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# The ORGANIZER



## Polish Workers' Strike ... More Meat and Democracy

by Ron Whitehorne

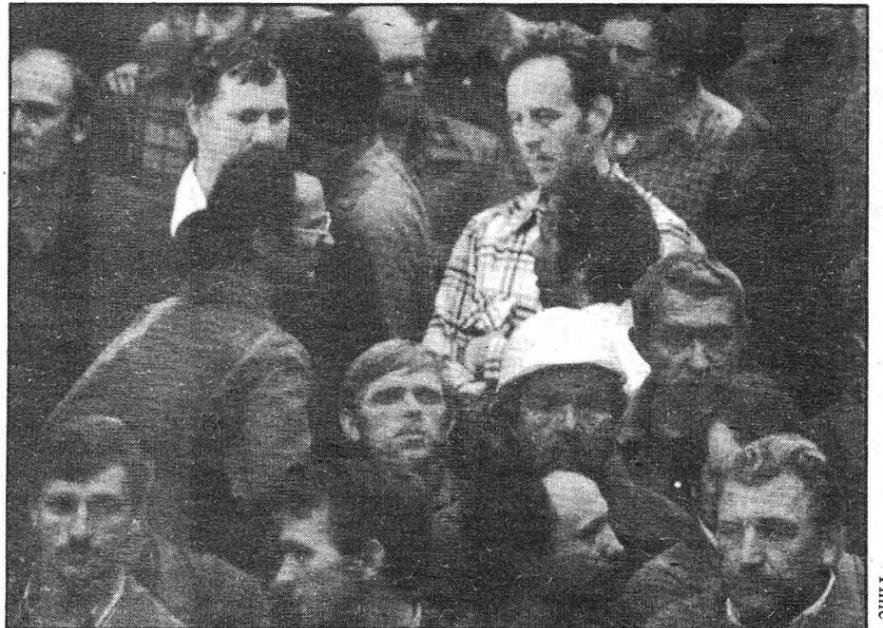
Upwards of 300,000 Polish workers are on strike demanding higher wages and democratic trade unions from what is supposed to be a workers' state. In much of capitalist Western Europe striking workers carry red flags and display the hammer and sickle. In this quarter of socialist Eastern Europe the strikers hoist placards of the Pope. Meanwhile the capitalist bankers of Germany, Britain and the US loan Poland's Communist government a billion dollars and caution the Polish workers that they must learn to tighten their belts.

What underlies these ironies? Is the Polish strike yet more "proof" that socialism does not work as the capitalist ruling circles here and elsewhere allege? Or are the Polish workers well intentioned but misguided dupes of anti-socialist elements as Moscow suggests. What should the attitude of class conscious workers here in the US be toward the strikers and their demands? These are just some of the questions posed by the Polish events.

### THE PARTIAL REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE

While Poland is certainly not a capitalist country in that the means of production with the exception of agriculture are state owned and the economy is centrally planned, its political constitution and economic policies reveal some decidedly unsocialist features. The present Polish state and social system is the product of a partial revolution from above. Moreover the motive force for this revolution came not from Poland but from its neighbor to the east, a country that in the minds of the Poles is responsible for centuries of subjugation and national humiliation. Polish "socialism" is marked by the circumstances of its birth and no attempt to understand present events can succeed without grasping this.

Poland was liberated from Nazi occupation by the Red Army in 1944. Five years of ruthless German rule had created a political vacuum in the country. The Polish resistance movement, while heroic, lacked the scope and organization characteristic of the Partisans of Yugoslavia,



Strikers in Gdansk, Poland, are fighting for higher wages and more democratic trade unions.

Italy and France. The government in exile consisting of pre-war political figures had little strength. Moreover it was politically unacceptable to the Soviet leadership.

Stalin demanded and received from his British and American allies recognition of two broad principles that were to govern the Soviet role in Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. One, the Soviets demanded a free hand to deal with pro-fascist forces in the zone of their occupation and two, that no post war gov-

ernment in this area be hostile to the USSR. The Polish government in exile had at its core the followers of the ex-Polish dictator Pilsudski, was backed by British imperialism and was virulently anti-Russian.

Unfortunately anti-Russian sentiment was not limited to this handful of emigres. Repeatedly annexed, partitioned and invaded, Poland has developed a national psychology of deep distrust for

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## Philly Cop Arrested for Murder

by Jim Griffin

On Sunday afternoon, August 24, in North Philadelphia, William Green, a 17 year old Black youth, was pistol whipped and then shot twice by John Ziegler, a 34 year old white cop. William Green died on the operating table at Temple Hospital of skull fractures and two bullet wounds. John Ziegler and the police department said it was an accident. His gun just happened to go off twice after he apprehended Green for suspected auto theft.

Numerous witnesses told a different story. Green was unarmed and made no attempt to resist arrest. Ziegler beat him repeatedly around the head with his pistol, then stepped back, pointed it at

the victim and twice pulled the trigger. All the witnesses agreed that the shooting was no accident but a very deliberate, cold-blooded murder.

It is an old story in Philadelphia, repeated dozens of times with only slight variations — Jose Reyes, Winston Hood, Cornell Warren and countless other victims of such "accidents" have died at police hands. Police brutality in Philadelphia drew strength from a city administration that claimed the police could do no wrong and aggressively defended both individual officers and the system as a whole from any efforts to curb abuse.

Now that administration is gone. Having driven Frank Rizzo and his

cronies from office, the city's Black community is in no mood to tolerate a new wave of police murders and official cover-ups. Following the shooting, hundreds of angry youths attacked the 22nd police precinct at 17th and Montgomery with bricks and bottles. Only the promise of a rapid investigation by City Managing Director Wilson Goode, supported by State Representative Milton Street and his brother Councilman John Street, averted a full scale rebellion. As it was, there were scattered incidents for the remainder of the week. The announcement that Ziegler had been relieved of duty and charged with murder restored calm.

That Ziegler was dismissed and arrested within a week is a step forward from the Rizzo years. But that the incident occurred in the first place, was initially justified by the police department, and took a near riot to bring about swift action by the city, are all indications of how little things have changed. Mayor Green, while refraining from Rizzo style apologetics for the police, has refused to take a stand against this brutal murder, hiding behind legal technicalities that allegedly bar him from comment.

Green also refused to come to North Philadelphia and face the community directly, sending Goode to take all the heat. This kind of "neutrality" gives aid and comfort to the perpetrators of police terror. A clear statement from City Hall that condemns police brutality without qualification is what is needed. Green, while "unable" to comment on Ziegler's actions, was quick to condemn "lawless-

ness" and "violence" on the part of North Philadelphia residents who took to the streets in reaction to Ziegler's deeds.

The arrest of Ziegler is by no means the end of the matter. Fraternal Order of Police mouthpiece A. Charles Peruto is representing Ziegler. Peruto told the press: "The city is losing a great policeman. I expect to have him back on the job." In numerous other cases Peruto has succeeded. The criminal justice system had demonstrated its failure to bring police offenders to justice. Only a concerted effort of public education and mass mobilization can offer hope of putting Ziegler in prison where he belongs.

The movement against police abuse, aside from pressing for justice in this particular case, needs to push for police accountability. Presently the police — police themselves. A civilian review board with the power to indict and prosecute offenders is needed. The Green administration has historically opposed such a measure.

Police abuse affects all sections of the community, but it is no accident that it is concentrated in Black and Hispanic neighborhoods. Racist ideology obscures for the masses of white working people the reality and causes of police terror and rationalizes police violence as just and necessary. Police brutality, no less than the violence of the Ku Klux Klan, is part and parcel of the effort to maintain white supremacy and keep working people divided and impotent. The struggle against police brutality needs to proceed on the basis of this understanding.

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# Letters To The Editor...



## PWOC Mistaken on Feminism

To the *Organizer*:

Florence Buckley's speech, "Racism, Feminism, and Rape" in the July *Organizer* is worth some extended comment. Buckley's speech should open up a necessary discussion about the relationship of Marxist-Leninists to the women's movement, and the ideological questions that are part of that discussion.

In laying out part of PWOC's position on racism and its analysis of feminism, Florence Buckley makes evident some of the strengths of the former and weaknesses of the latter. PWOC commendably seeks to move beyond the grave analytical and practical mistakes that have characterized American Marxists in the past on the issue of racism. Lack of understanding of racism's depth and pervasiveness in the culture and its inter-relationship to the class question have been major failings of the American left. PWOC has studied this history and made the struggle against racism a basic part of their work. So far, so good.

But the PWOC analysis stumbles badly, I think, in its understanding of the relationship of both racism and sexism to the foundations of our culture. PWOC acknowledges in practice, though its theory is weak on this aspect, the extent to which racism exists beyond material self-interest and the corporate quest for super-profits. As an ideology, racism predates capitalism in this country and will post-date the introduction of socialism. Racism was built into the formation of this country and its strength, obviously, interacts with and is reinforced by class exploitation. Also obviously, it exists autonomously of class exploitation to a significant degree. If this latter point were not so, there would be no need for struggling ideologically against racism. We would instead, as American Marxists generally have for too long, subsume the struggle against racism under the class struggle and assume that somehow the struggle for socialism alone will end racism. This view, fortunately, is no longer acceptable, and has proven bankrupt in practice.

Having made this practical advance, PWOC makes some major mistakes in its analysis of feminism. Speaking of the

women's movement Buckley notes that it "...cannot succeed if it keeps missing the fact that sexism is rooted in class society." This is true enough but not complete. Sexism, like racism, predates capitalism and exists, in significant degree, autonomously from class exploitation. Here again as with racism, this point doesn't subordinate the class struggle but confirms the need for a deeper understanding of sexism's roots in our culture; sexism's relationship to the struggle for socialism; and the need for ideological struggle against sexism.

Florence Buckley's speech apparently continues the mistaken notion that there is no ideological struggle needed against sexism since she makes little acknowledgement of its ideological form. Instead she sets up her one-dimensional definition of feminism, and after investing it with racist properties, knocks it down with appropriate ease. The reality, I submit, is a little more complex. Battling racism has been correctly identified as a fundamental struggle for feminists. But this is not news to a good number of feminists. Nor is the relationship and interaction between the sex and class questions a revelation to many feminists. Buckley conveniently ignores the fact that feminism has varying tendencies engaged in struggles over the specific manifestations of these questions. She has substituted caricature for a substantive analysis of feminism. If this type of analysis were extended to, say, the Black movement, that movement could well be denounced as "bourgeois" after citing the ideas of Vernon Jordan and Benjamin Hooks, and no one else's.

There are sharply differing political positions within feminism. A shared perspective within it is the impatience about the incompleteness and inadequacy of past Left analysis and practice about sexism. Buckley's speech, while containing a useful analysis of rape, continues in that long tradition of Left obtuseness about sexism.

And finally, it should be stated that the energy, consciousness and skills of PWOC would be better served by some engagement in the struggle they criticize. The self-righteous, lecturing tone of

Buckley's speech surely operates against what she wants to convey and do. From the reports received, the struggle against racism took practical form in the planning of Take Back the Night. But PWOC was nowhere to be found when that struggle was taking place and when their criticism could have had maximum impact. The content of leaflets, the choice of slogans and speakers, the outreach and the structure of decision making were all extensions of the struggle against racism within the planning of the action. PWOC should have been there, not outside scoring points with cadre and reducing its relationship to the women's movement to irrelevance.

PWOC has earned respect for its past work. It has an important place in the political life of this city, particularly in the workers movement and the struggle against racism. But the PWOC analysis of sexism and feminism is simply inadequate, both in understanding the two phenomena and in providing a non-sectarian guide to action.

In struggle,

Ed Nakawatase

### THE ORGANIZER RESPONDS

Ed Nakawatase makes three points in his letter. One, that we fail to understand the need for an ideological struggle against sexism, two that our analysis of feminism is a "caricature" in that we fail to take into account the more advanced expressions of feminism and three that our practice in relation to the women's movement is characterized by sectarianism.

These are all significant criticisms demanding of response. But we are struck that Nakawatase avoids taking any position on what was the central point of Buckley's speech, namely that the women's movement's failure to recognize the strategic primacy of the struggle against racism is its more serious weakness and that this weakness is rooted in white chauvinism and the ideological premises of feminism. This is the question that, in our view, should be the focal point for discussion and struggle.

On Nakawatase's first point, only the most vulgar "Marxist" would deny that

ideological struggle against sexism is necessary and that sexist ideology has an existence independent of class exploitation. This is not the source of the difference between Marxism and feminism. The real difference centers on two distinct views of the material foundation of male supremacy and thus two divergent views of how to eradicate it.

Feminists, including prominent socialist feminists like Sheila Rowbotham locate male supremacy in the institution of patriarchy. While acknowledging that patriarchy is a necessary feature of capitalist and earlier class society, socialist-feminists also argue that patriarchy can co-exist along side socialism. They deny that the eradication of male supremacy is one of the imperatives of the class struggle. This is because they view male workers as beneficiaries of privileges and power bestowed by patriarchy. A revolution based on the class interests of the workers, according to the socialist-feminist view, leaves this power and privilege untouched. Rather there must be a revolution that targets capitalism and patriarchy co-equally. During the building of socialism, class struggle is insufficient to move forward in the eradication of sexism. Only an autonomous women's movement can address this task. This, we think, is a fair summary of the socialist-feminist view.

The conception of capitalism and patriarchy as distinct, co-equal phenomena is the reason for the designation, socialist-feminist. To be just one or the other misrepresents the character of the revolution these forces see as necessary.

Marxism takes issue with this view at a number of points. While acknowledging that sexist ideas and practices do not spontaneously disappear after a proletarian revolution, Marxists hold that the working class, including male workers, has no interest in preserving this legacy of class society. On the contrary its interests as a class demand sexual equality. To the degree the class

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### 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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# Labor Round-up

## ACTWU Workers Want Decent Contract

by a clothing worker

It's contract time again for ACTWU members in tailor shops across the nation. And none too soon! All workers have been hit hard by inflation but clothing workers who are largely national minority and foreign born women have been knocked over by it. To begin with, clothing workers make just two-thirds of the average wage in manufacturing. On top of that the current contract has a Cost of Living Clause (COLA) that only prevents real wages from falling below the 1977 level!!

The Philadelphia ACTWU Rank and File Committee has proposed the following demands:

1) *An immediate raise of \$1 an hour on the clock* — Increases in the last contract were 30 cents, 60 cents, 20 cents an hour for the respective 3 years it covered. Most workers didn't even get those measly raises because when the increase is incorporated into piece rates it is hard to account for and the companies rarely pay the full amount.

2) *A guaranteed hourly rate of \$4 with a bonus for piece work* — The

majority of clothing workers are on straight piece work, a work system that turns people into machines and wrecks their bodies and nerves as a result. Hourly pay with a bonus system would save people's lives and make it harder for management to cheat workers on raises, downtime and waiting time.

3) *Plant-wide seniority* — Seniority is now based on "job classification" not even department-wide seniority. Companies are taking advantage of this to lay off workers on some operations while hiring off the street on other operations in order to keep federal funds for training coming in.

4) *Jobs posted and job promotions by seniority to end discrimination and favoritism* — Very few clothing workers are ever upgraded, thus Blacks and women who have the lowest paying jobs are stuck there for the number of years they work in the industry, often a lifetime.

5) *A real grievance procedure to protect our rights* — The current so-called grievance procedure is a sorry joke. There are no time limits and workers are left to the good graces of their shop chair-

persons and business agents, most of whom aren't even elected.

6) *A cost of living increase to match inflation with no limit* — The way the current COLA is worded even the union can't explain how it works, but understanding it doesn't matter much. There is one part that is real clear, — "in no event shall it be more than ten cents (10 cents) per hour".

7) *A one year contract* — The current 3 year contract has really tied clothing workers' hands because they haven't been in a position to bargain about working conditions each year as conditions change.

8) *No loss of present contract benefits* — This is a real fear for many reasons but the main one is that very few workers have copies of their contract. It takes at least two trips to the union office and special permission to get a contract. Add to this the high proportion of workers who don't read English and you have a situation where rights can be bargained away and people won't even know it.

While the majority of ACTWU members support these demands, they are

cynical about winning them, or enforcing them if they should win them. The clothing manufacturers have taken advantage of the climate of closing factories (clothing jobs in Philadelphia have dropped from 25,000 to 10,000 in the last ten years) to create the feeling that "you're just lucky to have a job". The union has succumbed to this strategy and usually looks the other way as provision after provision of the contract is violated.

Things have gotten so bad that the ACTWU Rank and File Committee recently brought charges against the Philadelphia ACTWU Joint Board for stealing Washington's birthday (the 10th holiday members were guaranteed in 1980) and in so doing engaging in union-busting. The Rank and File Committee has focused on enforcement of the present contract to both educate workers about their rights and draw attention to the importance of getting involved in demands for the new contract. Each time workers have mobilized on the shop floor to protect their rights the bosses have backed down. This needs to happen more often and along with members going to their local meeting and pressuring the union to represent them on the shop floor and in the upcoming bargaining.

## Teamsters Strike at Univ. of Penn.

by Audrey Clement

The housekeeping staff at the University of Pennsylvania is on strike and blocking deliveries at major access points. The housekeepers' contract with the University expired on July 31, but picket lines were not set up until August 18 in the hopes that a new contract could be negotiated. The major contention of the housekeeping staff, which is represented by Teamsters Local 115, is that the University's contract offer, a flat 9% wage increase over the present \$4.87 per hour is inequitable.

Recently the University settled a contract dispute with 46 striking security guards, represented by Plant Guards Workers Union Local 506, an independent bargaining unit. The three year contract calls for an immediate 9% wage increase plus an additional 50 cents per hour for a total salary boost of 18.3% in the first year. The second year of the contract calls for a flat 10% increase and the third year of the contract is open.

In response to Local 115's demands for a similar 18.3% increase for its housekeeping workers, George Budd, the University of Pennsylvania's Director of Labor Relations, said no deal to union negotiators. The reason, he explained, was that the University's Faculty Senate, an organization representing all of the University's tenured faculty members, but with no explicit administrative authority, had voted to limit all salary increases for University employees to 9% this year. The extra 50 cents per hour going to the security guards was just a "market adjustment" to bring the security cops' wage scale in line with that of the Philadelphia police.

As far as Local 115's Secretary/Treasurer Johnny Morris is concerned that 50 cents an hour increment is just another name for a raise — a token of appreciation on the part of the University to the security guards for ignoring Local 115's pickets.

In addition to a contract commensurate with Local 506, the housekeepers

are demanding a dental plan and an end to the inequitable treatment they've been getting at the hands of the University's intelligentsia. Actually the University's troubles with Local 115 began as a result of a 1977 labor dispute in which the University fired all of its 350 housekeepers because of their decision to oust an ineffectual AFL-CIO local in favor of the Teamsters. At that time the University was paying its housekeepers a paltry \$4.11 per hour and was contemplating turning over its housekeeping operation to an outside contractor. 197 of the workers laid off in 1977 were over 50 years of age and Black.

Local 115 appealed to the NLRB, which charged Penn with unfair labor practice, and ordered the rehiring of the laid off workers, some of whom had been out on the picket lines for six months, fighting management scabs and general campus indifference to the injustice of the situation. Although most of the laid off workers were eventually

reinstated, a contract with Local 115 was not signed until July, 1979. When that one year contract expired July 31st, the housekeepers went out in solidarity with the campus cops, but did not take to the picket lines until the guards' dispute was resolved on August 13.

If Local 115's dispute with the University in 1977 is any indication, Penn faces a prolonged work stoppage in its efforts to impose another unfair contract on the 341 striking housekeepers.

*As we go to press the strike has just been settled. The agreement includes a 9% wage increase, a dental plan effective in April of next year, and a \$110 lump sum for the costs of uniforms. While falling short of all the strikers' demands, Teamster official Jerry Sheean characterized the strike as a "moral victory" and pointed to the effectiveness of Teamster picket lines in shutting the University down.*

## Philly's School Employees on Strike

At midnight, August 31, the two year contract between the Philadelphia Board of Education and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT), which represents teachers, aides, secretaries and other school employees, expired, and the PFT was out on strike. After setting up a picket line at the Board of Ed. on Labor Day, several thousand PFT strikers picketed the Board on Tuesday, Sept. 2.

After the release of the factfinder's report in mid-August, which was rejected by both the Board and PFT, negotiations began in earnest. However, at this date, no agreement has been reached.

The Board, insisting that funds are unavailable, as it does every contract year, has offered to put the school employees and students back several years. They want to increase class size to 35 and have already laid off thousands of employees, including 1600 teachers.

They want to cut back on teacher preparation time along with the special subjects — such as art, music and physical education — which are taught during those periods. They have already cut back on many educational programs, including early childhood education, libraries, and bi-lingual programs.

Even the factfinder noted that the Board did not seem to be taking the question of finances very seriously, and questioned whether or not the Board had gone to City Council in earnest to seek funding. In the city of the new multi-million dollar commuter tunnel downtown, neither the city administration nor the Board is placing a priority on funding for thousands of school children who should have returned to classes September 5. Increasingly the Board, the city, and the state have been unwilling to fund a school system which is about 65% minority.

During the last contract struggle, in 1978, PFT members returned to work with no pay increase until the second year, and with laid-off employees only being returned in February, 1979. The massive changes in teacher and aide assignments, due to the late call backs, and the transfers of students to other classes in the middle of the year, due to the decrease in class size in February, caused chaos in the schools.

For students, it meant at best changing teachers in mid-stream; for many it meant as many as five to ten teachers in one year. Since then, both school employees and parents have seen the refusal of the Board to desegregate the schools, their refusal to seek funding, and the exposure of the Board's willingness to extend the contract of Michael Marcuse in spite of his poor record as superintendent. Increasingly, the demand for an elected school board which is truly representative makes more sense.

This year both the PFT and parents must stand firm. The education of thousands of students and the job security of thousands of school employees requires stopping the cutbacks, calling all employees back to work at the beginning of this school year, and returning class size to 33.

Although the Board and the City attempt to divide the PFT and the community by talking about high salaries of teachers and by calling them greedy, the demand for higher wages in this period of rising inflation is a necessary one. Not all school employees make over \$20,000 a year, and those who do have put at least 11 years into the system, in the better-paid job classifications such as teacher. For many employees, particularly secretaries, aides, and new teachers, the wages and benefits provided by the Board of Education can barely sustain a family in this day and age.

# Bell Telephone... Equal Opportunity Employer?



In the last Organizer, there was an article about a potential strike by members of the Federation of Telephone Workers of Pa. (FTWP) over Bell Telephone's hiring of installers and clerks off the street. The company was denying union members the opportunity to upgrade into these jobs. The strike was averted when the company agreed to a number of concessions including to take the cases of the bypassed union members to arbitration, which it had previously refused to do.

The overwhelming majority of those hired off the street were white. This is consistent with the generalized racism of Bell's hiring and upgrading policies. The working of management's "affirmative action" program in relation to installers is a case in point. Bell gets credit towards meeting its affirmative action goals on the basis of how many minority and women workers are upgraded. They still count in the statistics if they are then "retreated" or moved back to their old jobs.

Black frame attendant and union steward Michael Motley, who works in the Bell building at 9th and Race, was one of those retreated from the installer job. His case is being fought by the FTWP, which has taken the stand that his retreat was due to racial discrimination. In an interview by Pam Albright, a telephone operator at 9th and Race, Motley describes the realities of Bell's "Affirmative Action" Program for Black employees.

**Question:** Once a person is given a promotion to the installer job (officially, a Communications Installers Repair Technician (CIRT)), how can the company then retreat them back to their old job?

**Motley:** A person applies for the CIRT position through the company's Affirmative Action Upward Mobility Plan. If they get the promotion, they are sent to the CIRT training school in Valley Forge. They are put on a 6-month probation starting from the time they receive their promotion notice. They

can be retreated any time within those 6 months.

There is only one Black instructor at the CIRT school — the rest are all white. The instructors are in constant contact with the district that you'll be going to if you pass. They call your future supervisor; tell him your attitude and how you're doing. If the district supervisor decides he doesn't want you, he'll find a way of keeping you from getting to his district, by flunking you out of the CIRT school.

**In the past year, how many workers have been retreated from CIRT back to the frame at 9th and Race?**

**Motley:** Four Blacks, including me, and no whites. Two of these Black men were at the CIRT school at the same time. They both got retreated back to frame for no reason. They both had met all the requirements for CIRT. They filed grievances, won them, and went back to CIRT. Then one of them got retreated again (and again for no reason). Not only was this person retreated back to frame, but because his old supervisor didn't want him back at 9th and Race, he was temporarily loaned out to a Bell building up on Knights Rd., 1½ hours from his home, with no travel time allowance.

When the company wants to loan someone out temporarily, they are supposed to take volunteers first, and then the lowest seniority person. But they didn't do that. And also, a person loaned out to a place further from his home is entitled to travel time. I grieved it, and the man is coming back to 9th and Race next week. And in the meanwhile, he will be getting travel time. This person has always been a good worker, but when he stood up to harassment, he was labelled a "problem"...

**Why do you think that it has been only Black workers who have been retreated?**

**Motley:** The so-called Affirmative Action Program at Bell is managed by racists. Since the Consent Decree between

AT&T and the EEOC expired last January, the company does not have to meet any goals for upgrading Black and women workers. They never really met them before either — it's clear that the company never intended to meet the quotas. But since the Consent Decree expired, things have gotten alot worse. Not only have an increasing number of Blacks been retreated from upgrades, but also harassment of Blacks by supervisors, as well as disciplinary actions and suspensions of Blacks, have multiplied over the last year. I know because as a steward I've had to handle a lot of these cases.

At 9th and Race, the company has a secret file on Blacks, or anyone who doesn't meet the company's criteria, to justify disciplinary action and firings. We found this out after the company brought in additional "evidence" on a number of disciplinary cases, "evidence" which was not written up in the personnel files which the company is required by law to show to employees upon request.

A few months ago, the company instituted a stricter company-wide attendance program. Since then, there has been a rash of Blacks given 5-day suspensions, after which they can't be late or absent for 4 months or they'll be fired. With whites, management is turning their heads. All those suspended have been Black in my department.

**What kind of role has your Union, the FTWP, played in dealing with the company's racism?**

**Motley:** The Union has done a pretty good job in fighting the problems. But the company is on the offensive, and the union is forced to be on the defense. In order to fight Bell Telephone, I recommend that Black employees turn to the EEOC and the Human Relations Commission as well as to their union.

**Are there any other jobs from which Black workers have been retreated that you know of?**

Yes, this year in my building a Black man from frame was promoted to Utility Maintenance and then retreated. He has a grievance in. This job has never kept a Black person in it, here at 9th and Race. There are about 11 or 12 people in that job category here, and they're all white. Over the past years each Black person that's been promoted to that department has been retreated for some simple reason...

**Around how many CIRT's are minorities or women?**

Out of about 375 CIRT's, 70 or 75 are Black, and there are just a few women, not many at all.

**Is there anything else that you'd like to tell us about your experience as a Black person in the phone company?**

**Motley:** In my 11 years with the company, just about all my supervisors have been involved in racial incidents with Blacks, though not necessarily with me personally. The company isn't really sincere in implementing racial harmony in Bell — they really don't care. The company uses the philosophy — keep the Black man down — the same method as slavery — it's only a big plantation. It's basically a white, Christian, company — they don't even hire Jews, except for a very few.

A lot of Blacks in the company are afraid to stand up against the harassment and discrimination, afraid of losing their job — it's good money. But the way I feel about it, I'm a man first, and Black second, and I have to take a stand — whether it's racism or everything else.

The Black community sees all the TV commercials and ads done by Bell which show Black people at the higher paying jobs in the company. Black people should be aware of what really goes on in the telephone company. All is not well. There is racism in the company.

## PECO & Bell Hike Rates Again

by Audrey Clement

The utilities are gouging our pocket books again. In July the Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO) and Bell of Pennsylvania announced rate increases each amounting to an 18% increase over current rates. On July 29 PECO asked the PUC (Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission) for a tariff increase of \$304 million, \$79 million of which would be

used to underwrite interest costs for continuing construction of the Limerick nuclear power plant. An additional amount was included to finance the cost of uranium fuel and pollution devices yet to be installed on coal burning electric power generators.

Although the *Philadelphia Inquirer* described the inclusion of interest and other costs for nonproductive facilities as a "novel approach" to public utilities financing, PUC regulations enacted in 1978 make clear that the only costs for which rate payers are liable are the costs of facilities that are "used and useful". Since the Limerick plant, which will cost \$1.25 billion over the next five years, will not be in operation for at least as long, since uranium is not consumed before it is purchased, and since air pollution devices are not useful until they are installed, the inclusion of these costs in the rate base at the present time is clearly illegal under PUC guidelines.

Nonetheless PECO vice president, Joseph Paquette, Jr. believes that the inclusion of these costs in the current rate base "would provide even more

significant benefits to our customers". This is tantamount to saying that PECO customers relish ingenious forms of economic oppression as much as PECO stockholders do.

On July 24, just five days before the PECO announcement, Pennsylvania Bell announced rate increases producing an additional \$237 million in operating revenue. For Philadelphia area residents this would mean an increase of 18.8% or \$1.25 over the current \$6.65 for individual flat rate residential service, and an increase of 30% or \$4.68 over the current \$15.61 for metropolitan area flat rate service. In addition Ma Bell proposes to increase its *minimum* installation charge by 60% from the current \$17 to \$28. Ma Bell, like PECO, says that the primary motive behind the latest round of phone hikes is increased interest costs, which makes the current permissible 9.65% rate of return on capital established by the PUC in 1977 inadequate.

Although Ma Bell argues that its exchange rates have increased only 15% in the past 24 years and PECO argues that its rates have kept pace with the

consumer price index, the 18% plus increases requested by both utilities to take effect in late September, point to an alarming inflationary trend. PECO's last rate hike request, which occurred a year ago in July, 1979, amounted to \$123 million or a 12% increase over its then current revenues. Of that amount only \$88.8 million or 72% of the original amount was granted by the PUC, resulting in an increase to customers of only 8.7% in May, 1980. (This did not include the increased cost of fuel, which is routinely passed along to the customer without the need for PUC approval.)

The reduced tariff increase, which was brought about largely through the concerted opposition of CEPA (Consumer Education and Protection Association) here in Philadelphia and the Office of the Consumer Advocate in Harrisburg, no doubt spurred PECO's latest exorbitant demands. But CEPA has already filed complaints against both PECO and Ma Bell, charging the increases to be unjustified and excessive and requesting full evidentiary hearings before the PUC. These hearings are yet to be announced, but will probably be held some time after September 1.



Fred Wright

Organizer, September 1980, page 4

# Why Aren't Boston Hospitals Unionized?

by a Boston Hospital Worker

Rosalyn Wright is a 43 year old Jamaican woman. She's worked as a maid in a big Boston hospital for 6 years and takes home \$143 a week. Rosalyn supports her 3 kids by herself. She cleans a doctor's house in the suburbs so she can send a few dollars to her mother in Kingston. In the winter, one paycheck goes to the oil man each month and most of two others pay the rent. Rosalyn was a steward in the hotel workers' union at home, so she's a fighter and speaks up in meetings with her supervisor. Her raise depends on an evaluation and this year, her "bad attitude" meant she got only 4%. She lost 15 cents on every dollar to inflation.

Hospital workers in Boston face what Rosalyn Wright faces because they aren't unionized. Like hospitals everywhere, Boston's employ mainly women and minorities who are forced to accept poor working conditions and low wages. In New York, tens of thousands of hospital workers in District 1199 bargain together and have been willing to strike to defend their standard of living. Because of their organization and unity, New York hospital workers make at least \$70 a week more than those in Boston, even though the cost of living is higher in Boston.

Boston's hospital workers have fought back too, but only in scattered, individual ways. So far, Rosalyn Wright's complaints have only cost her a decent raise. Others who have fought back have lost their jobs. Without a union-enforced grievance procedure, there is no job security. Without job security, workers are given no respect and are handcuffed by fear. They cannot secure even a minimum standard of living, let alone win benefits such as respectable pensions, severance pay, sick-leave buy-back, and dental and eye glass plans. Unionized hospital workers in New York, Baltimore, San Francisco, Minneapolis and Philadelphia have won these things.

Despite the many different jobs in Boston hospitals, workers' chances of upgrading are slim. There are no formal training and upgrading programs, and many job openings are never posted. Seniority and affirmative action programs are ignored. This shell game with promotions keeps everyone in their place, but it comes down hardest on minority workers.

There are 74 hospitals in the Boston area, almost 20 major ones. They employ 77,380 people, more than any other industry in the city. Massachusetts General, the biggest, has a yearly budget of over \$200 million. Massachusetts hospitals take in over \$2 billion a year. Three major medical schools (Harvard, Boston University, and Tufts) are based in Boston hospitals.

Boston hospital workers desperately need unions, but every year drives are defeated. Why does this continue to happen? What are these workers up against? What will turn things around?

## RACISM — THE NUMBER ONE OBSTACLE TO ORGANIZING

More than anything else, racism keeps Boston hospital workers unorganized. One walk around a big Boston hospital will reveal how rigidly segregated it is. Black people and white people work apart from each other. Nursing, technicians, clericals and maintenance shops are mostly white. Dietary and housekeeping are mostly Black. Recent US Equal Employment Office figures for Beth Israel Hospital reveal that white collar and professional employees are 91.8% white, while service workers are 64.7% national minorities. The segregation is just as shocking elsewhere.

Conditions are separate and unequal. Thousands of minority workers in Boston hospitals get the shortest end of the stick. Mainly Black departments such as dietary and housekeeping have the lowest pay, worst working conditions, tightest supervision, least job security, and hardest time using their benefits.

When Black workers can be especially exploited like this, all workers lose. For example, the white men who receive supplies and deliver them to the patient floors may complain about their lousy wages and poor treatment. More often than not, the response they'll get is "Like it or leave it. Every other Black guy in the kitchens is trying to transfer in here." Consistently, the hospital administrators have been able to intimidate and fool white workers into competing with Blacks for the best of what is overall a very bad situation.

When white workers have been conned into thinking they are well off just because Black workers are worse off, it is impossible to unionize. White-dominated organizing committees and unions in Boston have failed to tackle this problem head-on, and time and again they have paid the price. They have called for "unity" and for Black and white hospital workers to "stick together". But history has shown time and again that unity built on this basis is superficial, temporary, and likely to fall apart as the administration's attacks increase. A real unity must be based on a commitment to struggle for equality. This means that Boston's organizing drives have to win white workers to struggle against the extreme discrimination Black workers face.

The failure to fight against discrimination cuts white workers off from their co-workers who are strongest for unionization. Black workers face racist harassment by supervisors and are stuck in dead-end jobs. Therefore, they are least likely to buy such lines as "we're all one big happy family" or "anyone can get ahead if they try."

Many union activists in Boston drives are West Indian workers who built unions in the factories, fields and mines of their islands. Black workers in Boston hospitals are also well-acquainted with the leading role Black workers played in the original 1199 drives in New York, Baltimore and Charleston. 1199 has won some of the best hospital contracts in the country. Yet in Boston elections, 1199 has been defeated when the administration has used the label "Black union" to blind white workers to its accomplishments.

The hospitals know that racism is the strongest weapon in their arsenal. Segregating the races isn't enough. They deepen the division through the use of professionalism. White secretaries, nurses technicians and skilled tradesmen are encouraged to think of themselves as "professionals" who have nothing in common with their fellow workers. Unfortunately, professional associations and narrow craft unions often appeal to this same racist professionalism and craft mentality.

Can Boston hospital workers ever break this stranglehold of racism? Drives must be built on the basic principle that the struggle against racism is part and parcel of the struggle to unionize. This means that white workers must struggle along with their Black co-workers against the discrimination those Black workers face. To do this means uniting around a program that calls clearly for affirmative action.

Only affirmative action can guarantee Black workers the training and opportunities to move into the many hospital jobs from which they are now excluded. Only affirmative action can



P. M. O'Sullivan

Racism is the main obstacle to unionizing Boston hospitals. For organizing drives to succeed, white workers must fight against discrimination and for affirmative action.

break the system of segregation by departments. To enforce affirmative action plans, silence the hospital's appeals to racism, and clamp down on racist harassment by bosses, the drives must also call for strong anti-discrimination committees.

Racism must be struggled against within the organizing drives themselves. Multi-national leadership must be developed. The unions must have fully integrated organizing staffs.

Finally, racism isn't left behind when workers leave the hospitals at shift change. Boston is a city where Black families face systematic stonings of their children's school buses, attacks on their homes, and the threat of racist frame-ups in the police stations and courts. To truly take up the struggle against racism that is the struggle to unionize, white workers must stand with their Black co-workers in Boston's neighborhoods as well as its hospitals.

## SEXISM AND WOMEN HOSPITAL WORKERS

Sexism is also used to make sure that hospital work remains among the lowest paid work in the country. Certain departments in the hospitals such as nursing and clericals are almost entirely women. What is more striking however is that 80% of all healthcare workers are women. This is in spite of the fact that most doctors and administrators are men. The hospitals use the fact that their workforce is mostly women as a reason why wages should stay low. To do this they trot out the time-honored myths that "women are only picking up a little pin money anyway" and that women's work isn't as important as men's. Especially hurt are minority women who are trapped in dead-end jobs that pay poorly.

Sexism divides and holds back all workers in the hospital industry. If everyone is to move ahead, male hospital workers must take up the struggle against sex discrimination. Men must join ranks with working mothers in the fight for such demands as paid maternity leave without loss of seniority and daycare centers in the hospitals. Only equal pay for equal work and affirmative action can break the back of the sex-based job discrimination that pits men and women workers against each other.

## THE UNION BUSTERS

Boston hospitals are rich and getting richer. They always say they are running things on a shoe string because of government regulation. In fact, hospital room rates have risen even faster than the sky-rocketing inflation rate. Workers'

wages, of course, have lost sight of the cost of living. Clearly, hospitals are making a lot of money. Mass. General, for instance, the director of which also sits on the board of the city's largest bank, is presently putting up a new building filled mainly with fancy doctors' offices at a projected cost of \$25.2 million.

Besides building funds, the hospitals have been putting lots of the money they've made off their workers into hiring outside union-busting firms. These "management consultants" are hired at a rate of \$500-700 per day! Armed with brief cases instead of billy clubs, these modern day union-busters are masters of intimidation and bribery. They interview supervisors to get profiles of every worker. Then, once they know who is strong and who is vulnerable, they figure out who should be harassed and who should be taken out to lunch. They spread lies about unions up and down the halls. Modern Management Methods of Illinois (3M's) is the biggest and most successful of these outfits. Most Boston hospitals use the 3 M's and they have never lost...yet.

## GETTING HELP FROM THE UNIONS

Boston's rich and powerful hospital industry is on the offensive against its workers. Hospital workers especially have lost ground to inflation, but all Boston workers and unions suffer when the city's largest industry is unorganized. The Boston labor movement is particularly hamstrung by being cut off from the militant leadership the Black and women workers in the hospitals could provide.

The two main hospital workers unions are not really working to organize the city. District 1199 tried to organize in Boston during the early 1970's. They won in a couple of very small hospitals and nursing homes, but they skimmed on resources and tried to wage blitz campaigns that relied more on flyers than rank and file organization. They were slurred by the hospitals as "all Black," lost a few elections, and pulled out of the city 5 years ago. Lately, they have expressed some interest in returning, but have yet to back it up with the necessary resources.

Local 880 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has demonstrated a more consistent approach, but unfortunately, they have been consistently weak. With only a couple of organizers, they too have lost in the big downtown hospitals and been successful only in smaller, mostly white suburban hospitals.

continued on page 20

# Coalition Falls Short in Plant Closing Fight

by a member of the Coalition to Save Jobs

Robert Fisher was 59 years old. He had worked at the Seaman Manufacturing plant in Pontiac, Michigan for 23 years. One day last December, Fisher punched out and the second shift went to work. They found a big notice on the door, "This plant is closed, pick up your paychecks at the union hall." After that, Fisher tried to kill himself three times, and finally died three weeks later after he had stopped eating. According to his wife, Dorothy Fisher, "All he did was to live for his work, and when they took it away he felt like a nobody."

## COSTS OF PLANT CLOSINGS

The case of Robert Fisher is not just an isolated incident. Workers affected by plant shutdowns are more likely to suffer from heart attacks, ulcers, hypertension, alcoholism, and depression. Among those displaced by plant closings and relocations the suicide is 30 times the national average!

A recent survey found that 40% of workers who lose their jobs because of shutdowns or runaways will still be unemployed two years later, long after their unemployment benefits have run out. The problem of finding new work is compounded for national minorities, women and older workers who face discrimination by employers.

Plant closings have a ripple effect on communities that goes far beyond the particular workers who lose their jobs. Small businesses lose income and many are forced to close. The community loses taxes that were paid by the corporation and must reduce social services. This usually results in layoffs in the service sector. At the same time the community faces the increased costs of unemployment insurance, welfare payments and food stamps.

From 1969 to 1976, 15 million jobs in the US were destroyed as a direct result of plant shutdowns. In Massachusetts, 45,000 plants have closed since the early 1970s, costing the state 500,000 jobs. And the number of jobs lost continues to grow.

Many working people believe that plant closings are a result of business failures or declining profits. In April the Progressive Alliance released a study: *Capital and Communities: The Causes and Consequences of Private Disinvest-*

*ment*, that disproves this myth. According to the report, more often, a profit making plant is closed or allowed to run down when a corporate conglomerate liquidates its assets to transfer capital so that it can earn even higher profits. For example, Sperry Rand closed a profit making New York plant because it was not yielding the 22% profit goal set by the company.

Often corporations close plants in order to relocate in areas such as the South, where labor costs are lower because of racism and "right-to-work" laws. The 1974 average production wage in the South was \$3.60 compared to \$4.40 in the rest of the country. Many US corporations relocate in other countries where the US government gives military and economic support to repressive regimes. For example, in Taiwan, they reap "super-profits" paying an average wage of \$2.70 a day.

Corporations also close plants to invest in more profitable but unrelated fields. Mobil Oil bought Montgomery Ward. US Steel, while putting thousands of steel workers out of work, invests their profits in Disney World, motels and condominiums.

## LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS

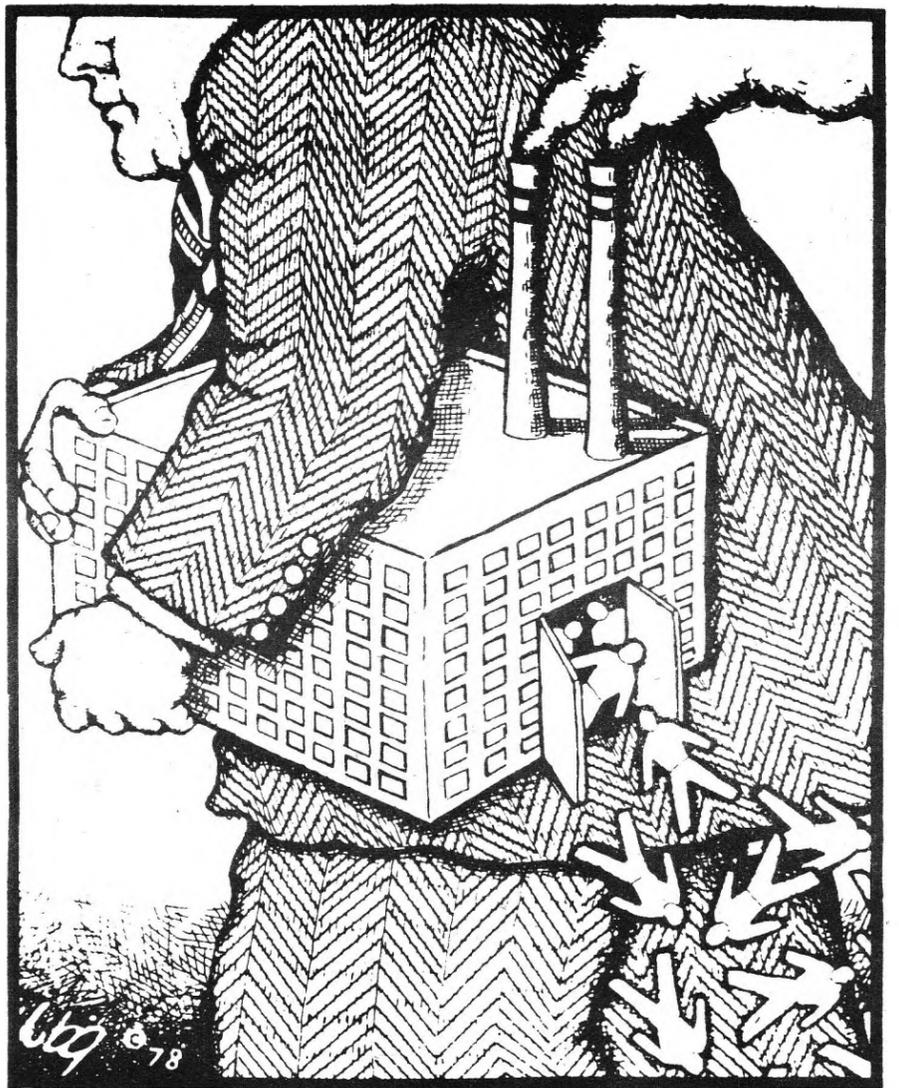
In response to this attack on the working class, labor unions and community groups across the country have begun to fight back. This effort has mainly taken the form of legislation that would require companies to pay for some of the social costs of their actions. New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Massachusetts, Illinois, Indiana, and Rhode Island all have similar bills before their state legislatures. With the exception of Ohio, however, none of these bills even have a remote chance of becoming law this year. To understand why, let's take a look at the Coalition to Save Jobs, the main force behind plant closing legislation in Massachusetts.

In January, over 450 labor and community activists, both officials and rank and file members, attended a Boston conference, "Saving Our Jobs and Communities," sponsored by the Coalition to Save Jobs. Over 20 international unions and many community groups were represented. This conference coincided with the opening of a drive to pass the Massachusetts Plant Notification and Assistance Act, S. 96. S. 96 would have required companies to give a one year notice of a plant shutdown, to pay one week of severance pay for each year of service, and to pay 15% of its gross annual payroll into a job retraining fund for affected workers.

Delegates at the January conference had expressed a strong desire to work hard at getting S. 96 passed. At workshops and in the regional caucuses a wide variety of tactical ideas were put forward, including, labor and community education, letter writing campaigns, regional meetings, leafletting in shops and unemployment offices, organizing the unorganized, and broadening the Coalition. The Conference was significant in that it represented the first time in many years that the labor movement in Massachusetts (both the AFL-CIO and independent unions) has worked together to achieve a common goal.

Now, six months later, S. 96 is dead. The Massachusetts legislature adjourned for the summer with the bill still bogged down in the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee.

The Coalition to Save Jobs expected to see S. 96 killed in the House this year. They knew it would take a few years to get the bill passed. But they were shocked



Rochester Patriot/cpf

to see how little influence they had. They couldn't get their phone calls to legislators returned. Only half of the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee bothered to show up at the hearing on the bill and they paid little attention to the testimony. The bill died in Committee, never reaching the House floor.

## WHY LABOR GETS PUSHED ASIDE

What happened? Why was the Coalition so weak? First of all, most of the enthusiasm and tactics generated at the January Conference were never put to work. The potential rank and file movement was never organized and, with the exception of Massachusetts Fair Share, community groups have been excluded from the Coalition. Instead the Coalition to Save Jobs has for the most part remained a small group of union officials and business agents with a small staff, narrowly focused on legislative lobbying.

A particularly revealing example of this exclusion is the treatment of the Boston Jobs Coalition. The BJC led an aggressive and successful fight to get a Boston residents jobs policy that applied to any city-funded construction jobs. 50% have to go to Boston residents, 35% to national minorities and 15% to women. Forces conciliating with the Building Trades Council, a backward force in the State Labor Council, particularly in its opposition to affirmative action for national minorities and women, were key in preventing the BJC from participating in the Coalition to Save Jobs by failing to keep in contact with them.

Not surprisingly, many of the union officials involved seem to be more concerned with their own careers than with the interests of the labor movement as a whole. In the face of increasing attacks on labor they have failed to aggressively organize the unorganized, or to mobilize their memberships around any important political issues facing the labor movement. This has certainly been the case in the fight for plant closing legislation.

Instead, these officials have depended on campaign contributions and endorsements to win influence in the legislature. Their goal has been to deliver some goods to the membership, however minimal, to prevent the kind of rank and file organization that would threaten their power.

While the bureaucrats have been sitting back, big business has been on the offensive. The growth of union-busting consulting firms has made it more diffi-

cult to organize the unorganized and win decent contracts. The defeat of the labor law reform bill, the common situs picketing bill, the taking away of food stamps for strikers, attacks on OSHA and other defeats, are evidence of the stranglehold the corporations have on government officials both locally and nationally.

The Coalition is planning new tactics to get the bill passed next year. These include broadening the Coalition to include more community groups, endorsing politicians who support S. 96 and working against those who oppose it. These are steps in the right direction but they are probably doomed to failure if they remain the only tactics.

The idea of endorsing candidates is a good one. But the Coalition plans to endorse or oppose candidates solely on the basis of their position on S. 96. We have all seen how politicians change their positions at the drop of a hat. The time has come for the labor movement to find its own candidates with progressive stands on all the issues facing the working class.

In Boston, as elsewhere, racism had been the obstacle that has kept the labor movement from this kind of independent political action. Look at the failure of the unions to endorse Mel King's campaign for mayor last year even though he ran on the issues most important to the labor movement — employment for Boston residents, Plant Closing legislation, affirmative action, and cuts in the military budget to create jobs. The present predominantly white leadership of the Coalition to Save Jobs has failed to recognize the leading role that national minorities have played in the movement for independent political action.

The labor bureaucrats are finding themselves in a sticky situation. With little or no clout with which to win anything in the state legislature, the only way to win legislation would be to mobilize the rank and file. But you can't build a rank and file movement and keep it confined to a single issue. Therefore, all but the few honest officials will undoubtedly hang on to their losing strategy rather than risk their positions in the face of a united membership.

Clearly then, we can't wait for the union officials to organize the kind of movement we need. A multi-national rank and file movement that understands the necessity of political action must take the lead in the fight against the corporations and their politicians in the Democratic and Republican parties. When this happens the labor bureaucrats will be forced to stand with the working class or they will be left behind.



Modern Times/cpf

# NUTS & BOLTS

*Nuts and Bolts is a feature which appears from time to time in the Organizer. Its purpose is to arm rank and file organizers with information and analysis which can be of practical value in the struggle on the shop floor and in the unions. Basic labor law, parliamentary procedure, and health and safety information are some of the technical areas we cover in Nuts*

*and Bolts. Also, we deal with problems in building rank and file caucuses, starting an organizing drive, and other practical concerns that face workers in their struggles with the employers. If you have a problem of a question that we can help answer, write Nuts & Bolts, c/o the Organizer.*

## Job Hazards in Meat Packing

by Keith Forsyth

One worker in a chicken-processing plant in Mississippi cut off two of her fingers with a boning knife, yet felt nothing at first because her hands were numb from working in a refrigerated room. Another worker in a Chicago sausage plant passed out and died, overcome by hydrogen sulfide gas in an empty vat he was assigned to clean out. Meat-packing and processing, like most American industries, are dangerous places for workers. This article lists a few of the more common health and safety hazards found in meat-packing, so that workers can recognize and deal with these dangers before someone is killed or injured.

**CUTS** — Cuts from knives, saws, and cleavers are one of the most common injuries in packing plants. Sharp knives, slippery hands and meat, and high-speed production all add up to bad cuts and even amputations. Protective gloves made of steel wire mesh are available that will stop nearly all cuts; they are fairly comfortable and provide a better grip than bare hands or rubber gloves. Mesh aprons and leggings are also available. Raising piece-work rates or converting to hourly pay also make the pace of work slower and safer.

**CARBON DIOXIDE (CO<sub>2</sub>)** — This odorless and colorless gas is present in the air we breathe, but in high concentrations can cause dizziness, vomiting, and lightheadedness. Carbon dioxide is sometimes used to dope animals before slaughter, and in solid form ("dry ice") in sausage-grinding and packaging of meat for shipment. Any area where carbon dioxide is used should be well-ventilated with fresh air.

**CARBON MONOXIDE (CO)** — This is the deadly gas present in car exhaust fumes; there is no way to detect it without a special meter because it has no color or smell. Gas-powered forklifts, poorly vented space heaters, and smoke rooms without proper ventilation can all generate carbon monoxide. Headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, feelings of weakness, and even unconsciousness and death can result from too much carbon monoxide. Proper ventilation and good

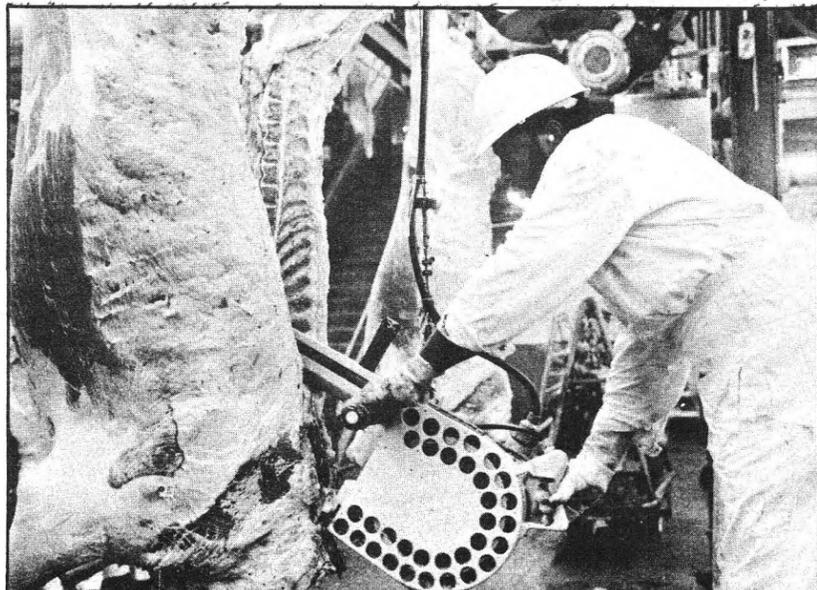
equipment repair can keep the level of this gas down to safe levels.

**HYDROGEN SULFIDE** — This gas is colorless, with a smell like rotten eggs, and is both poisonous and flammable. It's usually found in closed spaces (pits, vats, tanks) where plant or animal matter has been. Besides being a fire hazard, small amounts of the gas irritates eyes and nose, and may cause headaches, dizziness, and a "drunk" feeling. High concentrations are instantly fatal. The odor is quite strong, but isn't a reliable warning, because constant exposure to the gas kills the sense of smell. Workers who smell hydrogen sulfide should leave the area right away, until forced-air ventilation can remove the gas and any decayed matter can be cleaned up. Tanks, vats and other enclosed places that may have the gas must be tested before anyone goes in to clean them out.

**METHANE** — Methane gas is both colorless and odorless, and is produced by decaying animal or plant matter in the same way as hydrogen sulfide gas. First symptoms of exposure are "drunkenness," nausea and possible vomiting; high concentrations can kill by suffocation, especially in closed places. The gas is also explosive, and may be set off by a spark when mixed with air in the right proportions. Forced-air ventilation and cleaning of the source are the ways to remove methane hazards.

**CLEANING CHEMICALS** — Cleaning chemicals used in meat packing are often much more potent than normal detergents. Some of these cleaning agents contain lime (calcium oxide) or other caustic chemicals which can burn the skin or eyes badly. Skin rashes are a common reaction to heavy-duty cleaning chemicals. The safest method is to copy down the list of chemical ingredients in all cleaning compounds, and find out if these chemicals are dangerous or not. (See below for how to find out.)

**ASBESTOS INSULATION** — Asbestos was the major ingredient in most types of industrial insulation (around pipes, ovens, refrigerators, etc.) for many years, and is still used (although less often). Exposure to asbestos can cause a



The dangers of using meatcutting tools are increased by speed-up. Protective clothing and slowing the pace of work can make the job safer.

lung disease called asbestiosis, much like emphysema. Even fairly small amounts of exposure can cause a rare form of cancer called mesothelioma, found only in those exposed to asbestos, and always fatal. Symptoms of asbestos disease may not show up for ten or twenty years after a worker breathes in the tiny fibers (the most dangerous ones are invisible to the eye).

Maintenance workers who are removing old pipe or ductwork usually get the biggest doses, but other workers can be dangerously exposed if they work in an area where pipe is being cut, or if the fibers get in the ventilation or heating ducts. Anyone working around asbestos must use a special respirator mask (not a paper mask like those used for spray-painting), and should wear coveralls that are left on the job for cleaning (women who did not work with asbestos have been known to get asbestos disease from washing their husbands' work clothes). There is no reason to use asbestos in new work, since substitutes that aren't dangerous are available. If you're doubtful whether a certain batch of insulation has asbestos in it, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) will test a small sample for free.

**ELECTRICAL SHOCK** — While there is always some danger of electric shock when working with electrical machinery or tools, the danger is much greater when working in a wet area. A shock that may only scare you if you're standing on a dry floor can kill you if you're standing

in an inch of water. Any electrical tools used in a area where floors are wet should be "double-grounded" and checked frequently for grounds and shorts. Open electrical wires, electrical boxes without covers, worn electric cords, plugs with the third (ground) pin cut off, and similar hazards should be fixed right away. A device called a ground-fault interrupter (GFI or GFCI) can be installed in any line leading to a wet working area; this device will cut off the power much more quickly and safely than ordinary circuit-breakers or fuses.

This is only a bare outline of the hazards in the meat-packing industry. If you have questions about any of this information, or about any chemicals or equipment you think may be dangerous, or if you want more details about how to correct a hazard, write the *Organizer*, or contact the Philadelphia Project on Occupational Safety and Health (PhilaPOSH) at 1321 Arch St., Phila., Pa., 10107 — phone 568-5188. A booklet describing some of the Federal OSHA law covering meat-packing plants may be gotten free from OSHA (in phone book under US Labor Department — OSHA). Ask for NIOSH Publication 77-127 on meat packing.

Armed with the knowledge of proven health hazards, you're ready for action — a union grievance, a contract demand, a request for an OSHA inspection, or some form of more direct action. There's no reason on earth why you should chance being injured or killed just so the stockholders can make a few extra bucks.

## ★UPCOMING EVENTS★★★★

### SWAPO and SAMRAF on Speaking Tour

This fall the Southwest Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and the South Africa Military Refugee Aid Fund (SAMRAF) will be on a national speaking tour. They will be here in Philadelphia from Sept. 30 to Oct. 4. A few events are being planned, including a film and speakers on Friday, Oct. 3. To help with the events, or for more information, call Cornelius Moore at 387-5125 ext. 222 (days) or 726-5113 (evenings).

### Support for Shop Steward

On September 27th a fundraising BEEF and BEER nite will be held to support Jim Moran's four year long battle with the Gould Corporation. In September 1976 Jim was a U.A.W shop steward at the 19th Street plant. He was fired in the aftermath of a sit

down strike. Jim fought for unemployment compensation all the way through the Pennsylvania Supreme Court — Gould won the decision. Fighting through the National Labor Relations Board Jim won, but Gould appealed to Washington. Jim won again. Gould then appealed to the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals. Gould won the decision. Jim has now filed his case in the U.S. Supreme Court.

In pursuing this case, Jim is standing up for all of our rights as workers to organize. The fight has been expensive. Jim and his family are seriously in debt. If you want to stand beside Jim in his fight against Gould, come to the party! Tickets are \$8.00 and include a raffle whose first prize is a basket of cheer. The party will be held at the BROWN MUG, 3829 Frankford Ave, JE5-9125, on September 27th from 7:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. Tickets may be purchased in advance by calling Jim at 568-5188.

### Right to Know Bill

Do you ever wonder whether that foul smell, smoke or dust coming from your neighborhood factory could harm you or your family? If the local "Right to Know" Bill passes City Council this September, it will be a lot easier to find out. The Right to Know Bill would require every business to list toxic chemicals in the workplace and allow every resident and worker in Philadelphia to see these lists. The Delaware Valley Toxics Coalition has sponsored a petition drive and organized lobbying in support of the bill. At this point, the bill stands a good chance of passing despite mounting pressure against it by big business. Hearings on the bill will be held in City Council on Monday, October 6. Anyone who can circulate petitions or testify at the hearings can call or write The Delaware Valley Toxics Coalition, 1315 Walnut Street, Phila., Pa. 19107, tel. 735-7200 for more information.

### Cuban Film Showing

The Cuban film "The Teacher", will be showing in Philadelphia Oct. 10-12, sponsored by the Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee, the Coalition for a Free Nicaragua, and other groups. This will be only the second time this film has been shown in Philly.

"The Teacher" is one of the most popular films ever made in Cuba. Released in 1978, over 500,000 Cubans saw it in the first 3 weeks after it appeared. The film is a feature length film done in a Hollywood-like adventure style. The film is about the Cuban campaign against illiteracy in 1961. Over 100,000 young Cubans participated in this campaign, which succeeded in lowering the illiteracy rate from 24% to 4% in one year. Today a similar campaign is being undertaken in Nicaragua.

"The Teacher" was very well received when it showed last year here in Philadelphia at the International House. We urge our readers who missed it last year to see it this year. Time and place have not been set as we go to press, but call 848-8697 or 843-1269 for more information.

# Racial Equality— Exploding the Myths

The American public has become so entirely convinced that the ideal of equality of opportunity exists in US society, that the majority no longer supports "preferential" treatment for minorities and women. A study done by the National Urban League, *The State of Black America* (1978) reveals that while three out of four whites believed that Blacks were the victims of racial discrimination in 1970, by 1977 only one out of three whites felt that Blacks experienced discrimination in trying to achieve full equality and over one half of the whites surveyed in 1977 felt that the push for racial equality had gone too far.

Much is made of the gains of the civil rights movement in this regard, but what is the reality today? Twenty five years after the Supreme Court took its landmark stand against discrimination in finding that separate but equal facilities were unconstitutional in *Brown vs. Board of Education*, over 40% of the public schools in this country remain segregated.

It took nearly 13 years of grassroots pressure before the courts began to issue desegregation orders. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned discrimination in the hiring, firing and

promotion of people based on race, color, creed, national origin or sex. It took eight years for the EEOC to begin to seriously question the employment actions of major companies and since that time over \$1 billion has been awarded to victims of discrimination in the form of back pay, and promotion and training costs.

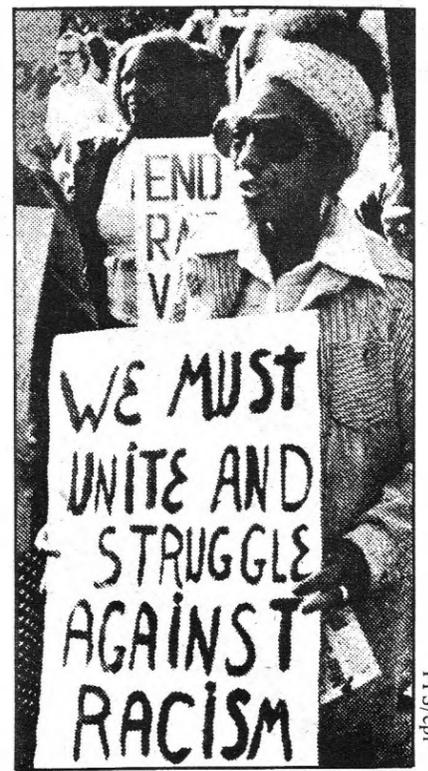
Despite numerous laws, executive orders, and court decisions since 1964 upholding the ban on discrimination, there continue to be attempts to subvert due process. The greatest burden of unemployment and poverty is still shouldered by Blacks, Hispanics and other minorities who hold the majority of low paying and undesirable jobs in society. Minorities and women will never become part of the economic and social mainstream based on equal opportunity alone — equal results can only be achieved — through ongoing affirmative action efforts of employers. This is the only means to correct the legacy of inequality.

The following comparisons were gleaned from the Urban League Study and reflect the attitudes of whites

regarding their beliefs about the gains made by Blacks as a result of civil rights legislation and the realities faced by the vast majority of Black Americans today:

\*\*\*40% of all whites thought that the Black unemployment rate was less than or equal to that of whites in 1977. Unemployment figures for 1977 show that 6.2% of all white workers were unemployed while Black unemployment was twice as high at 13.2% (nearly double the Black unemployment rate of 1967). Further, nearly three times as many Black teenagers were unemployed as white teenagers. When the "hidden unemployed" are accounted for, the Black unemployment rate reaches to 23.1% while the rate for Black teenagers reaches 50%.

\*\*\*In 1970, 62% of all whites believed that Blacks were discriminated against with regard to wages and equality on the job, in 1977 only 20% of all whites felt this. A look at the median income of Blacks as compared to whites brings this picture into sharp focus. The Black median income is 60% of white median income and the gap is widening. Further 28% of Black families live in poverty as compared to 7% of white families.



\*\*\*In 1970, 60% of all whites felt that Blacks were being discriminated against in trying to obtain quality educational opportunities. In 1977, only 20% thought this was true — yet over 40% of the nations public schools remain segregated. Black enrollment in medical schools declined from 7% in 1972-73 to 6.4% in 1977-78. The number of Blacks attending law schools has risen only 1.5% in the last ten years to 4.4% in 1977. Black representation in other skilled professions is negligible.

## The Legacy of Marcus Garvey

by Jim Griffin

On August 17th, 93 years ago, Marcus Garvey was born on the north coast of Jamaica. The descendant of Maroons, escaped African slaves who defended their freedom, Garvey was proud of his ancestry. His enduring contribution was as an advocate for renewed pride and power among the oppressed and colonized Black peoples of the world. While an influence in his native West Indies, Central America, and Africa, Garvey's largest following was among the Afro-American people, where millions were touched by the movement.

Garvey came to Harlem during World War I and in the space of a few short years founded and built up the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) into a large and powerful mass organization. These were the years in which the combination of a demand

for labor in the Northern cities and the decline of Southern plantation agriculture created the first great wave of Black migration. The rigid Jim Crow segregation and lynchings characteristic of the South were matched by the creation of northern ghettos and race riots in which whites attacked and killed newly arrived Blacks.

The North fell well short of being "the promised land" and Garvey was to forge a mass movement out of the smoldering resentment and disillusionment of the Black masses. In this the Garvey movement was unique. Its rivals, such as the NAACP, were limited in their composition and appeal to the Black middle class. Garvey, as the poet Claude McKay pointed out, "aroused the social consciousness of the Negro masses more than any leader ever did."

### ADVOCATE OF BLACK PRIDE, ANTI-COLONIALISM

Garvey was a critic of the politics of "assimilationism." To those who said that the fruits of progress and civilization were associated with white Europeans, Garvey persistently pointed to the advanced civilizations of pre-colonial Africa and contrasted them with the backwardness of the European societies of the same period. "Every student of history," Garvey said, "knows that the Negro once ruled the world when white men were savages and barbarians living in caves. . ."

While the educators of the day taught Black children to emulate white society and despise everything Black, Garvey urged Black people "to teach your children they are direct descendants of the greatest and proudest race who ever peopled the earth." To those who said that Black people were a weak minority who had no choice but to accommodate to the white majority, Garvey pointed to the potential strength of a liberated Africa. "We are out to get what has belonged to us politically, socially, economically and in every way," Garvey told the founding convention of the UNIA, "And what 15,000,000 of us cannot get we will call in 400,000,000 to help us get."

The central focus of the UNIA was to be, in Garvey's words, the organization of "the 400,000,000 Negroes of the world into a vast organization to plant the banner of freedom on the great continent of Africa." To this end the UNIA was fashioned in the manner of a

shadow state, complete with titles, uniforms, and a ceremonial army and navy.

The UNIA also promoted Black-owned businesses in connection with the larger aim of liberating Africa. It was one of these ventures, the ill-fated Black Star Steamship Lines, that was to lead to Garvey's imprisonment and eventual deportation. The line was victimized from the beginning by inexperienced management and by white-owned corporations which sold old, barely seaworthy vessels to Black Star at exorbitant prices.

The federal government, fearful of Garvey's influence and militant hostility to colonialism, and urged on by rival Black organizations like the NAACP, railroaded Garvey and three associates. After serving almost three years in prison for mail fraud, Garvey's sentence was commuted by Calvin Coolidge in 1927 and he was immediately deported to Jamaica. Isolated from the movement's center in the US and beleaguered by a succession of legal fights and factional struggles, Garvey's influence and the UNIA declined. He died in London in 1940.

### BACKWARD SIDE OF GARVEY'S NATIONALISM

The decline of the Garvey movement was also rooted in its political contradictions. While initially Garvey had combined Pan-Africanism with a practical emphasis on the fight for equality for Blacks in the US, the UNIA and Garvey personally became increasingly pre-occupied with Africa and utopian business schemes, to the exclusion of addressing the day to day struggles of the Afro-American people for democratic rights.

Garvey's brand of nationalism emphasized Black capitalism and was hostile to both Black and white efforts at organizing labor. In addition Garvey attacked other civil rights organizations and leaders with great frequency and intensity (although it must be added that these same leaders and organizations attacked Garvey with a similar passion.) These policies isolated the Garvey movement from real and potential allies.

Even more serious and wholly indefensible was Garvey's attitude toward openly white supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. "I regard the Klan, the Anglo-Saxon Clubs and White American Societies as better friends of

the race than all the other groups of hypocritical whites put together." Garvey said in 1926. A UNIA letter to the Mayor of New Orleans says: "We like your Jim Crow laws in that they defend the purity of the races. . ."

Sentiments such as these won Garvey open encouragement from the Klan and others. Nor was Garvey's attitude merely a matter of words. Garvey sought out the support of the Klan for his back-to-Africa schemes and later backed Senator Theodore Bilbo of Mississippi's notorious bill to repatriate Blacks to Africa. Garvey's collaboration with the Klan was the logical extension of his view that racial equality was impossible in the US and that racial integration only weakened the Pan-African cause.

It is not this dark side of Garvey's politics, which included elements of anti-communism, anti-Semitism, and even the claim to be the originator of fascism, that explains Garvey's influence and prestige in the modern Black liberation movement. Nor is it the utopian side of his Pan-African doctrine, although such doctrines have their influence. Rather it is Garvey's legacy as a fighter for the liberation of Africa and Africans from colonial rule and as a champion of Black pride and self-consciousness.

In Africa, the West Indies, and in the US, Garvey's ideas and example have inspired and instructed diverse political movements. In Nigeria a poet intones: "Nigeria, oh my Nigeria, For thy redemption brave Garvey fell." In Ghana the state-owned steamship lines are christened the Black Star Lines. In Jamaica streets are named after the man regarded as the island's most famous native son. In the US the name of Marcus Garvey is now taught to school children and his influence on Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and a whole generation of Black leaders is obvious.

In death Garvey honored his promise to his followers made in a farewell speech before going to prison: "When I am dead wrap the mantle of the Red, Black and Green around me. . . Look for me in the whirlwind or the storm, look for me all around you, for, with God's grace, I shall come and bring with me countless millions of Black slaves who have died in America and the West Indies and millions in Africa to aid you in the fight for Liberty, Freedom and Life."



Marcus Garvey (on the right) watches a UNIA parade.

# Kerner Commission Report Thirteen Years Later

Following the "hot summer" of 1967, in which urban rebellions swept Detroit, Newark, and dozens of other cities, then-President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed a commission to study the matter. Officially named the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, it was better known as the Kerner Commission, after its chairman Otto Kerner, then governor of Illinois, later a convicted felon for his role in a race track scandal.

The Kerner Commission issued its findings with great fanfare. The *NY Times* ran excerpts of the report, editorial writers and opinion makers dutifully praised it and a paperback edition of it was a momentary best seller. Then, as is the case with most such reports, it was quickly forgotten and its findings and recommendations were largely ignored.

Today, in the wake of Black rebellions in Miami and Chattanooga, it is worth taking a second look at the Kerner report.

## PATTERNS OF DISORDER

Equipped with an extensive research and investigative staff, the commission surveyed 23 cities that had experienced "disorders". In almost half of the cases studied an incident of police brutality or abuse of law enforcement triggered the outbreak of violence. The commission documented the existence of systematic racial inequality that formed the background for the rebellions. Blacks were twice as likely to be unemployed as whites and three times more likely to be in unskilled and service jobs. Black people paid a higher percentage of their income for housing while they were three times as likely to be living in crowded, substandard housing.

The Commission noted similar and by now familiar differences in standards of education, criminal justice, consumer and credit practices, and the delivery of social services. In addition Black people

were effectively excluded from the political process. In only three of the cities studied were there more than one Black legislator and none had a Black mayor or city manager.

The study found that the typical rioter was a male teenager or young adult — nearly 53% of those arrested were between 15 and 24 years of age, nearly 81% between 15 and 35. They were life-long residents of the city in which the riot took place, high school dropouts although somewhat better educated than non-rioting Black neighbors, and usually unemployed or employed in a menial job.

Looking at the cities in the aftermath of the uprisings, the commissioners found that the official action taken to address the problems had been limited and sporadic and with few exceptions had not reduced tensions. The commission found that in a number of cities, the official response had been to train and equip police with more sophisticated weapons and to develop intelligence systems in Black communities. (see box on LEAA)

The Kerner Commission made the following generalizations about the urban disturbances that occurred in 1967:

\*\*\* Disorders involved Blacks acting against local symbols of white American society, authority, and property in Black neighborhoods.

\*\*\* Of 164 disorders reported during the first nine months of 1967, eight (5%) were major in terms of violence and damage; 33 (20%) were serious; 123 (75%) were minor and undoubtedly would not have received national attention as "riots" had the nation not been sensitized by more serious outbreaks.

\*\*\* In 75 disorders studied by a Senate subcommittee, 83 deaths were reported. 82% of the deaths and more than half of the injuries occurred in Newark and Detroit. About 10% of the dead and 38%



Smoke blankets Washington, D. C., during the 1968 rebellion. Thirteen years ago the Kerner Commission described how institutionalized racism created the conditions for the uprisings of the 1960's. Today these conditions are the same or worse.

of the injured were public employees, primarily police and firemen; the overwhelming majority of the persons killed or injured in all of the disorders were Black civilians.

\*\*\* Initial damage estimates were greatly exaggerated. In Detroit, newspaper damage estimates at first ranged from \$200 million to \$500 million; the highest recent estimate is \$45 million. In Newark early estimates ranged from \$15 to \$25 million; a month later, damage was estimated at \$10.2 million, over 80% in inventory losses, as opposed to destruction of buildings.

The Commission noted the coming together of rising Black expectation, fueled by the passage of civil rights legislation, the creation of federal poverty programs and a rhetorical commitment to eradicate inequality on the part of the nation's leadership, with the reality of white resistance. While Blacks were arrested, hosed, and even shot for engaging in non-violent protest, white officials who openly defied the law by refusing to desegregate schools suffered no consequences.

The gap between government promise and performance fed the frustration of the masses of Black people and encouraged the view that only violence would move the system to make real concessions.

## CAUSES AND CURES

The Commission charged that "white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto: white society created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it." US society, the Commission warned, "was moving toward two societies — one white and one Black — separate and unequal."

To reverse this trend the commission called for commitment to national action on a scale large enough to address the full scope of the problem in jobs, education and housing which would move the US toward the goal of one society with full rights and equality for all citizens. In the absence of such commitment and action, the commission warned, no American, white or Black, would escape the consequences of the continuing social and economic decay of the major cities. The Commission set the following objectives for national action:

\*\*\* Opening up of opportunities to those who are restricted by racial segregation and discrimination and eliminating all barriers to their choice of jobs, education and housing.

\*\*\* Removing the frustration of powerlessness among the disadvantaged by providing the means for them to deal with the problems that affect their lives and by increasing the capacity of our public and private institutions to respond to these problems.

\*\*\* Increasing communication across racial lines to destroy stereotypes, to halt polarization, end distrust and hostility and create common ground for efforts toward public order and social justice.

The strength of the Kerner Commission report is in its thorough-going documentation of systematic, institutionalized racism. But having proven indisputably that the locus of racial inequality and violence is in the dominant institutions, the commission turns around and places the responsibility on "white society" — not on the white ruling class, but the totality of white people, the vast majority of whom are themselves exploited and denied genuine power.

It is certainly true that the strength of racist ideology among white working people rationalizes and ultimately makes possible the continued oppression of Black people. But the motive force of racial oppression does not spring from white working people, but rather from the exploiters of both Black and white working people. The cultivation and reinforcement of racist ideas is itself part of the fabric of institutionalized racism. It is the monopoly corporations, banks, slumlords and politicians who reap the rewards of racial inequality in the form of profits and power and it is this class which seeks at all costs to maintain this inequality.

Given that the Kerner Commission was appointed by and largely drawn from this very class, it is, of course, not surprising that the Commission avoided reaching this conclusion. The Commission necessarily had to blame the whole of "white society" equally in order to obscure the responsibility of the class they so loyally served.

The Commission's recommendations for action are also revealing. Their vague and timid proposals are at variance with their seemingly radical analysis of the problem. By emphasizing more government and business effort in the form of services, monies, training and communication, the commission neatly avoids the real problem.

*continued on page 20*

*Organizer, September 1980, page 9*

## LEAA - Another Response to the 60s Rebellions

As a response to the crises of the sixties, the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 was passed. Title I of this law established the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) under the following rationale:

"Congress finds that the high incidence of crime in the United States threatens the peace, security and general welfare of the nation and its citizens. To reduce and prevent crime and juvenile delinquency and to insure the greater safety of the people, law enforcement and criminal justice efforts must be better coordinated, intensified and made more effective at government levels."

Among other things, LEAA was set up as a funding mechanism for local police to acquire crime prevention hardware and techniques.

A summary of hearings held by Congressman John Conyers' Subcommittee on Crime (August 17, 1978) on a proposed restructuring of LEAA stated that the agency spent nearly \$6 billion in ten years with "little or no impact on the rate of crime, the fear of victimization, or the sense of injustice experienced by persons, especially

minorities and the poor, who come into contact with the criminal justice system."

Typically, Conyers reported, LEAA-funded programs consist of hiring more police, building detention centers, conducting police training and public relations, and purchasing communications and computer equipment. Such "innovations" as SWAT teams came out of LEAA funding of police training programs.

Critics also charge that the LEAA modernization approach tends to be overly dependent on technological solutions for police work — equipping law enforcement agencies to deal with crises that may never occur — but access to equipment and training raises the possibility of new technology being applied to situations for which it is inappropriate and harmful.

While rising crime rates have stimulated a public cry for more funds for police to reduce and prevent crime — it is clear that the priority is not to put more resources into the police but for Congress, LEAA and other appropriate agencies to look at the inter-relationship of anti-crime efforts to other federal domestic policies.

# Crisis Mounts in El Salvador

by Kevin O'Hare

Since January 1 of this year, according to the Catholic Church, over 4000 people have been killed by the military government in El Salvador. Currently, about 30 people are killed a day, their bodies appearing in the morning, often mutilated. The daily papers list the names of the dead, and a few sparse details. Last June 30, for example, six young men and one woman were tortured and then killed in Mejicanos, a suburb north of the capital city San Salvador. All of the victims had their thumbs tied together, a common practice of the El Salvadorean National Guard. In early July, 22 people were found murdered on the Pan American highway 39 miles east of San Salvador. Five had the initials "EM" carved in their chests, standing for Escaudron de Muerte, or Death Squad.

The military government, which took power last October in a coup which was supposed to be "progressive," has dropped all pretense of reform and is waging a deadly war against its own people. The civilian members of the government, the representatives of the Christian Democratic Party, have no influence on daily events. Most of the civilians in the government left in January, fed up with the continuing repression. The Christian Democratic Party itself has split over the issue of its participation in the government, with most of the party joining the opposition.

The repression is not completely without reason. The military junta is in trouble. The popular forces and the left are stronger and better armed than in any country in Latin America (with the exception of Cuba and Nicaragua) and are on the point of carrying out a successful revolution. The military, which has been in power continuously since 1932, has increasingly lost any base of support in the population. Open fraud in the presidential elections of 1972 and 1977 denied victory to the popular candidates.

As in Nicaragua, the middle forces have increasingly joined with the left in opposition to continued military rule. In an attempt to turn the tide, supposedly progressive younger officers took over the government last October and proclaimed a series of reforms, mainly a land reform and a nationalization of the banking sectors. These reforms, decreed in March, have been proven fraudulent as the situation of the masses remains as bad as ever. The land reform, in particular, has been used merely as a method for the army to better identify peasant activists, who are then subject to repression.

## REVOLUTIONARY UNITY

El Salvador is a country of five million people, 60% of whom are illiterate. Sixty per cent of the population is rural. Rural workers average only 95 days of work per year, with a daily average wage of \$1.25. Unemployment in the cities is

22%. Fifty-four per cent of the houses in El Salvador have only one room and 60% lack sanitary facilities. Under these conditions, Salvadoreans have little to lose. Most have joined the fight against their military rulers. Over the last 10 years the left has been able to develop large and well-organized popular organizations, as well as strong military forces. Since the coup in October, these forces have increasingly come together to form a united front in the fight against the military.

The four main military organizations united in late May to form the United Revolutionary Directorate (DRU). Although they will continue to maintain their own structures and internal discipline, their military actions will be coordinated and agreed upon in advance. Their unification is similar to the unification of the three tendencies in the Sandinista Front in Nicaragua, just before the military victory in that country last year.

Each military organization is closely allied with a popular organization, in a conscious effort to avoid past mistakes in Latin America. When the left has relied exclusively on guerrilla forces which lacked a mass base they have been crushed militarily. The large popular organizations operate legally (within the definition of what is legal in today's El Salvador), and are federations of a number of trade unions, peasant groups, and community organizations. The largest of the popular organizations, the Revolutionary Bloc, is estimated to have 80,000 members. The military organizations and their allied mass organizations are:

- 1) Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN) - FAPU (Front for United People's Action)
- 2) Peoples' Liberation Forces - Farabundo Marti (FPL) - People's Revolutionary Bloc
- 3) Peoples' Revolutionary Army (ERP) - Peoples' Leagues, 28th of February
- 4) Salvadorean Communist Party - Nationalist Democratic Union

Last April all the popular organizations, the armed organizations, and a large number of middle forces joined together to form the Democratic Revolutionary Front. The Front includes those middle forces who served temporarily with the military government after the October, 1979 coup, but who then withdrew last January. Practically every mass organization in El Salvador is a member of the Democratic Revolutionary Front, which is expected to become the future government of El Salvador.

The Democratic Revolutionary Front has shown its strength by calling two successful general strikes, on June 24-25 and August 13-15. Both paralyzed the country, although during the second the military was able to keep small shops open in

the big cities. The Democratic Revolutionary Front explicitly recognizes the need for a military victory over the current government and also explicitly recognizes the leadership of the United Revolutionary Directorate (DRU). This situation is again similar to what happened last year in Nicaragua, where the mass organizations and the middle forces united behind the military and tactical leadership of the Sandinista Front.

The Democratic Revolutionary Front has spent the past several months approaching other countries, asking for 1) recognition of the civil war in El Salvador and recognition of the popular forces as an official side in a civil war, giving the popular forces belligerent status and making it easier to send arms and money, and, 2) recognition of the Democratic Revolutionary Front as the future government of El Salvador. The Front has gained the support of the Socialist International in Europe and of Mexico. Unfortunately, so far the countries in Latin America which supported Nicaragua against Somoza last year have not all joined in to support the Front in El Salvador. Of particular importance are Panama, Costa Rica, and Venezuela. Torrijos in Panama has ties with the younger military officers who seized power in El Salvador last October, but is leaning to supporting the Front. Venezuela has a new Christian Democratic government which is supporting the leadership (without a base) of the Christian Democratic Party in El Salvador, which is cooperating with the military.

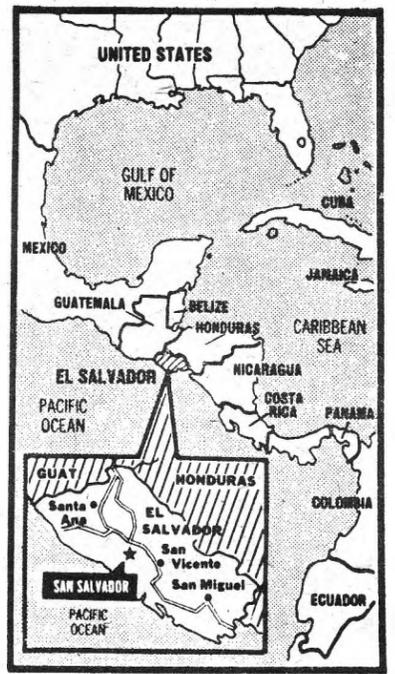
The Democratic Revolutionary Front also recently toured the US, and will soon set up offices in Washington and in New York. In the US the Front met with Assistant Secretary of State William Bowdler, who is in charge of Latin American affairs. Bowdler attempted to split the Front by urging that the middle forces enter into negotiations with the military government and abandon the left - the same tactic which the US tried to use in Nicaragua. Representatives of the Front spoke to the public in Washington, Philadelphia, and New York. In Philadelphia over 200 people attended.

## CIVIL WAR

The military organizations of the Front clearly have force. The ERP, for example, operates permanently in the east and northeast parts of the country. In recent battles with the El Salvadorean National Guard in the area of Morazan near the Honduran border, the ERP fielded 1000 troops fighting in 100 person units. Although some 40 guerrillas were killed, the Minister of the Interior of the government has to admit that "dozens" of soldiers had been killed and 60 others wounded.

The Peoples' Liberation Forces - Farabundi Marti operates in the zones of Cabanas and Aguilares in the central part of the country. In early August a large battle took place in Aguilares where 500 government troops fought with guerrillas numbering in the hundreds. Aside from the zones of permanent operations and large units, the military forces of the left operate on a smaller scale throughout the country, with daily attacks on army convoys and specific individuals involved in the repression.

The increasing unity and strength of the left has been counter-balanced by the increased unity of the right. Recently all the right-wing para-military groups joined together to form the Secret Anti-Communist Army, which operates with the backing of the official military. Progressives in the Armed Forces have been isolated, and the reform aspect of the military-Christian Democrat government has been abandoned in favor of outright repression. Honduras and Guatemala have taken increasingly active roles in supporting the El Salvadorean government, and



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have prevented refugees fleeing repression from crossing into their countries.

Above all it has been the US which has propped up the current El Salvadorean government. The US government has strongly backed the current military ever since the coup last October. They saw the new government as the last hope, as a "moderate" government which would prevent a left takeover in El Salvador. Over \$50 million in US economic aid has been poured into El Salvador since last October to help the new military junta and its Christian Democrat allies. More significantly, arms shipments have been renewed. Over \$10 million in supposedly non-lethal military equipment has been given to the new El Salvadorean government. Thirty-six military advisors have been sent to El Salvador. The non-lethal equipment includes vital military transport, anti-riot gear, tear gas, communications equipment, etc. Any equipment which goes to strengthen the current regime is ultimately lethal. The current military regime is slaughtering dozens of El Salvadoreans daily - mostly innocent civilians. The Carter regime does not want to be seen as "losing" another country in Central America (after Nicaragua) just before the November elections.

## U.S. INTERVENTION?

The US is undoubtedly encouraging its friends in power in Honduras and Guatemala to intervene at any critical moment in El Salvador, and is finding a very receptive ear - especially in Guatemala. The right-wing and the military in that country openly express their belief that they must intervene to help the right in El Salvador because if the left won in El Salvador the left in Guatemala would also win.

The US has not ruled out direct intervention, either. Last spring State Department spokesmen said the US would consider intervening if Cuba were to do so. About a week later the State Department began to give out information about Cuban intervention in El Salvador. Meanwhile, the combined popular organizations announced last June that the US had set up a naval base on the island of Manguera in the Gulf of Fonseca off southeast El Salvador, and had set up three helicopter bases in the departments of Morazan and Chalatenango, the areas where intense fighting has occurred and where government helicopters have been used extensively.

The situation in El Salvador, where there is an undeclared civil war, grows more critical every day. The economy has practically come to a halt. Only 30% of last year's crops have been planted this year, and come harvest time this fall the food shortages will become very severe. Over \$1 billion has left the country in the last 18 months, and the GNP dropped 3% last year. Clearly, the military question between the wealthy minority supported by the official armed forces and the popular forces, must be decided soon.

Some segments of the left have called for a strategy of insurrection (the FARN actually called for an insurrection last May which did not succeed because it did not have the support of the rest of the left and armed organizations), while

continued on page 20.

## The face of fascism in El Salvador



Daily World

# Guatemala ... Repression & Resistance

by Bob Hilliard

(Bob Hilliard is a member of the National Lawyer's Guild and traveled to Guatemala in 1979.)

## TRADE UNIONISTS MURDERED IN GUATEMALA

— Six workers from the Coca-Cola plant murdered between December, 1978 and May, 1980, two of them after being kidnapped following May Day march.

— June 20, 1980: Rebel Armed Forces take credit for execution of Army lieutenant who worked as head of Coke's personnel, accusing him of direct involvement in prior killings.

— Same day: Coke worker dragged off the line during night shift and machine-gunned on the premises, by men in civilian clothes, his body taken and dumped across town.

— June 21: uniformed police raid headquarters of CNT, the national labor federation, and take away 26 trade union leaders who were planning a funeral for latest murder victim. Police deny that they are in custody but turn over their motor scooters to relatives of the disappeared. No trace of them since then.

— Spring, 1980: Thousands of migrant workers in sugar cane fields go on general strike, demanding doubling of minimum wage from \$1.50 per day. Several workers and their supporters, including a Belgian priest, are killed.

The above are just a few recent examples of the wave of repression that has swept Guatemala in the last few years. The trade union organizations have been severely hit by those forces in and close to the Guatemalan government. The ruling class sees that the only way it can contain the demands of the people for basic reforms, for democracy and for a serious commitment to meeting the people's material needs is through brutal, fascist repression. Not only the unions, but all popular organizations — peasant leagues, slum-dweller associations, market sellers, students, professionals and democratically inclined politicians face attack if they press their demands.

## U.S. INVOLVEMENT

The United States has been directly involved in maintaining in power all Guatemalan governments since 1954. In the late 1940s and early 1950s democratically elected governments in Guatemala began a series of reforms to bring the country from a semi-feudal, agrarian society to a modern capitalist economy. Land reform was central to this process. It involved expropriation of unused farm land and payment to the owners according to the value they had declared for tax purposes.



The United Fruit Company, which owned vast tracts of land, did not like this, nor the laws requiring companies to recognize labor unions. In 1954 the CIA sponsored an invasion of Guatemala which overthrew the elected government and replaced it with one more amenable to the wishes of United Fruit and the US. Allen Dulles was head of the CIA and his brother, John Foster Dulles was Secretary of State. Both had long connections with Wall Street law firms that serviced United Fruit and other US companies. Around the same time the CIA installed the Shah in Iran.

None of the series of governments in Guatemala would have been able to hold power without US support. During the 1960s Guatemala received the highest per capita US military assistance of any country in Latin America. By that time the US had learned that the example of Cuba had to be countered so they tried to push the Guatemalan government to accept some limited reforms at the same time as the US was financing the local counter-insurgency campaigns.

The ruling class in Guatemala accepted the guns, napalm and military personnel training. They resisted any efforts to reform the economic system since to do so would require either undermining the base of their wealth in the landholding system or an outlay of US capital far in excess of the hefty profits that a variety of US corporations were reaping from their Guatemalan investments.

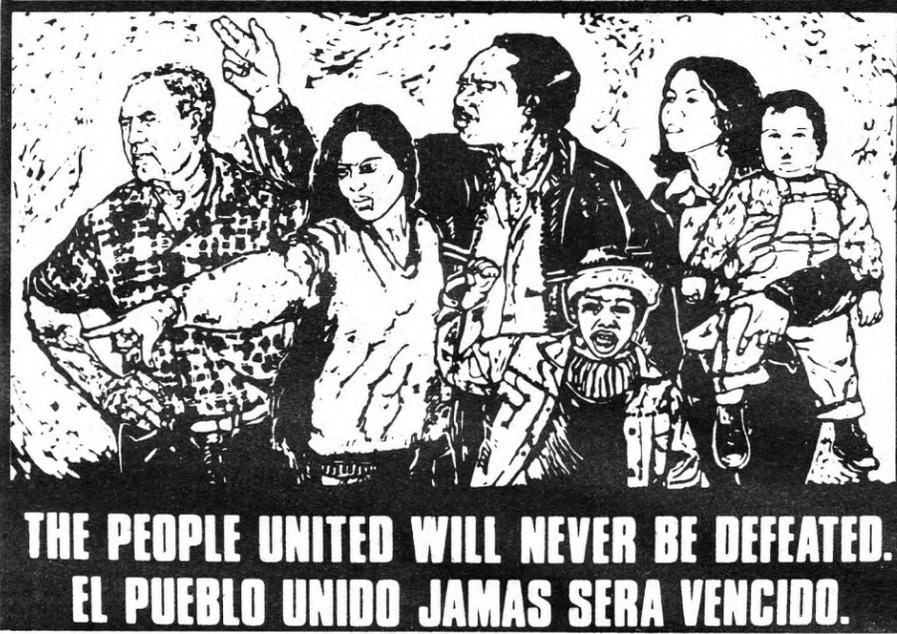
By the 1970s some patterns had changed but the US was still the major foreign investor. United Fruit had sold out to Del Monte. Nickel extraction, through a US-Canadian consortium, and oil and uranium exploration became a more dynamic sector than bananas. US capital had moved into all facets of the Guatemalan economy, from banking and tourism, to plastics and canneries.

The repression continued, with some periodic fluctuations. By 1978 the US was forced to suspend military assistance because of massive human rights violations. Amnesty International documented 20,000 deaths related to political violence from 1966 through 1976, almost all of them workers, peasants and political oppositionists. The suspension of US military aid could not change the system that 25 years of US arms and training had set up. Items already approved in earlier budgets, that is "in the pipeline," continued to flow. Economic aid, which props up the system, has not been suspended. Other arms suppliers have been found, particularly Israel.

## POPULAR RESISTANCE

Since the 1954 intervention the popular organizations have continuously regrouped and mobilized. With the election of the latest general to the presidency in 1978, the repression has intensified. Particularly active since the mid-70s have been the trade unions. From the 1960s on, the US has pushed for its economic program for "modernizing" Guatemala. This has meant a sizeable investment in labor-intensive industries, where \$6.00 a day is a high wage (this is still three to four times the wage of agricultural workers). A rapid rate of unionization has occurred, in spite of the labor laws which do little to assist unions. Strikes must be approved by the government in a lengthy procedure which affords no effective protection to workers from being fired while waiting to be certified.

Part of the US plan for Guatemala was to coopt the trade union movement. The North American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), which has been shown to have close links with the CIA, promoted business unionism —



training trade unionists to bargain for meager economic gains without in any way addressing broader social issues. AIFLD encouraged unions to accept the idea that both business and labor are entitled to their "fair share." AIFLD training courses included heavy doses of anti-communism, and promoted the idea of gradual economic development, through which the economy would be modernized, with benefits filtering down to the vast majority at some unspecified time in the future.

This process has not worked. Income distribution is actually more unequal than in 1948, since only a small middle sector has benefitted from the US model of development. The population is still overwhelmingly agricultural. Over half the population's cash income is less than \$100 per year. Half the children finish primary school. Infant mortality is 81 per thousand live births. The Guatemalan people will not wait for this to change through a process of US-dominated capitalist development.

The trade unions have been in the forefront of the people's struggles since the mid-1970s. Many of them have broken with the AIFLD training they received and have joined in active support of other popular organizations, such as peasant and slumdweller associations, as well as continuing to press their own demands. The efforts of the government, and the small sector of the population that controls it, to crush the unions starts with some familiar union-busting devices, like selective firing and endless legal procedures, and ends with outright murder, of which Coca-Cola is only one example.

One unique device is based on a Guatemalan law which requires a workplace to have 21 workers to have a legal union. Coca-Cola, an "independent" franchise, owned by a Texas lawyer, went through a paper reorganization, under which, supposedly, there were only 20 workers assigned to produce the different brands that they bottled, such as Coke, Orange Crush, etc. This has not stopped the workers from organizing unions without legal sanction when necessary. Coke workers have engaged in "illegal" strikes. Other labor organizations have resorted to direct action when it became clear that legal tactics would be of no avail.

Ironically, perhaps, Coca-Cola has been at the center of labor struggles. After the disastrous earthquake of 1976, the company tried to lay off half of their workers, who had only a few months before, begun to reorganize their union which had been destroyed after the 1954 intervention. The workers went on strike to win the reinstatement of those laid off. A support committee for the Coca-Cola workers was formed by other unions who united to defend the workers at Coca-Cola. This committee later grew into the National Committee for Trade Union Unity (CNUS).

Under Guatemalan law a union may only be organized at a single workplace. However, there are several federations of trade industrial unions, as well as federations of public employees, teachers, bank workers and others. All of them, with the exception of one government-dominated federation, are now grouped into the CNUS.

## THE FDCR

In early 1979, the CNUS and the unions within it, called together many other popular organizations of students, religious people and slumdweller, to form the Democratic Front Against Repression (FDCR), to oppose the increasing violence against all sectors. Since '78 when Garcia was elected (only 15% of those eligible voted, and most observers agree that the more liberal of the three generals running won the actual vote count) the repression has intensified. Some 2,000 were killed in the first year of Lucas' regime.

The FDCR has mobilized popular support and international opinion to oppose the current government. Two opposition political parties, the Democratic Socialist Party and the Unified Front of the Revolution (FUR), participate in the FDCR. The leading figures of both parties who were considered likely candidates for a popular ticket in 1981, were both murdered in broad daylight in the early months of 1979.

The FDCR has obtained considerable support from European social democracy. The Coca-Cola boycott within Guatemala in protest of the continued murders, has been supported by sympathy strikes in Spain and Scandinavia. It is likely that the next step in the process in Guatemala will be a call for the formulation of a Revolutionary Patriotic Front, as popular forces are mobilized around the FDCR and as the government's repression of any sort of electoral political opposition continues.

Revolutionary organizations have continued to function in Guatemala since 1954, with varying degrees of success. The Communist Party (Party of Labor of Guatemala — PGT) was formed in the late 1940s. Its small presence within the reformist government was used as a pretext for US intervention. It has continued to function and has on occasion supported armed struggle to oppose the military repression of the people. In the 1960s other guerrilla organizations were formed, some of them coming out of the PGT. The principal organization at that time was the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), which drew some element from the PGT and some from progressive, nationalist military officers. It followed a line of armed struggle based largely on the Che Guevara foco theory of establishing liberated zones in the countryside.

Much of the repression of the 1960s was directed towards wiping out the FAR and anyone remotely connected with it. From the 1960s to the 1970s as the repression shifted from the countryside to the cities, the direction of the government's operations shifted from the army to the police force, which received a large part of the US military assistance in the form of communications technology, riot control and modern police training. Today the origins of the repression are spread widely among the various police and military bodies. Many of the murders and "disappearances" occur at the hands of a variety of paramilitary groups like the secret Anti-Communist Army (ESA) which are widely believed to be composed of out of uniform police and soldiers, as well as assorted thugs and criminals hired by the wealthy.

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# Military Imposes Bloody Rule in Bolivia

by Kevin O'Hare

## BOLIVIA'S PINOCHET

Bolivia is a country of five million people in the west-central part of South America. Last July 17th the military took over the government. This was not an unusual event in Bolivia, which has had 189 military coups in the last 155 years. What was unusual about the military takeover was its brutality, the terror unleashed against the civilian population. This was no palace coup, a squabble among generals. Hundreds have been killed outright by the military, and the church estimates that over 1000 people have been imprisoned. Many have simply disappeared, kidnapped by the military.

The combative tin miners, the backbone of the popular resistance to the military takeover, have lost at least 50 dead and another 300 wounded, many when the Air Force bombed several mines. The military leaders want to sow terror in order to head off any opposition to their takeover. They remember all too well the short-lived coup of Col. Natusch Busch last year. He too wanted to prevent democratic elections and keep the military in control. But his coup was not repressive enough. A general strike, led by the tin miners, led to the colonel's removal after only 16 days in power. This time around the generals were taking no chances.

Recent excerpts from the *New York Times* give examples:

"A shoemaker from a slum near La Paz was picked up, for no stated reason, by the army one recent Saturday and taken to the city's new soccer stadium. There he was beaten with rifle stocks and forced into a dressing room so packed with other prisoners that the men had to sleep standing up and relieve themselves in place. After two days, soldiers pinned left-wing party legends on the chests of 15 of them, took them in a truck to a nearby cliff and lined them up. The shoemaker, tumbling into a crevice below the precipice in the midst of the ensuing murderous fury, was the only one to live to tell what happened. The Government reported that 14 men had died trying to storm a garrison."

"A 16 year old boy was trundled into a room at the Miraflores army headquarters in La Paz and ordered to lower his trousers. An officer approached. Either the youth would go on television and testify that he was making bombs for the leftist political party that had won the just completed elections, or the officer would butcher his genitals, he was told. That night he became one of three similarly menaced people to make his "confession" before the cameras."



The military coup was led by the head of the army, Gen. Meza. Meza, who models himself on Chile's Gen. Pinochet, has vowed to stay in power "as long as I have to in order to eliminate the Marxist cancer, be it five years, 10 years, or 20." Meza's takeover, however, was not aimed at any Marxist political party, but against a moderate left-of-center presidential candidate who polled a majority of votes in a nationwide election on June 29. That candidate was Siles Zuazo, president of Bolivia in 1959-60 and presently heading up the Popular and Democratic Coalition. He had the support of most workers and peasants in Bolivia.

Gen. Meza, like other military dictators, considers the majority of the people of Bolivia to be "Marxists" because they support the end to military dictatorships which have traditionally existed in order to guarantee the privileges of a wealthy minority.

For the last 15 years Bolivia has been run by right-wing military dictators. The popular pressure for a return to a democratically elected civilian government was great. The US, which has great influence in Bolivia as in all of Latin America, also favored a return to civilian rule. The US hoped to oversee a gradual return to civilian rule which would leave intact the class system which protected the interests of those who now control the wealth.

That most Latin American regimes are military dictatorships, notorious for repression of their own people, has become an embarrassment for Jimmy Carter's "human rights" image. The US has been pleased with recent elections and return to civilian rule in Ecuador and Peru, and hoped to see the same process in Bolivia. A democratically elected regime, even if it continued to favor the wealthy, might stem the drive from the workers and peasants for more radical change.

Last year an interim government was elected and this year elections for a more permanent new government were held on schedule on June 29th. The military was restless, unwilling to give up their direct control. Gen. Meza, for example, had successfully resisted last May an attempt by the interim President, Lydia Gueiler Tejada, to install her own choices for military chiefs. Meza rallied the armed forces to flatly refuse. It appeared as if he might overthrow the government altogether and cancel the scheduled elections.

The US publicly discouraged such a move. Gen. Meza then demanded the ouster of US Ambassador Weissman, and organized right-wing thugs to attack the US consulate in Bolivia's second largest city, Santa Cruz. The next day Gen. Meza claimed that urban unrest in Santa Cruz showed that Bolivia was not ready for democracy.

Such incidents made everyone doubt that the military would respect the popular will as expressed in the elections. Siles Zuazo, the center-left candidate, was running against another former president and right-wing candidate, Victor Paz Estensoro. Also in the race was the military's candidate, Gen. Banzer, who had run the country for the previous six years. Siles won more than 60% of the vote, and Banzer came in a poor third. Siles then pledged to leave the current military officers in office and not pick his own candidates for top military positions. But this concession was not enough, and Gen. Meza, along with the head of the Navy and Air Force, carried out their coup.



## WORKING CLASS RESISTANCE

The working class immediately called a general strike, which succeeded in closing down most of industry and the larger cities for about a week. The strike was broken by fierce repression, as the leaders of the left and the working class were systematically rounded up. The military invaded the headquarters of the major trade union the day of the coup, killing several and wounding the head of the federation, miner Juan Lechin.

Lechin was subsequently tortured and forced to appear on television calling for an end to the general strike. Since then he has disappeared and is presumed dead. Meanwhile, former interim president Lydia Gueiler has taken refuge in the Papal Embassy, and president elect Siles Zuazo is in hiding and still attempting to organize resistance.

Temporary disunity among top army officers, some of whom for a time resisted Gen. Meza's orders, has ceased, after the strong civilian resistance has been weakened. It is likely that such disunity will surface again. Gen. Meza is not well liked by many in the armed forces. Meanwhile, the tin miners (tin accounts for 75% of Bolivia's legal exports — although illegal cocaine traffic brings in more money) have continued their resistance. Tin production, as we go to press, is still paralyzed. The miners, armed with dynamite and isolated in the mountains, occupy the mines and can sabotage them if the military invades. They have also blockaded many roads giving access to the mines.

The international reaction to the coup has varied. The new government has been recognized by other Latin American dictatorships such as Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Chile is friendly despite historic rivalry. Israel, Egypt, Taiwan and South Africa have also recognized Meza. On the other hand, the Andean countries have denounced the coup, and Bolivia is expected to withdraw from the Andean Pact and orient its economy toward Argentina and Brazil.

The US, Venezuela, West Germany and others have withdrawn all economic and military aid; US aid alone will cost Bolivia some \$100-200 million a year. The US has also recalled its Ambassador and cut its embassy staff in half, as well as withdrawing its military advisors (although surely some remain secretly.) The US also has withdrawn its narcotics agents and funds, claiming publicly what is well known in Bolivia — that the new generals are heavily involved in the \$600 million per year cocaine trade.

## U.S. CUTS AID

The withdrawal of US aid has drawn bitter protests from Gen. Meza and company; Bolivia is faced with a \$3 billion foreign debt and an immediate need for \$200 million to pay interest. Argentina and Brazil are unlikely to be able to come up with that kind of money easily or on continued basis. Meza has denounced

Carter and is publicly hoping that Reagan will be elected. The new Bolivian leaders say they can survive economically, but the future is bleak.

However, the prospect of renewed US aid is always there. Carter's concern for human rights is known to be shallow. Consider the continued assistance to South Korea despite the military coup there and the cancellation of free elections.

Argentina has played a particularly dirty role in the Bolivian coup. Some 200 Argentine military intelligence officers oversaw the entire operation, and much Argentine military equipment was used. Gen. Videla, the butcher who runs Argentina, has commented on the Bolivian coup: "We don't want a situation in the heartland of South America that would amount to what Cuba represents for Central America. There was a high degree of risk because of the possibility that such a government would promote ideas contrary to our way of life and the permanence of military governments." Videla's way of life includes the kidnapping and murder of over 10,000 "disappeared" prisoners in Argentina after the 1976 military coup there.

Bolivia's new rulers blame its bad image on the "leftist" international press. According to military spokesmen, "Bolivia has encountered a public opinion premeditatedly against it and this cannot have come about through any other manner than the domination of the means of communication by the far left." As a result, Bolivia has cracked down on the press. Well known "far leftists" such as reporters for *Newsweek*, ABC, CBS, Reuters and AP have been arrested and several have been deported. Much of the country remains off limits for foreign reporters. The Bolivian press is, of course, severely censored.

It remains to be seen how long Gen. Meza and the military government can remain in power. The Bolivian people have shown that they do not want continued military rule and will actively fight against it. Meza's position is, at this point, not very stable. He is very isolated both internationally and internally. To the extent that we in this country can influence events, it is important to put pressure on the US government to continue the suspension of all military and economic aid. We must also denounce repression in Bolivia, and support investigations by international bodies of human rights violations.

The pressures by popular forces upon the military dictatorships of Latin America have forced a gradual and still limited return to civilian and elected rule in a number of countries. This trend, so threatening to dictators like Pinochet and Videla and Meza, has suffered a temporary setback in Bolivia. It is unlikely that such a setback can long reverse the drive by the poor and working people of Bolivia and the rest of Latin America to get rid of their military oppressors.

# THE 1980 OLYMPICS

by Jerry Silberman

For many American athletes, a once in a lifetime chance is gone. Despite his party for them, many are bitter that Jimmy Carter forced them to make the sacrifice of the Olympic boycott while he was unwilling to ask US corporations to sacrifice their profits and stop trading with the Soviet Union. For West German athletes, the irony was even greater. While they were forced to stay home, West German corporations made millions on contracts to prepare the Olympic facilities in Moscow.

The Olympics has always been a political event. When it has served the purposes of the US, politics have been brought in openly, as this year. When the Olympics have been used as a forum to raise criticisms of the US, our politicians are quick to oppose mixing politics and sport.

World opinion is sharply divided on Afghanistan, but almost universal in condemnation of apartheid, the open racist system of South Africa. Yet the United States criticized the boycott by African nations of the Montreal Olympics, rather than enforce international law against apartheid sport. This time around it was different. In Jimmy Carter's view, the United States was entitled to manipulate the Games because of its historical leading role in them. So the US sought to strong-arm its allies in order to gain diplomatic points against the USSR.

But Jimmy's plan was a failure, not just with American athletes, but also with the vast majority who did participate. They will take home the thrill of partici-

pating, and a view of the US as the spoiled kid who tried to pick up his marbles and end the game.

The one staunch ally of the president in this matter has been the American news media. Magazines and newspapers have searched high and low for ways to discredit the Soviet Union and its athletes, playing on every anti-communist myth Joe McCarthy and J. Edgar Hoover ever dreamed up.

## SOVIET SECURITY: OVER-BEARING OR NECESSARY?

One favorite theme is the extreme police surveillance in Moscow. Bugs under every bed, plainclothesmen tailing every American tourist. In light of Munich and the tension at other recent Olympics, it's easy to understand a "better safe than sorry" attitude. And this Olympics was unmarred by violence or threats of violence.

As for discretion, US papers did report one incident where Western athletes went on a rampage in a dining hall, throwing food, and utensils, yelling and screaming, prompted somewhat by lots of champagne. Soviet police stood by for over an hour before intervening to disperse the athletes. No arrests were made. Hardly the heavy-handed KGB we've been led to expect.

Housing for the athletes was adequate and comfortable, more than the US can say about Lake Placid. While much noise was made about sections of Moscow being closed off for the Olympics, there were no reports of arrests for Americans who hopped on Moscow's subway to do



US citizens unfurl the flag before a cheering crowd in Lenin Stadium prior to the opening of the 1980 Olympics in Moscow.

some exploring of their own. Scare tactics by Western media probably did more to discourage tourism in Moscow than actual Soviet security practices.

## SOCIALIST ATHLETICS

Six socialist countries led in the final tally of medals, and socialist Cuba was the only non-European country in the top ten. They must be doing something right. Western commentators are quick to point out that the national sports programs of the Soviet Union involve far more people as active participants than the US, and that Soviet research into the physiology and psychology of sport is far advanced over our own.

Then comes the rub. There is ruthless competition, we are told. Those who are not stars are cast aside. Those who do succeed are worked to death for the glory of the state. There is no warmth and team spirit in Soviet locker rooms, only cold calculation.

There is competition and corruption in Soviet sport. But the comparisons which are *not* made with the US are more revealing. To begin with, there are no professional sports in the Soviet Union. No Soviet boxers have died in the past year

of injuries suffered in the ring. No Soviet boxers were forced to fight because that was the only way they could feed their families. What could be more competitive than the American system, where four boxers have recently died from injuries in fights they couldn't afford not to fight?

No Soviet athlete who fails to become a top rank competitor in his or her field has to fear that they have no other options in life, because their education and preparation for careers has not been sacrificed to sport. Soviet hockey teams need not stock up on painkillers and cortisone before going on the ice, because no club owners are profiting from gang wars on skates, or insisting that the stars play while injured.

For most of the world, and many of its own athletes, the US boycott has discredited this country, but not the Olympics. There are many lessons to be drawn from Olympic politics. The Olympics cannot obscure political differences between countries. But for the athletes involved they remain an unequalled opportunity for cooperation and competition on a basis of equality, among people of all nations. Presidential politicking should not be allowed to disrupt this, ever again.

## J. R. Richards' Stroke ... Racism Major Factor

by a Boston reader

The stroke suffered by J.R. Richards, Black pitcher for the Houston Astros, on July 29, and the surrounding events have demonstrated that racism still has a stranglehold on the baseball world. Although Richards has been one of the best pitchers in baseball for the last several years, he received inadequate medical attention from the team doctor and racist disbelief about his health from the baseball world.

Something was obviously wrong with Richards this season, and many people believed it was in his head. From mid-June on, he experienced a lot of pain from pitching. He reported arm troubles, stomach pains, and bouts of feeling woozy. Doctors gave conflicting reports and suggested that he might be exaggerating. The press began to gossip that he was loafing. Although Richards has been very popular with his teammates, some of them also began to doubt him.

Richards was placed on the disabled list on July 16 because of muscle fatigue. He was hospitalized for several days of diagnostic testing. Although a blood clot was discovered on his right arm, the team doctor decided that J.R. could return to action. Four days after his discharge from the hospital, Richards collapsed with a stroke in the middle of a light workout.

At first, the doctors tried to minimize the seriousness of the stroke. Since then, they've claimed that they were correct in sending him back to play and that something "mysterious" happened between July 25 and July 29. The Astros management have covered themselves and their doctor by issuing statements expressing exclusive concern for his health and well-being. And the press has covered them all by reporting the incident as a "mystery" and a tragedy.

All of those who doubted Richards, must now blushing admit that they were wrong about him. The man obvious-

ly was not faking. Their postures of concern and amazement are undermined by their continual racist formulations. Instead of facing their own racism and the role that they each played in his near-death, the doubters basically defend what happened. They all, implicitly or explicitly, blame Richards for *his* handling of his health.

### WHAT WAS WRONG WITH RICHARDS WASN'T IN HIS HEAD

Many still conclude that the problem was within Richards. No longer do they claim he was loafing. Now, some blame his personality — that he was a loner and drew further within himself during all the gossiping. And this made it hard for people to believe him and for the doctors to properly treat him. Others claim that he felt competitive with another great pitcher, Nolan Ryan, and couldn't take the combined pressure of that competition and a pennant race. Still other blame the stroke on his muscular development and that he abused his arm by throwing a pitch called a "slider."

While these views seem to make the situation sound complicated and "mysterious," in fact these views are consistent with racist stereotypes of minority athletes, particularly for highly paid superstars. Those who blame the situation of his being a loner and his inability to take pressure are basing this on the racist view that he, like all minorities, are immature and not socially developed. Furthermore, the implications about his lying are based on the view that he, like other Black superstars, are child-like egomaniacs and always put their own interests above the good of the team.

For Richards, like many other Black athletes, these views about his personality and dedication are unfounded. In addi-

tion to being popular with his teammates, he had not missed a start in five years. Even this year, in great pain and at personal risk, he continued to play regularly.

The view expressed that his muscular development was responsible for his near-death lets the team doctor off the hook. White pitchers with his build who have thrown "sliders" and who also experienced arm troubles have received far superior medical attention. Underneath the "muscular" view is the racist belief that there is something innately different between the muscles of white and Black people, and that there is something wrong and less-than-human about Black bodies. Whites also suffer blood clots, which if not properly cared for, lead to serious repercussions.

What's unfortunate is that it took a near-death to expose this racism. The treatment Richards received is consistent with the way minorities have been treated since Jackie Robinson first entered the major leagues in 1947. While gains have been made over the past 33 years, even the best minority athletes are still treated like expendable merchandise.

Robinson was continually subjected to verbal harassment by every opposing team and generally received separate and less than equal accommodations. Branch Rickey, an owner, had brought Robinson to the major leagues because he thought Robinson had the "right temperament" to withstand all the harassment. Robinson's "temperament" remains the standard today for all Black and Hispanic athletes.

### WHERE'S THE MYSTERY?

The reality behind this "mystery" is that many Black athletes compete when they're injured. Several of Richards' teammates as well as players from opposing teams have publicly blasted the racism of the team doctors and the press. To them, what happened to J.R. was no mystery at all. There was nothing wrong with *his* head. The only heads that need examining are the white doubters with the racist ideas.

Organizer, September 1980, page 13

★★★ Neighborhood Film Project ★★★

Want to show a movie about union organizing? How about a documentary about how US corporations have ripped off Puerto Rico? Movies from Cuba, or China, or by Black filmmakers who can't get distributed by the Hollywood monopolies?

Talk to the Neighborhood Film Project. For several years, NFP has made such films available to progressive organizations in Philadelphia, as well as showing dozens of films that probably will never show anywhere else in the city in their regular series at International House, 3701 Chestnut St., during the fall and spring. Some interesting shows coming:

Black Independent Filmmakers: *Six Short Films*, with guest filmmaker Ben Caldwell, Friday, September 26, 7:30 p.m.

*Tent of Miracles* — The first of several films this year about Brazil, from its past as a slave-holding empire to the present struggle against the dictatorship, and the preservation of the African heritage of Brazil. Later films will also deal with the condition of the native peoples of Brazil, who have been victim of genocidal policies as Brazil seeks to open the Amazon Basin. *Tent of Miracles*, Wed. through Fri. September 17-19, 7:30 and 10:00 p.m.

*How Yukong Moved Mountains* Program 1: A Woman, a Family. The first of a seven part series of films made in China in 1973-75, by a Western film team given unrestricted rights to travel the country. The results are fascinating, first-hand reports on the efforts of the Chinese people to build a new society.

# Democrats Forge Uneasy Unity

by Jim Griffin

Teddy spoiled Jimmy's birthday party. That's one way to look at the doings in Madison Square Garden last month. Even the balloons didn't fall down on cue for the guest of honor. At what was supposed to be his moment of triumph Carter got a ho-hum response and even was booed by the Party faithful, while his rival brought the house down. Underlying the clash between these two political personalities is the contention between two different wings of the Democratic Party and two distinct viewpoints on how the Party is to face the 1980s.

## KENNEDY PULLS LIBERALS' HEARTSTRINGS

Ted Kennedy assumed the mantle of the traditional New Deal liberalism that has given the Democrats a broad base of popular support since the days of Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was not the Kennedy who has sponsored the repressive criminal code revision known as S-1, or the Kennedy who has championed higher productivity and deregulation of business who brought the Democratic Party rank and file to their feet with his Convention oratory.

It was rather Ted Kennedy the populist — the would-be champion of the have-nots — the poor, the unemployed, minorities, women and labor — who inspired the delegates and a national T.V. audience.

While Kennedy's speech contained many glowing generalities about the need for social justice, it was short on concrete proposals. Kennedy's platform planks in relation to jobs and the economy, while clearly in advance of Carter's fiscal conservatism, do not go beyond the partial measures of past Democratic administrations, measures which have provided temporary relief perhaps, but no real solution to the social and economic ills of US society. In addition Kennedy, while speaking to the economic plight of minorities, largely sidestepped the democratic questions of affirmative action and desegregation which are bound up with the economic expression of racial inequality.

Finally Kennedy made no real challenge to the aggressive direction of US foreign policy, the revival of the Cold War, and spiralling defense spending. His challenge to the Carter plank on the MX missile was limited to the timing of its deployment and his opposition to draft registration was muted. This gap between

pronouncement and policy, between rhetoric and substance, is characteristic of liberalism generally. Thus there is no inconsistency in recognizing that Kennedy is a genuine advocate of the New Deal tradition and a false prophet in his pose as a friend of working people.

Kennedy represents that wing of the monopoly capitalist ruling class that believes a policy of concessions and the language of populism best serves the maintenance of capitalist stability. Kennedy's political instincts tell him that whatever the mood of the moment, the longterm interests of the ruling class, the Democratic Party, and his own political career are best served by maintaining the Party's image as the Party of the common people.

Kennedy and his element in the Party leadership fear, with good reason, that if the Party abandons this posture and scuttles its reformist program, it will lead to a mass breakaway with the likely emergence of a new party to the left of the Democrats. It is this, even more than the fear of electing Reagan and the Republicans, that inspired Kennedy and the reform forces grouped around him to make a serious fight on the Party platform and utilize the Convention podium to draw a line of demarcation with Carter.

## CARTER'S BRAND OF REALISM

Jimmy Carter sees things differently. In a moment of unusual candor press secretary Jody Powell told a CBS correspondent that Jimmy Carter, as the president, could not be guided just by the elected delegates of his own Party. Carter, he said, was accountable to "important financial interests" as well. Carter has dutifully carried out the will of those interests for four years, as must any President supported by the two capitalist parties.

Economic austerity, putting the demands of minorities and women on hold, and a more aggressive foreign policy are the requirements of monopoly capital at present. Carter favors "frank talk", telling the US people that they must bite the bullet. He views Kennedy as irresponsible for raising popular expectations and making promises that cannot be kept short of a drastic political realignment. This is why the Carter forces drafted such a conservative platform in the first place and gave in on some Kennedy planks only after it was clear that this would be the price of Party unity.



Democrats' unity around Carter's candidacy is based on his reluctant endorsement of a platform he never intends to carry out. While Kennedy forces pushed through some progressive platform planks, Kennedy doesn't represent working people any more than Carter does.

Given Carter's record in office and the view of the next four years he has argued for to date in the campaign, he can hardly be a credible candidate running on a Kennedy platform. But, if he does not make some nod in this direction, he risks further demoralizing. The Kennedy wing of the Party with the danger that many Democrats will sit out the election. Carter can be expected to run essentially the same kind of campaign he would have anyway, seeking to minimize his differences with Kennedy, and play on the fear of Reagan to rally the traditional Democratic coalition around the Carter standard.

To anyone unfamiliar with the internal dynamics of the Democratic Party whole struggle over the Party platform must have seemed unreal. The Kennedy forces succeeded in winning the Convention to support key minority planks. Carter then offered a qualified and reluctant endorsement of the platform. Virtually all understood that Carter would disregard both the spirit and the letter of the changes in the platform. Yet the Kennedy forces and the left liberal elements, even though disgruntled, were willing to regard these changes as sufficient to support Carter.

## THE PLATFORM STRUGGLE

The reason the platform struggle acquired significance for the left wing of the Party is that some progressive changes in the platform were essential if these forces are to maintain their credibility with their own constituencies and mobilize a Democratic vote. The platform gives them a justification for backing Carter and sticking with the Democratic Party.

The reaction of the trade union leadership illustrates this most clearly. Meeting shortly after the Convention, the AFL-CIO Executive Council issued a near unanimous endorsement of Carter. Only William Winpisinger of the Machinists dissented, indicating he would support Citizens Party candidate Barry Commoner. AFL-CIO chief Lane Kirkland was quick to cite Carter's concessions around the platform, along with the danger posed by Reagan, as the reason for lending Carter support.

The most far-reaching political challenge to the politics of Carterism came not from Ted Kennedy but from Black congressman Ron Dellums, who utilized the device of a Presidential nomination to secure the podium and deliver an impassioned call for social justice. Unlike Kennedy, Dellums sharply attacked the drive toward war of the Carter administration and called for a peace policy.

Dellums' main theme was the urgency of the social and economic demands of the Afro-American people. It is significant that Dellums had to get himself nominated for President in order to insure that this question was placed squarely before the Convention.

William Winpisinger of the IAM was another figure at the Convention who was not satisfied with the largely meaningless changes in the platform. Winpisinger said it was time for labor to break with the practice of always backing the lesser evil. And unlike many others who huffed and puffed about a walkout, Winpisinger actually did so, taking some 40 delegates with him.

## DEMOCRATIC DISSIDENTS

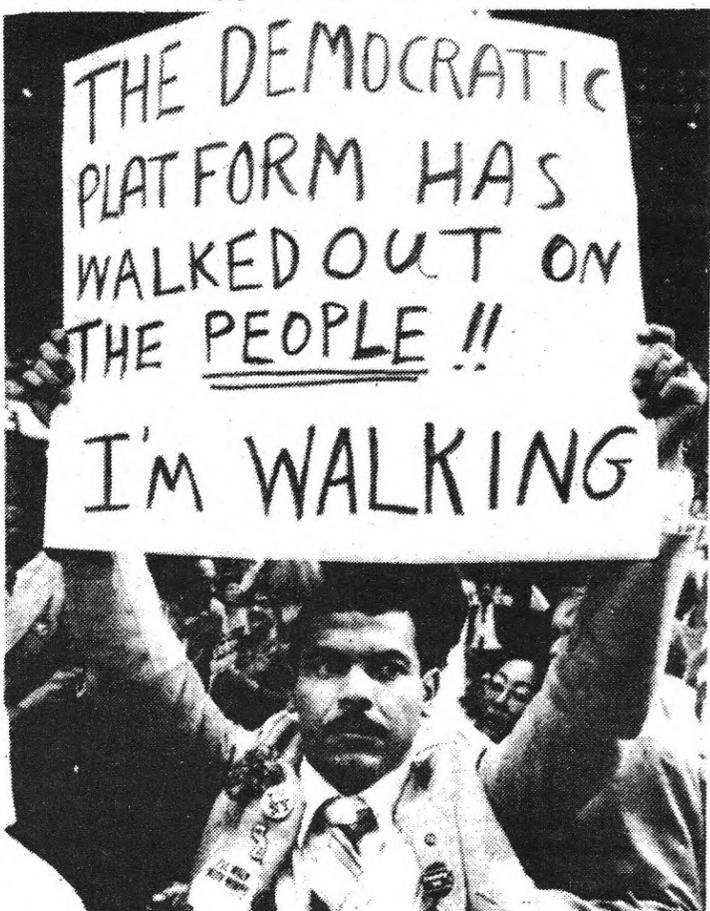
The manner in which Winpisinger and others walked out says much about the limitations to dissidence with in the Democratic Party. The walkout occurred during a Convention film and went virtually unnoticed as a result. It was more like a sneakout than a walkout. As one machinist said, "we want to walk out with respect."

This reflects the two minds of Winpisinger and others in the dissident camp. They are unwilling to burn their bridges and strike out in an independent direction. Winpisinger made this clear even as he supported independent candidate Commoner. Winpisinger describes himself as a Democrat for Commoner and disavows any intent to leave the Democratic Party. Thus the walkout tactic and the support for the Citizens' party is essentially a means to pressure the Democrats further to the left rather than a clearcut step towards independent political action.

Nevertheless, the platform battle, the walkout talk, and the handful of defections to the Commoner camp do objectively represent the motion toward a breakaway from the Democratic Party and toward independent political action. The established leadership of labor, the oppressed nationalities, women and other progressive forces are feeling the heat from below and are forced to challenge the dominant politics and leadership of the Democratic Party. The Carter presidency has accelerated this conflict. Should Carter win it will sharpen even more.

The question four years from now will be whether Ted Kennedy can effectively blunt this contradiction and regroup the Democratic coalition or whether the progressive forces presently within the Democratic Party have matured to the point where they will reject Kennedy style liberalism as a genuine vehicle for their aims.

More immediately the question is whether Carter can rebound from an all time low in the polls, the taint of his relations with his buffoonish brother Billy and a Convention which scorned him as it nominated him, to beat Ronald Reagan. The openly reactionary politics of Reagan plus the former actor's capacity for blowing his lines promises to make it a close race and may well land Jimmy Carter in the White House for four more years.



# People's Convention Meets in South Bronx

by Ron Whitehorne

For two days 1500 delegates, reflecting the diversity of the various movements for social justice in the US, met under tents in a rubble-strewn lot in the South Bronx to project a People's Alternative to the politics of big business being served up by Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter and John Anderson.

The People's Convention, organized by the Coalition for a People's Alternative in 1980 (CPA), was held on Charlotte St. in the South Bronx in order to underline the broken promises of the two party politicians over the years. The vast empty lot surrounded by burned out tenements symbolizes the plight of inner city residents and disenfranchised people generally at the hands of the monopoly corporations and their political servants. Over 150,000 people have been displaced from the neighborhoods of the South Bronx by a combination of landlord inspired arson and federal neglect. Jimmy Carter visited Charlotte Street in 1977 and pledged a billion and a half dollars to rebuild the Charlotte Streets of our cities, but three years later nothing has changed.

In contrast to the physical desolation of Charlotte Street were the energy and hopes of the people assembled on the site, including representatives from the South Bronx community. The theme of the Convention was the need for unity of the people's movement in opposition to big business and the program of the two parties. This unity was formulated in a declaration adopted by the Convention following workshops and a series of panel discussions.

The document includes a "People's Agenda", a statement of concrete demands in the areas of jobs, a decent standard of living, and a safe environment, equality and democratic rights and peace (See box). The progressive content of this program is in sharp contrast to the platforms of the Republicans and Democrats. In addition the declaration calls for a common effort to popularize the agenda and build an independent political movement in the coming period.

## BLACK AND LABOR PARTICIPATION WEAK

That diverse forces encompassing the breadth of the various movements in the US were able to come together and adopt a common program is a positive achievement. At the same time the coalition and

the composition of the delegates did not adequately reflect the actual character of the independent political movement. The Black Liberation Movement has played the leading role in developing independent political action over the last decade as witnessed by local campaigns in Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit and elsewhere. And yet, while there were a number of Black activists at the Convention, the participation of organized Black forces was minimal. The coalition did not succeed in gaining the active involvement of those who have the most concrete practice in forging an alternative to the Democrats and Republicans.

The presence of labor at the People's Convention was also minimal, consisting of a scattering of rank and file activists and progressive staff members. The coalition has not been able to connect with the spontaneous motion toward independent political action within the unions and further develop it.

These shortcomings are particularly serious in that labor and the Black Liberation Movement are the cornerstones on which any viable independent coalition will be built. While the coalition also has much to do in terms of involving the broadest forces from other sectors of the people's movement, it has much greater representation from the peace, anti-nuke, feminist and gay movements, movements which are presently predominantly white and middle class in composition and outlook.

## HOW TO BUILD UNITY

These weaknesses are bound up with the dominant conception of how to forge unity in the coalition. This view emphasizes "respect" for the autonomy of each movement as the key to forging trust and unity. In practice this means a largely uncritical attitude toward the political weaknesses of the different movements and an unwillingness to make any strategic distinctions.

Given the composition of the coalition such a conception can only feed and reinforce the anti-working class, racist tendencies which pervade the movements. This, in turn, undercuts the coalition's ability to broaden the involvement of working class and oppressed nationality forces. Rather than struggling for a common strategic conception that reflects the objective interests of all the various sectors of oppressed and exploited, the dominant line in the coalition reduces the different sectors to competing interest groups who seek



Photo above and bottom left: Some 10,000 people marched on Madison Square Garden, site of the Democrats' convention, on August 10. The march and rally were organized by the Coalition for a People's Alternative in 1980.

to insure that their particular demands get "equal time."

These differing conceptions of how to build unity take their most acute form in relation to the question of racism. Racism is the source of a deep seated distrust between the movements of the oppressed nationalities and other sectors. Racism has served to divide and weaken all the various progressive movements. Given this, any effort to forge an effective multi-national, multi-racial coalition must accord the struggle against racism special attention. Yet within the coalition racism is treated as simply one of a range of "issues" and the responsibility for formulating anti-racist demands is left to oppressed nationality forces. The "respect for autonomy" argument serves as a means for deflecting any criticism of the predominantly white forces for failure to take up the struggle against racism. Such an approach will not and cannot overcome the distrust that presently exists and build unity.

The People's Convention, while it did not produce any real debate of these questions, reflected the problem. The Black Caucus rightly stated: "We as the Black Caucus are concerned about the lack of involvement of Black people (and organizations) in the organization of this convention. We are concerned that the unity statement does not address the needs and concerns of Black people."

While the actions of some workshops served to strengthen the unity statement, the actions of others fly in the face of the concerns raised by the Black Caucus and others. The gay and lesbian caucus, for example, demanded that a call for opposition to the racist violence of the Klan be reworded to read the racist and homophobic violence of the Klan, thus equating the anti-gay stand of the Klan with white supremacy which always has been and remains its principle rallying cry and reason for being. Significantly, the racist violence of the Klan was not even mentioned at all in an earlier draft of the unity statement and this remarkable omission did not draw any objections from the representatives of the gay/lesbian caucus.

The education workshop, while not even mentioning the racial segregation and inequality of the public school system, called for "an investigation of the voucher system." The voucher system is a pet proposal of right wing reactionaries and segregationists that would virtually destroy the public school system by subsidizing private schools. Such backward ideas are in sharp contrast with the language of the unity statement calling for full equality for the oppressed nationalities.

There will inevitably be unevenness in political understanding and this, in and of itself is no cause for concern. The problem is that the coalition's conception of how unity develops undermines the struggle against such conceptions and thus holds back the forward development of genuine unity.

## LACK OF DEBATE

The Convention suffered from the lack of debate of these and other questions. Workshops on the first day provided an opportunity for delegates to participate in the development of the unity statement as well as exchanging experience and perspectives. However small group discussions scheduled for the second day, which were to focus on the political links between the different issues and struggles, never happened leaving delegates to simply listen to a procession of speakers and panels. The plenary session to adopt the unity statement, while formally allowing for discussion and amendment from the floor, was too short and rushed to further meaningful debate.

In part these failures reflected the enormous logistical problems in organizing such a complex event with limited resources. However, they also reflected the priorities of Convention organizers who in varying degrees downplayed the importance of consolidation and debate over the unity statement.

In spite of all these problems, the People's Convention did succeed in projecting a visible alternative to the two parties of monopoly. This was embodied not only in the Charlotte St. Declaration and the People's Agenda, but in the spirit of the Convention.

While the unity of progressive forces represented at Charlotte St. is embryonic and flawed in some important ways, it does represent the recognition of a common enemy and the beginnings of an understanding that we have common demands. This is in sharp contrast to the plight of progressive forces in Madison Square Garden who co-exist with the dominant big business interests in the Democratic Party and have to fight to get concessions in a platform that they know will never be taken seriously by their standard-bearer anyway.

The CPA is planning a meeting in early September to evaluate the Convention and demonstration and chart future plans. Developing a national campaign during the election around the People's Agenda is a key task.



organizer photo

organizer photo

# Carter's Budget ... More Guns, Less Butter

Jimmy Carter and Congress are taking the ax to the federal budget, slashing social programs while increasing defense spending. Carter argues, in the manner of fiscal conservatives like Ronald Reagan, that a balanced budget is essential to stem inflation, currently running at an annual rate of 18%. This, in spite of the view of most economists that deficit spending has a minimal impact on inflation and a balanced budget would reduce the current rate by as little as 1%.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) put the proposed budget for fiscal year '81 together from estimates submitted by the executive departments and independent agencies. The budget Carter sent to Congress in January was \$20 billion less than originally requested by these groups, and he is calling for an additional reduction of \$15 billion to balance the budget.

Since fixed obligations of government, such as social security and long-term contracts cannot be changed without further legislation, only 24% (\$150 billion) of the total budget is left over for presidential and congressional control. If defense expenditures are removed, less than \$60 billion in controllables are left from which to eliminate \$20 billion. This money represents mostly human needs programs which have already been cut by \$17 billion or 7.8% compared to last year, before inflation is taken into consideration. Between now and October, Congress will review, revise and vote on the budget.

In a statement issued on February 5, 1980, the Congressional Black Caucus called the proposed federal budget "an unmitigated disaster for the poor, unemployed, and minorities." Calling the budget deceptive, the Caucus statement pointed out that there are real cuts in domestic program spending, changes in budget policies which will significantly increase unemployment, while there are massive increases with long term implications proposed for the military budget.

President Carter presented his budget message to the American public as one which continues current services for domestic programs while making modest defense increases. Yet, by the administration's own admission, the proposed budget would increase unemployment by 1½ million persons, to 7.5%, by the end of 1980.

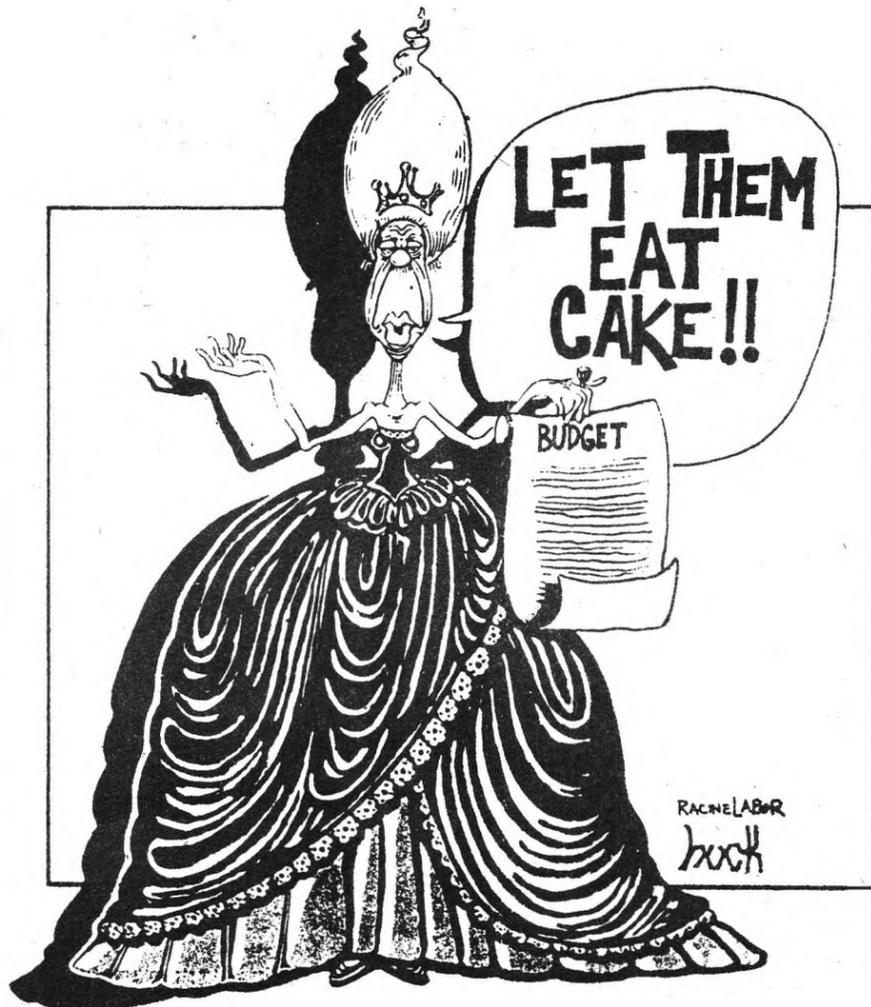
The proposed budget for fiscal year '81 would postpone the Full Employment Act's unemployment target of 4%

until 1985 and the inflation target of 3% until 1988. Rather than offering economic alternatives to unemployment, the administration demanded flexibility in the Humphrey-Hawkins timetable asserting that 4% unemployment is an unrealistic goal for 1983. The white male unemployment rate stood at 3.7% at the end of last year while the official Black unemployment rate rose from 11.4% in November to 12% in December and 12.6% in January 1980. The proposed budget also funds only 450,000 job slots under Title VI public service job programs, less than half of the level authorized by law to respond to the unemployment rate of 7.5% which is being predicted by the administration itself.

## **JOBS?**

The budget includes a new \$2 billion youth jobs program which is being called the "major domestic policy initiative" of the administration. This program would in reality give half of that money to school systems for illusory benefits and provide few new jobs or training opportunities with the other half.

There would be up to a two year delay to get the program started. Only \$300 million of the money is for youth employment programs in Fiscal Year '81 and only \$100 million of that amount would actually be spent in 1981. The bulk of the FY81 money would be spent for training through the same public schools which have failed to train young people in the past. Because the program is not forward funded, it would not become fully operational until FY82.



While on the surface, the budget would continue human services at current levels, massive defense spending increases will cut social programs below even the levels they were publicly cut to last year. For example, in housing, there is supposed to be an increase by 24% to 300,000 units of subsidized housing in FY81. This is the number of units the administration claimed it was building in FY80 but provided money for far fewer with only 240,000 now anticipated to be produced.

The 300,000 figure was already a reduction from the 400,000 that had been provided for in previous years. Further deceptions in a budget that claims to maintain programs for the people are that no money is added to the revenue sharing plan, set at \$6.9 million. So-called "cash management initiatives" are being introduced whereby tax receipts will be collected earlier in the year to create the illusion of a lower deficit.

The military budget is increased by 5.4% above inflation rates for FY81, and then adds an additional 4.8% in

FY 82, 4.4% more in FY 83, 4.2% each in FY84 and 85, with only the passage of the FY81 budget. This means the military budget which stood at \$127.8 billion in 1979 will be over \$248 billion in FY1985.

Serious consideration is also being given to changing the Consumer Price Index, which is the basis for increases in such "uncontrollable" entitlement programs such as Social Security, food stamps, and various government pensions. Because the CPI takes in the rising cost of housing due to high mortgage rates, it is argued that it overstates the rate of inflation. Further, most older and low income people's housing costs, if influenced at all by interest rates, are subject to lower rates that were in effect when they or their landlords signed their mortgages.

But, if the CPI is changed, the changes should take into account that for low income people, 90% of their income goes to four basic necessities — food, energy, housing and medical care. The cost of these items rose by over 17.9% in 1979, as compared to the overall inflation rate of 13.3%.

# Prisoners Strike at Graterford



No Limits/cpf

by Duane Calhoun

On Monday morning, May 5, a typed sheet of paper was taped to the wall of cell block "B" at Graterford State Prison: "Remember, only at Graterford we have no gym, no electricity during the day, no family day visits, no program for the recreation department, only one shower during the day, medical treatment that went out with the stone ages, and no representation from the prison population." Two days later, a full list of demands was presented to warden Julius Cuyler, the press, and a number of lawyers and state officials.

## **STRIKE DEMANDS**

The major demands were for better medical care, particularly the right to have yearly medical checkups, cleaner and safer working conditions in the prison industries, retention of a dental technician training program that the state was taking out of Graterford, and the firing of warden Cuyler. The following day, Thursday, the prisoners began a peaceful work strike to enforce their demands, reporting sick instead of to their jobs in the prison shops (weaving, clothing, shoe, and others). About half of the prisoners reported sick the first day of the strike, but within the next few days over 1,000 of the 1,775 prisoners had joined the strike. Strike organizers asked the kitchen and power plant work-

ers to stay on the job so the prison wouldn't be without these essential services.

Warden Cuyler's first reaction was to ship out five suspected "ringleaders" to other prisons, in the middle of the night and without telling their families that the prisoners had been transferred, or where they were transferred to. One of these, Harold X. Smith, was charged with conspiracy to escape and inciting to riot, even though no escape attempt or riot ever took place. Reporters were told that the administration had no idea why the prisoners were striking, since "We haven't received any complaints from these people."

For the first few days of the strike, prison officials tried acting as if nothing unusual was happening, telling the press that only a few were striking, and hoping the protest would fizzle out quickly. When that didn't work, every prisoner was locked up in his cell with no showers, exercise, or visits, and only cheese sandwiches and coffee at mealtime. Teams of four or five guards then went from cell to cell, "asking" each prisoner if he wanted to work, and threatening those who refused with more charges, denial of parole, and transfer to other prisons across the state from their families. Seven prisoners were sent to the "hole."

continued on page 20

# Polish Workers' Strike . . .

continued from page 1

its neighbors. From the close of the Napoleonic wars to the Russian Revolution Poland was reduced to a province of the Tsars. The role of the Soviet Union during the war did not dispel popular anti-Russian sentiment. While the Soviets defeated the Nazi occupiers, they also occupied the Eastern marches of Poland in the first days of the war in accordance with a secret protocol in the German-Soviet non-aggression pact, thus participating once again in the dismemberment of Poland by foreigners.

In addition the Red Army refused to allow the western allies to provide support to the Warsaw uprising in 1944 and only provided aid of their own after it was too late. Soviet policy in both instances was dictated by defensive concerns rather than any aggressive designs on Poland. Nevertheless the effect could only be to reinforce anti-Russian and thus anti-Soviet sentiment.

## THE ROLE OF THE COLD WAR

The only political force in Poland that could be entrusted to organize a government that was not hostile to the Soviet Union was the Polish Communist Party. Small and compromised by its defense of Soviet behavior in relation to Poland, the Party was a slender reed on which to construct a government that could command popular confidence. Yet, short of turning power over to anti-Soviet reactionaries tied to Anglo-American imperialism, the Soviet Union had little choice but to sponsor a regime based primarily on this Party.

Had it not been for the intervention of the Cold War a more democratic evolution of the Polish People's Republic might have occurred. The Polish Party, with the support of the Soviets, succeeded in drawing some left wing social democratic forces into the government and adopted a conciliatory policy toward the powerful Roman Catholic church. While committed to an eventual socialist transformation of Poland because of both ideological conviction and security considerations, the Soviets urged a cautious and gradual approach. The new government limited itself to social and economic reforms while trying to build popular support for more far-reaching socialist measures.

A drastic shift occurred as the imperialist powers abandoned the wartime alliance with its acceptance of Soviet pre-eminence in Eastern Europe in favor of a policy of "rollback." The imperialists combined military intimidation with attempts to exploit the internal contradictions within Eastern Europe in order to undermine Soviet influence. The Soviets reacted by moving to consolidate all political power in the hands of those of proven reliability, purging non-communists and communists alike. Gradualist measures gave way to a policy of rapid nationalization regardless of political conditions. Thus the tempo and character of Poland's social transformation was dictated by external events.

## A CONTRADICTIONARY LEGACY

The regime that has emerged from this unfortunate history is full of contradictions. Compromised by being empowered by the Soviets, it at the same time has shown an ability to respond and adapt to Polish nationalism as in 1956 when Wladyslaw Gomulka emerged as the first successful "national" communist, becoming Party leader over the objections of the Soviets. Owing to the circumstances of its origins, the regime was unwilling to encourage the broad democratic participation of the working masses in the administration and policy-making of the state.

Years of power and the bureaucratic habits that inevitably flower in the absence of democracy have further alienated the Party from the masses. Yet even Western analysts acknowledge that Poland is a far cry from the grey Police State of anti-communist lore. There are few political prisoners, the dissident community has more latitude than anywhere else in the bloc, and the Catholic Church functions openly as a powerful and independent opinion molder. Public criticism

of the regime is freely given, generally tolerated and even encouraged within narrow limits.

The Polish Communist Party is at once a bureaucratic elite and a working class political party. Its leader is a former Silesian coal miner as is the head of state. While the Party acts to preserve its bureaucratic privileges, it also seeks to raise the living standards of the Polish working class.

The actions of the Polish workers reflect the contradictions that characterize the Polish state. There is no indication from either the strikers' demands or from interviews with them in the western press, that the strikers seek a return to the bad old days of capitalism. The thrust of the workers' struggle is against undemocratic distortions and wrong-headed economic policies that are holding back the development of socialism in Poland.

Even with all of its defects the present Polish social system has dramatically improved the lot of Polish workers. There is no unemployment and real wages in the last decade have increased by 60%, a sharp contrast to the plight of the inflation and layoff-ridden working class in our country. Low prices and comprehensive social services have attracted thousands of Polish Americans and others to spend their retirement years in Poland.

Food prices, particularly of meat, along with the availability of these items has been the principal focus of worker economic dissatisfaction, not simply today but in 1956 when working class demonstrations in Poznan brought reformer Wladyslaw Gomulka to power, in 1970 when worker unrest brought Gomulka down and raised Edward Gierek to his place and again in 1976 when strikes forced the cancellation of price increases. The combative Polish workers are jealous of the economic gains they have made and believe that they could and should have more. And they are right.

## SMALL FARMS AND BIG DEBTS

The shortage of meat and its relatively high price is rooted in the regime's failure to move towards the collectivization of agriculture. Some 80% of Poland's agriculture is in private hands, consisting of small family farms. As a result Polish agriculture is inefficient and labor productivity is extremely low. Over 35% of the labor force is engaged in agriculture, a remarkable figure for an industrialized country. The result is high prices for farm products. The state has softened the blow historically by selling the produce it buys from the farmers at a price well below cost. On July 1 the state moved to end this subsidy, a measure that resulted in a 40-60% rise in the cost of meat.

This move was prompted by a growing economic crisis brought about by Poland's indebtedness to western financial interests. In the early 1970s Poland initiated an ambitious program of industrial development, borrowing heavily from West German and US banks to finance its growth. Today Poland is over \$20 billion in debt, slightly more than half the indebtedness of the whole Eastern bloc. In interest alone the government must pay nearly \$2 billion this year.

Polish planners expected that increased productivity and rising exports would enable the state to repay its debt while still delivering improved living standards. This has not occurred. The high costs of imported energy, the economic slump in the West which has undercut markets for Polish exports, and bureaucratic sluggishness have all been factors. One result is increasing Polish dependence on the West. This dependence is encouraged by Western financial interests and governments alike.

This, more than any desire to forestall Soviet intervention, which is most unlikely anyhow, is what explains the curiously sympathetic attitude of the financial community and the state department toward the difficulties of the regime. This most far-seeing imperialist strategy sees Poland gradually being drawn into the capitalist economic orbit and the Polish leadership has unwittingly

served this aim. The other result of mistaken Polish policy is that the government, in order to service its debt, must cut back on expenditures and is calling for workers to tighten their belts.

## MORE MEAT AND MORE DEMOCRACY

Polish workers are unwilling to pay the costs for mistaken policies which they had little say in formulating in the first place. It would be one thing if the regime had adopted the present course in a democratic fashion which included widespread public discussion and debate. But it did not and thus has little basis for demanding that the working masses share in the responsibility for its mistakes. The workers have not developed a full blown alternative to the economic policies of the regime. However one of the strikers' demands is for a full public airing and discussion of the economic situation and an unfettered debate on proposed measures to resolve it.

Worker unwillingness to "bite the bullet" is fueled by resentment over the privileges enjoyed by Party members, high state officials, and other members of the elite. While workers wait in line for meat, the best cuts are either exported to earn hard currency to service the national debt, or go to specialty shops reserved for this privileged stratum. The strikers are demanding an end to the specialty shops and the limiting of exports to whatever surplus exists after domestic needs have been met.

Aside from the demand for a \$66 a month wage increase, the other principal demand of the strikers is for trade unions free of administrative interference from the state and controlled democratically by the membership. The present trade unions in Poland are bureaucratized, top-down organizations which function more as instruments of labor discipline than as vehicles that represent the workers' concerns.

The Leninist conception of the role of trade unions during the transition to socialism sees the unions as transmission belts between the workers on the shop floor and the workers' state. The union represents the workers in matters pertaining to wages, working conditions and the organization of production. The union also seeks to mobilize the workers to carry out the various political and economic tasks necessary to build socialism. The unions do not exist in an antagonistic relationship to the state, but neither are they simply extensions of the state.

This conception assumes proletarian democracy both in relation to the unions and the state, and the existence of a revolutionary party that has the confidence of the workers and can mediate between these two institutions. None of these requisites are present in Poland today. In demanding the democratization of the unions the Polish workers are taking an important first step to bringing about a broader democratization of Polish society. The call for total autonomy for the unions, however, is a misplaced emphasis. Instead the focus must be democratizing the state as well as the unions.

While the strike movement has not elaborated a clearcut socialist alternative to the present impasse, the political thrust of the movement is predominantly progressive and will serve to advance Poland's progress on the road to socialism. The strike is in reaction to economic policies that weaken socialism and strengthen the position of international imperialism. While the Polish workers have not demanded the collectivization of agriculture or a sharp reversal of the import of western capital as the means for modernization, objectively their strike points in this direction.

The main political content of the strike is an attack on bureaucratic power and privilege and a call for greater democracy. While the movement as yet lacks a comprehensive vision of working class democracy that encompasses the Party, the state and all the institutions of Polish society, the call for democratic unions and the demand for an end to the special-

ty shops contain the embryo of such a vision.

## THE ROLE OF POLISH REACTION

Concern that the strike could be exploited by reactionary elements is not entirely unwarranted. The alienation between the strikers and the Party has furthered the influence of the powerful Catholic church and the dissident movement, composed primarily of intellectuals from the upper stratum of Polish society. The strikers' demands, at least as reported by the Committee for Social Self Defense, a dissident group, reflect the influence of these two forces, neither of which are friendly to socialism.

The two demands that most directly reflect this influence is the call for the release of all political prisoners and the demand for access to the mass media by religious groups. There is no differentiation between those who have been imprisoned for legitimate political activity that should be protected and those who have been jailed for organizing outright counter-revolutionary actions. The main beneficiary of what appears to be a demand relating to religious freedom in general would be the Catholic Church, the principal organized counterweight to the Party and an institution that has, while practicing co-existence with the state, sought to hold back and retard the development of socialism.

However neither of these demands appear to figure centrally in the strike negotiations. The strikers have raised no objections to the recent arrest of 12 members of the Committee for Social Self Defense and have sought to put some distance between themselves and the dissident community.

Western media accounts have made much of the visible expressions of religious sentiment on the part of the workers, seeking to buttress the idea that this is an anti-communist strike. However the undeniable identification with the church and Catholicism co-exists with manifestations of revolutionary socialist convictions among the workers. Last Sunday the *New York Times* reported that the workers held a mass in the Lenin shipyard and then joined together in singing the Internationale, the anthem of revolutionary workers throughout the world.

The influence of the church is not simply the product of strong religious feeling among the masses. It is also a reflection of the role the church has appropriated as a voice for national independence. The church has taken advantage of the compromised position of the Party and subtly played on Polish national sentiment and resentment toward the Soviets to bolster its position.

In any event the workers have not pressed the question of the church's status during the strike and the church has been unwilling to jeopardize its relationship of co-existence with the state by backing the strike. The limits of its influence were clarified when Cardinal Wyszynski, the leading prelate, went on television and urged the workers to show restraint, in effect urging them to return to work. The message did not play well in Gdansk and the strike continues.

To oppose the strike on the grounds that reactionary forces, real or imagined, might gain influence is a profoundly shortsighted and stupid position. In the case of the Polish Party such an attitude would function as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Repression of the strikers could only strengthen the hand of the enemies of socialism. For revolutionaries in Poland to support such repression would deny them any audience, let alone influence, among the mass of the Polish workers. For revolutionaries in the US to take such an attitude would be to forfeit our credibility as advocates of working class rule in the US before the workers of our country.

History is not a simple thing. It has imposed upon the Polish working class a tortured and twisting road towards its own emancipation. The Polish workers are travelling it nonetheless.

# Rectification and Petty-Bourgeois Chauvinism

by Clay Newlin

*"Take the situation of the advanced workers...who you want to win to form a party. Now you are asking them to take a big step forward, you're saying, 'come on, step out of line, put yourself out on the line, challenge the ruling class forthrightly', and yet you have an organization which does not yet have a coherent strategy that you have tested in practice and demonstrated before the world as an organization of dedicated revolutionaries with a consolidated, clear-cut worldview. I don't think that they are going to take a chance on you."*

—Irwin Silber, *Rectification vs. Fusion debate, San Fran, 9-78*

Silber's real message would have been clearer if he had said this: "Most workers are not brave enough to want to play a role in building the party. Even those few who could possibly be brought to understand the need for a party are too timid to participate in constructing one; they are afraid to oppose the government unless they have a lot of backing and support. Given this, it is absurd to even encourage workers to join the communist movement at this point. It is better to rely on such proven and reliable communists as myself and the rest of the current party-builders."

Ironically, Silber made these statements less than six months after the conclusion of one of the most bitter strikes in the history of the Miners' union. During this confrontation literally thousands of miners confronted not only armed local and state authorities, but even a Taft-Hartley injunction backed by the threat of deployment of federal troops. Though their leadership was riven with factionalism thus putting their union in a weakened position, the miners showed ample readiness to confront state power when their vital interests were at stake.

Such demonstrations of the courage and fighting capacity of US workers apparently made no impression on Silber or the other future leaders of the rectification circle. To them, the miners' strike and numerous similar examples of worker combativeness had no particular significance for those active in the party-building movement.

Their inability to appreciate the fearlessness of the workers comes from a special kind of arrogance. It stems from the self-conceited illusion of superiority which infects petty-bourgeois intellectuals in our society.

## ARCHIE BUNKERS & MICHAEL STIVICS

Petty-bourgeois chauvinism consists in the view that those who live a middle class existence are superior to those who are forced to work with their hands. Instead of seeing their privileges as an outgrowth of the oppression of the working class, petty-bourgeois elements view their position as befitting their advanced mental and intellectual powers. Their easier jobs, more comfortable lifestyles, greater social status — all are due to their innate mental advantages.

This attitude of superiority is especially strong among intellectual strata. Since their social status is most bound up with their ability to harness their mental capacities and place these capacities at the service of the existing social order, their tendency to justify their privileged existence as rooted in

their intelligence becomes almost a compulsion.

While rooted in the material privileges of the middle strata, petty-bourgeois chauvinism also serves, and is therefore fostered by, monopoly capital. Apart from blinding the petty-bourgeoisie to its own oppression by imperialism, it also teaches it to look down on the workers. Clearly, the ruling class has every interest in feeding disdain for the only class capable of threatening its rule.

The bourgeoisie nourishes petty-bourgeois chauvinism in many ways. Through its monopoly on television and other mass media, art literature and culture, the monopolists continually project the image of the boorish and backward Archie Bunkers on the one hand and the intellectual and socially progressive Michael Stivics (Archie's son-in-law) on the other.

families is greater than that of whites, most nevertheless entered the party-building movement as ex-students.

Just how extensive is the petty-bourgeois composition of the party-building movement is shown by a survey of the forces in the OCIC taken about two years ago. Typical of the communist movement as a whole, working-class comrades (excluding the large numbers of those who sought proletarian jobs on the basis of political commitment) comprised merely 3.4% of the membership.

Not only does petty-bourgeois chauvinism find fertile soil in the movement's class composition but it is helped along by another important factor — the isolation of communists from the class struggle.

This isolation dovetails nicely with the prejudices of most intellectuals. For



Given the prevalence of this chauvinism in society at large, it should come as no surprise that petty-bourgeois chauvinism influences the communist movement. After all our movement does not exist in an airtight state. Just as becoming a communist does not make us immune from white chauvinism, so too the adoption of Marxism-Leninism does not automatically inoculate us against petty-bourgeois chauvinism.

Though anti-working-class bias affects all segments of the US left, it is a particular problem in the party-building movement. This results, in the first place from the composition of our movement.

The class composition of party-builders is — as is readily apparent — overwhelmingly petty-bourgeois. Though only a significant minority has an essentially petty-bourgeois relation to the process of social production (e.g., intellectuals, professors, teachers, doctors, lawyers, nurses, etc.), the vast majority do not view themselves primarily as workers, even if they may temporarily have a proletarian job.

This is true even of those comrades who come from working-class backgrounds. They may have come from working-class families and have grown up in a working class neighborhood, but the majority of these comrades were effectively declassed during their period as students. Though raised in a working-class environment, by the time that they completed college, they saw themselves as petty-bourgeois intellectuals.

And it is also true of the bulk of national minority cadre in the communist movement. While the numbers of these comrades who come from proletarian

in the absence of contact with the workers, the isolation appears to stem not primarily from the weaknesses of the communist movement but chiefly from the backwardness of the working class.

## FUSION THE ANTIDOTE

Fusion with the working class movement, of course, cuts against this prejudice. Instead of the mythical Archie Bunkers, it brings revolutionaries face to face with real workers. It thus puts communists in a position to grasp both the real strengths and the genuine weaknesses of the workers.

Any honest appraisal of these strengths and weaknesses can only lead to the conclusion that the primary weaknesses of the communist movement are internal. Its lack of perspective on its own aims and how it is to realize them, its immature and narrow practice and its small and weak organizations soften its appeal to both workers and petty-bourgeois strata alike.

Fusion cuts against petty-bourgeois chauvinism in an even more important way. By defining the essence of party-building as the maturing and ever deepening merger of revolutionary program and strategy with the advanced workers, it turns the face of the communist movement directly towards the class struggle.

Instead of allowing party-builders to stew in their own (petty-bourgeois) juices, the fusion line encourages them to transform themselves. It demands that they become a genuine vanguard force by merging with the leading elements from the working class movement.

And it demands that both existing party-builders and the advanced elements undergo significant changes in the process. On the one hand, the petty-bourgeois intellectuals must become working-class intellectuals by directing their efforts towards solving the difficult problems facing the proletariat. And on the other it demands that the advanced workers also become worker intellectuals by adopting Marxism-Leninism as their guide to action.

Petty-bourgeois chauvinism is inevitably an abstacle to this process of transformation. In the first place, the communist movement must recognize the need to transform itself. The petty-bourgeois elements must realize that in order to become revolutionaries they must abandon their self-satisfied illusion of superiority and put themselves in the service of the working class. And they must also grasp the fact that along with having something to bring to the working class they have something to learn from it as well. Otherwise they will have no desire to really merge with the advanced workers.

Petty-bourgeois chauvinism is also an obstacle from the advanced workers point of view. While anxious to take up their own liberation, the most class conscious workers have no desire to subject themselves to the outrages of those who view them as inferior. A movement that in the name of communism neither respects their real strengths nor faces their real weaknesses but treats them as second class participants at best and undesirable children at worst will have no real appeal.

It is precisely the pursuit of fusion with the class struggle which forced the PWOC to face the anti-working-class prejudice within its own ranks. In summing up our all too slow progress towards fusion with the advanced workers we came face to face with the following reality.

Our members continually underestimated both the workers' openness to communism and their ability to grasp communist theory. There was one recruitment process for the petty-bourgeois intellectuals and one for the advanced workers; the intellectuals were brought in speedily whereas the advanced had to practically beat down the door.

Those workers who were recruited suffered even more. Within the organization they had a second class status. While our petty-bourgeois members were willing to accept them as members, they drew the line at following their leadership. When it came to formulating policy, the comments of working-class comrades were listened to politely and then just as politely ignored. Viewed as incapable of moving beyond mere membership, workers were only assigned the most practical tasks and certainly never theoretical ones. And they were promoted into leadership only by way of exception.

Our summation of this practice brought us face to face with a rather unpleasant truth: while favoring fusion in theory, in practice we had sought to protect and preserve the hegemony of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals (especially the white ones) in the PWOC.

## RECTIFICATION FUELS CLASS PREJUDICE

However, while fusion cuts against petty-bourgeois chauvinism, the rectification line not only is consistent with it

(continued on following page)

but positively builds upon it. This can be seen in several ways.

In the first place, the rectification line liquidates the need to forge worker intellectuals. It does this from two points of view. On the one hand, it regards attempts to mold revolutionary intellectuals out of the advanced workers as premature. In their view, fusion with the advanced elements should only be taken up after the party has been formed.

And on the other it sees no need to really transform the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. In its view the process of molding these intellectuals is merely the straightforward logical progression of their previous development. Like a Catholic converting to Protestantism, they have solely to replace their bourgeois thinking with Marxism-Leninism learned through study and discussion.

The rectificationists' liquidation of the need to forge worker intellectuals has serious consequences. By viewing the process of molding revolutionaries out of intellectuals as an essentially evolutionary progression, they belittle the real difficulties involved.

Far from just evolving from intellectual to revolutionary, the process of becoming a communist demands a qualitative break with the past. It demands a thorough and protracted struggle against bourgeois ideology, a radical separation from the deeply ingrained habits of individualism and egotism and particularly a total severing of the illusion of petty-bourgeois superiority.

Contrary to the self-congratulatory illusions of the rectificationists, the experience of the party-building movement has shown this transformation to be an extremely difficult process. Study and discussion are only the first steps in a lengthy cycle demanding in addition criticism self-criticism, practice, renewed study and struggle and so on.

Moreover, in stark contrast with the process of maturation from advanced worker to revolutionary intellectual, the petty-bourgeois comrade's transformation is one for which neither his socialization nor his concrete relation to the means of production provides much help.

It is indicative of their basic idealism that the rectificationists liquidate the material effects of socialization and relation to production. In their view, a whole movement of aspiring communists with a petty-bourgeois socialization and relation to production can transform itself into a proletarian vanguard without either attempting to alter the socialization of its members or changing their relation to the means of production.

While no one can assert that it is impossible to achieve such a transformation, as materialists we must hold that it is highly unlikely. For however strong the subjective desires of petty-bourgeois elements to adopt a proletarian

line, their daily existence and relation to production will inevitably provide a powerful counterweight.

In addition to underestimating the difficulty of forging revolutionaries from intellectuals, the rectificationists also deprive the communist movement of a powerful bulwark against opportunism. By denying the advanced elements the opportunity to participate in party-building, they isolate the communist movement from its most stable potential base for proletarian ideology.

While the fact that a group of workers hold a given position does not make it a proletarian one, nevertheless on the whole workers provide a more reliable base for Marxism-Leninism than the petty-bourgeois does. This is because their daily participation in the class struggle tends to dispel illusions about how to defeat the class enemy in a manner not directly available to the petty-bourgeois intellectual.

That workers provide the firmest bedrock for proletarian ideology is not some vague anti-Leninist and workerist fantasy as the rectificationists would have us believe. There is real significance to the fact that every intellectual prominent in the formative period of the Russian party with the sole exception of Lenin went over to Menshevism whereas the Bolshevik positions received the support of the great bulk of the workers. It is also true that revisionism made the most progress in the CPUSA during its period of greatest petty-bourgeois composition.

Nor should we labor under the rectificationist illusion that this basic materialist proposition becomes correct only once the party has been formed. On the contrary, in the pre-party period it has a special importance. In the absence of a firm revolutionary theory which has established its hegemony over party-builders, our forces are particularly prone to opportunism. Under such circumstances, we can hardly afford to deny ourselves any opportunity to strengthen the potential base for proletarian ideology in our movement.

Clearly, both the rectificationist underestimation of the difficulty of the transition from petty-bourgeois intellectual to revolutionary and its denial of the special role of advanced workers as a bulwark against opportunism only nourish petty-bourgeois illusions. These views only encourage intellectuals to downplay the need for a sharp break with their past on the one hand and to belittle the real strengths of the advanced workers on the other.

#### THE THEORETICAL STRUGGLE

An additional, and related, manifestation of petty-bourgeois chauvinism is revealed in the rectificationists' approach to the theoretical struggle. Not only do they maintain that it is incorrect to hold that the actual class struggle in the US should set our theoretical agenda, but they also argue that it is wrong to



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attempt to test our theoretical work by applying it to that struggle.

To buttress this idealist position, they openly appeal to anti-working class attitudes. In the absence of a party, they assert, the workers are so backward and their struggles so limited that to take up the questions posed by their battles inevitably feeds reformism. And further, it is argued that given the limitations of the workers' struggles, to attempt to test theory in practice prior to the formation of a party can also only lead to opportunism.

In order to reveal the petty-bourgeois chauvinism here, it is necessary to be clear on two points. First, it should be remembered that the rectificationists argue that theory is primary in relation to practice only in the pre-party period. But, if the fact that the struggles of the masses of workers lag behind the consciousness of communists is taken to mean that the actual class struggle should neither anchor our theoretical work nor provide the testing grounds for the solutions arrived at, then practice can never be primary.

For does not the primacy of practice in relation to theory mean that on the one hand practice determines theory's agenda and on the other provides its criterion of truth? And, is it not the case that the practice of the masses will generally lag behind the consciousness of the vanguard elements?

Thus, if the rectificationists were consistent they would have to raise their objections to using mass practice to fix our theoretical agenda or to verify our theoretical work in every period without exception — and not just the pre-party one.

Second, it is necessary to recall that in the rectificationists scheme the party is built prior to fusion with the class struggle. Given the present composition of the communist movement, this view can only mean that the party is built primarily by petty-bourgeois intellectuals.

Having grasped these two points, the rectificationists' appeal to petty-bourgeois chauvinism should be clear. In the first place, in order to obscure their faulty logic they speculate on the intellectuals' desire to substitute themselves for the working class. The petty-bourgeoisie has an extremely difficult time accepting that by itself it is incapable of making the revolution, that the "uneducated and uncultured" mass

of workers are those on whom the future of humanity depends.

Rectification says to them: "Comrade intellectuals, it may be true that the proletariat is the agent of revolution. But do not despair. You can become their leaders. You alone can become their vanguard."

The appeal to the substitution complex is buttressed by playing on the petty-bourgeoisie's fears of the workers. To the above, the rectificationists add: "Moreover, comrade intellectuals, you need not include these 'Archie Bunkers' in the formative stages of constructing a proletarian vanguard. You can conduct your theoretical work without regard to either the obstacles the workers face or the errors in your thinking that their practice seems to indicate. And, by postponing any attempt to merge with them, you can consolidate petty-bourgeois hegemony over the party, thus ensuring that neither intelligence nor culture is lost."

There are other examples of the rectificationists' reliance on anti-working class prejudice. But from what is enumerated above, it should be clear that the rectification line not only roots itself in petty-bourgeois chauvinism but depends upon it for its survival.

Given this, it is no accident that the rectification circle has its base primarily in the least proletarian sections of our tendency. An example of this can be seen in their participation in the formation of the national trade union fractions.

Though not well represented in any of the fractions, support for rectification was strongest in the teachers and health (made up almost exclusively of health professionals) fractions and has been virtually non-existent in either telephone or auto fractions.

Taken together, the chauvinist premises and petty-bourgeois composition of the rectification circle fully confirm a remark I made at the very beginning of the struggle between rectification and fusion. "...the view that party-building and fusion stand in contradiction," I wrote, "can only be successful to the extent that it adapts itself to the petty-bourgeois intellectual who makes a principle of his isolation from the working class" (*Guardian*, April 13, 1977).

August 22, 1980

## Guatemala ...

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### PEOPLE'S ARMY EMERGING

In 1975 the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) emerged, and in late 1979 a fourth group, Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA) carried out its first armed actions. Both of them seem to have placed particular emphasis on building a base among the peasant population, particularly the numerous Indian sectors, non-Spanish speaking descendants of the Maya, who make up more than half of the population. They have in particular raised the demands of the special oppression of the Indians and defended their rights to cultural autonomy. Most shocking to the ruling class have been armed propaganda actions by these groups in which armed Indian women have participated in temporary takeovers of towns to explain to the townspeople in their own language their call for revolution.

In May of this year the four revolutionary groups announced the formation of a single body to coordinate their armed activity. This is an encouraging sign which should lead to the formation of a single people's army capable of providing political and military direction to the struggle to end the massive repression by those forces which have been groomed and maintained by the US. It is clear that the armed organizations support the demands of the popular organizations and are rooted in them. Only through mass popular political organization, based on the day to day demands of the people, combined with popular self defense through military organization, will the people of Guatemala be able to end the bloody repression and build a new Guatemala.

The example of Nicaragua is a real and vivid one for the Guatemalan people, as it is for the people of El Salvador, and all of Central America.

# Letter on Feminism ...

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struggle goes forward under socialism male supremacy will wane. Socialist-feminism negates the revolutionary potential and leading role of the working class. It denies that class struggle is the motive force of history. This stand reflects the class essence of socialist-feminism as a petty bourgeois system of politics.

The subjective origins of these politics should be apparent. Middle class women experience their oppression primarily as women. They readily generalize that the sexual contradiction is, if not primary, at least co-equal with class exploitation in explaining the oppressive features of society that they perceive. Like middle class men, they are saturated with prejudices toward the working class. The notion that the working class will be the principle force that emancipates them does not easily square with these prejudices. The "autonomous women's movement" existing along side the working class movement as a co-equal partner in building a revolutionary society provides a conceptual means to preserve the privileged position of the petty bourgeois vis-a-vis the working class.

Significantly, socialist-feminists have not extended their analysis to the question of racism and national oppression. To be consistent they would have to argue that class struggle is insufficient to eradicate racism because whites have a vested interest in the structure of privileges associated with white supremacy. Thus the revolution must target this institution as a co-equal enemy with capitalism and patriarchy. The term socialist-feminist thus falls short and should be extended to read socialist, anti-racist, feminist. What is it, other than white chauvinism, that explains the selectivity of the socialist-feminists when it comes to the "autonomy" of different forms of oppression?

Nakawatase argues that we fail to take into account the diversity of feminist views and more specifically that some feminists are cognizant of questions of race and class. We disagree that we are caricaturing feminism by focusing on its most backward expressions. As the above discussion of socialist-feminism seeks to argue, the manifestations of white chauvinism and anti-working class bias are not limited to the most backward forces.

Feminism as a whole rejects the leading role of the working class and the strategic primacy of the struggle against racism. This is part of what gives it its unity and coherence as a distinct ideological trend, regardless of any number of differences that obviously exist within the feminist spectrum.

If feminism means anything at all there must be a common politic and certain shared theoretical premises that distinguish it from other trends. We think that there is a common view of the sexual contradiction and its relationship to the class struggle. Like all ideas this view has a definite class character. This is what we are trying to draw out. In this context a discussion of the range of views in the feminist movement would have been wholly inappropriate in Buckley's speech.

Nakawatase goes on to say the PWOC "would be better served by some engagement in the struggle they criticize." It is not the struggle against sexism which we are criticizing but rather the approach to that struggle by conscious feminist forces. In relation to our role in advancing the struggle against sexism we are self-critical (and have been so in the pages of the *Organizer*) for failing to play a consistent role within the women's movement generally and in relation to Take Back the Night in particular. We think, however, our decision to distribute a broadside critical of slogan and politics of the TBN action in conjunction with mobilizing for it was a break with our history of sectarianism and not a continuation of it.

Nakawatase correctly says we should have been there when the slogans, speakers and other matters basic to the politics of the event were being determined. But by the same token we must ask where were the advanced feminist forces Nakawatase alludes to when it came to developing anti-racist propaganda and agitation that could compensate for the weaknesses of the activity and educate the thousands of women there around the vital question of racism and rape? As far as we can determine, these forces believe it was a sectarian error to put out such material. Certainly they did not do so and certainly there was nearly universal criticism of the PWOC from these quarters for distributing its broadside.

Perhaps these forces did argue for a more advanced perspective within the planning committee, but when push came to shove their problems with the politics that eventually emerged were not of the magnitude to warrant any public criticism of the event. Judged by their practice we can only conclude that concern with "alienating" other white women was of considerably more importance than developing the anti-racist content of the action. The struggle against racism is fine and good but (white) sisterhood is powerful.

# Boston Hospitals ...

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The International officers of both unions have required their Boston locals to make most of the initial investment, but the locals don't have the resources to challenge the big places. The Internationals seem to want something for nothing and have yet to finance the necessary all-out assault.

Forced to go it alone, Boston's hospital workers have organized anyway. The organizing committees that have been built have had to defend themselves against the hospitals on the one hand and struggle with the unions to get organizing help on the other. A first victory in the struggle for union resources came this spring when a merger was forced between Local 880 and Local 285 of SEIU. Local 285 represented city and state workers, including workers at Boston City Hospital, and was a bigger, stronger local than 880. This merger could unlock some resources for organizing, but the new merged local's organizing staff has yet to be enlarged.

Just as they are the key to pressuring the unions to develop large, multi-national organizing staffs, so are the hospital workers themselves key to winning the battle to organize Boston's

hospitals. Only strong organizing committees with multi-national leadership and a firm understanding of strategy and tactics can bust the union-busters and beat the hospitals. These committees must develop clear programs that speak to the needs of all workers — that struggle for equality and against discrimination by standing firm on the key issue of affirmative action.

All of this can happen. The victories can be won. With unity, militance and organization, the 1980's can see the Boston hospitals organized.

# El Salvador ...

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others (especially the PLF and its ally the Revolutionary Bloc) have insisted on a strategy of prolonged warfare. Apparently, so far the latter strategy has been adopted. Nevertheless, it is likely that the situation will come to a head in the near future.

# Kerner Commission ...

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To expect government and business to "solve" the problem of racism is like asking the fox to guard the chickens. While it is good and necessary to force concessions from both, the fundamental solution will require the abolition of the profit system and the government that presides over it. It will require a revolutionary transfer of power to the working class and the construction of a socialist society based on full racial equality. Again, the Kerner Commission, as a ruling class instrument, was constitutionally incapable of even entertaining such notions and necessarily sought reforms that would maintain existing power relations.

Putting aside its self-serving conclusions, the Kerner Commission report still provides a useful barometer for measuring national progress towards racial equality. What is striking is that in the 13 years since its publication, not only has there been little change in the conditions that produced the rebellions of the 1960's,

but that has been mostly for the worse. Unemployment is worse, housing is worse, schools are worse.

The election of a number of Black officials and a modest increase in Black enrollment in higher education has done little to reverse the situation of the masses of Black people. Police abuse and a double standard of justice remain the rule. The Miami rebellion was sparked by the acquittal of police officers who killed a Black insurance man by bashing in his head after he committed a traffic violation. In Chattanooga Black people took to the streets following the acquittal of two Klansmen who were involved in shooting four Black women.

What the Kerner Commission said in 1967 — that US society was moving toward two societies, Black and white, separate and unequal — is no less true today. It will take more than another commission report to alter this direction.

# Graterford ...

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Now the big question was, how long could the prisoners hold out against that kind of pressure? State Representative John White (D-Phila.) made a surprise visit to Graterford on the second day of the strike, and found things to be as the prisoners had claimed. White told of his visit to the prison kitchen, "We found that dead mice and rats were in every storage area of that facility. We found enough roast beef to feed the entire prison population in a room that was unrefrigerated. The meat was rancid. Kitchen personnel told us that the meat was to be cooked for dinner on Sunday, two days later. We found men working in areas where the water was two and three inches deep, without rubber safety shoes. We found a mess."

The strike remained solid for about a week. But by the eighth day, the 24-hour lockup and threats against the prisoners began to have their effect, and prisoners began returning to work. By the tenth day, only a few younger prisoners in "C" block remained on strike. Warden Cuyler still refused to negotiate, and continued to tell the press that he had not known of any grievances before the strike began.

## PRISONERS WIN GAINS

A week later, Pennsylvania Attorney General Harvey Bartle toured the prison, and spoke with the inmates about their grievances. Obviously shaken by the week-long strike, he promised to "find out what problems there are" at the prison. The Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee also decided to hold hearings on the prison system, and the method for handling prisoners' grievances in particular.

The prisoners' well-organized protest finally began to bear fruit less than a month after the strike ended. Attorney General Bartle ordered a number of reforms at Graterford and other prisons, most dealing with the grievances presented by the prisoners on the first day of their strike. Yearly physical exams will be given to all prisoners over 40 years old. The dental technician training program that was to have been taken out of Grat-

erford will be kept, and the state will find a hospital to take over sponsorship of the program. A welding program will be added to the job training available, and a barber will be re-activated.

Clearly, the prisoners have won a major victory. When state prison superintendent William Robinson objected to these concessions being made to the prisoners (he feared that to give in like this would encourage more strikes in the future), Bartle fired him. The question of visiting rights, inmate self-government, complaint procedures, and the unresponsive warden Cuyler remain unsolved. As we go to press, the State House Judiciary Committee is still working on its report on the prison situation, and a reform bill is expected to be introduced when the report is released. Now that the heat is off, it's doubtful that any major reforms will be made by the legislature.

One of the key demands of the strike — better job training programs that will prepare inmates for jobs that really exist — challenges the prevailing stereotype that all prisoners are nothing more than anti-social parasites. Obviously, these prisoners put a lot of work and sacrifice into their attempt to get decent jobs when they leave jail. In fact, being poor and/or Black has a lot more to do with someone landing in jail than whether they did or didn't commit crimes. The working class person who steals a car or a stereo set is likely to go to jail, while the middle class "pillar of society" who cheats on their taxes or steals from the public through fraudulent business practices will get a slap on the wrist.

Former prison warden William Nagel found in a recent study that the states with the highest number of prisoners were not those with the highest crime rates, but rather with the highest number of Black people. Colorado, for example, has a high crime rate but few prisoners, while Mississippi has a low crime rate, but the highest percentage of Black citizens and one of the highest rates of imprisonment.

ment, which is committed fundamentally (despite any rhetoric about human rights and support for democracy) to the wealthy few and to the military in El Salvador and the rest of Latin America, will try to prevent the masses of El Salvador from taking over the government. Our job of course, is to do what we can to prevent the US government from intervening in El Salvador.

(With special thanks to Bob Armstrong whose reports on El Salvador in the *Guardian* provided much of the information used here.)