teachers were faced with some hard choices. Would they support these demands or turn away from them? It was at this time of rising frustration and anger on the part of the oppressed nationalities that the AFT took a turn to the right. The Progressive Caucus, with Albert Shanker as its leader, gained control of the union.

RACISM: SHANKER'S MAIN WEAPON

Playing on racism, Shanker and the right wing were able to take over the leadership of the once democratic union, by driving a wedge between the teachers' and school employees' movement and its most powerful ally, the Black Liberation Movement. In the 60's, the demand for "community control" of the schools derived much of its support from those who recognized that school boards failed to meet the needs of the students:

particularly in Black, Latino, Asian and poor white communities.

The series of strikes by the UFT in New York City in 1968 are a good example of how racism, defended and encouraged by Shanker (then president of the local) and his allies has manifested itself recently in the AFT. Earlier in our history of the AFT we saw how teacher unions and communities often united to demand wages for the teachers and a decent education for the students. But in 1968, in New York City, the teachers' strikes aimed at preventing Black and Latino parents from having a say in their children's education.

Control of the New York City school system had traditionally been in the hands of a board of education and the state government that represented the city's banks and special interests at the expense of the vast majority of public school children and the staff.

During the strikes, Shanker used deceit, distortion, racist slur and slander to manipulate teachers into believing that Black and Latino parents were out to get teachers and that the minority

minorities, and many labor unions were taking their demands to the streets in an effort to force the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam and Cambodia. Where were teachers to stand on the question of US aggression against people thousands of miles away?

By 1967 the AFT had officially adopted a position of "no position" on the Vietnam war. This differed from the hardline AFL-CIO support for Johnson's escalation. But more significantly, many locals took an active part in strongly opposing the war. The California Federation of Teachers passed a strong resolution against the war. Despite the national union's official neutrality on the question, in the spring of 1967 the *American Teacher* ran a paid full page ad with the headline "Help Stop the War in Vietnam," sponsored by the Teachers' Committee for Peace in Vietnam. By 1970, the anti-war movement had picked up speed everywhere, and teachers around the country were a part of it.

A union-wide referendum was to take place in 1970 to put the question of immediate troop withdrawal before



Albert Shanker (right), President of the AFT, with Vice-President Walter Mondale.

communities were the teachers' number one enemy. At one point in the conflict between the union and the community the UFT reproduced thousands of copies of an anti-semitic leaflet in order to paint the Oceanhill-Brownsville community as anti-semitic.

While community control in the narrow sense of each community fighting for its own interests cannot mount an effective campaign for quality education for all children, the actions of the UFT under the leadership of Shanker unjustly targeted the community and in the end undermined that local's best source of potential support in its fight for jobs and working conditions.

In the process of Shanker's rise to power, the AFT lost much of its independence and began to actively defend the policies of the US ruling class. The growth of the anti-war movement within the AFT and the response of an increasingly conservative leadership provide a good example of class collaboration, Shanker style.

THE AFT & VIETNAM

By 1965, President Johnson's campaign pledges to the contrary, it was clear that the government was willing to sacrifice thousands of lives to protect its interests in Southeast Asia. But as the US escalated the war, a growing opposition to that war developed. Students, national

the membership. However, the UFT and its allies were able to undermine the vote by adding a second question to the referendum: "Shall the AFT reaffirm the 'no position' policy on the war in Indochina?" The membership voted in favor of both questions and the AFT leadership was able to say the results were inconclusive. Thus the New York local under Shanker's leadership successfully sabotaged the vote on the question of US aggression.

ATTACKS ON UNION DEMOCRACY

Until recently, the AFT was considered to be one of the more democratic unions within the AFL-CIO. Yet this too was a casualty of the politics of Shankerism. Sensing opposition in the elections at the 1972 convention from a democratic United Action Caucus, Shanker's forces amended the constitution making open balloting mandatory for the first time in AFT history. Now delegates would be forced to sign their names on their ballots. Thus, the dominant Progressive Caucus could punish "renegade" locals.

In 1973, Shanker's caucus rammed through two more anti-democratic constitutional amendments in an attempt to further consolidate its power over the union. The net effect of the two amendments gives the larger locals, and especially the New York City local,

virtual control of the national convention. More recently, the Progressive Caucus has moved from controlling the voting at conventions to also controlling discussion of the issues. Minority reports from committee members have been eliminated. The time for committee sessions has been shortened from a day and a half to a few hours. Lastly, no more than three resolutions are now allowed to be reported out of committee to the convention floor.

These undemocratic changes in the constitution make discussion and debate of issues difficult and have discouraged the participation of many small locals. Moreover, the curtailment of democratic process at the convention means even greater control for the right-wing leadership of Albert Shanker at the convention. The role of class collaborationist trade unionism (that kind of trade unionism that seeks "labor peace" at the expense of working people) as embodied in the Progressive Caucus can be seen, not only at convention time, but also in the day to day response of the AFT to the worsening conditions of school employees.

In the fall of 1975, when 20,000 New York City teachers and school workers were fired and laid off, Shanker did nothing to organize a militant fightback to recover those jobs. Shanker promotes himself as the champion of public education, but in 1976 he successfully urged the UFT to support the election of Senator Daniel Moynihan with union COPE funds.

Moynihan, the author of a racist study on the Black family, has long been a target of the Black community. As a leading advisor to Richard Nixon, Moynihan wrote a memo urging that the Nixon administration impose a "moratorium" on the discussion of racial conflict and allow for a period of "benign neglect" in dealing with racial inequality. Shanker's support for Moynihan, aside from being a slap in the face to the Black community, is another example of his indifference to the fate of public education generally. Moynihan is co-author of a bill which would grant tuition credit for parents sending their children to private and parochial schools, a measure that would promote segregation and further decline of the already beleaguered public school system.

Although the theme of the 1979 AFT national convention was "American Education in Crisis", Shanker and the Progressive Caucus prevented any kind of fightback against such anti-working class measures as Proposition 13 and the expansion of the military budget. The AFT will be remembered in labor history for being the only union to go to court on the side of Allan Bakke in the attack against affirmative action.

But Shanker's policies are beginning to meet with stiff resistance by the rank-and-file as there are now anti-Shanker caucuses organized in many locals. Nationally, the United Action Caucus has challenged the right wing domination of the AFT. With the attacks upon public education escalating daily, the Shankerite leadership's ability to lead the rank-and-file is going to be put to a severe test.

(For more on the role of Albert Shanker read: The American Federation of Teachers and the CIA, by George Schmidt, published by SUBS, 343 S. Dearborn St., Room 1503, Chicago, Ill. 60604. Cost is \$2.00.)

No Strike Deal in Steel?

by Duane Calhoun

The most important part of the new 3-year contract between the United Steelworkers Union (USW) and the nine largest steel companies is the part that was left out. In 1973, the USW and the steel industry signed an agreement called the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA): in exchange for a guaranteed wage increase of 3% each year plus a COLA increase, the union agreed not to strike during contract negotiations.

If the union and management didn't reach agreement on a new contract under the ENA, the dispute would go to binding arbitration. This no-strike guarantee has been renewed before every national contract negotiation since then, making the USW the only union in the US to voluntarily give up its strike weapon altogether (local strikes are allowed under ENA over local contracts, but not national strikes).

When the union leadership took the new tentative contract to a meeting of local union presidents for their approval on April 15, a renewal of the ENA was not part of the package, as it was in 1974 and 1977. As we go to press, union and management negotiators were meeting behind closed doors to decide whether to renew the ENA, and on what terms. While the top union officials want the ENA renewed, many rank & file steelworkers see it as a sell-out. The companies want to renew it minus the guaranteed wage increases.

The ENA is nothing more than a formal, legally-binding version of the deal that has been struck over the years between most top union bureaucrats and top corporate management. The labor bureaucrats agree to take it easy on demands like job security or job safety, and to do everything in their power to keep the membership from fighting for these things by striking. In return, the corporations agree to come across with steady wage increases. Until recent years, this was why workers in the US earned the highest wages in the world, along with the highest unemployment



The United Steel Workers Union is the only US union to voluntarily give up its right to strike.

and the most deaths and injuries on the job of any industrialized nation.

Also part of this deal is unwritten. The union leaders' cooperate, or at least don't interfere, with the companies' super-exploitation of Black and women workers. These workers are kept out of the skilled trades and in the lowest paid and most dangerous jobs. Their unemployment rate is double that of whites, they are denied on-the-job training, and everyday harrassment and firing is designed to keep them fearful and "in their place." All the Steelworkers Union officials did was put only part of the deals down on paper and sign it.

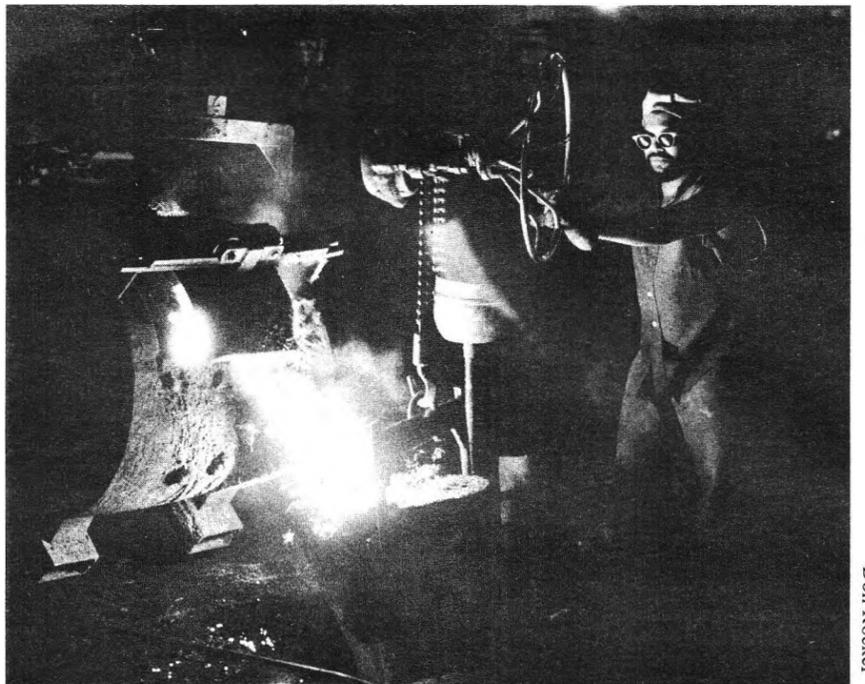
There's no doubt that steelworkers did get higher wages from the ENA. Ten years ago, steelworkers made about 87 cents more than the average industrial worker. Today they make \$4.35 an hour more, making them second only to coal miners in pay. Meanwhile, the injury rate is increasing in steel — coke oven workers (mostly Black) are still getting cancer from the fumes, and there are only ¼ as many steelworkers working today as there were twenty years ago. Some 30,000 have lost their jobs in the past couple years due to plant closings alone. Even the big wage increases didn't stop steelworkers from losing \$1.50 in weekly buying power to inflation in 1979.

PRICE IS TOO HIGH

This contract is a perfect example of why the price of the ENA is too high for the steelworkers to pay. Facing massive layoffs along with forced overtime and sub-contracting of skilled craft work, this contract has very little protection against layoffs or plant shutdowns. There are some small increases in layoff benefits (details were unavailable at press time), but demands to end forced overtime, shorten the work-week, and set high severance-pay when plants close were all dropped. The union even took a step backward by agreeing to future discussions with management about changing lines of demarcation between skilled craft jobs, possibly combining two or more skilled classifications into one. What good is \$11 an hour if you don't have a job?

The contract does provide for pension increases for workers who've already retired, to a minimum of \$12 monthly per year of service. This will partly offset the losses retirees have suffered to inflation in recent years, but it is still less than the pension increases the UAW got last year, and far less than the inflation rate. These increases were the top priority of the union leadership in the negotiations. Most of the cost of the pension increases will be paid by the active workers themselves, who will give back to the companies 32 cents of their cost-of-living raise due this spring. The total money package (wages, COLA, pensions, and benefits) is only 1% more than it would have cost to extend the old contract for 3 more years.

The old cost-of-living formula will be retained (1 cent increase for each 0.3% increase in the Consumer Price Index), and there will be a straight wage increase averaging 84 cents an hour over three years. Incentive pay rates will also be increased for the higher-skilled classifications (most steelworkers work under incentive-pay plans tied to how much production they get out). While these increases will keep steelworkers well above the average pay rates for industrial workers, they will still end up with less purchasing power after three years because of inflation.



Don Rucker

Most Black workers in steel, as in other industries, are kept out of the skilled trades and in the lowest paying, most dangerous jobs.

ANOTHER PRODUCTIVITY SCHEME

The contract also sets up a new program — "labor-management participation teams." These will be joint union-management committees in each steel mill (local unions must give their approval before the "team" can be set up in their plant) that will discuss productivity, working conditions, absenteeism, quality control, and incentive pay. The idea is to develop "labor-management cooperation" in these areas. Management hopes to hood wink labor into cooperating with management ideas for getting more work out of less workers.

Management also hopes to undermine the "adversary" grievance procedure through informal discussion in the "teams". Business publications like the *Wall Street Journal* and *Business Week* see this item as a concession to management by the union, which they hope will help spread the fantasy that labor and capitalists have common interests. Several progressive union officials, members of rank and file caucuses in the union, scoff at the program.

While they see it as a step in the wrong direction, these rank and file fighters think that it will turn out to be a dead letter in most plants. Since the "teams" have little real power and can't change any terms of the union contract, they will only have an effect where the local union leaders are already pushing the philosophy of labor peace. Union officials with that outlook are already pushing "labor-management cooperation" whether or not there is a formal "participation team."

When the contract went before the local presidents for a vote, 333 voted for and 42 against. Rank and file steelworkers don't have the right to vote on their contract. Last fall the same group of local union presidents voted 313 to 70 not to allow the rank and file to vote on contracts. Steelworkers Union President Lloyd McBride made a big push at that meeting against the rank and file's right to vote.

The right to vote on contracts was one of the major issues in the last election for union president, where District 31 head Ed Sadlowski lost to McBride. Sadlowski made the "right to ratify" one of his major planks. Sadlowski won a majority among steelworkers, but he lost the election because of McBride's large margin among workers in other industries (can, aluminum, copper, etc.) that also belong to the Steelworkers Union. A national rank and file committee continues to push for this basic democratic right for steelworkers. (Rank and File Ratification Committee, Box 417, Homestead, Pa. 15120.)

In addition to loyalists of President McBride, a number of progressive local presidents who belong to rank and file caucuses in their locals also voted "yes" on the contract. While they believed that the contract was a poor one, if it had been rejected the dispute would have

automatically gone to binding arbitration under the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA). Had this happened, the arbitrator would most likely have "split the difference" between company and union demands, and the company would have gotten some of the "take-aways" it wanted (such as eliminating several thousand workers from the national contract, and a wage freeze in "unprofitable" subsidiary companies).

The only alternative would have been a national wildcat strike, which the rank and file is not organized enough to win at present. The other reason for the "yes" vote among some progressive presidents was that the ENA was not renewed in the contract, leaving open the possibility that steelworkers would have the right to strike during 1983 negotiations.

Union and company representatives are still meeting about the future of the ENA. Top union officials want to extend it. So do the steel companies, but *only* if the guaranteed wage increases in the deal are set well below the inflation rate. How far the union bureaucrats are willing to go in that direction, and how up-front a sell-out can be and still be sold to the local presidents who must vote on it, is an open question at this time.

THE MEANING OF THE ENA

Since the early 1970's, the US ruling class has been losing its overseas military and corporate empire. More and more poor countries are clamping the lid on US corporations, in some cases nationalizing them altogether. Former "junior partners" like Japan and Germany are more and more insistant about getting a bigger piece of the action. American efforts to defend its corporate empire with guns have been losing, like Vietnam and Angola. It all adds up to slower expansion, lower profits, and more problems for the corporations.

The time when the corporate elite could offer US workers a little more pie each year in hopes of buying off their union leaders and partly pacifying the average worker is gone. From now on, the fight over who gets how much of that pie is going to get rougher every year. Lloyd McBride is in the position of trying to sell the members of his union a deal that no longer works. Now the companies want the same benefits without letting the workers have any more pie at all. Not even the greatest acrobat in the world can keep that balancing act going for long.

As one local union official, a long-time member of the rank and file caucus movement in the Steelworkers, told the *Organizer*,

"McBride is always talking about how he 'understands the problems the companies face'; it seems he doesn't want to understand the problems we workers face. And they aren't problems like having our profits go down from 100 million bucks to 'only' 50 million. I'll tell you one thing, we're going to make him and the companies understand, one way or the other."

United Electrical Workers on Independent Political Action

The following resolution was adopted by the National Convention of the United Electrical Workers Union (UE) at their 43rd convention in 1978. Its forthright condemnation of the two-party trap and the need for labor to take the independent path is food for thought for trade unionists who in this election year are once again faced with the choice between Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee.

There is no fundamental difference between the two dominant parties in American political life. The Republican Party is openly the party of business. The Democratic Party claims to be more oriented toward workers and makes forward-looking campaign promises, but once in office the Democrats reverse their field for the sake of "business confidence" and "investment climate."

Both major parties presided over the war in Vietnam. Both parties have countenanced CIA and FBI spying on American citizens engaged in lawful activity. Both parties have maintained support for right-wing dictatorships that welcome US runaway plants. Both parties have continued to raise military expenditures far beyond what is needed for sufficient national defense, depriving the civilian sector of job-creating projects to meet human needs. Both parties relieve business and wealthy individuals of tax responsibilities, adding more taxes to the already-overburdened workers. Both parties pin the blame for inflation on workers' wages and seek ways to restrain the trade union movement.

The anti-working class nature of the two major parties has rarely been more evident than during the past two years. Despite a Democratic administration elected largely by union members' support, together with an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress, Republicans and Democrats teamed up to attack the union programs:

- labor law reform was defeated by a Republican-Democrat filibuster;
- a sub-poverty minimum wage was enacted with bipartisan support;
- common situs picketing was turned down by members of both parties;
- a modest plan for a Consumer Protection Agency was scrapped with help from supposedly liberal Democrats;
- spokesmen from both parties beat the drums for a new Cold War and demanded that more resources be poured into the war machine;
- representatives of both parties jump on



organizer photo

The United Electrical Workers Union (UE) is one of the most progressive and politically active unions in the US. Above, UE participates in the Save Our Jobs march here in Philadelphia this past March.

the tax relief bandwagon, only to demand cuts in social programs and bigger tax breaks for business;

- representatives of both parties have knuckled under to the oil companies' demands for super profits.

Obviously, not every member of Congress can be painted with this brush. A few Democrats, and some Republicans, are sensitive to workers' interests and try to defend workers' rights. They deserve our continued support. As a general proposition, however, the time-honored labor strategy of electing "friends of labor" from the two major parties is a loser. Both parties are thoroughly controlled by business interests. The fundamental decisions are made in corporate board rooms and club lounges and communicated to the leadership of both parties, then "sold" to the American people through the business-controlled mass media.

To continue working exclusively within the two-party shell game is a dead-end street for American workers. We can no longer afford to fight the bosses inside the shops every day and then vote for the bosses' representatives in government. Out of 535 members of Congress, only

eleven make any claim to a working class experience, and most of these are lawyers who worked their way through school. The vast majority of Congress is composed of businessmen, investors, landowners and attorneys who specialized in representing the wealthy. Such a body can in no way be relied upon to legislate in the interest of workers.

A majority of the American people have already reacted to the two party shell game by copping out of the electoral process - they no longer vote. Unfortunately, this just makes it easier for the leaders of our corrupt political system to retain and expand their power.

There is no solution to the political bind in which we find ourselves except the formation of a labor party - a party which unites workers, Blacks, Hispanics and other minorities, the women's movement, senior citizens, farmers, consumers, progressive intellectuals and others who are fed up with what is happening to our economic and political life. UE has said this for 25 years. Now, other influential labor leaders and people, who are participating in many of the protest and social change movements that have developed, are beginning to raise the same question.

Millions of Americans in thousands of local, state and national organizations are now involved in struggles to challenge the stranglehold of the corporations on various aspects of our lives. It is these Americans and these organizations that will form the basis of a new political party. UE should identify with and participate with these many organizations whenever practicable and whenever the programs of these groups parallel UE policy: the utility fight; the campaign for ERA; the All Unions Committee for the Shorter Work Week; the attempt to revive the Farmer Labor Coalition in Minnesota are all examples of issues and movements with which UE is closely identified and where UE members and leaders have played an important role.

It is out of struggles such as these that the labor and civil rights movements will secure the necessary allies to develop an independent political movement, outside of the two business-dominated parties. Such a movement will have many options as it moves to establish an effective, large scale labor party.

Such a movement could have the power to demand a role in the choice of candidates at every level of government instead of waiting obediently to be handed candidates. Such a movement could force candidates of the major parties to support its program, and could seek the defeat of those who refuse to do so. Such a movement could push its own best-qualified candidates for public office, breaking the professional and business stranglehold on political life. After being tested by experience and demonstrating its ability to fight for the people in local, state and national affairs, such a movement will form an actual labor party that creates no illusions about being all things to all people and makes no bones about whom it represents and whom it opposes.

Therefore, this 43rd UE Convention directs all levels of our Union to begin an intensive educational campaign within our ranks on the need for independent political action and a movement toward a labor party. Discussion should also be initiated with other unions at both the leadership and rank and file level on this question.

Wherever UE is involved in campaigns, movements and organizations that are struggling for the rights of the people, we should see to it that the need for a new party is raised.

- September 14, 1978

Support the Workers' Rights Law Project

Just over two years ago, a few labor activists met with attorneys from the National Lawyers' Guild to discuss continuing problems that confront unorganized workers, rank and file committees and small unions. The most urgent need discussed was for legal resources to advise workers of their rights on the shop floor and the union hall. Immediate assistance is not available to rank and file organizations and individual workers.

This need led to the formation of the Workers' Rights Law Project - an organization of union activists and rank and file workers as well as attorneys, legal workers and law students from the National Lawyers' Guild. The project is dedicated to fighting against race and sex discrimination in the work place; to improving health and safety conditions on the job; to extending the union movement to unorganized shops and democratizing the union movement.

The Workers' Rights Law Project serves workers in several different ways. We have:

- organized educationals on issues such as discrimination, strikes and literature distribution at the work site;
- held a free law school class on workers' rights;
- offered seminars prepared to meeting the specific needs of workers' caucuses or union organizing committees;
- prepared pamphlets explaining different areas of law;
- given legal advice and counseling;
- given legal representation;
- set up an outreach committee to meet with and find ways to help rank and

file activists and progressive trade union officials and organizing committees.

Recent activities have included a session on winning grievances which drew 100 workers from 25 different locals and an education on how and when to use the National Labor Relations Board.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE BEGINS

On January 24, 1980, the Workers' Rights Law Project officially became a dues-paying membership organization

when an overwhelming majority of members at the January meeting approved yearly dues of \$5.00. According to WRLP Chairperson Bob Rusten, a member of Local 68, United Paper Workers International Union, the decision was made to give the Project a base of support from committed members. The consensus at the meeting was that the act of paying dues would make people feel more a part of the project. Also the dues list would provide a meaningful indication of the Project's support, who we are, and who we could count on for future activities.

Membership is open to all workers, rank-and-file activists, legal workers, lawyers and supporters. Anyone interested in becoming a member should send in the \$5.00 membership fee, for which you will receive a subscription to our newsletter. A membership card will be mailed to you.

Making the project work takes time, energy and money - all of which are in short supply. If you believe that the services of the Workers' Rights Law Project can help to strengthen the workers' movement, we invite you to join with us. Call us at LO3-1388 for more information.

Organizer, May 1980, page 7



Green Continues Rizzo Policies

contributed by Audrey Clement

On Friday, March 21, the curtain rose on Act VI of one of the greatest travesties in the history of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The setting was Philadelphia City Council chambers, where housing officials and concerned citizens gathered for the sixth year in a row to dispute the allocation of some \$96 million in housing funds for a hodgepodge of programs falling under the umbrella of the Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD).

These programs, over 35 in number, range in focus from crime prevention to day care facilities and are sponsored by groups as related to one another as the Salvation Army and the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation. (On the average only 13% of Community Development (CD) funds are actually spent on housing.)

The performance began with the introduction of Thomas H. Massaro, the newly appointed Director of OHCD. Noticeably absent was T. Milton Street, veteran housing activist and outspoken critic of the city's housing policy. Street's absence, which he explained at a later hearing was due to a bout of the "be fair" syndrome (he wanted to give Massaro a chance), was welcomed by the affluent housing bureaucrats who lined the gallery.

Street is a member of the Ad Hoc Committee, a group that scrutinizes the CD budget applications to HUD on an annual basis, and has led the opposition to recycling, landbanking and demolition in the city of Philadelphia. As a result of his political activities, he has never been popular with the city's ruling class. They prefer to dismiss the real issue at hand, namely the existence of half a million substandard housing units in greater Philadelphia.

Massaro began his two hour monologue with: "I intend to listen and to hear what people have to say. In the past the emphasis has been on planning. My goal is brick and mortar construction." He was promptly dubbed "Brick and Mortar Massaro" by the cynics in the pit. Massaro, a 27 year old public housing proponent from Newark, New Jersey, replaces former director John Gallery, who went out the door with the racist administration of Frank Rizzo. Skepticism regarding Massaro stems from the fact that nothing in Massaro's budget proposal signified a departure from Gallery's policy.

BUSINESS AS USUAL?

The only changes offered from Gallery's original budget proposal, were the reallocation of some \$3 million for use on a priority basis and the additional allocation of \$2 million for community sponsored programs. None of the peripheral projects, except \$650,000 for "police protection," have been eliminated. And most importantly, the city's critical housing problem has not been addressed.

Maisha Jackson, Director of Housing for the Urban League of Philadelphia, pointed out that no money has been allocated for the rehabilitation of public housing units throughout the city. She also testified that the city's plan to renovate 170 privately owned rental units this year is laughable, because the estimated number of deteriorated units exceeds 100,000.

In addition to this, of course, is the fact that the estimated backlog of projects for which money has been budgeted but not spent, exceeds \$25 million. Massaro has indicated that he is unwilling to free up more money for housing assistance with such a backlog of prior unspent appropriations. While he promised to increase production of rehabilitated units by 30%, it is unlikely that he will meet this goal with the staff he inherited

from Gallery. The staff is committed to the program on recycling.

Gallery's problem as director of OHCD was directly related to his identification with the urban elite. A "gentleman planner" by education — he came to Philadelphia from Boston in 1964 to work for the City Planning Commission. From there he went to the Bicentennial Commission, and accepted a teaching position at the University of Texas in Austin in 1973, where he subsequently became Acting Dean of the School of Architecture. In an interview in 1973 prior to his departure for Texas, Gallery revealed his cynical belief that the Black area of North Central Philadelphia was so deteriorated that it could not be targeted for renewal, at least not with public funds.

The only viable solution to urban blight, he hinted in a 1976 report prepared for the city, was triage. That is the revitalization of blighted areas through private investment — recycling. In the same paper, he suggested that federal monies allocated to the city under the Housing and Community Development

pressure from community groups, disputed these charges. According to Lapham, citing a OHCD memo dated April 8, 53 rehabs have been undertaken in North Central Philadelphia west of Broad St. and 68 loans and grants have been made in the same area. Lapham put the figure to Ad Hoc relying on information assembled before August of last year whereas his figures take into account developments since then. Further he contends that OHCD has the highest drawdown rate of any city currently receiving CD funds, spending 75% of all funds received from HUD over the last five years. The fact remains, that even if Lapham is correct on the facts, the performance of OHCD has barely made a dent in the city's massive housing problem.

Gallery himself invariably responded to Ad Hoc's charges by saying that he lacked the cooperation of the Black community in planning for renewal sites. Yet a report written by another Ad Hoc Committee member, Henry DeBernardo, and appended to the year five objections, indicated that Gallery required little community cooperation for his demolition

lery itself was used as collateral. In addition, the city built an \$8 million parking garage for the Gallery. SEPTA put in another \$6 or \$7 million. Over \$30 million in public funds went into the Gallery, which is privately owned."

When asked how SEPTA got involved in the Gallery, Street responded, "Federal regulations prohibit the use of public money to benefit private business. In order for the city and Rouse to bypass that limitation, they had to define the Gallery as a transportation center rather than a shopping mall. And any profits that Rouse makes on the Gallery are considered incidental." In a telephone interview, Lapham confirmed that OHCD contributed \$120,000 to \$180,000 in CD funds for the planning staff of the Gallery project. Public outcry during the year five CD hearings brought about the removal of the proposed Gallery II from the year six budget application. The public money for planning and acquisition costs in connection with Gallery II, is now coming directly from the city's capital budget.

HUD PULLS THE PLUG

HUD was quite familiar with the accusations leveled in the 1979 Ad Hoc report. In May, 1978, HUD released a report indicating pervasive racial discrimination as a result of OHCD housing policy, and compelled the city to enter into a compliance agreement whereby it would spend previously allocated funds for impacted areas as quickly as possible. This agreement was promptly violated.

Not only did the city fail to spend previously allocated funds in North Philadelphia, it also failed to come up with a developer for the federally mandated Whitman Housing project (proposed integrated public housing site in South Philadelphia, which had been disputed in the courts for over 20 years). HUD responded by withholding 90% of OHCD's budget year five appropriation, a total of \$60 million.

As a result of HUD's action, activities budgeted for year five ground to a halt and were not resumed until January, 1980, when a developer was approved and assurances were given that groundbreaking on Whitman would begin.

HUD's intervention into Philadelphia's housing crisis, though required by law, was something less than a godsend, 1) because of its laxity in bringing OHCD into compliance with federal housing requirements, and 2) because the beneficiaries of its punitive enforcement measures have not been the sponsors, but rather, the victims of injustice. HUD, while responding superficially to the Ad Hoc Committee's claims of discrimination, has not recognized Ad Hoc as the legitimate voice for the residents of North Central Philadelphia, in contravention of its own guidelines on citizen participation.

In May, 1979, Ad Hoc charged: "The City of Philadelphia has shown a blatant, and intentional disregard for low income residents of minority neighborhoods. It has totally ignored the tremendous needs of tenants in both private and public housing. It has totally ignored the large amount of vacant public housing units in this City. It has totally ignored the needs of the Hispanic population. It has failed to deal with problems of performance or the establishment of goals and timetables. It has not only failed to deal affirmatively with the Whitman Townhouses but continues to obstruct their development. It has failed to commit sufficient housing resources to deal with the critical problems existing in low income minority neighborhoods..."

HUD made no official response to these accusations, and as a result, Gallery himself did not feel obliged to reply. This

(continued on following page)



Inquirer/Gerard C. Benene

Last year housing activists occupied Independence Hall for two hours. The sign reads, "We want houses — not more Galleries."

Act of 1974 be administered by a separate office, which would take over much of the work being done by several city agencies. City Council, acting on Gallery's initiative, created the Office of Housing and Community Development and appointed him director in September, 1976. Having thus gained virtual control over all the city's housing funds and stock, Gallery set about to implement triage, or recycling.

This he accomplished quite simply by doing little or nothing for the communities he was hired to assist. In a report issued by the Ad Hoc Committee in opposition to the city's year five CD application, it was asserted that absolutely no money for any type of housing assistance for North Central Philadelphia west of Broad Street (an area comprising some 2½ square miles of densely populated ghetto) had been spent. In objections raised against the year six CD application these charges were repeated, with the addition of a budget breakdown indicating that between 1976 and 1979, \$9.415 million had been allocated but unspent.

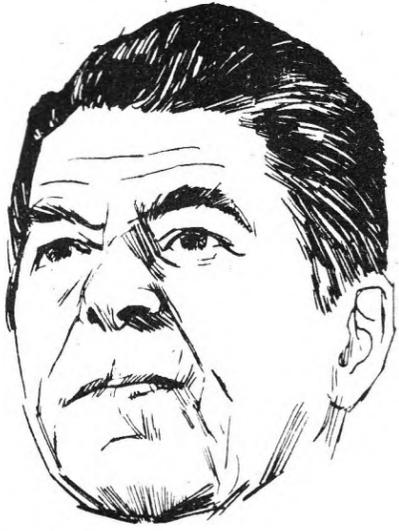
Gallery's former deputy, Peter Lapham, who recently resigned under

program. DeBernardo demonstrated that demolitions in North Central Philadelphia were ongoing at a rate of 400 per year, and that most of these were concentrated in areas already targeted for private redevelopment by the city. It was also pointed out that the cost of demolition approximated the amount of an individual emergency grant available to low income residents under the original CD guidelines.

THE GALLERY

In addition to passive acceptance to the logic of triage, Gallery diverted CD monies for planning and acquisition in connection with a commercial development in Center City Philadelphia, known as Gallery I. In a December, 1978 interview Milton Street described what went into the construction of Gallery I:

"The Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia built the Gallery (with HUD approval). It rents it to Rouse Corporation (private developer) on a 99 year lease for 72 cents per square foot. Rouse invested only \$9 million of its own money in the complex, with the city co-signing as security against Rouse's loan. The Gal-



Carter & Reagan Move Toward Nomination



by Jack Powell

With little more than half the delegates in the Democratic and Republican primaries selected, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan already have their nominations all but locked up. Only last October it appeared to be anybody's guess who would win either nomination. Polls then showed President Carter with the lowest approval rating of his presidency. Ted Kennedy was outpolling Carter by a 2-1 margin among Democrats who planned to vote in the primaries. On the other side, Ronald Reagan, though the favorite in his party, faced no less than a dozen presidential hopefuls, while he had yet to shake off his image of being unelectable.

RALLY ROUND THE FLAG

Then came the events in Iran and Afghanistan. Carter skillfully exploited both these events, promoting an atmosphere of national crisis. Having convinced the US people that the vital interests of the nation were threatened by the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Carter reaped the natural advantages that flow to an incumbent President in such a situation. The logic of supporting the President, putting aside criticisms of his policies, exerted a strong pull on the electorate. Carter's ratings in the polls climbed, and he rolled up big victories over Ted Kennedy in the early caucuses and primaries. The "Rose Garden Strategy" — which called for Carter to forego campaigning in the name of taking care of serious business — proved effective in the months following the taking of the hostages. Carter's approval rating soared from 17% in October to 72% in December.

Ironically, the biggest beneficiary of Carter's fanning the flames of jingoism and super-patriotism over the hostages and Afghanistan, may have been not the President, but his likely opponent in November, Ronald Reagan. Reagan, as the most consistent "hard line" anti-Soviet candidate, inevitably looked like a prophet. Carter's sharp shift to the right, his strident attacks on the Soviets and his proclamation of the Carter Doctrine made him look like a convert to Reaganism. In 1976 Reagan was stigmatized as being "far right" and was unable to score in the big primaries. In 1980 Reagan, thanks in some part to Jimmy Carter, has become "respectable" and has rolled up victories in all parts of the country.

By March, Carter's inability to resolve the situation in Iran, coupled with double-digit inflation, and his growing attacks on the living standards of the American people, began to take its toll. A *NY Times*-CBS News poll from the second week in March, showed Carter's job approval rating down to 40% compared with 52% at the end of February and 72% in December. When Kennedy scored his twin upsets in New York and Connecticut, it was a clear signal to Carter that a great many people are unhappy with the direction his presidency has taken. Barring any unforeseen crisis that might prop up his fortunes, Carter's diminishing public approval seems to be a long-term trend.

Nevertheless, and despite apparent contradictions, Carter continued to rack up delegates for his party's nomination, while Ronald Reagan did the same. As it stands now Carter has 1136 committed delegates, a sizeable portion of the needed 1666, while Kennedy has only 593. To insure his nomination, Kennedy would need to win 70% of the remaining delegates, an extremely unlikely possibility despite Carter's continuing signs of weakness.

On the Republican side, Reagan has accumulated 607 committed delegates to George Bush's 126 — 998 are needed for the nomination. The chances of Bush being able to head off Reagan's nomination is just about nil. So with little more than half the delegates selected, it already looks like it's going to be Ronald Reagan vs. Jimmy Carter in November.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO TEDDY?

The obvious question is why has Ted Kennedy been unable to take advantage of Carter's growing weakness? While Kennedy clobbered Carter in his home state of Massachusetts and scored victories in New York and Connecticut, he has been beaten badly elsewhere and in the recent Pennsylvania showdown could only manage a draw. Part of Kennedy's problem, as every analyst has noted, is Chappaquidick and the question of trust and moral integrity. Kennedy's halting performance in interviews with press, especially in relation to Chappaquidick, has reinforced the suspicion that Kennedy is short on honesty.

But there is also a larger factor at work. Simply put, Kennedy is not seen as

a credible political alternative by the crucial sections of the Democratic Party electorate. Many voters, dissatisfied with Carter's economic policies, instinctively believe that Kennedy will not make a difference, in spite of the Senator's flamboyant rhetoric about inflation and high interest rates. The voters remember Jimmy Carter's election year populism in 1976 and his promises to slash unemployment, rebuild the cities and improve social services. Why should they believe Ted Kennedy about inflation now?

Kennedy's candidacy is a victim of the crisis of corporate liberalism, even more than it is a victim of his own personal credibility. Significant sections of the old Democratic coalition of labor, minorities and the "have nots" of US society no longer have any confidence that the Democratic Party can or will address their problems. And they are right. Kennedy is no less subservient to the interests of big business than Jimmy Carter. (See January *Organizer*.)

In the absence of a mass based left alternative to the Democrats, it is Ronald Reagan and the right that are profiting from this disillusion. Reagan's inroads among blue collar voters is an indication of this. Yet it would be a mistake to think that the electorate has made a major shift to the right. All indications are that the majority of the voters are dissatisfied with the choices the two parties are preparing to offer them. A Gallup poll from March 31 shows 58% of those questioned said that it's either possible or likely that they would cast a vote of no confidence in any of the candidates if a space were provided on the ballot for such a vote. In the Kansas primary, where the ballot provides for it, 6% of the electorate actually voted for none of the above.

It is this sentiment that has led John Anderson to declare as an independent. But Anderson, even less than Kennedy, hasn't put forward a real political alternative to the politics of either Carter or Reagan. Politically, he remains a moderate Republican. Because of the rightward shift of the political spectrum he looks like a flaming liberal next to Reagan and Bush.

MONOPOLY VS. PEOPLE'S POLITICS

It is not the masses of the people that presently define the political options

for the next four years. It is the monopoly interests that dominate the political process. The nominations of Carter and Reagan will be a continuation of the shift to the right that resulted in the nominations of Carter and Ford in 1976. The monopolists that back the candidates financially are more united than ever before behind a reactionary program that targets working people as the cause of the crisis facing the capitalist system.

The two-party politicians and their monopoly backers want the American people to pay the costs of repairing an economy crippled by its own contradictions. They're trying to make us believe that we are responsible for inflation, that our standard of living is too high and that we get too much in wages. They say we must tighten our belts and make sacrifices — cut social spending and stimulate a recession. Meanwhile, they increase prices, give Chrysler a billion dollars and subsidize big business in a thousand and one other ways.

But this is not all. Their reactionary domestic policies go hand in hand with a reactionary foreign policy that tries to convince us that the struggle of the world's people to control their own resources is responsible for our problems. They want to expand support for right-wing dictators and create a new rapid intervention force that could be used to put down rebellions that don't serve the interests of the multinational corporations.

In response to this reality, there is a growing movement toward independent politics — politics independent of the monopolies and their two parties. Candidacies like Lucien Blackwell and the Human Rights Slate here in Philadelphia, the bid of Mel King for the mayoralty in Boston, Ken Cockrell's successful race for city council in Detroit — these and other local developments, based primarily in the Black community, are the strongest indications of this trend.

Growing public support for a labor party from the trade unions is another. The founding of the Citizen's Party, while seriously flawed (see page 18), is yet another indication of the growth of independent sentiment. That this sentiment is being translated into organized independent activity is an important step forward. Massive popular dissatisfaction with a Carter-Reagan choice will provide a great opportunity to build this independent trend in the coming year.

Housing...

(continued from previous page)

he pointed out at the end of a self-congratulatory year five performance report. The ultimate irony, however, is a long standing HUD policy, pointed out by Milton Street, which prohibits the construction of federally subsidized "Section 8" housing projects in impacted (ghetto) areas, on the premise that housing should be built in integrated neighborhoods. Shouted Street — "We can't get housing because we're IMPACTS!!!"

MORE RECYCLING

John Street, in his capacity as newly elected city councilman for the 5th District, has criticized the CD year six application as a token of the city's continuing commitment to recycling. As to Massaro's

declaration that he will increase housing rehabilitation by 30%, Street said: "30% of nothing is simply a little less nothing." Street recently submitted to City Council a list of amendments that would reallocate \$13,247,300 from administration, commercial development, fire prevention, etc., to refurbish housing units in 1980 or a 75% increase over the currently projected 2259. These amendments were rejected, as expected, by City Council on April 25 after prolonged debate.

Nonetheless, the city's efforts to head off criticism from housing activists in Philadelphia will become increasingly more difficult. The opponents of recycling have formed a unified front. They are vocal, organized and fed up. If recent developments in City Council are any indication, the city can expect relentless opposition in the months to come from those who are neither deceived nor relieved by OHCD's pledge to correct past abuses.

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Worth the risk?



Black Power in the 1960s

by Michael Simmons

This is the second in a series on the Black Liberation Movement in the US.

In 1966 Stokely Carmichael, then chairperson of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), raised the cry of Black Power during a march in Mississippi. The slogan of Black Power signaled a new phase in the development of the Black Liberation Movement, challenging broadly accepted ideas of what the movement was all about. The idea that integration was the only solution to Black oppression, that non-violence was an absolute moral principle, that the norms of white society, including standards of beauty and culture, automatically applied to Blacks...all these notions and more were thrown into question by the advocates of Black Power. While the term was new, the ideas it expressed were not.

As far back as before the Civil War, Martin Delaney, Paul Cuffe and others raised a similar challenge to the anti-slavery movement. More recently Marcus Garvey, Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X, in different ways, projected a militant Black nationalism. Malcolm, in particular, was a strong and direct influence on the Black activists associated with the Black Power slogan. What was new was that for the first time a major civil rights organization had adopted this perspective and rejected the limited civil rights agenda.

BEYOND CIVIL RIGHTS

The mass media, the white liberal politicians and their allies in the Black movement tried to dismiss Black Power as the irresponsible ravings of a small handful of agitators. Their hysterical denunciations and distortions of the slogan showed that, in fact, they understood it was much more than this, and it posed a direct threat to the domination of conservative forces over the fortunes of the movement. Black Power was represented as "racism in reverse" — the doctrine of "Get Whitey" — a call to violence, destruction and anarchy. These attacks sought to justify the failure to address the demands of the movement and sought to repress it.

Black Power meant different things to different people and was subjected to a wide variety of interpretations by its advocates. But the fundamental idea underlying the slogan was clear. Namely that Black freedom is impossible without Black political power. Black Power meant Black people taking control of their own movement, determining for themselves their goals and the means for achieving them. It meant Black people achieving control over the basic institutions — political, economic, and cultural — that affect their lives. Finally, it meant that Black people were not going to accept what those whites in power deemed the proper limits of their struggle, either in regard to its objectives or the means for attaining them.

There were many reasons why the concept of Black Power held a broad appeal for the masses of Black people during the late 60s. The legal victories recorded by the civil rights movement (the 1954 ruling on school desegregation, the 1964 Civil Rights Bill and the 1965 Voting Rights Act) had done little to improve the day to day economic and political reality of the masses of Blacks. Moreover, Black people had to resort to constant protest to get enforcement of these laws because of the continued racism of local, state and federal officials.

Another factor was the exposure of the ineffectiveness of the traditional civil rights coalition. The mainline civil rights leadership, like Baynard Rustin and the NAACP head Roy Wilkins, counselled Black people to put their faith in the

Democratic Party and the labor bureaucrats. Yet these allies consistently sold out the Black masses, a fact that was dramatically brought home by the refusal of the Democratic Party to seat the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the 1964 Convention in Atlantic City. As one activist of the period summed up that experience:

"Atlantic City was a powerful lesson, not only for the Black people from Mississippi, but for all of SNCC and many other people as well. No longer was there any hope, among those who still had it, that the federal government would change the situation in the Deep South. The fine line of contradiction between the state government and the federal government which had been used to build a movement was played out. Now the kernel of opposite the people against both the federal and state governments was apparent...And the change had come through direct experience."

The racism and paternalism of white activists in the civil rights movement also created the context for the Black Power movement. Many whites during this period held missionary attitudes toward Black people — particularly southern Black people. They brought the same stereotype of the "poor, ignorant Black" that the movement was fighting. They showed little understanding of the culture and values of the Black community. The missionary complex existed alongside an equally paternalistic romanticism about Black life.

Even more significant, the whites who were so eager to "help" Blacks, took no initiative to organize and educate whites in an anti-racist fashion. A growing identification with struggles in Southern Africa and opposition to the Vietnam war also deepened this racial division in the movement. Many whites felt that Blacks should focus on domestic issues and leave the international questions to white people. The accumulated weight of these attitudes and practice led to the expulsion of whites from SNCC. The SNCC leadership correctly demanded that if whites were genuinely concerned with the question of racial equality they take the message to whites, where this understanding was needed.

EXPRESSIONS OF BLACK POWER

One of the first expressions of rejection of the gradualist, go slow approach to civil rights were the urban Black rebellions. From 1964 to 1970, over 50 US cities experienced what the mass media termed "riots" or "civil disorders." While the traditional civil rights leadership echoed the government and media in condemning the rebellions, and even Martin Luther King joined in decrying "violence," the militant Black Power leadership defended them as expressions of frustration and anger with racism and oppression.

They pointed out that America could not expect "peace" and demand non-violence from Blacks while maintaining systematic racial inequality. They exposed the hypocrisy of such a posture on the part of a government which daily visited violence on Blacks at home and Vietnamese abroad. The repression in the wake of the rebellions far exceeded in its brutality the violence of the rebellions, which focused on property and not human life. The National Guard in restoring "order," killed hundreds of Blacks in Newark, Watts, Detroit and elsewhere.

Independent political action became a cornerstone of the Black Power movement. This grew out of the failure of the



Lucious Hightower

two-party system to open up to Black people and to speak to their demands. While the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) was being formed, the Freedom NOW! party was formed in Philadelphia, Detroit and New York. This party which had Malcolm X as a founding member never developed a mass base but did point the way for future Black politics.

SNCC activist Julian Bond was one of the first Black persons to wage a successful campaign as an independent. Although he ran in the Democratic Party, racism caused him to run without any support of the party. The Lowdes County Freedom Organization in Alabama was another early effort to speak to the political needs of Black people. This organization used the symbol of the Black panther and was successful in winning some elected offices in Lowdes County, including the sheriff.

Many organizations came into being in this period to develop an independent thrust in Black politics. The most notable national ones were the Congress of African People (CAP) and the National Black Assembly (NBA). Both organizations were instrumental in consolidating this movement. Through Black Power Conferences and Black Political Conventions, these organizations laid the groundwork for many of the successful campaigns of Black people in the 70s.

"I'm Black and I'm Proud!" became a new slogan in the Black community. This was in part a result of Black college and high school students struggling for Black studies programs with particular emphasis on the many contributions of African civilization to the world. The growing awareness of Black history in Africa and the US exposed the "BIG LIE" that Black people were passive observers of history.

Some of the most militant struggles of Black people occurred during this period as the fight for Black studies led to mass protest. Schools such as San Francisco State, Cornell University, Temple University, University of Pennsylvania and others were subjected to building takeovers, boycotts of classes, and strikes. High school students were also a part of this struggle. One of the most significant protests occurred November 17, 1967. That day, over 5000 high school students assembled at the Philadelphia Board of Education to demand Black studies programs. They were met with one of the most vicious police attacks in Philadelphia history led by Police Commissioner, Frank Rizzo.

RACE AND CLASS

The emphasis on Black unity with little or no reference to the class divisions

among Black people facilitated the growth of reformist currents within the movement. The idealization of Black culture, again with little grasp of how values and attitudes express different class interests, similarly aided in transforming Black Power into a harmless slogan associated with Black capitalism, "self-help" or expressions of racial pride empty of political content.

Under the guise of Black solidarity, any number of careerists and opportunists were able to build their influence in the movement. They promoted politics that benefitted the upper stratum of the Black people while leaving the conditions of the masses largely untouched. The call for Black unity was used to deflect criticism and struggle over these politics. Others sought to turn Black Power into a cultivation of Black values and life style, divorced from mass struggle. Posing as the "genuine revolutionaries," they belittled the day to day struggles to exact concessions from the ruling class as "playing the white man's game." The federal government was all too happy to fund this sort of "revolution" and "Black Power" as an alternative to the militant politics promoted by SNCC and others.

The other side of the coin was the view of "White America" as a monolithic power block. The class contradictions between the masses of white working people and the white owners, employers, bureaucrats and politicians were seen as having little consequence. To the extent they were recognized they were seen as secondary to what was regarded as a common interest of all whites in maintaining the structure of racial privilege. This view drew strength from the absence of a broad anti-racist movement among whites and the failure of labor, in particular, to take up the agenda of Black Liberation. White activists, themselves in varying degrees affected by white chauvinism, gave Blacks little basis for having confidence that genuine allies existed, at least potentially, among the masses of white working people.

Nevertheless, the lack of a class analysis on the part of the Black Power forces meant that opportunities for alliance and coalition, both in the short and the long run, were not exploited. This helped the government and the ruling class to isolate and weaken the movement. The promotion of the view that whites were hopelessly racist or the enemy, left the masses open to opportunist forces who used anti-white demagoguery to advance their careers at the expense of the Black masses.

(This series will be continued in a future issue of the Organizer.)

Scottsboro to Boston - The Struggle Continues

by Mike Wolfe

Black, accused of rape, and innocent. Railroaded by kangaroo courts and racist judges. Doing five years on death row and 15 years in Alabama prisons for crimes he and his eight co-defendants didn't commit. That is the story of Clarence Norris, the last surviving defendant in the Scottsboro Boys case.

People in Boston had the rare opportunity on March 15 to come face to face with this history. Clarence Norris came here to support the defense efforts of Willie Sanders, another innocent Black man who is fighting a frameup on rape charges. (See *Organizer*, November, 1979 and January, 1980.)

With his experience, Clarence Norris knows a frameup when he sees one. And 49 years after Scottsboro, the same racist injustice that happened to him is happening to Willie Sanders. As Clarence Norris said, "Nothing has changed as far as framing innocent Black men are concerned."

Clarence Norris knows the hard way. It was the Depression and times were tough. Along with thousands of others, Clarence Norris hoboed, looking for work that mostly didn't exist. It was March, 1931 when he hopped a freight through Alabama. A fight broke out when the whites on this train decided to kick the Blacks off. The fight ended with the whites getting the boot.

Clarence Norris didn't think too much of it until the train slowly made its way to Paint Rock, Alabama. As the train pulled in, he looked up to see the tracks lined with armed men. Included in the crowd were the white men thrown off the train. Barely escaping lynching, the nine Black men on board were arrested and taken to the nearest jail in Scottsboro, Alabama.

LYNCH LAW

A lynch mob atmosphere prevailed. Crowds surrounded the jail late at night, throwing rocks and threatening to burn it down. The National Guard was ordered in. The next day two women, Victoria Price and Ruby Bates, were brought to the jail. Clarence Norris recounts the scene in his autobiography:

"The sheriff brought two women over to us. He said, 'Miss Price, which one of these n-----s had you?' She went down the line pointing her finger: 'This one, this one, this one...until she had picked out six, including me. They asked the other woman, Ruby Bates the same question but she did not part her lips. A guard said, 'Well if those six had Miss Price it stands to reason the others had



Clarence Norris continues to speak out against the racist use of the rape charge.



The Scottsboro Boys - 9 young Black men framed on a rape charge - surrounded by national guardsmen. The picture was taken March 20, 1931. Clarence Norris, the last surviving defendant, is first on the left.

Miss Bates." We all started talking at once: "We never did any such thing." "No, sheriff, we didn't do that." I blurted out that it was a lie. Before I could blink that guard struck out at me with his bayonet. I threw up my hands and he slashed my right hand open to the bone. He screamed, "N-----r, you know damn well how to talk about white women."

The trials of the nine men lasted three days. Victoria Price and Ruby Bates claimed they were raped at knife and gunpoint. No weapons were ever found. In fact, the nine had never even seen the two women before! The judge let it be known he presumed guilt and considered trials for Blacks a waste of money. An all-white jury deliberated.

Outside the courtroom, huge crowds partied. Bands played, food and drink were sold in the street. In this atmosphere of legal lynching, the outcome was never in doubt. Eight of the nine were sentenced to die, the ninth was given life in prison. When the sentences were announced, the crowd went wild with joy. People danced in the street as the bands struck up "There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight."

Clarence Norris was 19 years old at the time. The situation appeared hopeless. The only future looked like beatings at the hands of the guards and then, the electric chair. However, the International Labor Defense (ILD), a group closely associated with the Communist Party, changed all that. The ILD threw its resources behind the defense of the Scottsboro Boys. They appealed the case to higher courts. They fought off the first execution date. It was a close call. Clarence Norris watched the prison officials bring eight coffins into the prison yard. He was to die that evening. A telegram arrived late in the day - he had won a stay of execution.

The ILD fought all the way up to the US Supreme Court to win a new trial. They succeeded. The ILD combined this legal work with mass mobilization to fight for the Scottsboro Boys' freedom.

They marched, demonstrated, collected money, spoke out in many countries, and educated masses of people about the realities of racism. This support saved the Scottsboro Boys' lives.

NEW EVIDENCE

Still, Clarence Norris (not to mention the others) had to face two more trials, numerous execution dates, and 15 more years in prison. Meanwhile Ruby Bates, one of the two supposed rape victims, had a change of heart. At the second trial, she testified for the defense that she and Victoria Price had both lied. Neither had been raped. Ruby Bates went on to join the efforts of the Scottsboro Defense Committee. She gave speeches at large demonstrations protesting the frameup of the Scottsboro Boys. Even with this new evidence pointing to their innocence, the racist court system would not free them.

The various trials only proved to be interludes in a jail term. Clarence Norris continued to fight for his life from prison. The vicious guards, special harassment for being a Scottsboro Boy, punishments like whippings and getting thrown in the "hole," the slave labor and the slop called food - surviving jail became a full-time job.

After 12 years behind the wall, Clarence Norris received an opportunity for parole. He took it. There was one condition. He had to stay in Alabama. This was a condition he could not accept. He broke parole and went to New York. His lawyers and advisors there convinced him to return. He had many doubts and fears about this, but he was told he would not be put back in jail, and that he would be given a better job. Neither turned out to be true. He was thrown in jail again - this time for two more years.

In 1946, when his second parole came around, Clarence Norris made good on his escape. He headed north again. He had to lie low because the FBI was hunting him. For the next 30 years, Clarence Norris lived in obscurity. He had to hide his true identity. He was still wanted by the state of Alabama for breaking parole.

It was not until 1976 that Clarence Norris was able to clear himself. Negotiations went on aimed at achieving a pardon. At first in 1974, the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles insisted that Clarence Norris return to Alabama and surrender to authorities as a parole violator. Clarence Norris told them where to go. Under prodding, Alabama's Attorney General launched a new investigation into the case. This time, overwhelming evidence proved Clarence Norris was not guilty of any crime. Finally, Clarence Norris was pardoned.

STILL NO JUSTICE

When Clarence Norris came to Boston to support Willie Sanders, he made an important historical connection. Rape frameups of Black men are not a thing of the past. The Willie Sanders Defense Committee is just as necessary today as the Scottsboro Defense Committee was yesterday. As Clarence Norris said, "There still ain't no justice in this system."

Willie Sanders will be tried again in May. Already he has won one victory. Last November he was found not guilty of the first rape charge. At the time, the prosecution had claimed this was their strongest case. Now they don't talk about that anymore.

It is outrageous that Willie Sanders must now stand a second trial. The evidence is less than flimsy. He doesn't match the description of the rapist. Prior to his arrest, none of the victims had positively identified him as the rapist. After his arrest (when he was behind bars), rapes exactly similar to the pattern of which he was accused, continued to happen.

Pressed to drop charges, the D.A.'s office insists on prosecuting. In their warped scheme, getting Willie Sanders the second time around is the way they can recover from looking so bad in the first trial. In the end, there will be one big difference between the Willie Sanders railroad and the Clarence Norris railroad. The Willie Sanders railroad will get derailed a whole lot sooner!

MAY DAY: The Struggle in Chile

May Day is celebrated by workers throughout the world in commemoration of the international struggle of the working class and as a time for the working class movement to take stock and chart the course ahead. The US is one of the few places where May Day is not celebrated in a massive fashion by the labor movement. This is ironic because May Day originated in the US. It is the anniversary of the 1886 struggle for the 8-hour day when thousands of workers struck and were met with violence and repression by the employers and the police. Inspired by the example of US workers, workers elsewhere made May Day a day of international solidarity.

The following article, in the internationalist spirit of May Day, describes the efforts of Chilean workers to carry on the holiday in spite of the presence of an anti-labor dictatorship. It was contributed to the Organizer by people who do international solidarity work.

by Non-Intervention in Chile (NICH)

The September 1973 military coup in Chile was the most brutal in modern Latin American history and a tremendous blow to the workers' movement in Chile. Over 40,000 Chileans were hunted down and murdered by the military, 3500 disappeared, thousands were held in prisons and concentration camps, and some one million went into exile.

Despite the brutality of the coup and the repression which followed (such as

the banning of political parties, government control of trade unions, abolishment of freedom of assembly and press), the coup did not succeed in smashing the mass movement. While the popular movement was forced to retreat after the coup, it slowly began to reorganize. The last two years have seen a resurgence of the mass movement, with the trade union movement playing an increasingly important role.

The Chilean trade union movement has a long history of combativeness.



Guardian photo by George Cohen

NY City demonstration in support of the Chilean people.



Jose Venturilli

Under the dictatorship, May Day has become a focal point of mass resistance.

In 1974, May Day could only be commemorated clandestinely. By 1975, however, resistance committees organized a boycott of the official government celebration, with widespread distribution of leaflets, wall paintings in working class neighborhoods, and soccer games and chess tournaments as alternatives to the government event. Ten thousand people packed the Cathedral in Santiago where Cardinal Raul Silva Henriquez delivered a homily strongly condemning the junta's economic policies and repression. Bomb threats caused panic at the US Embassy and Chilean Labor Ministry. Considering that these actions came at a time when Chile's prisons were overflowing with political detainees and people were disappearing daily, May Day was a powerful show of resistance to the dictatorship.

Similar activities were organized the following two years. In 1976, two plants which processed fruit exclusively for export were burned to the ground. In 1977, five bombs exploded in upper class areas and in downtown Santiago. 126 trade unions joined in protesting the ban on May Day demonstrations and attacked the junta's labor policies.

In 1977, the mass movement grew. Various trade union organizations opposed to the government emerged, as well as semi-legal organizations such as the Councils of the Unemployed. Trade union leaders spoke out more openly against the junta's labor policies, and the number of work slowdowns, stoppages, and call-in-sick strikes increased.

In 1978 May Day was commemorated in the streets as well as in churches. The dictatorship tried to stop the demonstration, arresting 21 trade unionists the day before, stationing hundreds of policemen and security agents on the streets at dawn, and suspending transportation from working class areas.

Despite the threats, over 10,000 workers arrived in downtown Santiago where they were attacked by security forces. Word spread to go to a nearby church. The church was quickly surrounded by repressive forces and the first 300 people who tried to enter were arrested. In the confusion another group managed to gain entry to the church and it was filled to overflowing. During a march held after the service, over 1,000 people were detained, 600 of whom were presented to the courts. Protests following these arrests won the release of most of those detained.

Last year workers again defied the dictatorship's ban on demonstrations and even larger numbers took to the streets to protest the junta's labor code. The protest was called by the National Trade Union Coordinating Council. The demonstrators were better organized than the previous year, holding impromptu rallies with speeches and distributing anti-government pamphlets on many street corners until dispersed by police.

Security forces again clubbed demonstrators, and official statistics showed 365 arrested. Most were eventually released, but 37 were charged with violating the Internal Security Code. The Catholic Church declared that Chile had broken a world record: of 500 people arrested around the world for May Day activities, the Chilean dictatorship was responsible for 73%.

This year May Day will assume even greater significance in the struggle against the dictatorship. Over the past year the number of strikes has increased, along with activity by semi-legal organizations, human rights groups, students and other oppressed sectors.

The dictatorship will undoubtedly respond to this challenge with more repression. But it cannot change the fact that the people of Chile are no longer a persecuted people. Today the people of Chile are a people in struggle, and the workers of Chile are once again taking a vanguard role in that struggle.

Iran...

(continued from page 1)

The Iranians, even before Operation Blue Light, were convinced that the US seeks to turn back their revolution, and they are determined to fight to protect it. While US officials belittle this view, recent revelations give it more credibility. On April 21, the *NY Times* reported that the US planned a coup in Iran in January when the Shah was clearly on his way out. Air Force General J. Huyser was sent to Tehran on January 3, 1979. His mission was to try to hold the Iranian military together as an intact force, and ensure that they supported the pro-Western government of Bakhtiar which replaced the Shah on January 16, 1979.

In the case that Bakhtiar was unable to keep control, and in case it appeared that the pro-Khomeini forces were going to take control through revolution, then

Huyser was instructed to coordinate a coup of the Iranian military to take over the government. In the critical period in early February, 1979, when the Bakhtiar government was clearly unable to control the situation, Huyser reported that a coup could be staged on short notice. Shortly thereafter, however, the Iranian military fell apart in the course of the rebellion and the plans for a coup had to be abandoned.

This poses an extreme danger — to the hostages and to world peace. At this point the resignation of Cyrus Vance is an indication that Carter is consolidating around the hard line represented by Zbigniew Brzezinski, a development that spells further danger. The appointment of Senator Edmund Muskie as Vance's successor, however, seems to indicate that the Carter administration will remain divided at some level. Muskie is regarded as being a lot closer to Vance's outlook than Brzezinski's. With considerable stature and influence as a senator, Muskie is expected to show independence as the new Secretary of State.

THERE IS A WAY OUT

Carter claims that he has had no alternative to military action because of Iran's "intransigence." But many Americans wonder why Carter doesn't simply admit that the US put the Shah in power and helped keep him in there. The Shah and his secret police, the Savak, stayed in power by murdering tens of thousands of Iranians and by plundering the country's wealth. That is something the US should apologize for. But Jimmy Carter, in an election year, seems less concerned with truth and with the hostages' fate than with winning nomination and election.

The family of John Graves, another hostage in the US embassy, put it clearly in a televised statement last March 4. Mr. Graves' daughter Lizette said, "We're going to have to apologize, admit to what past administrations did in Iran, and say we're sorry and we won't do it again." Mr. Graves' wife Bonnie said, "We're going to have to stop meddling in other peoples' affairs. We are now urging people to pressure their Congressmen for a total re-examination of our foreign policy. We

can't continue in our neo-colonialist approach. This is our position, and we have every reason to believe it is Mr. Graves' position too."

Carter is asking us to support military aggression against Iran, with its grave threat to world peace, rather than admit to the shameful US support of the past tyrant. Behind all the bravado and pseudo-patriotism, lies the basic US hostility to a new Iran. The new Iran has taken back control over its oil and no longer serves US interests by acting as a pro-US policeman in the Middle East.

Regardless of our attitude toward the taking of US hostages in order to raise the issue of US support of the Shah, we must oppose the new war moves by the US. Besides the fact that all concerned recognize that the increasing belligerence of the US threatens peace in the already tense Middle East and provokes a confrontation with the Soviet Union. This crisis calls for all peace-minded people to mobilize to divert Carter from the path of war and intervention.

Vietnam Vet Speaks Out Against War and Draft

Ken Campbell was a leader of the local chapter of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). A long-time member of the PWOC, Ken is currently active in the anti-draft movement.

Campbell: I got out of the Marine Corps a few months early. I was unemployed for quite a while trying to figure out what to do. It was the summer of 1970. I heard over the radio that a group calling itself Vietnam Vets Against the War was staging a march out at Valley Forge. I couldn't make the march but I called the number they gave over the radio. Eventually, I ended up meeting and talking to a lot of vets, who like myself were bitter about the war, but were putting it in political terms.

I was trying to come to grips with the contradiction between what I had believed and what I had done. Also, I was hit by the gap between what so many people here *thought* the war was all about and what I knew from my own experience it was *really* about. So many people really thought we were over there protecting the Vietnamese, and I had to square that with my knowledge of inflated body counts based on the cynical killing of innocent Vietnamese civilians.

Organizer: So you got involved with VVAW?

Campbell: I had some hesitations at first because I didn't know what it was all about, but I was attracted to other vets who were trying to come to terms with the same things I was. I wanted to bring what I knew about the war firsthand to other people. So VVAW made sense.

About the same time I was contacted by some lawyers with the Commission of Inquiry investigating war crimes in Vietnam. They were talking to Vets to get any testimony on participation in or knowledge of atrocities and so forth. I talked to them and agreed to testify. I also testified at a number of other hearings. This was around the time of the Calley trial. Vietnam Vets understood that what Calley did was business as usual and that the government was being dishonest in portraying it as a special situation. The biggest war criminals, of course, were in the White House and the Pentagon.

Organizer: How would you characterize the politics of the VVAW at this time?

Campbell: At first it was pretty much a matter of wanting other young people to avoid what we had gone through. We were for peace and not much else. But the organization developed and many of us began to see the connection between foreign policy and other issues. We increasingly understood that Vietnam wasn't some "mistake" but the logical outcome of the domination of big business over the political life of the country generally, and foreign policy in particular.

Organizer: How'd you get drafted?

Campbell: To begin with I wasn't drafted. I volunteered. I signed up for the Marine Corps in my senior year of high school. Right after I graduated, July 5th 1967 to be exact, I went to boot camp in Paris Island. After that I did advanced infantry training at Camp LeJune, North Carolina and then went to school for artillery scout observer, basically to spot for artillery at Camp Pendleton in California. In February of 1968 I went to Vietnam.

Organizer: So you were pretty gung ho?

Campbell: Yeah. I came from kind of a conservative working class background. My dad was for Goldwater and had lots of anti-communist literature around... *None Dare Call it Treason, Masters of*

Deceit... that kind of thing which I read and believed. But I didn't just enlist because I was for the war. I had looked around for a job and couldn't get anything, so I was thinking in terms of the GI Bill and the greater opportunity I'd get as a Vet.

Organizer: Where were you sent in Vietnam?

Campbell: It was the tail end of the Tet Offensive. I was sent to Danang and then just outside of Hue. My unit was in Hue during the fighting and I hooked up with them afterwards. It was an infantry outfit or "grunts" as we were called. All in all I was in Vietnam for 13 months, the first half around the DMZ and after that, south of Danang. Our unit was part of the force that "liberated" Khe Sanh, which was a big deal in the news at the time.

Organizer: When did you first begin to have doubts about the war?

Campbell: It wasn't a political thing at first. Pretty quickly you decided it was a bad place to be. Besides the danger of getting killed or maimed, you see that the officers are out to build a career at your expense, leading you on a lot of missions that made no sense. Instead of fighting what was called the enemy, that is the Viet Cong or the North Vietnamese Army, you find out your fighting the general population. It just wasn't much like those training films we saw about protecting freedom and saving the people. So after a while you decide what makes sense is saving your own ass.

THE REAL WAR

Organizer: We've all heard about the morale problems with US troops — desertions, soldiers unwilling to fight, even assassinations of officers. Did you see much of this kind of thing?

Campbell: When I was there the anti-war movement back home was just taking on mass proportions and hadn't yet seeped into the military in the big way it did later. So there wasn't much conscious political resistance. It was a lot of attempts to deal with officers who were responsible for high casualties, including fraggings, that is hitting an officer with a live fragmentation grenade.

Two incidents I can relate. I was in Brava company, 1st battalion, 1st Marine Division. In both my company and our sister company, Delta, we had gung ho officers of the sort who needlessly sacrificed the lives of the men under their command just to make a name for themselves. The captain of Delta company was given many warnings. First he got a smoke grenade in his hooch, what we called the sleeping area and quarters. Second time he got a gas grenade, third time a grenade with the pin still in it and a note telling him he was going to get it if he didn't cool out. Each time he would increase the pressure on his troops, sending them out on needless, dangerous missions. The fourth time two live grenades were thrown in his hooch, one from the front, the other from the rear. The hooch was totally destroyed, but he had left it moments before the explosion.

My lieutenant, it was a case of taking us on a mission through a heavily booby trapped area. We hit a couple and some people got hurt. Then he took us back there the next day, late in the day. He made us wait on the edge of the area until dark which we all thought was ridiculous since you had enough trouble seeing the trip lines and the things that would set the booby traps off during daylight. We couldn't use any light since that made you an easy target. But he went ahead and walked us through

there, and we hit a couple more. Then somebody fragged him. It was officially listed as him stumbling on a booby trap.

Organizer: What about racism in Vietnam?

Campbell: The racism was pretty up front. Just take the terms for the Vietnamese — "gooks," "slanteyes," "zips," "zipperheads," "slopes," — ways of making the Vietnamese seem less than human. Then there were the countless incidents in which Vietnamese were harassed, maimed or killed just for kicks or to increase the body count or whatever. Scores of incidents I saw myself. Just a couple of examples. We had a sniper assigned to our unit who got bored and would shoot people out in the field, calling them in as "enemy in the open." He would kill a couple of civilians a day for target practice.

I either was ordered to or on my own initiative called in artillery strikes on innocent villages. I know I'm directly responsible or share responsibility for the death of a number of Vietnamese villagers. You got congratulated for doing this. You were expected to do this. Body count was the name of the game and from the generals down to the chaplains and headshrinkers you got reinforcement for it. If you acted like there was something wrong with it, you were treated as the one who was crazy.

Organizer: What about racism within the military itself?

Campbell: Well, it was most evident simply in the disproportionately high number of Blacks and Hispanics among the troops generally and at the front lines in particular. Among the fighting units, the nature of the situation lessened racism. You were dependent on each other. You couldn't afford the degree of hostility and distrust that usually characterizes racist relations in civilian society. There was a lot of closeness.

On the other hand, away from the front you were quickly reminded of the strength of racism — discrimination in assignments and promotions, harassment, certain clubs that wouldn't serve Blacks and so forth.

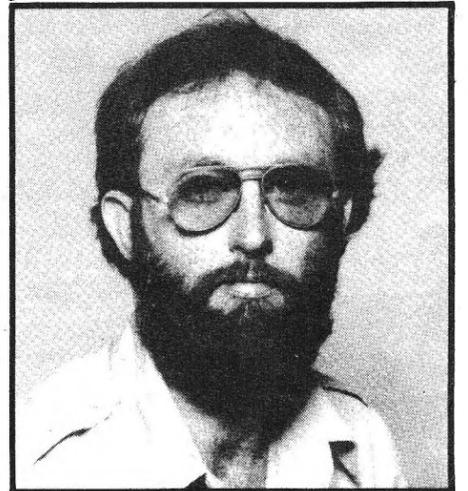
VETS ORGANIZE

Organizer: How did you get involved in the anti-war movement and the VVAW?

Campbell: While I was in Vietnam there was an almost total blackout on the anti-war movement. It wasn't until I got back that I got involved. I had enlisted for three years and was due to get out in July of 1970. When I got back here I was stationed in North Carolina. I had pretty much kept my nose clean while in Vietnam, gotten my promotions and so forth. I was fed up with Vietnam but didn't generalize that to the whole military. Then in North Carolina I began to realize how we had been used. The conditions at the base, the treatment we got. After all the talk about patriotism and duty and so forth, we were treated as if we had made no contribution whatsoever. That and the growing exposure to what the anti-war movement was saying, made me ask myself some hard questions.

Organizer: How did VVAW participate in the anti-war movement?

Campbell: For the most part it was a combination of education and creative direct action. We went around to a lot of different groups and schools and spoke out on the war. We had a credibility with many people as Vets that other anti-war activists didn't have. Most of VVAW



Ken Campbell — Vietnam Vet, anti-war activist, PWOC member.

were combat vets, unlike vets generally. And this made us even more effective.

VVAW grew fast and reached its height in terms of membership within the first year of its existence. The organization was weakened and eventually lost its mass character as the result of a number of problems. The whole difficulty of readjusting to civilian life — the impact of the war experience, the lack of jobs, the high frequency of alcohol and drug abuse as a result — all these things took a heavy toll. The government did its bit too, infiltrating the vet movement with agents and provocateurs.

AGENT ORANGE

Organizer: What kind of experience did you have with the Veteran's Administration?

Campbell: To us the VA was just an extension of the military. They treated us the same way. Their position amounted to "If you want benefits you're going to have to work for them" — keep going to the office, filling out forms, dealing with red tape, etc. In their effort to cut costs, they denied a lot of Vets compensation for medical treatment because they couldn't prove within a shadow of a doubt that their problem was war related.

Organizer: Agent Orange is a case in point.

Campbell: Right. Here's this herbicide that was sprayed all over Vietnam to kill vegetation, which it did very effectively. It's a highly toxic chemical which we never were told about. We were exposed to it constantly. Now we find an incredibly high rate of cancer, brain tumors and deformed children among Vietnam Vets who were exposed. In spite of studies and all the evidence, the VA to this day refuses to pay benefits for disorders related to Agent Orange. I worry a lot myself about it. I have stomach problems that are symptomatic of Agent Orange poisoning. My wife and I just had a baby, which appears to be normal, but we were concerned that she might not have all her arms and legs. We have friends who weren't so lucky.

Organizer: What role can Vietnam Vets play in the anti-draft movement today?

Campbell: I think we can be an important bridge between what is now a largely student-based movement and the working class constituency that the movement must reach if it is to be effective. The kind of credibility Vets have, which I mentioned earlier, remains important. Our experience in the earlier anti-war movement, along with the experience of other activists of that generation, is important to bring to bear on the present political generation of young people. We've been there, and we sure as hell know we don't want to go again.

Three Mile Island



Inquirer

by Theresa Mooney

A year after the near disaster at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania residents are angrily protesting plans to vent radioactive krypton gas into the air. Metropolitan Edison (Met Ed) customers are expected to foot the bill for the accident in higher electricity bills. A government study reports that we came within 30 to 60 minutes of a total core meltdown, the worst possible nuclear accident.

What's the response of the nuclear energy barons and their government cronies? They're putting their bucks into newspaper ads promoting nuclear energy that say "no one died at TMI." The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) effectively ended its moratorium on the licensing of new nuclear plants in February. The NRC continues to allow plants near large population centers to operate without reasonable evacuation plans.

CREDIBILITY GAP

The credibility of government regulators and power company officials has never been lower. Even the conservative *Philadelphia Inquirer* attacks government credibility head on in its editorial pages. This "credibility gap" is particularly acute among residents near the TMI plant. In the last months, reports have been released about increases in thyroid abnormalities in infants, about increases in infant death rates in the area. State Health Department officials dispute these reports, but very little funds have been allocated by the state and federal government to document the health effects of the accident.

Residents fear continued contamination of their air and water. In the last several weeks attention has focused on the government's and Met Ed's plan to vent krypton gas into the air. Krypton is a highly radioactive element that is produced by nuclear fission. It remains radioactive for a long time (its half life, or the time it takes for half of its radioactivity to disappear, is 11 years). Unlike some other forms of radiation, krypton cannot penetrate the skin, but it can enter the body by inhalation.

The krypton gas is now present inside the reactor containment vessel, where it poses a hazard to workers assigned to decontaminate the plant. Met Ed officials are anxious to release the gas because they could then keep workers inside the containment vessel longer before their radiation limits were exceeded.

Government officials, including Governor Thornburgh, claim that alternative methods of removing the krypton gas are impractical and too expensive. Venting the gas into the air would cost \$75,000 while other methods of removing it would cost \$4-5 million. Residents contend that their health and safety are once again being put behind costs and corporate profits. Nobody believes it when the government says that the amount of radioactive krypton is too small to have any health effects.

Residents are quick to point out that the same claims that are now being made about the krypton venting were made about radiation from nuclear weapons tests in Utah and Nevada in the 1950's, as both US troops and civilians stood by — only years later to find themselves suffering from cancer and other health effects at an alarmingly high rate.

The krypton venting issue is the first of many battles that will be fought over the decontamination of TMI. Large amounts of radioactive material remain and will have to be removed somehow. No matter how it is packaged, transport of highly radioactive material through the surrounding community is dangerous. And if anything goes wrong inside the plant, unplanned releases of radioactive material into the air and water may occur.

A much larger community will be directly affected by the cost of the accident and the cleanup. So far, emergency rate increases that Met Ed customers have been hit with because of the accident amount to \$150 million. In addition to rate increases for its customers, Met Ed is asking for government help in the cleanup. The total bill to customers and taxpayers for the TMI accident has been estimated to be \$7 billion.

Met Ed has attempted to recover some of the costs of the cleanup from Babcock and Wilcox, the manufacturer of the reactor, by filing a \$500 million dollar damage suit against them. The suit draws heavily on the conclusions of the President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island, which found that the manufacturer had ignored shortcomings in its operating instructions that were obvious after a similar accident at the Davis-Besse reactor near Toledo, Ohio. Babcock and Wilcox was recently fined \$100,000 for its negligence by the NRC.

NRC COPS OUT

It seems less and less likely that the TMI accident will result in federally imposed limitations on the growth of the nuclear industry. On February 28, 1980, the NRC effectively ended its 11 month moratorium on the granting of new nuclear plant licences by granting the Sequoyah nuclear power plant near Chattanooga, Tennessee a start up licence. In addition, the NRC has not limited nuclear power plants near major population centers.

Federal investigators have recommended that existing reactors in heavily populated areas be shut down altogether if effective evacuation plans cannot be made. They also recommended that future plants not be located within 10 miles of population centers. However, the NRC has not taken up the question of how many nearby residents are too many. In the near future, the NRC is expected to consider this question in regard to two operating plants: Indian Point outside New York City and Zion near Chicago.

Philadelphia residents will be watching these developments because they may set a precedent for rulings on our nuclear neighbor at Limerick. The Limerick nuclear power plant is now under construction only 27 miles northwest of Philadelphia's city hall. 185,000 people live within a 10 mile radius of the plant, 3.8 million within 30 miles and 7 million within 50 miles. Right now, it does not appear that the NRC will move to halt construction of the plant. Instead, they may propose extra safety features within the plant and preparation of evacuation plans. As Philadelphia residents know, plans for the speedy evacuation of Philadelphia are a joke.

The spread of nuclear power plants seems to have slowed, largely due to economic reasons. Nine nuclear power plants were canceled by utility companies in the year since the accident. Inflation has caused capital costs for these plants to skyrocket. High interest rates make the large capital expenditures involved in building nuclear plants unattractive to capitalists. The near financial ruin of Met Ed has scared off a lot of investors.

GROWTH OF ANTI-NUKE MOVEMENT

A positive outcome of the TMI accident in the past year has been the growth and increased activity of the anti-nuclear movement. The anniversary of TMI was commemorated around the country with demonstrations, marches, occupations and leafletting activities. Although the anti-nuclear movement has gained greater acceptance and influence among the public, its political impact is weakened by its decentralization on the national level and its lack of a clear political and economic perspective. The major strength of the anti-nuclear movement lies in active local coalitions, such as the Keystone Alliance in Pennsylvania, and in its adoption of direct action tactics.

The anti-nuclear movement is criticized by the left for its lack of a clear economic and political analysis. The development of nuclear energy is firmly rooted in US capitalism and imperialism. The nuclear industry was started with strong government initiatives and support for "peaceful uses of the atom." — an offshoot of nuclear armaments development and the cold war. The nuclear industry, which has never turned a profit, continues to be subsidized heavily by the government.

Nuclear energy was embraced by the capitalists because it is a highly centralized way of generating energy that can be easily monopolized. Not surprisingly, the same energy czars who are reaping huge gas and oil profits also have a controlling share of the natural resource for nuclear energy — uranium. A US Senate study revealed that 13 of the 20 top corporate holders of US uranium reserves are oil and gas companies which hold over half of the total reserves.

This monopolization of energy results in price fixing that squeezes a

greater and greater share of our dwindling paychecks to pay for the basic necessities, electricity, heat and transportation. The key to shutting down nuclear plants is breaking the hold of the energy monopolists — who now control how much energy is produced, how it is produced, and how much it will cost. The anti-nuclear movement is of fundamental importance to the working class, and must win the support of the working class if it is going to succeed.

LABOR, NATIONAL MINORITIES KEY

The anti-nuke movement has not gained much support from organized labor, although this has been improving. Only the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) has adopted a resolution calling for a moratorium on construction of new plants. Other unions, such as the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) call for stricter enforcement of health and safety regulations in nuclear plants. At the other extreme, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), representing workers in about two thirds of power plants in the US, is avidly pro-nuke.

The jobs issue seems to be key in winning over the labor movement. Workers in nuclear plants, in plant construction and in shops manufacturing components for nuclear plants would face lay-offs if the nuclear industry slowed down or shut down. The anti-nuke movement has emphasized that in the end, nuclear energy results in fewer jobs than alternative energy sources, because it is capital rather than labor intensive.

Demands for the shut down of the nukes must include provisions for the guaranteed income and retraining of all workers in the nuclear power plants themselves who have the most to lose by the continuation of the nuclear industry. It is the workers themselves who face the most immediate risk of health damage by radiation accidents.

A serious weakness of the anti-nuclear movement has been its failure to involve national minorities. The movement has taken up the demands of Native Americans to halt uranium mining on their lands. But it has failed to address the struggles of other national minority peoples or to build coalitions with the Black liberation movement. Consequently, the movement remains largely white and isolated from the multi-national working class.

For many of us, the nuclear energy issue has seemed pretty remote from our day-to-day struggle for survival. TMI opened our eyes to the immediate and deadly danger of nuclear plants. It is the task of the anti-nuclear movement to bridge the gap between our day-to-day economic struggles and our concerns about nuclear energy by putting forward a class struggle program. This program, which must have a solid anti-capitalist analysis as its base, should lay out the economic impact of energy monopoly on the working class and take up the demands of national minorities.

Genetic Screening: Cover for Discrimination

by Liz Ward (This article also appears in PhilaPOSH's *Safer Times*.)

Major US companies have begun to use genetic tests on workers, despite controversy over their validity and rising concern over their social implications. This controversy was aired in a series of articles in the *New York Times* in February. Two basic types of genetic tests are commonly spoken of. One screens individuals for genetic traits, and the other monitors workers for genetic damage that may result from exposure to certain chemicals.

In the first type of genetic testing, workers are given pre-employment tests to identify individuals with specific genetic traits. Companies use these tests to determine hiring and job placement, excluding supposedly "hyper-susceptible" individuals from particularly dangerous jobs. This kind of testing has come under attack from both the scientific community and organized labor.

A major objection is that screening for genetic traits may be used to discriminate against ethnic groups with a high frequency of the trait. There is often little or no evidence that individuals with the trait would suffer adverse effects under conditions safe for other workers. Excluding "hyper-susceptibles" from certain work areas may be used as an excuse by companies to maintain hazardous conditions, on the basis that workers who might be affected have been excluded.

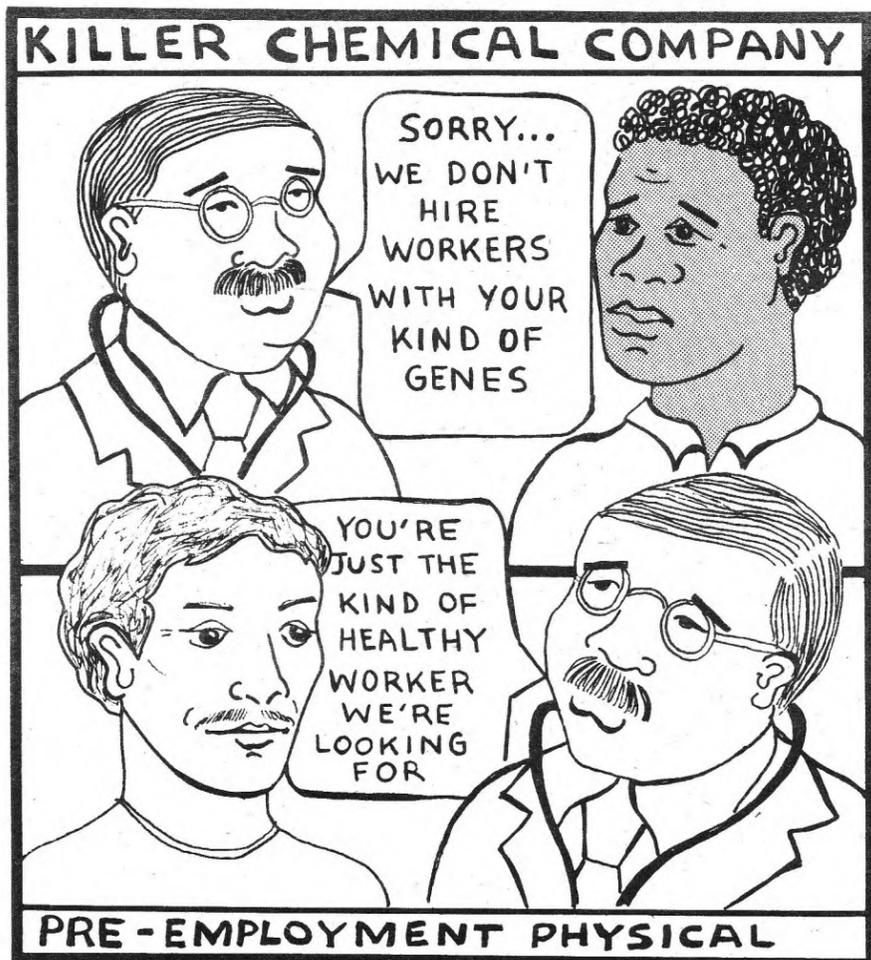
DU PONT

An example cited in the *New York Times* highlights the danger of this kind of testing. Du Pont has been testing Black job applicants for sickle cell trait. Individuals with sickle cell trait have no symptoms, and there is no evidence that having this trait would cause any disability under normal working conditions. So why is Du Pont screening Black workers for this trait?

There is evidence that Du Pont is using this test to discriminate against Black workers. One company spokesman admits that the test results are sometimes considered in job placement. In addition, Du Pont does not routinely test for similar genetic traits that have a high frequency in whites of Mediterranean descent. As one scientist (Dr. Jonathon King, molecular biologist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) put it, "Du Pont's position is scientific racism." All workers may suffer from this kind of genetic screening program. At the basis of it is the fact the Du Pont knows that some of its jobs are dangerous, and is unwilling to clean them up.

The second type of genetic testing is called "cytogenic screening." In this test, workers are monitored to see if genetic damage is being caused by workplace exposures. This genetic damage, measured in a particular kind of blood cell, may correlate with the worker having an increased risk of children with birth defects or developing cancer. At this point, it is not clear how strong the relationship is, because studies following workers who show this genetic damage have not been done.

There are major problems with this kind of testing also. The test may be done as part of a pre-employment physical and workers who already have genetic damage, possible as a result of previous job exposures, may be denied certain jobs. Secondly, the company is doing these tests because it suspects that a dangerous condition may exist. They should clean up the conditions rather than wait to see how workers are affected. Our knowledge about these tests is very limited. Just because no workers are showing genetic damage that can be measured by this test does not mean they are not being harmed. Finally, there is the question of



what the company will do if it finds that workers are showing genetic damage.

An example of the dangers of this kind of testing was cited in the *New York Times*. Workers at Dow Chemical who were exposed to benzene (a highly toxic chemical that causes leukemia) were given cytogenic tests under the direction of Dr. Dante J. Picciano. He found an elevated rate of genetic damage in workers exposed to low levels of benzene. He says, "They [Dow Chemical] started dragging their feet. We wanted them to tell the workers what we had found, reduce the levels of benzene to which workers were exposed, and inform the appropriate government agencies and the rest of the petro-chemical industry." Dr. Picciano's recommendations were not followed, and he has since left the company.

OSHA'S ATTITUDE

In the wake of the controversy sparked by the *NY Times* series, OSHA

has reviewed its regulations regarding genetic testing. Dr. Eula Bingham, head of OSHA, has clarified the regulations by stating, "Exclusion of workers as a result of genetic testing runs contrary to the spirit and intent of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. It wrongly puts the burden of controlling toxic substances on the worker who is denied employment because of a supposed sensitivity. Employers should make the workplace safe for all workers, rather than deprive some workers of their livelihood in the name of safety."

Further research is needed to define in which circumstances, if any, genetic screening is a legitimate means of protecting worker health. Until then, workers should demand protection from abuses of genetic screening. This starts with workers having the "right to know" why genetic tests, are being given and full information about the results.

Working Women Organize for Health and Safety

"You're right - the job is dangerous. If you want to keep working here, you'd better be sure you can't get pregnant."

"If you don't sleep with me, there's no job here for you."

These are situations women workers face every day. They pose the question clearly: "What will you have to do to get or keep a job?" Low wages, speedup,

sexual harassment and the economic crises which hit hardest at women and minority workers, make terrible working conditions even more hazardous and oppressive for women.

To meet these attacks, the women's movement is increasingly turning to its allies in the labor and civil rights movements. One exciting example of this was a conference on March 22 in Boston on

health and safety for working women, sponsored by the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (Mass COSH).

Over 400 people, representing the major industrial concentrations and unions in the area, attended the conference. They came from every sector of the economy and virtually every occupation. The participants were overwhelmingly young white women, but they focused clearly on health and safety as a class issue, and on the centrality of the struggle against racism in the fight for safe workplaces.

The keynote speaker reminded the participants that minority women are concentrated in the least skilled, most dangerous jobs and that they receive the lowest pay and face the worst problems which confront working women.

With this orientation, the participants separated into workshops on subjects ranging from sexual harassment to organizing effective union health and safety committees. The morning sessions concentrated on identifying and correcting workplace hazards. Specific industries were discussed as well as more general topics such as stress and reproductive hazards and rights. The afternoon workshops focused on investigating strategies for change.

Leadership for the workshops was well-balanced, pairing workers with health professionals, lawyers, union officials or organizers. The wide range of occupations and workplaces represented gave participants the opportunity to deepen their own understanding of problems and possible solutions.

The major theme of the day was "Organize!" Non-union workers need to organize into unions to have a more effective legal forum for health and safety demands. For unionized workers, the word was also organize. Organize health and safety committees and organize around health and safety contract demands. Organize to make union leadership more responsive and to force companies to make our working environments safe. And organize for a stronger OSHA and tighter enforcement of existing laws.

While the conference was a step forward in actively involving women in a health and safety movement in the area, it also highlighted the obstacles which must be overcome to make that movement strong. Most obvious is the continued isolation of the women's movement from the labor and anti-racist movements. The greatest weakness of the conference was the failure to do effective outreach to minorities as evidenced by the small number of minority workers present. Few union officials participated or encouraged their members to attend. Other obstacles are the views that health and safety is only a women's issue and that men are not allies in this struggle.

One outcome of the conference was a commitment to overcome these obstacles, to do serious outreach to minority workers and communities and to broaden working class and male involvement. The commitment is to link the women's movement with the labor and anti-racist movements in a common struggle.



organizer graphic

Inflation & Recession

by Kevin O'Hare

Inflation is now running at 18% a year, the highest in the US since WWII. Wage gains made by workers have been eaten away by inflation. Workers who made \$100 a week in 1967 are now making only \$84.85 when wages are adjusted for inflation. Take 1979 for example. Wages in the US went up 7.4%, but inflation went up 13%, wiping out the wage gain and then some.

Inflation is threatening to get completely out of hand. While prices went up at 2% a year from 1950-1965, from 1965 to 1980 prices went up at 6% a year on the average, and the jumps have been larger every year for the past few years. Although the workers lose through inflation while the bosses gain, continued inflation makes the dollar worth less abroad. More dollars are held abroad than in the US.

If the dollar loses its value in relation to other currencies, the dollars abroad will also lose value, and those that hold them will try to get rid of them in exchange for other currencies. If this happens the value of the dollar will drop still further, and the whole structure of international capitalism still based on the dollar will be in danger. The big businesses which run the US don't want this to happen, and they have been listening to the demands of foreign dollar holders to do something about inflation.

In addition, with inflation as severe as it is, it is disrupting the normal action of the market in the US. For example, most working people have normally put away about 6% of their income in savings. Nowadays, people are saving only about 3.3% of their income. No wonder — it's better to spend it now while it's worth something. Savings accounts pay only about 5% interest — when inflation is running at 18%, it makes no sense to put your money into savings. As a result, savings and loans banks are taking large losses now, losing their deposits.

Furthermore, people are taking out more and more personal loans to buy a car, make repairs on the house, etc. Use of credit cards has soared, as consumers try to spend today thinking that inflation will wipe out some of the cost of their loan and the interest on it. Credit for personal loans now totals \$250 billion, and credit extended via credit cards totals \$55 billion — large increases over past years. Such spending on credit further fuels inflation. Meanwhile, lenders frantically

raise interest rates to try to cope with inflation. The current trend in home mortgages, for example, is towards re-negotiable rates of interest which change with inflation.

ROOT CAUSE OF INFLATION

The ultimate cause of inflation in the US is monopoly, which permits large businesses to charge high prices which the consumer, having no choice, must pay. Faced with declining demand, monopolies can afford to simply reduce supply, rather than lower prices, because they have the market cornered. Other explanations of inflation don't hold water. The rise in oil prices only accounts for a few points in the inflation rate and is a recent phenomenon which does not explain long-term rising inflation rates.

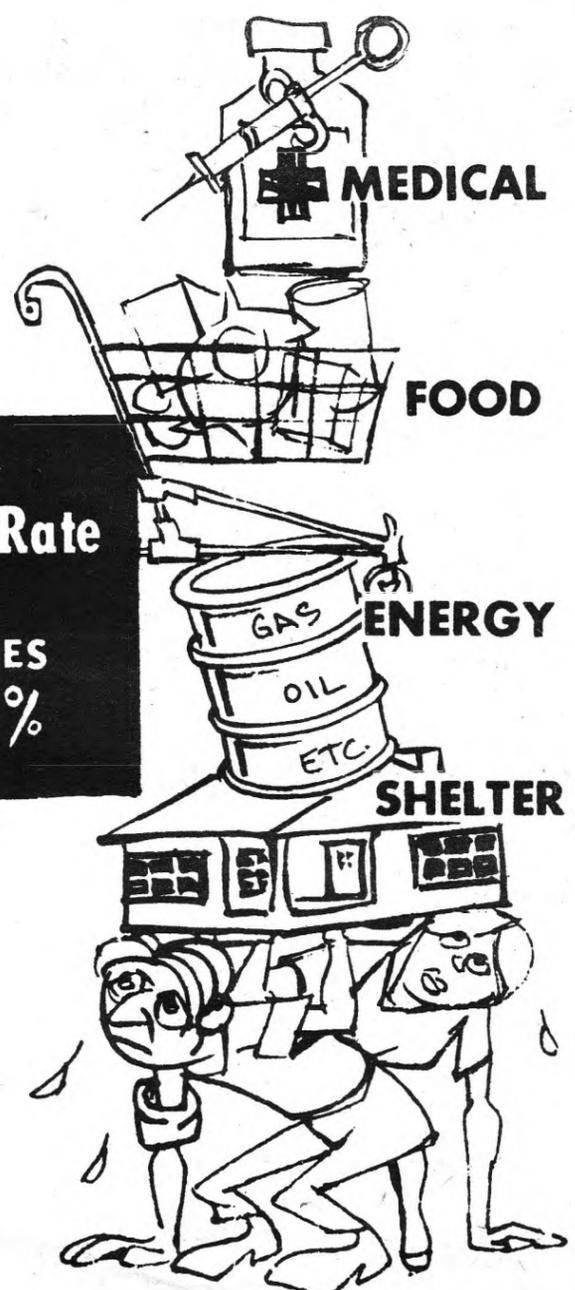
The theory of declining productivity doesn't hold water either. Productivity, or output per hour, has been increasing slowly but surely for decades. If its rate of increase has slowed, it is due to the shift from manufacturing to service jobs. (Manufacturing jobs, through new technology, can be made more productive more easily.) Productivity has also slowed because monopoly capitalists have little incentive to invest and improve their plants, because they have no competition. Instead, US companies have invested abroad or in more profitable industries. That is why the US steel and auto industries are so weak in comparison with foreign competition.

But Jimmy Carter is not searching for the real cause of inflation, because Jimmy Carter does not question the basic system of monopoly capitalism. But he is searching for a way to slow down inflation and eliminate disruption at home and the weakened dollar abroad. He isn't concerned about preserving workers' wage gains and their standard of living either. His answer to inflation is a good old fashioned recession to slow the economy down — a recession which has already started and which threatens to be worse than the 1974-75 recession. This recession (call it a depression if you're a worker) will throw millions out of work and further cut our standard of living.

Carter has taken recent steps to combat inflation. First of all, he revised his projected budget for October, 1980-Oct. 1981. Carter's original budget was presented last January. It was a \$611 billion budget which had a projected \$16 billion deficit, with spending exceeding income.

1979 Inflation Rate FOR NECESSITIES 17.6%

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX



On March 31, reacting to spiralling inflation, Carter changed his mind. He is now proposing a balanced budget, to be achieved by drastically cutting spending on social services and increasing revenues by taxing oil imports at \$4.50 a barrel — which translates into a 10 cent hike in prices at the pump.

The cuts in spending and the balanced budget are supposed to curb government spending, which is supposedly fueling inflation. The oil tax, which in the short run will increase inflation by making the price of gas jump, is supposed to in the long run force conservation and make us less dependent of oil imports with their rapidly increasing prices.

There are a number of problems with this theory. One is that last year Carter was arguing that even a \$25 billion cut in government spending would only reduce inflation .5%. He has yet to explain how a \$16 billion cut will make a dent. The oil tax, meanwhile, will cause an immediate jump of 1% in the inflation rate.

CUTBACKS

It appears that the budget cuts are largely symbolic in an election year, giving the appearance of doing something about inflation. Those who will lose out are the poor. Military spending has not been touched, with Carter proposing upping the military budget from \$125 billion to \$150 billion (25% of the budget). But health (10% of the budget) and education, training, and social services (together only 5% of the budget) will be sharply cut. Although all the details are not known, and although Congress will undoubtedly make changes, indications are that cuts will include:

- Cut CETA funds by \$500 million.
- Cut postal service, no Saturday delivery: \$800 million.
- Cut food stamps by \$300 million.
- Stop welfare increases: \$860 million.
- Cut federal aid to states by \$1.7 billion.
- Cut cost-of-living adjustments in pensions by \$1.2 billion.

Other large cuts include eliminating tens of thousands of federal jobs, raising the trigger unemployment rate in cities from 6.8% to 7.5% (the level of unemployment before federal aid is given), ending the federal share of unemployment benefits for CETA workers, and cutting mass transit funds.

These cuts, and more yet to come, are a miserable slap in the face to those who are just barely able to get enough food on the table today. In Philadelphia, for example, Congressman Gray estimates the cuts will translate into the loss of 600 CETA jobs and \$331 million in federal aid. Consider welfare: in NY state, welfare payments (except for the part for paying rent) have not gone up since 1974, despite the huge increases in prices. Now welfare increases have been thrown out the window. The Congressional Black Caucus called the proposed budget "an unmitigated disaster for racial minorities, the poor, and the elderly."

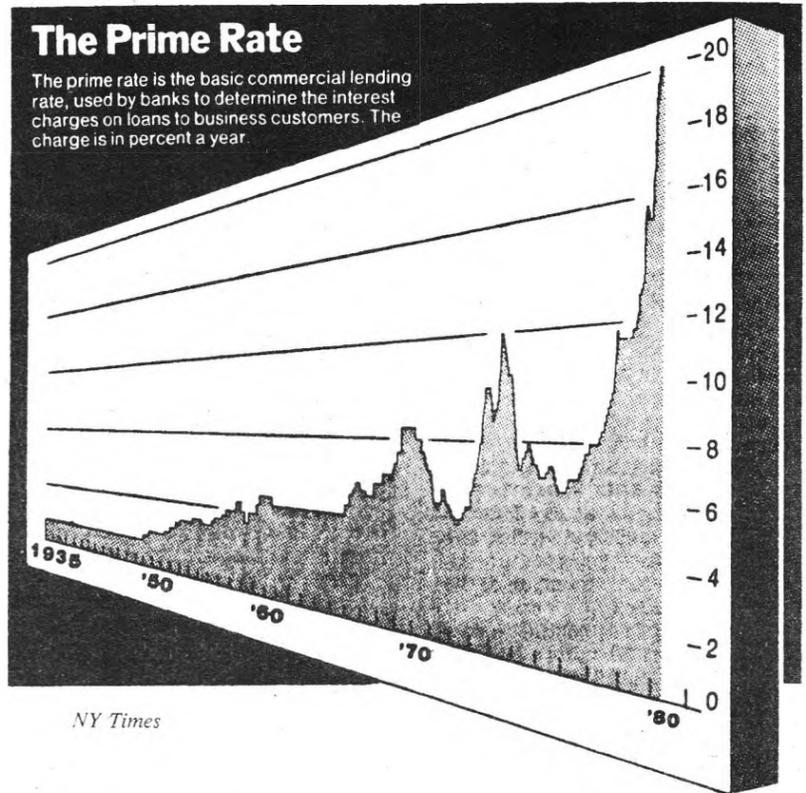
But if a balanced budget won't help with inflation, some of Carter's other measures have a better chance. At the very least, they are likely to provoke a severe recession. Carter has vastly increased the power of the Federal Reserve Bank, and the Reserve Bank has taken steps to make money harder to borrow. The idea is that this will force businesses to cut back production, because they can't get financing. This in turn will cause a recession. The government doesn't say so openly, but they want a recession badly. They just don't want one so severe that businesses actually go under and social unrest occurs, like in the 1930s. It's a tricky balancing act to slow down the economy, but not *too* much.

BRINGING ABOUT RECESSION

The Federal Reserve Bank is the central government bank. It regulates private banks which are members. (Until recently most private banks were members.) The "Fed" requires member banks to keep a certain percentage of their money in reserve, without lending it out to make money. The Fed has now required that these reserves be larger. This, in effect, makes less money available for loans to consumers and businesses.

Meanwhile, the Fed has been given power — for the first time — over money flows outside of private banks and over non-member banks (whose numbers have been increasing). Unregulated lending previously outside the Fed's control has included finance companies which loan to small borrowers, or the commercial paper market where big companies loan money to each other. The commercial paper market has grown from \$53 billion

(continued on following page)



Vieques—the Struggle & Fightback

On March 28, Carlos Zenon, the president of the Vieques Fishermen's Association, was sentenced in Puerto Rico to six months in prison by a US federal court. Pedro Sadee, the Association's lawyer, was also given a six month sentence. The two were arrested and charged with trespassing in restricted waters and obstruction of military activity, following their participation in a daring protest against military maneuvers on their small Puerto Rican island.

The demonstration which took place on January 19 was the latest in a series of similar blockades by local anti-Navy activists protesting major military maneuvers involving US, NATO and some Latin American naval forces. The exercises, which include air-to-ground attacks and ship-to-shore bombardment using 34 naval vessels, were brought to a complete standstill for five hours, as 11 small fishing boats carrying fishermen armed with slingshots ran circles around the less agile Navy assault boats.

Other protests during the past two years have included land occupations of the proposed target areas. During one of those occupations on May 19 of last year, 21 protesters were arrested, in keeping with the Navy's attempt to isolate the movement from its leadership. Several of the 21 spent between two and six months in US federal prisons. One of them, Angel Rodriguez Cristobal, was beaten to death and then hanged from a sheet in his prison cell in order to portray the murder as suicide.

So far, the US Navy has resisted every effort by the people of Vieques and their supporters to end the 39-year occupation of their island and the use of nearly three-fourths of it for military purposes. However, with each passing week, the movement in Vieques grows more united and determined and gains more allies in Puerto Rico and around the world.

On May 17, a national demonstration will take place in Washington, DC to protest the Navy's continued presence in Vieques, its steady destruction of the island and its economy and its full-scale repression of the organized anti-Navy movement. The demonstration is being called by the May 17 Ad Hoc Committee in Support of Vieques, a broad-based coalition of local Vieques support committees, Puerto Rican community organizations and the Washington-based Vieques Support Network. Scores of other organizations from the environmental, anti-military and other movements are also co-sponsoring and actively building the event.

The demonstration will commemorate the arrest of the Vieques 21 one year earlier and will take advantage of that week-end's Armed Forces Day activities to call attention to the US military activ-

ity in the Caribbean which relies on Puerto Rico and Vieques as a base of operation. The march begins at 11 a.m. at Malcolm X Park (16th and Euclid) and is followed by a rally at 1 p.m., at the White House. Speakers will include a number of leaders of the Vieques struggle as well as several distinguished supporters in the US, and will be followed by live music and the reading of a number of statements of solidarity.

For bus tickets in the Philadelphia-South Jersey area or for more information, call the Philadelphia Vieques Committee at 227-7113.

Readers should also take the time to send letters of support to Carlos and Pedro at: Lexington Federal Corrections Institution, Box 2000, Leestown Pike, Lexington, Kentucky 40511. Or call them at: (606) 225-6812.



U.S. Navy Out of Vieques

National March and Rally
in Washington, DC

Saturday, May 17, 1980

Sponsored by the May 17 Ad Hoc Committee

For further information, call the Philadelphia Vieques Committee: 227-7113

Jesse Owens Stole Hitler's Show

by Jim Griffin

In 1936 Adolph Hitler planned to use the Olympic Games, scheduled to take place in Berlin that year, as a showcase for the Nazi doctrine of Aryan supremacy. Instead, a group of Afro-American athletes (mockingly called the "Black Auxiliaries" by the Nazis) turned the event into an exposure of Hitler's white supremacy and racist hot air. At the center of what was both an athletic and political triumph was Jesse Owens, who died last month at the age of 66.

Owens recorded a feat unmatched in modern Olympic track competition, winning four gold medals. Hitler's Aryans were sent to the showers in disgrace. The humiliated Fuehrer refused to shake hands with the man who had done it.

With the whole world watching, Jesse Owens exposed Hitler's big lie. Owens had shown what he was made of the year before the Olympic contest. Competing with a wrenched back so painful that he could not dress or undress without help, in 45 minutes Owens broke five world records and equalled a sixth.

Returning to the US after his Olympic triumph, Owens was accorded a hero's welcome with a ticker tape parade down Fifth Avenue. But once the applause died down, Jesse Owens came up against the reality of racism in the US. It is an ugly irony that the man who exposed racism abroad on behalf of the US was then victimized by racism in his own country. Owens had difficulty finding work and was forced to do Vaudeville routines to

make a living. Eventually he was able to set up a public relations concern and make a substantial living speaking to sales meetings and conventions. He remained one of the biggest boosters of the Olympic Games, tirelessly promoting Olympic competition among the nation's youth.

Owens was one of the greatest track stars of all time, but he will be remembered more for the political significance of his victories than for the athletic records he set. This in spite of the fact that Owens himself was never intensely political and regarded himself as a moderate on civil rights. At a critical moment in world history, Jesse Owens kicked the world's biggest, most arrogant racist right in the teeth. Freedom loving peoples everywhere will never forget him for it.



JESSE OWENS

Inflation & Recession ...

(continued from previous page)

a year in 1976 to \$120 billion in 1979. Now the Fed is requiring that 15% of all new deposits in such money markets be deposited with the Fed where they will yield no interest. This should cut loans between the big companies, as well as restrict the finance companies.

Furthermore, the Fed is requiring that 15% of the amount of all new consumer loans (auto and housing supposedly excepted) must be deposited with the Fed where it will yield no interest. This should cut consumer loans, and is why the use of credit cards is being cut back. Inevitably, auto and home loans will also be cut back.

The whole point of all these moves is to make it harder to borrow money. Banks have charged up to 20% interest for their best and largest customers to borrow money. This is the prime rate. The prime rate was only 11.75% a year ago. The prime rate is now the highest it has ever been in the US. It has been going up with inflation and is bound to stay ahead of inflation since the banks would not make any money if their interest rates were not higher than the rate of inflation. Meanwhile, banks are paying out 18% interest on deposits of over \$100,000. Banks are also paying 13% (9.5% a year ago) to the federal government for deposits from it (the new rules jack this rate up to 16% in many cases).

Banks pay out only 5% interest on small deposits; that's why banks are now carrying out campaigns with gimmicks to get people to make savings deposits. Even though banks were charging best customers up to 20% interest on new loans, loan demands have not slackened until recently. The high interest rates alone were not enough to slow business borrowing from the banks. The new restrictions on credit, however, are already showing an effect. Loans to big businesses are slowing down. Some banks have already dropped their prime rates to 18%, and further decreases are likely. Fewer loans mean less production, and indicate the beginning of a recession.

LAYOFFS SPIRALLING

Signs of a recession are unmistakable. The unemployment rate increased last month to a full 7%. Economists are predicting that eventually it may go up to 9 or 10% as it did in the recession of 1974-75. Housing, traditionally one of the industries most sensitive to a recession, is way down. With mortgage rates now running around 17%, most people cannot afford to buy, if they can even find a mortgage at all. Although 1.8 million homes were built last year, predictions for this year are for one million homes, the lowest figure since WWII.

The recession started some time ago in the auto and steel industries, which are no longer competitive with foreign producers largely because of failure to make proper new investments. In auto 250,000 workers are now laid off — 165,000 indefinitely. Chrysler is hoping to get its \$1.5 billion bail-out loan from the federal government. Ford may soon be knocking at the door. Ford is losing \$1 billion a year on its domestic production, and its foreign earnings are no longer sufficient to prevent a net loss. Imported autos now make up 25% of the market. Car sales are down 12% in 1980, largely because Detroit still has not produced enough small cars with high gas mileage.

In steel 100,000 are laid off. Imported steel accounts for about 15% of the market, and US producers are suing the government to put more tariffs on imported steel. The administration has so far refused, arguing that higher steel prices would cause more inflation. In auto, the government has likewise so far refused to restrict foreign imports, but it is moving to cut pollution requirements and ease restrictions on miles per gallon on new cars.

Meanwhile, the public is sick of inflation and thinks that Carter is not doing enough about it. According to a recent CBS poll of the population, 65% favor wage and price controls to stop inflation. Carter is resisting controls, but the AFL-CIO favors it, and so does Kennedy. Some argue that Carter is waiting until Kennedy is defeated before imposing controls. Actually, controls are a bad thing

for the working class. Inevitably, wages are controlled and kept down while prices escape control and rise.

This is what happened in 1971-1972 when Nixon imposed the first peace-time controls in US history. Prices went up 3.2%, profits jumped, and wages were held steady. Wage and price controls will always benefit the capitalists, who will raise prices anyway, as long as the capitalists control the government which is controlling wages and prices. But if present signs are correct, the public worry over inflation may be replaced by the end of this year with public concern with recession.

Carter promised in his 1976 campaign that he would never use a recession to cure inflation, but that is exactly what he is doing. Many economists predict that the inflation rate will drop to 10-12% by the end of the year, as the recession deepens. It's hard to say whether Carter should be labelled a hypocritical liar, or just plain stupid. Under capitalism, there is no other solution to rampant inflation except a recession. The up-and-down business cycle is the natural product of capitalism and monopoly capitalism.

In contrast, there is little or no inflation in those countries based on a socialist economy. The inflation that does exist, comes largely from increased costs of goods imported from capitalist countries. Inflation is not a problem under socialism, because the economy is planned to meet the needs of the people and is not crippled by the drive for profit that motivates capitalism.

Organizer, May 1980, page 17

Racism Sparks Walkout ...

Shaky Start for Citizen's Party

by Ron Whitehorne

"364 days out of the year we're out on the streets struggling and then on that one day we're asked to go to the polling place and vote for the same people we've been struggling against." The speaker was John Brickhouse of the Pennsylvania Consumer Party. Brickhouse pinpointed the dilemma that brought some 300 delegates from 32 states to the founding convention of the Citizen's Party in Cleveland, Ohio. The delegates came to Cleveland with high hopes that the Citizen's Party will emerge in this election year as a clearcut alternative to the two monopoly dominated parties and their likely standard bearers Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan.

Unfortunately, the deliberations and decisions taken at the three day convention do not support such optimism. This is in spite of the positive achievements recorded by the hard work of the delegates. The platform that emerged from Cleveland, which still must be edited by the National Committee and approved by a membership referendum, goes well beyond the politics of the two parties. In a wide ranging series of planks it advances far-reaching reforms to democratize the economy, reorder social priorities and check the drift toward war. It stands as a call to arms against corporate power.

Nevertheless, the actions of the convention seriously compromised the prospects for the Party to become a rallying point for all those who are prepared to take the path of independent political action. While the convention revealed any number of political weaknesses, both in the Party program and its conception of how to build a broad based independent party, the inability to deal with the question of racism stands out as its Achilles' Heel, prompting a Black walkout and split at the moment of its birth.

DIVISIONS IN THE PARTY

The Citizen's Party was initiated a year ago by a diverse group of activists and intellectuals including environmentalist Barry Commoner, Ed Sadlowski of the Steelworkers Fightback, Lucius Walker, Black director of the Inter-religious Foundation for Community Organizations, Richard Barnett of the Institute for Policy Studies, author Studs Terkel, consumer advocate Robert Chlopak, legal activist Marilyn Clement, and Hilda Mason of the DC Statehood Party, to name but a few. Commoner, in his book *The Poverty of Power*, puts forward the unifying theme that in less than a year has brought together 3,000 activists under the Citizen's Party banner. "The capitalist economic system which has loudly proclaimed itself the best means of assuring a rising standard of living for the people of the United States, can now survive, if at all, only by reducing that standard. The powerful have confessed the poverty of their power."

While united in seeing monopoly power and domination as the fundamental obstacle to the democratic aspirations of the US people, the fledgling Party was, and is, deeply divided over how to build the struggle against monopoly. In the months preceding the Cleveland Convention, two perspectives emerged. One, associated with Commoner, stressed unity around the common anti-corporate theme, de-emphasizing the particular demands of labor minorities and women as potentially divisive. In the tradition of populism, the Commoner forces glossed over the contradictions among the different anti-monopoly forces in favor of the lowest common denominator of anti-corporate politics. In addition the Commoner wing argued for a focus on a national presidential campaign as the key priority for

the Party. Practically, this means that the Party's limited resources would be expended in an arduous campaign to get on the ballot.

In contrast, a tendency grouped around Lucius Walker, Marilyn Clement and later Arthur Kinoy, argued that the Party's principle focus had to be on the movements of labor, the oppressed nationalities and women. They argued that in order to bring about a genuine People's coalition the demands of these sectors had to be accorded prominence. This tendency also emphasized the importance of developing local bases of support and extra-electoral forms of activity as a means toward this end. In varying degrees the national Presidential campaign with its requirement of intensive ballot access work was seen as undercutting the development of base-building activity.

The brochure makes clear that the Citizen's Party is a Peace Party, and a party that will assert the economic interests of the broad masses of working people against those of the corporations. As to whether it is also the Party of freedom and equality for Women, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans we are left to guess. There is no mention of affirmative action, desegregation, Klan violence and the racial inequality in the distribution of the nation's wealth and resources.

The Party's draft platform submitted to the Cleveland Convention indicates that the politics of the Party's brochure is not some isolated lapse. The demands of the oppressed nationalities are neatly compartmentalized in a section on Black Americans and another on Native Americans. There are no sections on Puerto Ricans, Chicanos or Asian-Americans. By way of contrast their *are* whole sections on burning questions like

The section on Black Americans was much improved by the actions of the delegates, particularly by the contribution of the third world caucus. Indeed the platform overall - in relation to labor, foreign policy and other areas, was strengthened by the caucus and amendment process. Nevertheless, the original draft stands as an indication of the political vision of the dominant forces in the Citizen's Party entering the Cleveland Convention.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OR TOKENISM?

Given these political weaknesses it was not surprising that the delegates assembled in Cleveland were overwhelmingly white. When pressed by the media about the composition of the convention, Commoner pointed to the Party's affirmative action rules specifying that each delegation have at least 20% minority representation as an "unprecedented" example of commitment to equal representation. However, the Democratic Party during the McGovern years probably did better than the Citizen's Party in meeting affirmative action guidelines. Commoner admitted that many delegations did not meet the 20% figure but were seated nevertheless.

Moreover, given that the largest delegations were from urban areas like the Bay Area, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Detroit, the 20% figure does not even reflect the racial composition of the areas in which the Party is concentrated. That some of these delegations could not even make this minimal objective underlines the problem.

The whole way in which these affirmative action guidelines were talked about at the convention smacks of tokenism. Rather than face squarely that the Party's composition reflected the failure to programatically address the question of racism and focus organizing efforts on drawing in national minority forces, the Party leadership for the most part reduced the problem to one of insuring a respectable number of national minority representatives through the organizational measure of affirmative action rules.

These issues came to a head in the struggle over the composition of the national leadership and committee, the body that would translate the general mandate and platform of the convention into an actual political campaign. Commoner put out the word that he would not accept the presidential nomination if Walker, Kinoy and Clement, the leaders of the opposition, were seated on the national committee. Later in a "unity" gesture Commoner offered to support Clement if Kinoy and Walker withdrew.

Given that Walker, in particular, was the leading voice in seeking to get the Party from the beginning to take up the struggle against racism in a serious fashion, Commoner's effort to ice him from the Party leadership has a definite political significance. Commoner's commitment to affirmative action does not extend to those Blacks who aggressively fight for a more than rhetorical bow in the direction of Black Liberation and the fight against white supremacy. The Commoner forces factionalized with a vengeance against Walker and his allies.

Walker's interventions from the convention floor were characterized as "disruptive" while dozens of silly parliamentary haggles introduced by whites were tolerated as a part of the democratic process. The rumour was spread that Walker and Kinoy were out to "wreck" the Party, a particularly vicious slap at Walker who has been part of the

(continued on page 20)

Splitting the People's Movements



Unfortunately, the Cleveland Convention did not allow for a full airing and debate of these differences. The bulk of the convention was taken up with often obscure debate over an endless series of constitutional and procedural questions. The only substantive political discussion occurred in platform workshops and caucuses. Questions of basic direction and strategy went largely unaddressed. Nevertheless the divisions between the two wings smoldered beneath the surface and erupted on the final day of the convention.

The role of the movements of the oppressed nationalities and the question of racism have a special significance in this debate. It is these movements, particularly the Black Liberation Movement, that have been in the forefront of the struggle for independent political action. Over the last year, for example, the broadest based independent campaigns, like Mel King's and Lucien Blackwell's bids for mayor in Boston and Philadelphia, have emerged out of the Black movement. At the same time, it is the strength of white racist ideology that has denied these efforts the broadest support and prevented the coming together of a genuinely united coalition of all progressive forces.

A WHITE BLINDSPOT

That the dominant Commoner forces in the Citizen's Party have failed to understand this is evident in a number of ways. The Party's brochure, issued well before the Cleveland Convention, treats the struggle for racial and national equality with a "benign neglect" worthy of the rival two parties. Except for a mention of the fact that "minorities, women and others are last hired, first fired" and a phrase committing the Party to "the protection of civil and human rights here and abroad" there is no discussion of the struggle against racism.

sports and recreation. The section on public lands management is twice the length of the section on Black Americans. Moreover, the programmatic content of the Black Americans section is severely limited. The thinness and generality of this section is in stark contrast to the lengthy section on energy which is chock full of very specific demands and proposals. It is sufficiently vague so that most two party politicians would have no great difficulty in endorsing it.

For example, it identifies "a fair share...of wealth and power for Black Americans" as a "goal" to be "pursued". It calls for support for "policies and practices" that prohibit discrimination and promote desegregation in education and housing, without ever specifying what policies and practices (i.e. busing or voluntary desegregation) serve these ends. It waffles on affirmative action by supporting it at "all levels of government" while remaining silent on the question of the private sector. Indeed there are dozens of liberals in the Democratic Party who take more advanced and forthright positions than these. Even Jimmy Carter's position on the Bakke case is better than the Citizen's Party's silence.

Finally, other sections of the platform which have a special significance to national minorities are virtually devoid of anti-racist content. For example, in reading the section on Law & Justice one would never know that Black and Hispanic people are disproportionately victimized by the criminal justice system and that racism pervades the enforcement of the law. There is no mention of the problem of police abuse and brutality, an urgent concern of the nationally oppressed communities, no mention of racist practices in arrests, jury selection, and sentencing. No mention of the racism of the prison system. The same blindspot is evident throughout the platform.

Our Differences with the PWOC on Party Building

by Max Elbaum and Irwin Silber
for the National Network of ML Clubs

From 1974 through 1978 the fusion party-building line and its leading voice, the PWOC, made a number of important contributions to the US communist movement. PWOC correctly argued that the major organizations of the "new communist movement" (RU, OL, etc.) were dominated by dogmatism and ultra-"leftism", and that they had become isolated from the mass movements of the working class and oppressed minorities in the US.

The fusion line called for Marxist-Leninists to establish roots in the proletariat, combatting various anti-working class prejudices left over from the "new left" of the 1960s. And the PWOC led in popularizing the concept of an anti-revisionist, anti-"left"-opportunist trend, drawing many previously isolated groups and individuals into national identification and work within this trend.

However, as the trend matured, major differences over party-building line increasingly came to the fore. PWOC's fusion line came under criticism from a number of forces (including *Theoretical Review*, the *Guardian* and those developing the rectification line) for failing to target correctly the principal and decisive role of theoretical work in the pre-party period. While expressed in different ways, a common thread ran through these criticisms: The fusion line ties our theoretical tasks only to those issues immediately raised by the mass movement. It sets unrealistic expectations for what can be accomplished in mass work without a party and a party's general line — thus underplaying the role of theory and political line in communist work.

Posing fusion as the essence of party building liquidates the qualitative distinction between the party and pre-party periods; it objectively subordinates the theoretical struggle among communists to formulate a correct general line (decisive in the pre-party period) to the task of winning influence among the advanced workers and the mass movement generally (a task which will become decisive only after the party is formed).

In short, the fusion line fails to scientifically target the very particular tasks communists must take up in the pre-party period. The general concept of fusion may assist in building a commitment to the working class and its struggles. It may assert correctly that party building will involve both theory and practice, mass work as well as struggle among communists. But the fusion line is unable to go beyond these generalities to target the specific contradictions of the pre-party period, the correct interrelationship of principal and secondary tasks, or the appropriate method of developing a leading political line for the US revolution.

In this sense, fusion may express a correct communist goal, but it is inadequate and incorrect as a party-building line. Unfortunately, the PWOC was unable to grasp that a line which had once advanced the movement had now become a fetter on further progress.

The PWOC failed to recognize that the too-vague direction and questionable formulations flowing from the fusion line required a re-examination of the line itself. Facing criticism, PWOC did not

even take strict pains to re-clarify its line in comprehensive fashion for principled struggle with other emerging lines. Instead, PWOC argued that party-building line struggle should not be the key question before our trend and launched a campaign of snide innuendo and intellectual-baiting against leading critics of the fusion line.

Despite PWOC's objections, however, the substance of the party-building-line struggle dominates the contention within our trend. It pervades the pages of *The Organizer* itself. We take up certain aspects of that line struggle here, for it is only through the struggle over political line — rigorous struggle over "shades of difference" — that our trend can unite at a higher level and transform itself into a single genuine vanguard party of the working class.

THEORY/PRACTICE

The relationship between theory and practice in the pre-party period has consistently been one of the major differences between the fusion and rectifica-



tion lines. While PWOC seldom emphasizes it, they actually hold the view that in this contradiction practice is *always* primary. Clay Newlin made this point in the party-building debates of 1978. And in the December *Organizer*, Newlin criticizes "the idealist formulation that 'theory is primary in relation to practice' in the party-building period." PWOC's argument, essentially, is that materialists who understand that being determines consciousness cannot hold to any other view.

Now it is undoubtedly true that this position is a cornerstone of materialism. But left to stand by itself, it is not yet *dialectical* materialism. For dialectical materialism holds that not only does being determine consciousness, but also that consciousness takes on a life of its own, and thus is capable of transforming reality. In other words, while the proposition that social practice is primary is correct *in general*, there are periods in which the leading role in a process can and must be played by theory.

The pre-party period is one such period. Developing the party's general line is the indispensable pre-condition to re-establishing a vanguard party, and the principal vehicle to develop such a line is theoretical work.

Newlin and the PWOC recognize that, in some sense, theory plays a leading role in the pre-party period, and some forces professing allegiance to the fusion line state that "theory is primary" in this

period. But PWOC is unable to break with its mechanical materialist prejudice of seeing practice as always primary. Consequently, PWOC puts forward such fuzzy formulations as:

"We have always held — and continue to hold — that the development of revolutionary theory is of *central importance* to the formation of a viable vanguard." Or, "We have also consistently argued — and still do — that theoretical work is *key* to advancing the fusion process." Or, "In an article published in the first issue of *The Organizer*... theoretical tasks are given *top billing*." (All quotes are from the November 1979 issue of *The Organizer*, emphasis ours.)

All this talk of *central importance*, *key* and *top billing* is just obscurantism. PWOC actually holds that *theory* is *secondary* in the theory/practice dialectic during the pre-party period. However, PWOC is unwilling to advance this position straightforwardly and deal with its implications. For this would reveal the fundamental accuracy of the critique made of the fusion line, that it underplays the role of theory in party building.

THE QUESTION OF ESSENCE

Newlin writes that "the principal expression of NNMLC's ultra-leftism is its statement that 'rectification of the general line' and not fusion is the *essence* of party building." He goes on to argue that this error "cannot be understood without grasping the materialist conception of essence." He asserts, "By essence, Marxists understand the organizing principle of a process. In the case of party building, it is that principle which guides our efforts from their very inception up to their culmination in the formation of a genuine party."

This definition of essence runs counter to Marxism-Leninism and reflects the same mechanical materialist outlook that infuses Newlin's view that practice is always primary. Marxism-Leninism never has defined essence as an "organizing principle" or anything of the like. For Marxists, essence means particularity, that specific contradiction in every object

or social process that distinguishes it from all others.

Discussing the significance of the difference between "the phenomenon and the essence," Lenin wrote: "When we say, John is a man, Fido is a dog, this is a leaf of a tree, etc., we disregard a number of attributes as contingent: we separate the *essence* from the appearance." (*On the Question of Dialectics*.) Mao put it this way: "Every form of motion contains within itself its own particular contradiction. This particular contradiction constitutes the particular essence which distinguishes one thing from another."

This is why getting to the essence of any problem is at the heart of Marxist-Leninist analysis: we seek to go beyond the surface phenomena and discover what is the *particular contradiction* that defines an object or process, thus understanding it in its distinction and in its interrelationship to other processes and objects.

With this understanding, how is it possible to say, as PWOC does, that the "essence of party building is fusion"? For fusion is the essential task of communists *when we have a party*. Fusion as the "essence" is useless in distinguishing the pre-party period and its particular contradictions from the party period. If "fusion is the essence of party building," then the work of building the party is qualitatively no different (though perhaps quantitatively less) than communist work with a party.

As in the handling of the theory/practice dialectic, PWOC has been forced to acknowledge the immense contradiction in its very formulation targeting the essence of party building. Newlin wrote in "Has PWOC Changed Its Line on Fusion?" (*The Organizer*, November 1979): "While we were correct to posit a certain measure of fusion as required to construct a genuine vanguard party, we should have made clear the *qualitative distinction* between two stages of fusion. Clearly, the quality of fusion possible prior to the formation of the party is very different from the kind of fusion of which a genuine vanguard is capable" (emphasis ours).

This statement by itself should be sufficient to refute the fusion line! For if the pre-party period is characterized by a *qualitatively distinct* stage of fusion, it is the particular contradiction causing this *distinct stage* that must be targeted to identify the essence of party building. Whatever that essence is, it cannot be simply "fusion."

The rectification line addresses this question straightforwardly. In the most general sense, fusion is the historical task of the communist movement. But communists must target the *particularity* of each period in history to determine the essence of that period and thus define our tasks. The particularity of the pre-party period is that the communists lack a general line to serve as the basis for establishing a party and giving direction to the class struggle.

Therefore, the essence of constructing the party is overcoming this particular contradiction, that is, the rectification of the general line. The process of rectification involves all aspects of communist work — theoretical and practical, struggle among communists

(continued on following page)

NNMLC Responds ...

(continued from page 19)

and work in the mass movement — but the *decisive breakthrough* leading to the party must be the development of a leading line.

It is mechanical materialism — not Marxism-Leninism — that defines essence as an “organizing principle.” It is mechanical materialism that does not target the essence of party building in overcoming the *particular contradictions* of the pre-party period, but instead targets only the general historical task of communists.

IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL LINE

We are not surprised to note that Newlin and PWOC have little sympathy for the formulation, “The correctness or incorrectness of ideological and political line decides everything.” Yet instead of a sly barb noting only that this was the favorite formulation of the “Gang of Four” (*The Organizer*, August 1979), it would be more forthright of the PWOC to state openly its disagreement with this formulation and repeat the statements made by leading PWOC members on other occasions that the slogan is “absurd,” “unscientific,” “idealist” and “voluntarist.” We, on the other hand, straightforwardly defend this formulation, and believe that one’s stand on this point is central to the Leninist concept of the party.

First, we emphasize the fact that the formulation “ideological and political line decides everything” refers specifically to the work of the party, of the conscious element. And it does not mean that line *by itself* decides everything. The cadre holding the line must embrace, internalize it, and struggle to make it a material force. But the essential factor on which all other things depend is ideological and political line.

After all, what determines if a party is in reality the advanced detachment of the working class? It is the “advanced” aspect of this formulation that distinguishes the party from all other

working class detachments. It is whether or not the party’s line correctly analyzes objective conditions and stands for the revolutionary interests of the working class. What determines if a “communist current” built by a party is really communist, if not the line guiding that current’s development? What decides whether or not a party-building process will succeed, if it is not a correct orientation and line on party building?

PWOC criticizes this as idealism or voluntarism — overrating the subjective factor, downplaying the importance of objective conditions. But Lenin in “What Is to Be Done?” defends the decisive role of line and consciousness, and includes it as a fundamental part of the concept of the communist vanguard.

“We would ask our philosopher: how may a designer of subjective plans ‘belittle’ objective development? Obviously by losing sight of the fact that this objective development creates or strengthens...certain classes, strata or groups, certain nations...If a designer of plans did that his guilt would not be that he belittled the spontaneous element, but on the contrary, that he belittled the *conscious* element, for he would then show that he lacked the “consciousness” properly to understand objective development.” (*Col. Works*, Vol. V, p. 394 — emphasis in original.)

In other words, it is a correct line — “subjective plans” — that is decisive in the work of communists, because such a correct line grasps objective reality correctly and gives direction to revolutionary efforts to change those conditions. Rejecting the proposition that the correctness or otherwise of ideological and political line decides everything amounts to “belittling the conscious element” — rejecting the heart of *Lenin’s concept* of the vanguard party.

Differences concerning the decisive role of ideological and political line translate into crucial differences on the necessary preconditions for party formation. The rectification line holds that

these preconditions lie in the level of development of the communist forces. Have the communists developed and united around a leading line? If so, the essential precondition for party formation has been met, for the communists now are prepared to intervene in the spontaneous movement in a conscious manner.

The fusion line, however, posits a certain measure of fusion — a measure of influence among the masses — as the essential precondition for forming the party. For the fusion line, it is not the development of a leading ideological and political line that is decisive to forge the party — it is some change in the spontaneous movement that is decisive. The communists are not to form their party on the basis of line to *lead* the spontaneous movement, they are to *tail* that movement and must wait until it develops to a certain point before the party can be built. Under the guise of materialism and taking into account objective conditions, the fusion line subordinates consciousness to spontaneity. This is the direct result of denying that “ideological and political line decide everything.”

UNITING THE TREND

The mechanical materialism of PWOC’s views on theory and practice, essence, and ideological and political line is reflected again in PWOC’s strategy to unite our now divided trend. PWOC is the leading voice arguing that the Organizing Committee for an Ideological Center (OCIC) is the only legitimate vehicle for party building in this period, that the key link in uniting the trend is for all forces to organizationally affiliate with the OCIC’s attempt to build a “single center” for communist work in this period.

This line is both incorrect and profoundly sectarian. It proposes essentially an organizational solution to the problem of political and theoretical differences in the trend. It mechanically separates the notion of a leading line from a leading center, and argues that a “single center” is possible without a single leading party-building line. It leads to the kind of bureaucratic leadership now manifested in the OCIC, since a fully elaborated leading line does not explicitly lead the “single center” and the OCIC must be held together by organizational means.

PWOC’s line is increasingly leading to the danger of a split in our trend, as the OCIC under PWOC’s leadership appears determined to demarcate with forces who do not agree with the “single center” and “OCIC process.”

For our part, we propose a different method to unite our trend. In place of organizational blueprints and schemes, we propose the method of rigorous struggle over the political and theoretical differences which divide our trend, in the Marxist-Leninist spirit of unity-struggle-higher unity. It is precisely this kind of struggle — which the PWOC with its mechanical materialist prejudices can only see as a reflection of “circle spirit” — that has historically been the only effective means of uniting communists.

The concrete application of this method is the call to build a broad movement within the entire anti-revisionist, anti-“left”-opportunist trend to rectify the general line of the communist movement. Such a movement, taking up all the complex areas of communist work, but centered around the theoretical struggle to develop a leading line, provides the best means to transform our trend into a vanguard party.

The call for such a rectification movement flows from the rectification party-building line. This line already is a material force in our movement, having initiated a number of concrete vehicles to conduct rectification work, including *Line of March*, *A Marxist-Leninist Journal of Rectification*, the Marxist-Leninist Education Project (MLEP), advanced study projects, and a variety of revolutionary organizations intervening in the mass movement.

We urge readers of *The Organizer* to study the many documents elaborating the rectification line, and to examine critically the achievements and shortcomings of the projects under its initiative. In our view, such study and examination will refute the distortions propagated by the PWOC, and will provide comrades with the necessary tools to form an opinion concerning the real differences between the rectification and fusion lines.

For documents concerning the rectification line, write: NNMLC, P.O. Box 11118, San Francisco, CA. 94101.

Citizen’s Party Split By Racism

(continued from page 18)

Citizen’s Party effort from its inception. In fact as events were to show, it was the racist factionalism of the Commoner forces that ripped asunder the Party’s tenuous unity.

ELECTIONS PROMPT WALKOUT

Commoner and LaDonna Harris, Native American activist and wife of former populist Democratic Senator Fred Harris from Oklahoma, were nominated for President and Vice President without serious opposition. While the opposition tendency included those who had serious doubts about the viability of a Presidential campaign as the Party’s initial focus, this was regarded by all as a settled question by the time of the convention. There were also no objections to Commoner as the Party standard bearer. Harris was regarded as above the factions and thus an acceptable consensus V.P. candidate.

The election of the co-chairs of the Party on the final day of the convention produced the first real contest between the two wings. The result was a stand-off in which Marjorie Allen, a leader of the New York delegation supported by the Commoner forces and Denise Carty-Bennia, co-chair of the National Conference of Black Lawyers backed by the opposition were both elected. Carty-Bennia headed a field of four candidates in a close race in which only a few votes separated the top from the bottom.

The co-chair race would seem to have promised a rough parity between the factions on the national committee.

Instead, the Commoner faction flexed its muscle and succeeded in ousting both Lou Walker and Arthur Kinoy from the leadership. On top of this, only one Black, Moses Harris, Director of Black Economic Survival, was elected to the 17 member National Committee. This result was seen by the bulk of the Black delegates as a racist slap in the face. Carty-Bennia resigned as Co-Chair, Harris refused membership on the National Committee and the bulk of the Black delegates walked out of the convention.

Other issues are posed by the creation of the Citizen’s Party and the debate between the different forces within it. But they pale in significance next to the question that split the Party at the moment of its birth. The Citizen’s Party is for the moment hopelessly compromised in the eyes of the Black movement, and only a protracted process of self-criticism and reappraisal can hope to resurrect it. Commoner and those around him give little indication that they understand this.

To think that a serious and progressive independent party can emerge and be built without the full confidence and active participation of the Black people’s movement is a profound mistake. The question of Black/white unity and the struggle against racism is at the heart of building independent political action. This is true historically as in the case of the Populist movement which was fatally flawed by white chauvinism. And it is no less true of latter day populists like Cleveland’s Dennis Kucinich.

The forces grouped around the Citizen’s Party represent an important sector of the small but growing forces for independent political action. Their commitment to building a real alternative to the monopoly parties is serious. For all its weaknesses the platform adopted in Cleveland and the strong anti-monopoly stand taken by Commoner as a candidate clearly represent a political break with the Democrat’s brand of corporate liberalism. Yet owing to white chauvinism, the Party appears slated for an early demise, if it is not already dead in the cradle.

Independent forces need to seriously debate the key tactical questions around how to build an independent People’s Party. Most centrally, how do we bring about a mass breakaway from the Democratic Party where the bulk of organized progressive forces still lead a compromised existence? But we cannot focus on these questions as long as there is not clarity on the most fundamental level. The bedrock of political unity for an independent effort must include a grasp of the centrality of the struggle against racism. Without this we cannot even begin to build a popular challenge to Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee.



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