The Politics of Ecology

Lenin Centennial
1870-1970

Black Panther Caucus at GM
Italy · Delano · April 15
Shop Struggle Committees
Women and the SMC
Gay Semel

Ultimately, only when working people control society will we be able to redirect the nation’s wealth from production for profit to production for human needs.

Since the document fails to analyze the roots of the oppression of women or the economic role that the family plays under capitalism, it gets off to a shaky ground when trying to deal with the fact that wars have often allowed women greater latitude, in-the-case with which they can get jobs and in the greater safety of jobs open to them. Point 50 states that war “reinforces the traditional roles of men and women; even when she does work in a defense plant performing a role formally assigned to a man, she is carrying the job on an emergency basis.” This may indeed have been the only time that she could get such a job, and rather than reifying or traditional roles, war does tend to grant women greater leeway, but this is not to say that the key to women’s liberation is to send all the men off to fight a war however. The point to make is that women are perfectly capable of doing their jobs but are pushed in and out of the labor force according to the needs of the social system, not their own needs and abilities.

The resolution continues by saying that “an end to the war would set a new stage not only for Vietnamese liberation, but for women’s liberation as well” -- a statement which the author makes no attempt to prove and can only be taken as pure demagoguery (especially if one considers that four million women lost their jobs in the eight months following the end of World War II). Hardly a step forward for the cause of women’s liberation.

The resolution concludes by calling for one day in the April week of anti-war activity to focus on women and the war. We can only assume that the other six days will deal with men and the war -- hardly an equal distribution. It does not attempt to discuss the politics of these activities or to raise demands necessary for the liberation of women. Not only are the specific points (or the lack thereof) in this resolution wrong, but, in fact, its entire thrust is misguided. If we are to talk about women’s liberation and the war, we must analyze the integral relationship between them, not just allude to it. Basic to the oppression and exploitation of women and basic to the war in Vietnam and the whole foreign policy of the US is the dynamics of capitalism as a social system. We must address ourselves to the whole system, not just its various separate manifestations such as the war or the oppression of women. We must make clear where power lies, and what will be required to defeat those interests which perpetuate exploitation and oppression. We must make clear that in this classist and capitalist society will bring an end to war and enable women to achieve their liberation.

The anti-war movement must begin to address itself to the only power capable of overthrowing class society -- the working class. We must raise demands relevant to the needs of working people -- both men and women. We must develop links between women’s liberation and the anti-war movement, but on an honest basis, continually stressing that both movements must fight the capitalist social order to win their own demands. The anti-war movement -- if it is to bring women in on a legitimate basis, around the struggle for their own liberation as well as against the war -- must raise demands such as those pushed by SMC women and other radical women at the SMC conference. We must demand equal pay for equal work, an end to sexual tracking in the schools, and on the job, free access to state-controlled day-care centers, free, voluntary abortions on demand. We must also demand that the funds for meeting these demands be raised by taxing the banks and corporations in a meaningful way.
ITALY: After the Offensive

Andrea Savonuzzi

The Italian 'hot' summer is over. Practically all the contracts which were due for renewal have been signed. Yet it has left behind a mood of unresolved problems, a trail of dead, and a massive resistance against leftists and trade unions.

For us as socialists it is essential to analyse the history and events of the last few months to see how the perspectives outlined in the December I.S. have remained unchanged and to draw from this experience important lessons for the future.

It is difficult to express and convey fully the courage, determination and enthusiasm which Italian workers have displayed over these months. In spite of provocation from the police, the authorities and the bosses, they have managed almost without exception to remain undeterred and not to lose sight of their objectives.

It must be stressed that the impact of the struggle came from the rank and file. Yet the movement has been directed by the official trade union apparatus. This apparent contradiction is both real and unreal at the same time.

On the one hand the pressure from below has resulted in the unprecedented unity of all trade unions (Christian Democrat, Social Democrat and Communist), an alliance which has been formed at the rank and file level and then mirrored at the top. The apparatus has been able to regain control of the leadership of the struggle only to the extent that it has accepted and advanced the genuine demands of the base. However, once the union bureaucracy had regained control, they were able to use it to divert and dampen the struggle. This does not mean that at the trade union level the contracts have resulted in a complete sellout. On the contrary, large (if not dramatic) increases in wages have been won. The working week will be reduced to 40 hours without loss of pay over three years. The right of the trade union to be represented in the factory through a shop and department delegate structure and general assemblies has been won. The differentials in benefits, holidays, and assistance between blue-collar and white-collar workers have been decreased.

All this goes most of the way towards meeting some of the demands of the rank and file. They are important concessions wrested from the bosses with great sacrifice. (For many months take-home pay has often been below half its normal level.) The trade union bureaucracy, however, in fighting for some of the trade union demands of the workers has managed to frustrate their wider aspirations. The struggle has effectively been politically deflected.

The rift between large and small employers already apparent in September has increased over the last few months. While both sides complain bitterly about the hardships and difficulties which the concessions they had to make to workers are going to cause them, the truth of the matter is that they affect them very differently indeed.

The more modern international employers (Fiat, Pirelli, Fiat, etc.) can easily afford the increased costs by raising productivity, expanding production and generally taking over a larger share of the market. Internationally, also, they are better placed to take advantage of the revaluation of the mark. Many small or medium-small producers may well, instead, be forced out of production or to merge with the larger giants.

This rift is reflected in the turmoil within the Confederation of Italian Industry (Confindustria). The smaller producers are leaving it to the giants and flocking towards the Confederation of Small Industries. Even within the nationalised industries there is a rift between large and small industries.

The contracts which were agreed to separately by industry led to the fragmentation of the working-class offensive in the last stages of the struggle. The weaker sections were left to fend for themselves. The same process was mirrored within the industrialists. Yet it had a totally different meaning. The unity of the working class is its very strength. For the employer, instead, a strategy which is designed to drive the least efficient out of business or into the arm of the bigger brothers strengthens the class as a whole. The process may be superficially similar, but it is qualitatively different.

The differences between the two sections of the employing classes, today as in September, result in two different political perspectives. On the one hand the more dynamic and less economically threatened members of the ruling class opt for a reformist path, a strategy based on the integration of the CP into the government machine in the hope of neutralising the working class. On the other, the more backward business and industrial sectors are calling for law and order and a switch to the right.

The Social Democrats are the chief exponent of the right-wing solution. By splitting from Neri’s Socialists on the issue of the CP’s possible contribution to the government, they had clearly indicated over the summer that they intended to use the inevitable disorders of autumn to appeal to the country as a party of order. To this effect, a campaign was mounted to create tension and anxiety.

The sharp contrast between the hysterical articles in the papers and the responsibility and cool determination of the workers threatened to punctuate the fear of revolution that they were counting on instilling in the thorny issue of a policeman and the explosion of a bomb in Milan. Yet the hysteria and the violence are not disconnected. The Observer wrote, ‘No body is crazy enough to blame President Saragat for the bomb plot. It is saying today that his “strategy of tension” indirectly encouraged the far right to go over to terrorism.’

This strategy has, however, failed in spite of Neri’s latest attempt to mislead the masses. President Saragat sent a telegram of condolences accusing the leftists before any proof was presented or arrests made. An attempt was made to capitalize on the bomb tragedy according to the Evening Standard: ‘At the moment of panic, after the bomb, the Italian President, prompted by powerful industrial forces, planned ... the dissolution of the two Chambers and a coup d’état la de Gaulle.’ But this failed.

It is impossible to say whether the reports in these papers are correct. The Italian press has remained silent on all this. Indeed, attempts were made through the various Italian embassies to silence the reporters. Yet what is clear is that a right-wing turn inspired by the more backward industrial concerns and some of the more reactionary political forces has not taken place or has been stopped. This is not accidental. It is part of the strength of the left and the margin for manoeuvre which the Italian capital has for reformist policies still implies attempts to induce the CP to join, or at least to support, the government in the near future.

Out of the struggle the CP has emerged as a responsible party of order. It is true that through its trade union it has largely led the trade union struggle. But what would be more accurate to say is that the party has abdicated all responsibility of leadership to the trade union. It has increased its membership no doubt losing some of its most militant members, but recruiting from previously unorganised and apolitical workers.

The expulsion of a group of left-wing intellectuals who advocated a more independent trade union action, which expressed mildly revolutionary aspirations and opposed the policy of entry into the government, has created some unrest in the Party. Although the magazine was only for consumption by intellectuals the fact that the Party’s commander had in no way attempted to create a working class following for themselves, or to set up a real oppositional tendency inside the Party, they have still gathered some support.

Unrest in the CP

It is a symptom of the troubled state of many Cpers that in Rome, Pisa, Bergamo, Naples and Cagliari there was deep unrest. Some branch committees had to be dissolved and some provincial Federations disciplined. Yet although this may help the left groups in some ways, it paradoxically also strengthens the Party. The CP’s strategy of bourgeois receptivity and the attempt to enter bourgeois coalitions demanded the expulsion of these timid revolutionaries.

The loss of even a few hundred members up and down the country and the danger of the pull which these comradely orders exerted on the party as a small penalty to pay for the increased security which the party as a whole will be able to afford the bourgeoisie. In the next few months with the election of the regional governments the CP should be able to pull through towards the government. Already they have held as an example the eyes of all the relative quiet and calm of the Emilia region where most of the local coalitions are already well established.

At the present moment the two sections of the bourgeoisie are still unable to solve their conflict one way or another. At one and the same time the CP and random acts of repression are made.

The liberal government of the liberal parliament,
manned mostly by antifa-fascists, is using fascist laws, in particular Article 272 which forbids propaganda for the dictatorship of one class over another, Article 305 which forbids subversive politics by association (any association), and Article 401 which forbids stirring up class hatred. Seven thousand leftists and trade unionists are now under indictment under these acts. Yet in the long run there can be no solution to the problems of the Italian ruling class with this kind of repressive measure which can only heighten the class struggle.

The prospects for the Italian ruling class are still those of relative expansion in spite of a massive flight of capital abroad. So long as these perspectives hold, so does a reformist solution. Already the more progressive elements are thinking of using the Constitutional Court to declare the inapplicability of these laws.

The magnitude of the struggle and the unity of the three main trade unions which diminishes their explicit political allegiance should have opened new perspectives and opportunities for the revolutionary left. The attempts by the trade union bureaucracy to divert the attention of the workers at the height of the struggle towards protests against high rents, the chains of urban transport, the inadequacies of the welfare state and governmental corruption, could have given the left an important leverage.

Double-Edged Weapons

Most of the weapons in the hands of the bureaucracy are double-edged. When the struggle is specific, they attempt to widen it in the hope of diminishing its intensity. But this leads them to raise more political slogans and more political demands. Such a contradiction of the impasse and ambiguity in which they find themselves. On the one hand they rely on control of their main base for their bargaining power with the ruling class, on the other they constantly need to prove their militant opposition to employers to retain their base.

The more political perspectives which the bureaucracy has opened up could have been better used by the left. Instead of exploiting these contradictions, they relied on blanked opposition to all actions of the bureaucracy to increase their political standing and to heighten consciousness. Inevitably they have tended to fall.

A precondition for an effective policy by the left today is the recognition of the importance of the official trade union. Instead they simply raise the utopian call for a revolutionary trade union. Thus they left themselves open to accusations of splitting the working class just as it was enjoying its newfound unity. The problem today is not the setting up of new trade unions, but drawing up and fighting for a set of demands which will effectively attract around the left groups the most conscious elements of the class in a programme of internal opposition to the existing union bureaucracy.

This, however, requires a clear perspective and theoretical understanding of the role of a vanguard party, the trade unions, etc. The history of Stalinism which still distorts, even if by rejection (which it is not yet total or obvious) the Italian left makes progress very difficult.

These inadequacies led to the relative isolation of the left groups from the struggles of the workers. More tragically, perhaps, the very same problems led to the relative ineffectiveness of the rank-and-file committees.

There are democratic institutions set up by militant workers inside factories often with the aid of outside politics. During the last couple of years and throughout the summer they have been a very important element in the struggle. Yet during this autumn they, too, have proved unable to provide a political leadership. They, too, have been left largely watching from the sidelines as the official trade union apparatus regained control of the factories and file.

At the time of the guerrilla struggles of the summer, the rank and file committees were able to increase their prestige. They were able to inject politics into the factory, press for rank and file control and initiative, and win important concessions.

When the struggle expanded, however, the crisis of the rank and file committees became apparent. Harassment remained outside of the trade unions and in a sense counter-posing themselves to them, they could not lead the struggle on the factory floor. This would have required that they accept delegated authority from the rank and file to negotiate with the union apparatus and with the employers. Yet they rejected this role.

They were able to provide new methods of struggle for workers, such as the wildcat strike and more flexible opposition to the employers, but they were unable substitute themselves fully for the trade unions, unable to provide a national organisation, unable to lay to sign contracts with employers. They relegated themselves to the role of pressure groups outside of the mainstream of events. In a sense they had exiled themselves from the class to which they belonged.

Implying in this that the struggle between the political vanguard and the democratic self-organisation of the class. By trying to fulfill both roles they fulfilled neither.

The left has also proved to have an ultra-left position towards the police force. This is understandable. The brutality of the Italian police is well known. After the killing of a policeman in Milan, there was a full-scale police instruction in the barracks and a desire expressed to ‘clean up the university’ and do away with the left = an instruction which might well have had fatal consequences and had to be put down by other policemen using tear gas.

Still, it was essential that strikers and demonstrators differentiate between the role which policemen play and the policemen themselves. Actual social unrest is reflected in the police force as much as in the petit-bourgeoisie as a whole. Indeed there are ample signs that there is deep dissatisfaction among policemen in Italy.

Letters have been sent to newspapers complaining about their conditions and expressing sympathy with the ideals and aims of the students. There have also been some sit-down strikes in barracks of policemen who refused to go on duty. These contradictions might have been usefully exploited with a sensitive attitude. The chance was lost.

Chronic Sectarianism

The theoretical, political and practical problems which beset the Italian revolutionaries have no easy solution. I certainly do not want to imply that they do not raise important issues of principle. One of the more unhealthy aspects is the failure of the different groups to openly debate and discuss their differences in order to see common positions and solutions. Instead there is a chronic sectarianism, a failure to tackle theoretical differences. Indeed there seems to be an extreme suspicion of any theoretical approach. This is an inimmovable barrier which faces Italian revolutionaries in the present period.

At the moment, one phase of the workers’ struggle is over. In the next few months other contracts are up for renewal in some of the more backward industrial areas such as textiles. The left once again will be faced with a challenge. In order to meet it, the rank and file committees will have to understand that their role is to be something like a militant shop stewards’ committee within the structure of the unions. They must not be the exclusive preserve of politicians but open to all genuine militants. They must accept delegated authority. They must fight for the recognition of their role within the trade union movement.

The left groups must debate all the theoretical issues and strategies which confront them openly with a view towards unification. It is impossible to predict whether either the rank and file or rank-and-file committees or the revolutionary groups will be equal to the task.

The Italian ruling class is deeply split on the strategy to follow and the political solutions to seek. Since the most powerful industrial groups support a reformist policy and the integration of the CP into the government, for the time being this can be the only possible solution. Marx, however, depends on the international economic situation and on whether, therefore, a reformist road will remain open.


Richard Lyons

The War Came to Minneapolis

As citizen, put out my hand, pant cover and part greeting.

There was a child there, and my hand became a weight I could not hold.

As I watched it lower, my fingers spread like a star and began to bend at the joints.

The lips touched the child’s head first, but continued to descend, going heavily into the five holes in the soft head of the child.

My fragmentation fingers filled the ragged hollows of his head, and the weight lifted from off my hard hand, transferred to their dead child, and tightened my bent fingers as they gripped the Honeywell wounds like a bowling ball.

Christ, I said, I don’t want to play, not with this equipment.

U.S. Cluster Bomb Unit fragmentation bomb, manufactured by Honeywell in Minneapolis, Minn.
The Environmental Crisis: A Socialist Perspective

Sara White  Bob White

As environmental catastrophes occur with increasing frequency and severity, we see the beginning of a new movement with great potential mass appeal. Unfortunately, the new ecology movement, which it usually rationalizes to emphasize its concern with man's relationship to the total environment, seems destined to repeat the same mistakes which have been fatal to other movements for change.

Even though their 'Donny's Day scenario differs only in detail - such as whether pollution of the atmosphere is going to bring on a new ice age or cause a general temperature increase which will melt the polar ice caps - leaders of the ecology movement continue to act as if traditional Democratic Party reform politics and lobbying within a basically unchanged social system hold the key to survival.

Indeed, some of them attempt to make the issue a personal, moral one and not political at all. And, after all, haven't Establishment politicians from Lindsay to Reagan, not to mention Nixon, endorsed the goals of the movement? We all have to breathe. It should be just a matter of cleaning things up once everyone realizes there is a problem. Each of us must stop his own personal polluting and vote for candidates who understand the importance of the issue.

There is, of course, a catch to this. Even forgetting about the obvious fact that many politicians are taking up the environmental issue simply to divert attention from such "diverse" issues as inflation, poverty, racism, and a losing imperialist war, there is little reason to believe that the crisis can be solved within the framework of the capitalist system. If you think that the threatened extinction of all life will not necessarily stop the world's rulers into saving the day, consider the nuclear arms race. We have been threatened with nuclear extinction for years. Instead of disarmament, we see a new acceleration of the arms race with the introduction of the ABM.

The threat of the final destruction of a liveable environment will not cause the capitalist class or their bureaucratic counterparts in the "Communist" world to stop the destruction, any more than the threat of nuclear destruction has forced them to disarm. Imperialism, the permanent arms economy, and capitalist competition have a logic of their own which admits no conditions even the existence of the struggle to save the environment is a struggle against those who rule, and thus it could not be more political.

Ending pollution and reversing the process of environmental deterioration will be a very expensive process. Ecology movement leaders, politicians, and the media alike emphasize that it will mean "sacrifices for us all", i.e., that the masses of people will have to subsidize pollution control through higher taxes and prices and a general decline in their standard of living - while the prerogatives and power of the ruling class remain untouched. Such sacrifices could only be imposed from above, by a state with increased repressive powers.

Reactionary as this "solution" is, even it would probably have as much chance of surviving today's international competition as the ocean's whales, which are being slaughtered to extinction by the fleets of the United States, Japan, and Russia. Any real solution to the crisis will demand democratic planning in a social system freed from the insatiable drive for profit which characterizes capitalism.

It is easy for the individual to feel very guilty about the destruction of the environment, since most of the mass media coverage of the issue and a segment of the ecology movement have focused attention of individual consumption in the basic cause of pollution. If you are not willing to give up "luxuries" like your automobile, you are as guilty as a polluting industrialist.

This view ignores the fact that there is no mass alternative to the automobile - in part because of the power of the auto industry and in part because, except for an inadequate, bare minimum parcelled out to necessary social services, taxes are spent to maintain the permanent arms economy and its imperialist war rather than to build anything on the order of mass rapid transit systems. It is not we, but they, the capitalists, who are causing the pollution. We should feel guilty only if we aren't trying to break their power.

Although the temptation will be great to try to restrict the ecology movement to efforts to gain the ex of those in power, especially now when they seem so attentive, this is a "short-cut to nowhere. The revolutionary changes that the environmental crisis demands will inevitably "eliminate" those politicians who are now "on our side", including the Musks and all the and all the other liberal Democrats.

The ecology movement must learn from the sad example of the anti-war movement, which followed McCarthy into the Democratic Party and ended viewing...
Notes on Capitalism and the Environment
Wayne Price

The fundamental responsibility for our "environmental" problems lies with the capitalist system and its bourgeois ownership. In fact, making it right is not simply that capitalism pollutes the air and water, and builds ugly cities, and produces sloshy goods. Rather it is that the system has developed a society fundamentally out of harmony with the non-human world upon which man's survival depends. This disharmony has now reached a point at which the survival of the species, let alone its future development, is threatened.

The ill effects of capitalism on the natural world are not, in the main, directly due to its plauseness and competition - significant as these are. The main problem is the basic drive of the system for unending accumulation, caused by competition. The world is treated as a mine, with resources to be extracted as quickly as possible, rather than as an interdependent ecosystem.

We oppose the idea that technology or industrialism has created our ecological predicament. On the contrary, technology has given us the possibility of a new harmony with the non-human world. Pre-industrial peoples such as American Indians, did not and do not live in harmony with nature - they are dominated by nature, oppressed by the external world. Modern technological grandiosities point to a society with a wholly new type of human civilization; where nature will be humanized and man will be naturalized (Marx).

We reject the concept that overpopulation is the root of pollution and mass hunger. Capitalism with its drive toward limitless expansion, unending accumulation, has produced a similar population "polity" of limitless expansion. Only a society which is based on production for human need instead of imbalance, on respect for the individual instead of the degradation of the masses - or by such a one can limit its population growth by voluntary means.

Many theories chose to blame the ill of capitalism of the population increase, instead of the other way around. Since Malin, "overpopulation" has been used explicitly to "prove" the impossibility of socialism. While opposing neo-Marxism, Marxists see the need to fight humanity's number One enemy, the population. Positively, we say that socialism can ameliorate the immediate effects of "overpopulation" by deceiving cities and feeding the hungry. More importantly only interclass struggle can stop population growth.

All attempts to regulate business "in the public interest" have failed. They had to fail because it is a bourgeois state, serving the capitalists' interests. But this, by definition, is welfare, comfort and wealth. It can swamp and enslave government agencies and programs by virtue of its inevitable influence. The public is amorphous and unorganized, it can maintain the same steady pressure on a regulating agency that it can on a business.
suddenly this year, everyone is in favor of ecology. Teach-ins seem to be going on everywhere, bootleggers are filled with volumes of frightening statistics on environmental crises. The mass media project gloom about the future of humanity. Democrats and Republicans are fighting for possession of the environmental issue. Nixon has announced plans to solve absolutely everything by 1976.

It is hard not to view all of this as some sort of plot to divert peoples’ attention from Vietnam, racism and the economy. But that temptation must be resisted. Whatever the motives of some who have jumped onto the bandwagon, the rise of the ecology issue is a logical response to a real problem.

Environmental disasters have been occurring with increasing frequency. Each new disaster has received greater publicity than the last, and the interconnections between the different events have become clearer and clearer. With the Santa Barbara oil slick at the beginning of 1969, the volume of publicity and the number of visible interconnections became so great that the public began to see the issue as a whole. The ecology snowball is now rolling and picking up speed.

At the same time, it is true that ecology appeals to some as a means of avoiding radical politics. Many activists have involved themselves in the issue primarily to escape the frustrations of the Left. And no doubt, by the way the mass media publicize ecology, there can be no doubt that many politicians do see the issue as a means of diverting the energies of young people into harmless channels.

In this respect, the ecology movement resembles the McCarthy campaign. But although ecology is often said to make all previous political thought obsolete, radical politics are in fact highly relevant to ecology, which cannot usefully be treated as a purely technical problem.

Consider pollution as an example. If a firm pollutes the environment as a byproduct of its manufacturing, the competitive market economy provides no incentive for it to reduce this pollution. Pollution control devices cost money, and a manufacturer would have to be crazy not to pass these costs on to the public by continuing the pollution. Under the pressures of competition, he is under pressure to continue to pollute.

In addition, there are more subtle effects of a capitalist society. Under capitalism, people are encouraged to define the quality of their lives in terms of the ownership of goods, rather than in terms of their relationships with other human beings. Advertising urges people to purchase goods they do not need and to discard products which still work. To the extent that this effort is successful in speeding the turnover of consumer goods, manufacturers are encouraged to make products which fall apart quickly.

Technological Planning

Products are elaborately styled and packaged. It is intriguing to speculate about what could have been done for automobile pollution control with one tenth of the money spent on the constant styling changes which produced such wonders as the cars of the late 1960’s. It is also interesting to speculate about how many less lethal Americans would have if advertising were confined to informing the consumer about useful goods.

These are the long-range effects and side effects of a competitive capitalist economy. To deal with the problems brought about by these effects, it is necessary to step outside the framework of the market. The pressures of “public opinion” are clearly not sufficient. Any serious approach to solving pollution and resource problems must involve the creation of a planned economy. This can happen in two general ways through a socialist revolution, or by increasing state control of a capitalist economy. The difference between these choices lies in who does the planning, and in whose interest.

Democratic Planning

Under socialism, the planning process and its priorities would be controlled democratically by the people.

A planned capitalist economy on the other hand may sound like a contradiction in terms. But in some sense, we are already in such an economy. There is an elaborate system of measures and tariffs, intended not only to raise money for the government, but also to steer the economy in certain directions. There are the federal regulatory agencies. There is an elaborate system of subsidies, from agricultural subsidies to the SST, from NDEA loans to the defense budget. And there is the greatest concentration of power the world has ever known, maintaining the greatest empire the world has ever known.

All of these functions in the interest of a ruling class — those who own and control the large corporations. Faced with environmental crises, they will attempt to export this sort of bureaucratic planning to meet the crisis. In the capitalist planning which would result, priorities would still be set by this same ruling class, in their interests, not ours.

Proposed solutions to environmental problems are often discussed in terms of halting economic growth. This is misleading. An economy has not only a "size" but a "shape" — that is, a particular internal structure. As far as the environment is concerned, the "shape" of American capitalism is atrocious; there if practically no recycling of resources, and competitive pressures create ever-greater deprivations. Real solutions to ecological problems must involve changing the shape of the economy. A far greater proportion of economic effort must be directed towards recycling resources and preventing pollution.

It is impossible to control the growth without changing the shape of the economy. And in a society where "money doesn’t talk, it swears", this is inevitably a deeply political process. The remarkable thing about ecology is not that it makes politics obsolete, but that on the contrary, every major political tendency observed elsewhere has its counterpart in the ecology movement. The parallels are so exact as to be uncanny.

Technical Problem

Eco-liberalism. The liberal attacks problems by attempting reforms within capitalism without attempting to change the basic nature of the system. Under this heading can be placed all approaches which view the ecology issue in isolation from its political context, as a purely technical problem. This is the most common approach to ecology, which is not surprising, since liberalism is the dominant ideology of American capitalism.

The basic outlines of any attempt to meet the ecological crisis within a capitalist framework can be discerned. Pollution would be attacked by creating comprehensive monitoring agencies. If taxes for finer-fol pollution were collected, their cost would be passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices. The cost of the installation of anti-pollution technology would be paid by the consumer or by the taxpayer in the form of subsidies. The priorities involved in taxation and subsidy would be set by the regulatory agencies.

Such agencies would be staffed (as they are now) by men from the large corporations, or by men who look forward to careers in these corporations. They will seek to stabilize the power and profits of the large corporations. Again, the cost will be paid by the taxpayer and the consumer — in other words, by the working class.

Techniques already exist to facilitate planning on a very large scale — notably the techniques of systems analysis. But to employ these techniques, priorities and goals must be specified. Simply pointing to problems is not enough. Policies aimed at solving problems in solving them will allow the priorities of corporate capitalism to remain unchanged. This is what will happen if arguments continue to revolve around how much the government will spend on pollution abatement, instead of around who will determine the priorities — the corporations or the working class.

Ecological activism should examine their goals and tactics to see which actually will contribute to solving the problem. There is a real danger that they will find themselves in the position of being propagandists for statified capitalism.

Eco-pacifism. The individual moral witness approach. Sell your car, then go around preaching to others to get them to give up theirs. Expect major results from consumer boycotts of products which pollute or are made by sweatshops.

What this approach ignores is the pressures of society. It assumes that the consumer is king. It is assumed that people do not really need cars. It assumes that people have the ready cash to substitute expensive products for inexpensive ones.

The problem is that the consumer is not king — there is such a thing as advertising, carried on a communica- tions network controlled by those who really do need cars to get to work (and really do need to get to work). So long as mass transit is unavailable, the prospect of a ten-mile march through the snow will not be a serious alternative to driving, even on a crowded freeway. As long as workers must struggle to keep up the payments on that car, they will not have the time or enthusiasm to substitute organically-grown foods for the products of agricultural monocultures.

There is no real difference between the moral-wit- ness approach to ecology and the moral witness approach to the anti-war movement. In both cases, individuals are blamed for the crime of a social system. But it is
As the 70's open, the environmental crisis is fast becoming the number one issue for politicians, the news media, and the public at large. No a day goes by without some mention of the crisis by one newly-converted «official» or another. President Nixon devoted a large part of his state-of-the-union address this year to the crisis.

On April 22nd, colleges and universities across the country will host the First National Environmental Teach-In. In honor of this occasion, Friends of the Earth and Ballantine Books have put out a book called The Environmental Handbook, and the Sierra Club and Pocket Books have published ecotactics, The Sierra Club Handbook for Environmental Activists. These two books are chock full of ideas for people interested in fighting around ecology issues, but the thing that will interest us here is the methodology inherent in their discussion of the issues, causes, and cures.

While liberals are jumping on the ecology bandwagon as it affects the «citizen», industrial and farm workers directly experience a day-to-day, 5- and 12-hour level pollution that everyone is talking about. Yet discussion of those experiences by ecology activists, if these two books are any indication, is cursory at best and totally absent at worst.

Since workers' experience is hardly touched on, it follows that there is no discussion of the role of the working class in fighting environmental poisoning. We're all just consumer here, it seems, and we ourselves are responsible for the sewers we're in anyway. Somehow, in its cover blurb, the «Revised Environment» summarized this approach:

"...the villain of the piece is not some profit-hungry industrialist who can be forced into submission, nor some lax public official who can be replaced. The villains are consumers who demand (or at least let themselves be cajoled into) destroying new, more, faster, bigger, cheaper, playthings without counting the cost in a dirtier, smellier, sicklier world."

The idea that somehow it is the public at large who is responsible for the mess is repeated again and again in the two books. Charles E. Little, in the preface to Ecotactics, refers to the danger of "...confusing the so-called establishment with the real enemy—the individual who consumes the establishment's products."

The other side of the coin is, of course, the idea that, if we all get together and stop buying or using or whatever these products, that will cure the problem. Mr. Little suggests that it's not really Con Ed's fault that it has to expand, build more power plants, etc., but that it's us or our drive to use more electric gadgets that's making Con Ed do it.

The facts, however, quickly belie this argument. In 1968 Con Ed's sales (in Kilowatt hours) were 6,833,695,572 to residential units as opposed to 15,106,131,681 to commercial and industrial units. He might better suggest that offices stop using their electrical equipment, and Industry do the same, but he isn't about to do that.

**Individual Action**

Mr. Little may be more conservative than most, but the difference is basically one of degree, especially among those concerned with individual solutions. Searching the "Individual Action" section of the Environmental Handbook, one is struck by two things. First, many of their projects for individual actions are actually organizational actions, i.e., handing out leaflets concerning pollution, and applying pressure to public officials.

Perhaps these things could be done on an individual basis, but no one, including those who suggest them, thinks that this would be effective. However, given the moralistic, each-man-take-his-stand, attitude of virtually all the ecology writers, they must view group activity as individual actions. Once the idea of organization is introduced and accepted, the moral fervor of "individuals" struggling for the "right" would be lost in a needless struggle for (perish the thought) power.

The other thing that strikes one is the almost childish naiveté of many of the suggestions, i.e., dumping your unrecyclable cartons at your local supermarket, mailing in prepaid envelopes you receive for ecologically undesirable products, complaining to the post office re eco-pornography.

The point is that even if all these tactics had some effect, the result, in terms of changing the structure of the system that breeds these misuses of our environment, would be insignificant. Unrecyclable milk cartons are, at best, petty side effects of the capitalist system. Concentrating on that sort of issue will side-track the movement and make it more difficult to fight the real causes of the crisis.

"Pitch In!"

One spokesman, Cliff Humphreys, in an article in Ecotactics called "Doing Ecology Action," does outline what a worker's role as an individual could be in this movement: "...let's follow an imaginary employee of a steel plant through a day of doing ecology action. He will walk, pour, join a car pool or ride the bus to work. If he has to drive, he will have a sign on his car telling how much air his engine inhales and the nature of its pollution. At work he will post on bulletin boards, or available wall space, clippings and pictures concerning ecological issues. He will also be on the alert for waterful corporate methods that should be corrected, and be willing to talk fellow employees into helping him correct the deficiency. If employer are aware of a harmful process that could be corrected and management refuses to take care of it, the plant should be struck until that practice is corrected. If management wants to clean up but can't afford to pay the price, perhaps some employee will drop by on a Saturday and pitch in."

Humphreys is here talking about steel plants, probably one of the biggest polluters of the environment. To postulate individual action (or any sort of action from anything but a strong power base) against corporate giants like steel companies is absurd. As for dropping by some Saturday to pitch in and help, that's otherwise known as overtime, and it's not likely to be used to help correct a few minor pollution problems.

The "Political Action" section of the Environmental Handbook is consistent with the "Individual Actions" section. Marion Fidy of Friends of the Earth outlines FOE's plan for political action: "A branch of FOE called League of Conservation Voters will actively support candidates who are working hardest to protect the environment. In every election year the league will pick a slate of outstanding candidates who face an especially close race. Not only will we endorse them, but we will raise money and manpower for their campaign. Thus, we can protect our allies in Congress and possibly succeed in defeating legislators whose policies are especially destructive to the environment."

She then goes on to say that we must overcome our distance for working with politicians and follow the ex-
April 15: Stop Work—Stop the War

Mike Friedman

In conjunction with anti-war activities taking place across the country, the San Francisco Bay Area Labor Assembly for Peace has called for a one-day work stoppage against the war on April 15. For the first time, an attempt is being made to link up the anti-war movement with militant workers in motion.

Although, for various reasons, this first anti-war work stoppage will not be massive, it does mark a significant development in the anti-war movement. Unlike past mass demonstrations, or even "no business as usual" activities, the work stoppage is a step toward the building of a militant, organized, politically conscious movement of working people, "based on the real collective power they have as workers."

Unions in this area, especially those who supported last fall's Moratorium activities, were urged to endorse the work stoppage, and to help mobilize their members for it. Rainbow groups, caucuses and individuals in shops and unions also were urged to raise the issue. Unfortunately, for reasons to be mentioned later, the organizing work, especially with respect to the latter groupings, has been minimal.

Bay Area unions endorsing the April 15 work stoppage include Painters Local 4, Amalgamated Clothing Workers Northern California Joint Board, AFSCME 1068, Social Workers 803, Building Service Employees 1469, Office Employees 692, and several AFT locals. In unions which would not endorse the action, militants and anti-war individuals are expected to participate.

ILWU Cops Out

Notably absent from the list of signators are any of the ILWU (International Longshore Workers Union) locals. ILWU Local 6 had passed an ambiguous motion, but later insisted on being dropped from the list of supporters. This fact is closely related to the functioning of certain members of the Labor Assembly for Peace, who attempted to undermine the work stoppage from the very beginning.

Under pressure from the ILWU leadership (which, by the way, has for too long had a reputation as "militant"), these people did what they could to prevent the necessary publicity and notifications of the work stoppage from going out. It took some doing just to get out a letter asking for union endorsement.

Their argument is that somehow a work stoppage is too radical a thing to ask for at this time, and that doing so would only alienate union leaders. Of course, this is based on a general outlook which is concerned more with maintenance of comfortable, though increasingly tenuous, political alliances with the labor establishment in San Francisco than it is on raising workers' consciousness about the war and the society.

Our job should be to point out the connection between the war in Asia and the growing economic squeeze on the rank and file working person, and to raise the question of who profits from war and who pays for inflation.
The Molly Maguires

Jerry Hodges

Those who desire a reasonably accurate portrayal of what conditions were like in a small isolated company-owned mining town in the 1870's should see *The Molly Maguires*.

Vividly portrayed are the utter despair of abject poverty, the horrors of random mining and the revolting and despicable use of child labor which was endemic to the period.

The Molly Maguires were a group of rebel miners in Pennsylvania who attempted, through the use of frequently violent tactics, to redress their grievances and obstruct their oppression. In the beginning of the film, the Mollyers are interviewed by James McPharlan, a poor immigrant who decides that the only way out of his miserable condition is through cooperating with the system in the oppression of his fellow workers. He succeeds in his plan, but in so doing it made to realize that he has lost something of much greater value, his dignity and worth as a person.

McPharlan represents all that is rotten and dehumanizing in the capitalist system. He realizes that the problem lies in the exploitation of the workers by the mine operators, and even sympathy with the Mollyers, but is still unable to make the sacrifices required to reject the system and fight alongside them. Instead, he betrays the group and brings about its eventual extermination.

One particularly effective aspect of the film was its treatment of the church as the tool of the operators in keeping the workers subdued. The town priest invokes the time-honored bourgeois incantations against the evils of violence and consistently reminds the Mollyers of the horrible external terrors awaiting those who resist to it.

The most serious flaw in *The Molly Maguires* lies in its lack of any political content. In the midst of an extremely accurate and effectively presented setting, we are given a maudlin, plotless soap opera revolving around the internal struggles of poor McPharlan and the daring exploits of a gang of rebellious muleteers devoted solely to the disruption of the mines.

In reality, the Mollyers were not just a set of bomb throwers, but a quasi-political group, certainly not conscious revolutionary socialists, but nevertheless possessing certain clearly-defined working class objectives.

Prior to the events depicted in the movie, there had been periodic attempts on the part of the mine operators to form unions, but these efforts were almost totally thwarted. During the 1840's and 1850's, there was a series of abortive strikes in which state troopers and coal and iron police, controlled by the operators, frequently beat and killed workers, usually without the slightest provocation.

Since the miners were prevented from winning any real gains through more-prosaic means of protest, the Molly Maguires found it expedient to resort to terror or the threat of it. Most Molly activity was confined to delivering threats to particularly odious individuals, such as strike-breakers or especially bad superintendents.

After the defeat of the 1870 strike, Frank P. Gowen, the leader of the mine operators, decided that it would be a propitious time to liquidate the Mollyers, and McPharlan was the man chosen to do the job.

One can have only one opinion of McPharlan: he was a rat, a police informer who was willing to go to any lengths to garner crumbs from the bourgeois oppressor, even to the point of betraying his own people. McPharlan was able to get nineteen Mollyers tried, convicted and hanged with hardly a scrap of evidence. It was this same repugnant who would, thirty years later, employ the same tactics in an unsuccessful attempt to engineer the legal murder of Big Bill Haywood.

The attempts of the producer of this film to ignore the reality of the miner's which McPharlan represented stems from the old platitude of whitewashing the capitalist system in the name of "objectivity." We are instead given a bland, distanced account which excuses the secondary aspects of this struggle and ignores the real cause of the atrocities, capitalism.

In short, *The Molly Maguires* blithely ignores the roots of the disease and concentrates gravely upon the symptoms. It sees a cancerous patient and prescribes aspirin.
Major Breakthrough in Grape Strike

Anne P. Draper

An historic first occurred on April 1, with the announcement that three table grape companies in Coachella Valley, California, had signed a union contract with the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, AFI-CIO. The breakthrough was arranged by an already girded itself for a major strike in the Coachella Valley, an area south of Delano, whose high temperatures produces an earlier harvesting of table grapes.

This important victory for the grape strike is the first contract in table grapes. Consumers will be able to eat grapes with the United Farm Workers Union label when the grapes are picked in the months to come. The contracts will cover some 175 workers at the peak season in May and June.

The three companies -- David Freedman Co., Charles Freedman Co., and Wonder Palma Co. -- cover more than 1,500 acres in the Coachella Valley, north of the Mexican border. The three vineyards are operated by Lionel Steinberg, a Democratic Party spokesman for agricultural interests and a key agricultural adviser to Governor Edmund Brown, Sr., to Ronald Reagan's victory in 1966.

The three-year contract sets a minimum wage of $1.75 per hour in the first year; plus 20 cents per box of grapes picked during harvest (the current rate is $0.45 plus 11 cents per box); 10 cents per hour for a health and welfare program; two weeks' vacation for semi-yearly workers; and half the premium, two cents per box, to be used by the union for the projects in the program at the retirement center; and a successor clause to protect the gains achieved should the property change hands.

Safety Clause

A safety clause provides that the growers must give the workers advance notice of any use of pesticides. To protect both the workers and the consumer, the contract bans the use of "hard pesticides," including DDT, Aldrin, Dieldrin, Endrin, TEPP, and Parathion. The safety clause has become a key issue in the union's last full UFWOC Director Cesar Chavez initiated new approaches to the Delano growers, indicating that the union was willing to reconsider its 8 a.m. minimum wage demand, but would not yield on the pesticide clause. The growers spurned the offer at the time.

The growers have rejected union attempts to discover what agricultural chemicals and pesticides are being used in the vineyards, despite the mounting evidence of their harmful effects on farm workers and their families. The union has escalated its campaign against pesticides, and its demands that the workers and consumers be given maximum protection against pesticides.

"This is the major issue, more important than money," Chavez stated. "Workers know the price of food if you don't have your health. The state's largest industry, the $4 billion agriculture employing over half a million farm workers, has the highest occupational disease rate - three times as high as the average rate of all industries. The growers have been criminally negligent where the health and safety of farm workers are concerned.

Boch Chavez and Larry Itliong, Assistant Director of UFWOC, expressed some disappointment that this contract got the union to lower the 8 a.m. minimum wage contained in their own contract, but there are yearly re-opening clauses on wages.

Five years ago, the grape strike began in Coachella Valley. At that time, Steinberg, then President of the Coachella Valley Growers' Group and a member of the State Board of Agriculture, refused to sign a contract with the union, with a guarantee of $1.60 an hour. The strike then traveled north to Delano, where vineyards were struck in September of 1966.

Last year the union struck the Coachella Valley vineyards, but was unable to get a major settlement. The grape boycott sharply reduced the profits of Coachella grapes, and the growers, especially Steinberg, bitterly complained of their losses. Last year, it was rumored that Steinberg was on the verge of signing, since his image as a "liberal Kennedy Democrat" was slipping.

March 27, just before Easter, labor leaders from throughout California, representing the AFL-CIO, Ogra labor councils, and the new head of the California Labor Federation, John Henning, met with the Delano strike leader. Steinberg, one of the former chief, Thomas Pitts, had failed to give the grape strike the kind of sustained, massive solid aid needed to win.

Pitts, a former Teamster official and deeply conservative, regarded the grape strike, its leaders and its supporters with considerable distrust and kept his distance. Other union officials travelled across the country to express solidarity with the grape strikers. He never

Coachella Valley breakthrough was played by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. A special committee on farm labor had been working for some months to bring the two sides together, along with the AFL-CIO's Director of Organization, William Kitcher. The largest minorities on strike are Chicanos and Filipinos, mostly Catholic. But the Catholic Church has been sharply divided on the grape strike and boycott, and laggard behind the strong support given by Protestant groups.

The three vineyards signed up represent about one-eighth of the total grape production of about 8,000 acres in Coachella Valley. They hope to boost their sales by the use of the United Farm Workers Union label to stress the quality, known to the grape buyers in the United States and abroad.

Meanwhile, plans to intensify the boycott against table grapes were outlined at hearings held in Delano just prior to the Coachella Valley signing. On Friday, March 27, just before Easter, labor leaders from throughout California, representing the AFL-CIO, Ogra labor councils, and the new head of the California Labor Federation, John Henning, met with the Delano strike leader, Steinberg, one of the former chief, Thomas Pitts, had failed to give the grape strike the kind of sustained, massive solid aid needed to win.

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The first "Caravan to Delano" from the S.F.-Bay Area was organized by Anne Draper, pictured above delivering part of the three tons of fruit to Cesar Chavez. Some ten cars, carrying the badly-needed food and $800 collected by trade unionists, Berkeley students, and strike supporters, drove the 300 miles to the strike front in the first demonstration of strike support shortly after the strike started. Since then the tradition of monthly Caravans to Delano has been maintained and extended, serving to keep close bonds between the strikers and their supporters.
Interview with Kenny Horsten

Black Panther Caucus at Fremont GM

The largest industrial plant in Northern California is the General Motors Assembly Plant in Fremont, located between Oakland and San Jose. In 1968 a group of Black GM workers formed the Black Panther Caucus. A number of the leaders of the caucus were members of the Black Panther Party, but the caucus also attracted large numbers of workers not in the Party. While the base of the caucus remains the GM plant, the caucus now has membership from a number of UAW plants in the San Francisco Bay Area.

K: Would you describe the general situation in the Fremont plant?
H: When the plant moved from Oakland to Fremont in 1963, General Motors stopped hiring black workers. They didn't come out and say it, but they set a policy that they would not hire anyone who lived outside the Hayward-Fremont area. Well, at that time there were no black workers living in Hayward. They were all living in Oakland.

A group of brothers demanded that this practice be stopped. Management's statement was that they were having too many problems with black workers: They were always gambling and fighting, they never came to work on time, they never paid their bills, they were always drinking on the job, and in general, they were just unreliable workers. This was the position of GM up to about 1965. But as production increased and GM found they had to increase the work force, they started to bring in more black workers.

Racism at Fremont

K: What about racist practices once black workers do get hired?
H: Any black worker in any UAW plant or in any union can tell you that racism does exist. In Fremont it is so subtle that some workers do not realize it. They've even got a vice-president who's a black guy, who stands up and says that it does not exist. Our shop chairman and international representative took a position six years ago that there was no racism in the plant.

But now with the increase of black workers at Fremont, naturally the problem has come to the front. We find that the majority of newly-hired workers are black. They hire about five black workers to every two white workers. The black workers on the production lines had found that there is only one black worker left, and those same two white workers are still there.

K: Are there any jobs that are reserved for white workers only?
H: I think you should say 'reserved' for black workers. There are such jobs mainly in the body shop, usually referred to as the 'sweatshop', the dark room, or the hot house. And they call it this because the body shop is where you do the welding and the sparks fly around. You get burned, and there is no ventilation. It's so thick you're actually breathing the gas. That's where most black workers go.

Or they are in the pit where the cars roll overhead and you have to work underneath, where the oil from the transmission and the gas and water drip down into the pit. For eight hours a day you have to dig around in that, and the stuff they put on the floor that's supposed to absorb the oil. Well, after awhile, they've got such a pit of dirt and grime that it's dripping off stuff that's dripping on you - in your face, in your hair, and all over you.

And there's the spray area on the production line where you have to climb inside the cab of a car or a truck and spray paint. You know how small it is inside of a car and you have to wear a mask because when you spray it comes back on your face and gets into your nose and eyes and ears. You can hardly breathe through that mask and if you don't wear it, then you choke on the paint fumes.

Then they have other jobs that are called water jobs, with what they call wet sand. For eight hours a day you have to stand in water up to your knees on the job. They have to do it because they have to box up in the boxes and they have to drink water and they have to have cold water on that. They have to boil water because there is no hot water. They have to get cold water to boil water and they have to boil water. They have to do the water job.

K: When it comes time for promotions and getting better jobs, is there clear preference by the foreman and management for white workers?
H: Yes, it is shown in the way which management gives the black workers the hard jobs because they know you will have to stay there because they know no one else will go. They give the easy jobs to white workers because they know that if they give them the hard jobs, that they will just quit and go somewhere else. As far as getting out of the pin, the body shops, the wet sanding area, or the spray booths, management has a provision in the contract that says they retain the right to job assignment and this means they can assign you to any job they want to. If you want to protest, you have to go through the grievance procedure, which might well take anywhere from 30 days to 7 months and by that time, they might come around and take you off the job.

K: What percentage of skilled jobs are held by blacks?

Kenny Horsten

K: There are about 300 of 400 skilled jobs and I think we have seven blacks. And they came within the last few days. There are more blacks beginning to be hired.

H: You raise two issues in describing these degrading, dehumanizing conditions. First, of course, is fighting against blacks or chicanes being given systematically the dirtiest and hardest jobs. The other is fighting against the conditions themselves so that no one is forced to do these jobs. Is there any general struggle over working conditions?

Working Conditions

K: There is a section in the contract on work standards which is the only clause we can strike over after the union goes through procedures. Say as an individual is processing a job; usually it is in the soft trim or the body shop, he files a grievance. The grievance is processed and it takes months before he gets a reply to it, or before he even anything about it.

Then there may be a settlement which works this way: If you've got two guys working in that body shop and you've got to turn around in about two weeks to get the job done, then one of them might write up a work standard grievance. Then, if he is the fifth man in line, after the settlement the work will take the work off him and put it on the sixth man in line. This is the way it is. That's what we have to turn around, write a grievance and management will stick the work on the first man or something like that.

So it's not just enough to deal with individual working conditions. We have to get rid of those jive-ass grievance procedures, written by management and the union. Only then can we begin to deal effectively with those working conditions, because these procedures disarm workers making them think that they have some kind of re- a action when they really don't.

K: Have there been any wildcats strikes over working conditions?
H: No. The last wildcat strike in the plant was, I think, in 1964 over something about wage scales and working conditions. The leaders of that are so long gone.

K: What about some of the broader political issues? What is the feeling in the plant about inflation, repression, the Nixon administration and the war in Vietnam? What's the feeling there?

Broaden Political Issues

K: The broader political issues are not really non-existent in our union. I think that these issues are almost non-existent in just about every union you have in this country, because of the bureaucracy of the union leadership. By consolidating their power the way that they have, they decide the direction in which the workers will go on the broader issues. Now when I say isolated, it's not like the guys don't know what's happening. They do know what's happening because they read their newspaper wherever they live.

If there's any position taken by the union, it is set down by Walter Reuther in Detroit in the form of a letter, and he informs the rank-and-file what his position is. They are able to do this by directly and indirectly discouraging the rank-and-file members from attaining union leadership or from even actively participating in any political programs other than the Democratic Party.

They set up an organization called the Political Action Committee and the COPE Committee and all these political committees that are geared for the Democratic Party. Nobody else, no other direction, no other way, and there is nobody inside those organizations that is going to take it from them. If they try then they're out. Simple as that.

K: Is there much discussion of these issues on the job or on breaks?
H: Well, yes, there's something like that. Everybody will say, well, yes, inflation, it's Nixon's fault. And I don't think much about it. There is really no meaningful dialogue coming out of the rank-and-file concerning any of these issues outside their local union.

K: Would you say that the bulk of the workers favor the war, oppose the war, or consider themselves part of Nixon's "silent majority"?

H: Well, I would say that they're split for and against the war. Not necessarily for or against, but for because of their patriotic feelings - that if we were to leave, we would lose face, even though some have never seen Vietnam. Then you've got the other guys who are against the war because we're spending too much money in Vietnam, that kind of thing. Our caucus held an anti-war rally November 13th, and the rally was fairly good. We got a fairly good response out of it. We didn't get as many people to attend as we wanted because of the time involved, but the guys came over to hear speakers, and that is the first time that something like this has ever been done outside of the structure of the union leadership.

Women Workers

K: How many women work at Fremont?
H: I think there were about 100. I think there might have been 200.

K: That's not the office sections?
H: No, that's in production. There might not be that many women, but certainly not that many who they estimate are.

K: Are there any women in the caucus?
H: At this time we're engaging upon bringing some of the women to the caucus, but they do not want to participate because of that fear. Well, they don't know yet, most women out here have families and are workers.
GM to Layoff 600 at Fremont

A reduction in production followed by an downsizing in layoffs and a new managing strategy in the UAW plants at Fremont was reported as part of a major change in the Fremont UAW plants. Work in the tool and truck assembly line was interrupted earlier this year. According to President March 9-10, workers have been layed off in various shifts in the past week. Workers in the tool line will return to work on their regular work days, maintaining the status quo.

The company does not send out letters, as layoffs later. Rights: California. Workers are the next to be laid off.

Reprinted from BPC Newspaper

Wallace Supporters

By: A tremendous amount of speculation exists within the radical movement about support for Wallace among white workers. A lot of people thought that it wasn’t just a sign of racism, but was also a sign that white workers were unhappy with the union, with the Democratic Party, and so on, and that because of the unrest among workers, Wallace was able to demagogically gain some support among them.

In Fremont, there is an actual Wallaceite Caucus functioning inside the GM plant. What exactly do they do, not only about racism, but also when it comes to the question of general workers’ issues, production conditions, speed-up, and so on? What sort of guys go into that Wallaceite Caucus? Is it guys who are militant on plant issues, or are they reactionary not only on the race question, but also on plant issues?

KIR: The Wallaceite thing only grew out of the Presidential campaign and before that, it was the Goldwater group. For you see, the Wallaceites are the latest group that has sprung up and they deal with some issues that were relevant to the workers, but they were not small. Once or twice they came up with questions about what was the union doing with the money, where were the finances going, but all this came about in the local union elections that were held in June, 1969.

They mainly appeared during the campaign and were stirred up with the help of the local union leadership.

Now the Wallaceites were never an effective group. They were just a small group of racists. The majority were just poor whites who were out trying to protect their interests, too, because they believed the same story that management and union leadership were perpetrating and we see these poor whites as being fooled and tricked into believing that the blacks were out to take their jobs.

But when it got down to the nitty-gritty, of it, you had a small hard core of racism even in management who passed out a lot of material that vaguely hinted around to racism and this material was taken to management and management refused to get on it. Later some material came out with more explicit racist statements like, “The Lord is my shepherd, and the government makes me to lie down beside Negroes,” and so on and so forth.

Self-Defense

We went to the union leadership and we told them very clearly that if anything at all happened to any black workers in that plant, we were not going to be responsible for any action that came down. Immediately, the union leadership got very excited and thought we were talking about killing everybody and blowing up everything, and we didn’t mean that. We just meant that we do believe in violence, but that we do believe in self-defense and if anything happened to any black worker in or outside the caucus, then we would look to them as being responsible.

At this time, management took the position that they didn’t know what it was all about, and they didn’t know this and they didn’t know that and they were completely ignorant — only to find at this time that we had finally come upon documented proof that management was part of this plot that was being perpetrated against the black workers by General Motors.

It got down to one union meeting we attended and we found that the Wallaceites had gathered fully armed. Even though we were outnumbered and unarmed, we were willing to challenge these racists and to stand united against even these overwhelming odds. So it wasn’t until the brothers were taking it upon themselves to arm themselves for self-defense that management felt that it was necessary for them to step in when there was a possibility of their work force in their plant being lost.

They had the Fremont Police Department standing watch, and every night, when the brothers would go off for their lunch, they would go to a bar or a liquor store or go out to lunch and they would be stopped on the street — just the management’s way of dealing with the problem that existed. They were not willing at all to come forth and say there is a problem. It would be impossible for them to do this because they were a part of it.

The Wallaceites are used to counteract any action that the black workers take against the union leadership. They’re like hitcher-men sitting in a closet and any time the union needs them then they just open the door and out jump the racists. The union was part and parcel to stirring up, spreading rumors and lies about the Black Panthers’ plan to blow up the union hall and blow up the plant. This stirred up fear among the white workers that their jobs and their income would be threatened.

Then you had a few hardcore racists out there who began agitating “to bring your rifles.” And while all this was going on, the union leadership was sitting back watching what was happening, glibly satisfied that our caucus had been stopped in its organizing attempts, which was incorrect.

Only when the union leadership found themselves directly involved, where they might get hurt, did they begin to make remarks that maybe we should all be cool and we should all be together as union brothers. Because all of a sudden they found that they might hurt in the little scuffle that it ever came about.

When it comes down to it, the Black Panther caucus in Fremont General Motors pushed the sheets off the union leadership and management. And when the sheets were pulled off, we saw that they were all the same people whether or not they worked for the union or for the management. They’re all the same people, because they all wear the same color shirts.

By what relationships have the Black Panther caucuses developed with groups in other unions or other auto plants around the country?

KIR: Since the beginning of the caucasus, we have tried to establish communication with other black organizations or progressive organizations throughout the nation and the one black organization that we relate to the closest is the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement.
in Detroit. We have an interchange of material. Hopefully sometime in the future, we can come together and start dealing with some of the realistic problems that have to be dealt with in the United Auto Workers convention in New Jersey.

We feel that together we can put forth the demands of the black workers that have been so long neglected, not just by the white racists in the Union leadership, but by some of those boot-tiekin' lackies of Walter Reuther who black ones I'm talking about. It's evident that Walter Reuther has no intention whatsoever of elevating any more black people to the Executive Board than he wants to elevate. Better than 1/3 of the million workers in the UAW are black. Yet there's only one member on the Executive Board and there are no black regional directors.

Hopefully the Black Panther caucus and DRUM can work together because we see the same need for Heather's consolidation of power to be shattered and broken, and for Walter Reuther to come falling down off his mount. That is exactly as he sits, as if he were king of the mountain. And as it stands now, I damn near am, isn't there any difference in DRUM's approach and your approach as to how to organize workers? KIY: Yes, well, I don't understand, I think your tactics are in a little different because the conditions in Detroit, are that a lot of the plans that DRUM has been organizing have 70% black workers, and our base are the other way around, our tactics and the methods that we use and our literature is different from theirs.

B: What are some of the activities that the Panther caucus has engaged in?

KIY: Well, we have had two anti-war rallies and the last election came up in June 1969, and myself and some other brothers in the caucus ran for office. Even though we lost, it caused a large turn-out. If we had gotten the same number of votes two years ago, we would have won office.

B: What percentage of the votes did you get?

KIY: I think I got 500 or 600 votes and some other brothers got 400 or 500 votes. The winner got about 900 votes.

B: What are your educational qualifications?

KIY: Well, we deal with historical labor material and Marxist-Leninist material. When I say historical labor material, we deal with the background and the stories of, say, the IWW and the Haymaker affair, and what happened. As the struggle of the IWW here in West Coast, the struggles of the coal miners, the troubles of the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. Add we take from each one of these historical events and groups of experiences different strategies and tactics that we can still use today.

B: Is the caucus open to Chicano and white or is it open only to blacks?

KIY: We're open to all workers, it's a worker's caucus. And even though this invitation was made very clear when the caucus was first formed, at this time we have very few whites and Chicano. Most of the members who are in the caucus are brother workers here who see the need for change, brothers who have gone through an educational process, brothers who have struggled these first 2 1/2 years in the caucus.

Repression

A repression has come down. There's been a lot of harassment and sometimes to the extent that the negro workers were brought into the plant by management and planted on members of the caucus on several occasions. There has been material that has been planted in their homes in the shape of 'typewritten' letters to intimidate these brothers, and to get them to sign statements. So we find a lot of black workers, older ones, who do not want to relate to that kind officialization, they're not ready for it yet. So talks why we have younger black members in the caucus and there are a few white and Chicano and Chinese brothers in the caucus.

B: Of course, the most effective form of repression in the plant is economic. We understand that you were recently fired. Could you explain how they worked this?

KIY: Well, first of all, management has compiled a dossier on all of us. From 1965 up to the present, there were some minor infractions of their attendance rules, and I was disciplined for them. And then my recollection was clear, I probably would have had a clear record right now if it hadn't been for the caucus, I guess, because it wasn't until after the start of the caucus that I've been disciplined. And statistically, it has averaged out to every two months some kind of disciplinary action has taken place.

B: For example?

KIY: Shooting in the floor, not obeying direct orders from management.

B: What kinds of direct orders did you not obey?

KIY: Well, we were working a lot of overtime and I would refuse to go home because I didn't want to work a certain night, and the foreman would say, yes, that I could go home; and then the next day he would say, "Hey, what were you at, I didn't tell you to go home." So, out the door. In other words, there's no redress right there, the foreman said, you're wrong, and he's right, and you are out the door.

B: They obviously shouldn't claim that they fired you for political reasons. They would want to claim that they fired you for technical reasons, but the rules are, they can claim they didn't or didn't tell you to do something to set it up so that they can fire you. Your only defense really is the extent to which there is some organized movement inside the plant which could erupt. What is happening in your case?

KIY: The wiser at that time, I don't know if they're doing something. They say it's going through the grievance procedure. To give you an example, last July 69, I finally got a settlement on a case that was sixteen months old. The same day I got the settlement which supposedly got some time taken off my record, that same night this was put back on my record because the foreman claimed he told me to do something I didn't do the night before that, and I was sent home for a month. And it's been a repeated thing, that entreprenuership kind of thing.

It's impossible to get around it in a place like that because management's position is that anything that a foreman says is right. Although the union says that it is up to management to prove that you did do it, it is in fact vice versa. It is up to you to prove that you didn't do it. That's the way it comes out.

B: Do you expect to get reinstated?

KIY: Well, at this time, I don't. I expect that they'll go through the motions and drag it out for a certain time. You see, this whole setup about a disciplinary action is used as an economic repression to where you are forced out of a job. Technically you are entitled to unemployment, but you really can't get it because the management usually turns you down. (People are not entitled to unemployment if management claims that you were discharged for "cause". Generally, unemployment offices uphold management's claim. In any case, an appeal is a long drawn-out process.)

B: What are some of the other repressive tools that management uses?

KIY: General Motors corporation has a private investigation firm located in Oakland and San Francisco. And in San Jose and it is their job to read all the radical newspapers, talk people and find out what their situation is, check on their credit and things like that and make a report. So now they find the weakest link economically in the chain and this is the guy who they threaten to discipline, knowing that he can't stand that time off.

B: Have they been threatening radicals that got in anyway?

KIY: No, they haven't really threatened them because I don't think they really know at this point who they are. But they go through all the newspapers and they clip out all the pictures and every time that there is a leaflet being distributed in front of the plant, they take pictures of each and everybody out there. One time they would drive by to take pictures, so then we brought cameras and we took pictures of them, so now they use telescopes lenses. But there still must be holes in their system, because we know of a number of white radicals who were very well publicized in the press who have gotten into GM. KIY: Well, at this time there are, but until these white radicals emerge within the plant, management doesn't feel that they are a threat.

B: What about the GM Workers' Committee?

KIY: The GM Workers' Committee constitutes a white radical organization that's trying to get itself together in the GM plant.

B: Has it gotten itself together?

KIY: Well, they're having some internal problems and they're still struggling with them. We relate to these brothers because we see that it's hard for whites with the background of some of them have to start relating to the working class.

B: Why doesn't the Workers' Committee join the Black Panther caucus?

KIY: One of the areas that we can't work in is the organizing of white workers because a lot of white workers are afraid of the word "Black Panther". So there is a need for white radicals to come into the industry and start relating to workers at the point of production the way they should be and stop with the rhetoric and the long-drawn-out philosophical conversations. They can form a caucus of their own and start organizing white workers and when they come out with something that is functional, then we can start working together.

B: Do you find any problems involving blacks in the Black Panther caucus because the caucuses also take in whites?

KIY: No, you see, we hold political education classes and we make it very clear to these brothers before they come into the caucuses that if we're going to engage in a struggle, we're going to engage in a struggle to overthrow the General Motors Corporation and the avairations businessman and to run out the bureaucrats and the...
Black Panther
Caucus
National Workers Program

1. Organize the Deregulated - There are more than 11 million workers in the U.S. Only 20 million of them (20%) are union members. In order for the workers to have the strength and unity we need in fighting the bosses, we must organize all workers into unions.

2. Week - The work week should be 30 hours per week (with no compulsory overtime) at 40 hours pay, or fewer hours if necessary to guarantee a weekly minimum wage.

3. Stop Runaway Shops - When a boss decides to move his shop, all workers must be given a choice: a) going with the shop to the same wages and working conditions (with transportation paid for by boss), or b) taking 3 years severance pay with continuation of health and welfare plans for 3 years or until they find new jobs. The union contract must go with the shop.

4. Women Workers - 1/3 of the workers today are women. Unions must lead the fight for an end to discrimination against women. Women must be represented at all levels of the union, and be available for equal work. Unions that represent women workers must guarantee leadership positions to women. As part of the struggle for these ends, unions must end all forms of sexual harassment and violence in the companies and the government for the children of working women.

5. Automation - The unions must fight to win the right to negotiate all automation with the company before it takes place. The unions shall set the conditions of automation so that there are no layoffs and all workers retain their safety and health standards.

6. Health and Welfare - Every year in the U.S., 14,000 workers are killed on the job, over half a million fall ill with occupational diseases; 7 million are injured, and 2 million are disabled.

Unions must fight for the right to set and enforce health and safety standards on the job. Unions must fight to win fully paid medical and dental coverage through the formalization of rank-and-file caucuses and their families. At the same time, labor must struggle for free medical and dental care for all the people.

7. Anti-Labor Laws - Labor must take the offensive against anti-labor laws by demanding their repeal and defying when they are used.

8. Draft Cause - The labor movement must struggle against racism in the unions in order to effectively combat racism in society. The unions must educate the workers to understand that racism serves to pit the workers against each other and preventing the development of class consciousness.

9. The War - Labor must demand an end to the war and stop all aid to both capitalist and socialist wars. This must be coupled with a struggle in this country against racism and growing fascism.

The economy must be re-directed to serve the needs of all the people: full employment, food, clothing, housing, education, and medical care.

10. Union Self-Out - All of the problems we have outlined can be solved if the rank and file take the lead in organizing the leadership of their own rank and file caucuses and the fight for class consciousness.

Reprinted from FOCUS, No. 2
William Morris: a vision of socialism

Martin Shaw

Perhaps the greatest of the early English marxists was William Morris. Poet and designer, he entered active socialist politics only in his late forties, although his conviction of the need for a fundamental change in society had been maturing for many years. When the 1880's created the conditions for a new socialist movement, Morris flung himself into the task of socialist propaganda. But he did not just reproduce the ideas of Marx.

In his many articles and lectures he creatively developed the attack on the conditions of art and labour in capitalist society. In his articles are to be found the most concise statements of his ideas.

But in many ways the greatest of his works is his utopia, a vision of the future communist society, published at the opening of the second decade of the modern socialist movement. This was News from Nowhere, the first instalment of which appeared in Commonweal, 80 years ago in January 1890.

It is immensely valuable to read it again today, when Morris wrote it there were many around — notably the Fabians — who identified socialism with some kind of bureaucratic collectivism.

Today the idea of socialism is identified in the minds of most people with the managerial capitalism of Labour or with the Stalinist tyranny. And of course, socialism is thoroughly discredited by being identified in this way.

Morris gives us a picture of socialism which goes far beyond any idea of state ownership or bureaucratic control.

Morris's utopia takes the form of a dream in which the narrator is transported into the communist future, into the England of the late twenty-first century which has passed through a period of thorough transformation after the socialist revolution.

He revisits areas of London and the Thames valley which he had known all too well in the ill-gotten and misery which dominated them in his own day — and which are not gone from us today. He meets a wholly new kind of people from the oppressed, the harassed and the prematurely aged population of 19th century England.

The visitor is amazed and confused to find the Thames clear, unpoluted, stocked with salmon. He is even more surprised to find that people do not understand when he offers them money for services rendered and goods obtained.

London, the great, dirty, crowded metropolis, has in that form disappeared, the result of planned transformation and not of the h-bomb or any other of the modern weapons of mass destruction.

All kinds of small changes have taken place. Parliament, for instance, is used for storing manure and as a subsidiary 'market' (the description is not exact, because although there is distribution, there is no buying and selling). Such details are absorbing, but Morris's traveller finds that very fundamental changes are behind them.

By a combination of direct exploration, as he sees for himself the miraculous difference in life and culture, and by probing his hosts, he discovers the quality and the principles of organization of the new society. And we realize the irrationality of the old social forms of capitalism.

Several themes run through the narrative and the explanations. Man no longer plunders nature, mutilating its natural beauty, for the production of unnecessary articles. Buildings no longer stick out like sore thumbs, but blend harmoniously with their surroundings — the visitor describes houses 'new-grown' on a hill near Oxford.

The domination of the town over the country, seen alike in the hideous growth of the towns and the plunder and decline of the country and the village, has been ended. Britain has been merged into a garden in which the real benefits of urban civilization have been preserved.

Transformation of Work

These changes reflect a fundamental change in the nature of work. The material needs of society having been assured, work is no longer a mechanical operation performed under the pressure of external necessity. It has had to restore to it the element of pleasure associated with individual creation and enjoyment of use.

Morris wrote elsewhere that 'Art is the expression of man's joy in labour', and his indictment of capitalism was that it had made art (the visual arts) incomparable and labour unbearable. Slowly after the revolution, with the achievement of the material wealth necessary for a full life for all, these evils have been overcome.

But the change in the relationship of man with his natural surroundings and the nature of work are both cause and effect of changes in the relationships of men and women with one another.

'The great trouble,' Morris's traveller is told by an old woman who has seen the history of the revolution and the growth of the communist society, 'was that the once-poor had such a feeble conception of the real pleasure of life; so to say, they did not ask enough, did not know how to ask enough, from the new state of things. But the remedy of art, or a new pleasure in work, is only meaningful because people can now have genuine pleasure in each other's company, instead of drudgery, friction and conflict spreading from their work into all human relationships.

Morris is not a devotee of pleasure in the sticky sense to which we are acclimated to it by today's advertisers. The enjoyment of the delight in life through natural human relationships lights up every aspect of his picture of a new society.

Morris appeals to the deep feelings of revolution at the change, waste and ugliness of production for profit which have inspired every kind of socialist activity. By imaginatively projecting his own very strong personal convictions in the form of this dream he deepens the desires of his readers for change.

And this is why, on awakening from the dream, Morris's narrator can overcome his despair at finding the world still the same when he left it in the 20th century: '... if others can see it as I have seen it, it may be called a vision rather than a dream.'

Morris realizes that a vision by itself is not enough. In order for a vision to find real meaning, it must be anchored in the realities of existing society and the actual possibilities of social revolution which are produced by it.

This was why for Morris, unlike the authors of other 'perfect societies,' a utopia was not a substitute for a programme and political organisation, but another way of elaborating the revolt against the inhumanity of existing civilization. And this was why, in News from Nowhere itself, there are passages of open propaganda, explaining the class purposes of production, the state, and other aspects of life in capitalist society.

It is why Morris constructs an imaginative picture of the revolution, taking place in the middle of the 20th Century, which draws extensively on the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871 — then the major 'real-life' example of workers' insurrection as well as workers' demonstrations in the 1880's.

His record of the 'change' takes account of the resistance of the ruling class to the threat to their privileges. It does not contain the illusions of a peaceful transformation of society. He points out the dangers that communism, who clumsily label Morris a more 'utopian' socialist.

Capitalism, since Morris wrote, has achieved after its own barbarous fashion, some of the changes that Morris saw as the results of socialism. The relation between town and country — the town centres are indeed declining and the town has invaded the countryside in the last half-century.

But at what a frightful cost. Decay in the towns, ugly sprawl in the country. The basic anarchy in man's relation to his natural environment remains.

Equally the form in which Morris saw necessary social activities performed after the revolution is often seen as old-fashioned. Take the distribution of goods as an example: Morris sees markets place with small booths, with we might more easily envisage some simple, rationalized version of a supermarket, without queues, 'free' offers or the interminable queues at the cash desks.

But the principles embodied are the same: personal wants, needs and tastes fully catered for.

More serious objections to Morris's vision can be raised in that he seems at times to suggest the total elimination of large scale production and the substitution of handicrafts. It is probably true that he underestimated, though he did not rule out, the continuing importance of much of the industrial technology developed under capitalism even to a communist society.

Realms of Freedom

But his dream is not so unreal in relegating these problems to a secondary position. Nor is Morris's emphasis on recreating pleasurable labour so far-fetched. The realm of freedom as a new childhood for mankind, as well as a new field of triumph for his intellect, is an idea which strikes a deep chord.

An imaginative project of communism written today would undoubtedly be cast in a very different form, and use a very different style, from News from Nowhere. Its strength and limitations are very much a product of Morris's own experience of life and traditions he knew and developed in.

But it stands almost alone in its field — a commentary perhaps on both the state of art and of the socialist movement.

And 80 years on we still need Morris's vision. The real experience of the transition to socialism is limited to a short period in a backward country and we need to remember how much further it could have been achieved, or have been inspired, to, in post-revolutionary Russia. For in Britain, and the advanced world generally, are today many more potentialities to a truly communist society. News from Nowhere is part of the tradition on which we can draw in our struggle to create that society.

Ranks Need Independent Struggle Committees: The Unions under Monopoly Capitalism

Kim Moody
Sy Landy

The trade unions have been and still are the only independent mass organizations of the American working class. Though the struggles of American working people have taken many forms, the union has been the primary organizational of the defense of living standards. Yet over the years, the unions have become more and more bureaucratic and, at the same time, less and less able to win real gains. It is no secret that even before inflation took away wage gains, working conditions in industry were getting worse. Spec-up, inadequate safety measures, overtime, and all the things that determine how workers live for eight hours or more a day have become intolerable.

Even some important income protection measures, like the cost of living escalator clauses won in the 1940's and 50's were dumped in the past few years. At the same time, the bureaucratic structure of the unions, and the enormous power of the international leaders and staff within the unions, has made it nearly impossible for the rank and file to have much influence on the content of the contract.

Legal Tangle

To make matters worse, over a long period of time the unions have become caught in an incredible web of legal entanglements. This is not just a matter of certain anti-labor laws, like Section 41B, but even of many of the laws that the labor movement fought for. The National Labor Relations Board, for example, sets limits on what the unions can bargain over, i.e., it defines what is "management prerogative." With the power to set the size and scope of bargaining units and interpret the laws, the NLRB also reinforces the bureaucratic power of the union leaders over the rank. This, of course, is not written into the law, but it is a matter of consistent NLRB practice.

Under U.S. law, the labor contract is not just an instrument for protecting labor from management, i.e., from capital, but also for restraining labor. As every union member knows, the union is responsible for disciplining the rank and file under the terms of the contract. Management agrees to some decreases in wages and benefits and the union promises that workers won't do anything (like strike) to change the terms during the contract period. Thus, while inflation runs wild and technology changes working conditions, workers are tied to a two- or three-year contract.

Disciplinarians

The most blatant problem with this two-sided contract is the fact that workers are virtually powerless under the contract to do anything about working conditions. Throughout industry, and in white-collar work as well, workers must go through a long, drawn-out grievance procedure that is entirely out of their hands after the figures are seconded. Most contracts forbid strikes over such issues during the contract period.

All of this came about when union leaders, who accept the power relations of capitalism, agreed that the union should play the role of disciplinarian over the workers. The capitalists fight for this setup not only to keep costs down, but to allow them to freely plan ahead for future profits without interference from the workers. The union leaders see it as a way of gaining respectability and of maintaining their power in the union.

In the decades since it developed, this arrangement has been reinforced by laws, the courts, the NLRB and the executive branch of government. The two-sided contract is not an example of "equality" between labor and management, but a mechanism that maintains the inequality of power between the two.

The labor bureaucracy has continued to enforce and defend this accommodation to the ruling class while the working people continue to suffer from its consequences: speed-up, unfair overtime, unsafe conditions, etc. Growing numbers of workers, however, have begun to resist. Through wildcat strikes, contract rejection, shop floor actions, internal union fights and in other ways, more and more workers have struck out on their own to fight intolerable working conditions and declining living standards.

Rank and File Revolt

In the 1990's wildcat strikes were unusual and contract rejections almost unheard of. Today, wildcats are as common as official strikes, and over 14% of all contracts are rejected at least once. This growing rank-and-file rebellion is so powerful and so respected by this nation's economic and political rulers - that it now fills pages in popular and business magazines and books and in an important consideration in management's bargaining strategy. The independent action of the workers has the power that has been so frightening to the the union leaders and management, to protect their power and position. There can be no doubt that the rank-and-file independent initiative in the reason why some international leaders have been more willing to call strikes than in the past. It is also the background to some of the fights and new developments within the labor bureaucracy.

The split of the United Auto Workers from the AFL-CIO and the subsequent formation of the Alliance for Labor Action (ALA) were disorienting responses to the same conditions that cause rank-and-file unrest. Similarly, the growing trend toward coalition bargaining by different unions, particularly in the electrical industry, in a response to the workers' demands for action.

Yet, as important as both events may be, they are really attempts to maintain the power of the bureaucracy by giving these leaders a more militant or progressive image.

This is particularly clear in the case of the ALA which tried to present a new image by putting forth some broad (and totally inadequate) social programs while still ignoring the problems in their own industries and by-passing participation by rank-and-file workers. Similarly, while the coalition of 23 unions was an important step in fighting the power of General Electric, the leaders of these unions made no attempt to build on-going unity at the rank-and-file level or even to pull together some kind of inter-union shop stewards' council. Thus, the on-going struggle over working conditions is still out of the hands of the workers and the contract still a double-edged weapon.

For One-Year Contracts

If the union and the contract are to defend the interests of the workers, it is clear that the power to enforce contract provisions must lie solely with the union rank. In the first place, inflation and rapid changes in working conditions make a shorter contract necessary. National contracts should be limited to one year in length. Annual re-negotiations, with the understanding that strike will, enhance the power of the workers to change their working and living conditions.

In this context, although it is not our intention to present a full collective bargaining program, certain kinds of contract provisions can help to shift power to the workers, as well as alleviate inflation and unemployment. The cost of living escalator clause, tied to real increases in prices with no upper limit, along with the

Standard Oil Strike
Workers' Power

WE STAND FOR WORKERS' POWER, that is, for socialism: the collective ownership and democratic control of the economy by the working class, those who produce the wealth and own and control the means of production. We stand in opposition to all forms of class society, both capitalist and so-called "Communist" as well, and in solidarity with the struggles of all exploit- ed and oppressed people.

America is faced with a growing crisis. War, racial strife, inflation and taxes are the price paid by the working class for the government's apparent neglect or readiness to tolerate lawlessness and disorder. The task of the Left is to step forward to help contain this explosive situation, to support the protests and to lead and organize the struggles.

Workers' Power is the only alternative to this crisis, with which the Left and the working class can take control of their own lives and destiny and be masters of their own future. Workers' Power can win if everyone puts their backs into it, and the American workers, united in struggle, are the most powerful force in the world.

Whether these struggles are battles on the shop floor, strikes, or fights for union democracy, the workers are always at a disadvantage because they do not control the union and have no other expression of resistance. Wherever the level they are fighting at, it is clear that victory requires the class to be organized.

It is, of course, legitimate and necessary for workers to demand that the actions, which are theoretically their organizations, fight for the kind of programs they need. Indeed, in a thousand ways, working people do this all the time. Yet the union "leaders" power over the workers, and their commitment to enforcing discipline on the workers, means that the union leaders will not fight for these programs. In fact, until they are thrown out by the ranks and the unions are made democratic, the bureaucratization will fight against the kind of demands mentioned above.

To win demands that increase workers' control over working conditions, labor is forced to organize its resistance independently of the union bureaucracy and of the whole structure of contract administration. Even the traditional shop floor leadership, the stewards and committeemen, are forced to play an ambiguous role because of their position in contract administration.

Often, of course, stewards resist this role and act as real militants. In some industries, it may be that stewards will play a leading role in rank-and-file organization, but the pressures to do otherwise are always there. Furthermore, the representation ratio of stewards is so large in most industries (800 or 500 to 1) that the ability of the workers to control the stewards, i.e., to keep them on their side, has been watered down.

With little or no control over the union, or even its shop floor organization, the workers are left without an on-going means of fighting the foreman, manager, boss, union bureaucracy, etc. Many wildcats and shop floor struggles are lost not because the workers have no power, but because they have no way of carrying on the struggle in a coordinated way after the initial strike or job action.

Point of Production

Control of the union and of working conditions depends on the ability of the workers to organize themselves at the source of their power — the point of production. Ultimately, it is the ability of the workers to control production that determines how much power workers can extract from what is done on the job. The power of the unions is itself based on this fact. The fight to regain control over those unions, to control production and to organize politically, must begin with the point of production.

The first step, therefore, is to organize shop floor workers' committees, directed both by the workers and independent of the union structure. Let the workers choose representatives who are free from the duty to enforce labor peace on management's terms and who can begin to lead; now — in the fight for the demand that workers must win to protect their living and working standards. Let these representatives be chosen on the basis of their commitment to fight for a program that really gets to the problems labor faces.

As an organization of any floor struggle on a permanent basis can begin to shift the balance of power from management and the union bureaucracy to the workers on the shop floor, and this shift in power can be used for re-establishing union democracy and moving towards workers' control of production.

Obviously, the workers' power to affect the unions and to win power, industrial or political, from the corporations depends on their ability to unite shop level organizations throughout industry and to forge alliances with other groups of working people. The shop floor committee is crucial in fighting particular fights in individual plants, but it must be linked to the larger movement of working people in general. Industry-wide, city-wide area councils of shop floor representatives, cutting across union and independent lines, are necessary steps in the organization and use of workers' power.

Alliances and coalitions with particular groups of working people, such as blacks and women workers and the independent organizations, are also central to the work of the working people as a whole to make their power felt. In short, the historic concept of workers' solidarity that built the CIO must be given a new living organizational expression.

Working class power is not so much a matter of organizational forms or structures as it is of unity of purpose. Fragmentation along occupational, union, racial and cultural lines means that the working people have left the field open to bureaucrats, managers, capitalists and politicians. Unity among working people, however, cannot be forged by demanding that black, women, young or poor people give up their color or class or gender power so that white workers subordinate their legitimate interests to some false "commen" or unity.

Unity of Purpose

Rather, real unity of purpose and action can be forged through common, militant, independent and a mutually-agreed-to program; a program that is in the interests of all working people, even though particular groups may have other demands beyond those mutually agreed to. If workers' committees act together on a programmatic basis, the road can be opened to all for a new and better life and the achievement of a common program encompassing the needs of all sectors of the class.

In working class struggles there is not a matter of choice. Day in and day out, workers are forced to struggle to make the slightest advance, or even to defend what they have won in the past. The struggle is one of time. To organize the struggle more effectively and how to advance workers' power and control over their lives and work, so that they don't have to continually repeat the struggles or mistakes of the past.

An organized, coordinated, programmatic movement based on ever-present shop floor struggles and a strategy of alliances with other groups of working people is the first step in the fight for workers' control in industry and workers' power in society.

BROTHERS! YOU CAN'T BEAT ME, WITH THE MEN OF VIOLENCE TO KILL US, WHO LIVES YOU, DARE TO SAY ABOUT HIM?

P.S. CO. - Q.E.D.

WHY THAT EXACTLY THEN?

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It is, of course, legitimate and necessary for workers to demand that the actions, which are theoretically their organizations, fight for the kind of programs they need. Indeed, in a thousand ways, working people do this all the time. Yet the union "leaders" power over the workers, and their commitment to enforcing discipline on the workers, means that the union leaders will not fight for these programs. In fact, until they are thrown out by the ranks and the unions are made democratic, the bureaucratization will fight against the kind of demands mentioned above.

To win demands that increase workers' control over working conditions, labor is forced to organize its resistance independently of the union bureaucracy and of the whole structure of contract administration. Even the traditional shop floor leadership, the stewards and committeemen, are forced to play an ambiguous role because of their position in contract administration.

Often, of course, stewards resist this role and act as real militants. In some industries, it may be that stewards will play a leading role in rank-and-file organization, but the pressures to do otherwise are always there. Furthermore, the representation ratio of stewards is so large in most industries (800 or 500 to 1) that the ability of the workers to control the stewards, i.e., to keep them on their side, has been watered down.

With little or no control over the union, or even its shop floor organization, the workers are left without an on-going means of fighting the foreman, manager, boss, union bureaucracy, etc. Many wildcats and shop floor struggles are lost not because the workers have no power, but because they have no way of carrying on the struggle in a coordinated way after the initial strike or job action.

Point of Production

Control of the union and of working conditions depends on the ability of the workers to organize themselves at the source of their power — the point of production. Ultimately, it is the ability of the workers (in the shop and on the shop floor, i.e., the actual class) to bring industry to a halt that makes the working class the most powerful social force in society. Workers' ability to control production and the power they can extract from what is done on the job. The power of the unions is itself based on this fact. The fight to regain control over those unions, to control production and to organize politically, must begin with the point of production.

The first step, therefore, is to organize shop floor workers' committees, directed both by the workers and independent of the union structure. Let the workers choose representatives who are free from the duty to enforce labor peace on management's terms and who can begin to lead; now — in the fight for the demand that workers must win to protect their living and working standards. Let these representatives be chosen on the basis of their commitment to fight for a program that really gets to the problems labor faces.

As an organization of any floor struggle on a permanent basis can begin to shift the balance of power from management and the union bureaucracy to the workers on the shop floor, and this shift in power can be used for re-establishing union democracy and moving towards workers' control of production.

Obviously, the workers' power to affect the unions and to win power, industrial or political, from the corporations depends on their ability to unite shop level organizations throughout industry and to forge alliances with other groups of working people. The shop floor committee is crucial in fighting particular fights in individual plants, but it must be linked to the larger movement of working people in general. Industry-wide, city-wide area councils of shop floor representatives, cutting across union and independent lines, are necessary steps in the organization and use of workers' power.

Alliances and coalitions with particular groups of working people, such as blacks and women workers and the independent organizations, are also central to the work of the working people as a whole to make their power felt. In short, the historic concept of workers' solidarity that built the CIO must be given a new living organizational expression.

Working class power is not so much a matter of organizational forms or structures as it is of unity of purpose. Fragmentation along occupational, union, racial and cultural lines means that the working people have left the field open to bureaucrats, managers, capitalists and politicians. Unity among working people, however, cannot be forged by demanding that black, women, young or poor people give up their color or class or gender power so that white workers subordinate their legitimate interests to some false "commen" or unity.

Unity of Purpose

Rather, real unity of purpose and action can be forged through common, militant, independent and a mutually-agreed-to program; a program that is in the interests of all working people, even though particular groups may have other demands beyond those mutually agreed to. If workers' committees act together on a programmatic basis, the road can be opened to all for a new and better life and the achievement of a common program encompassing the needs of all sectors of the class.

In working class struggles there is not a matter of choice. Day in and day out, workers are forced to struggle to make the slightest advance, or even to defend what they have won in the past. The struggle is one of time. To organize the struggle more effectively and how to advance workers' power and control over their lives and work, so that they don't have to continually repeat the struggles or mistakes of the past.

An organized, coordinated, programmatic movement based on ever-present shop floor struggles and a strategy of alliances with other groups of working people is the first step in the fight for workers' control in industry and workers' power in society.
May Day
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

The men who were hung went to their death proclaiming their innocence and declaring that they were being killed in an attempt to intimidate the movement they were a part of. None of them seemed to feel that they died in vain, and events bear them out. In 1866 and 1867 the agitation on their behalf was a spur to the labor movement as a whole, but even before that the eight-hour movement they had helped to build bore fruit.

By May 15, 1886, 42,000 workers were shorter days and other concessions through strikes. 160,000 more won concessions without strikes, so great was the impact of the eight-hour strike. In 1888 there were 665 strikes for shorter days, of which 70 occurred in May. As the movement spread, the number of such strikes grew, and that labor must find a solution to the larger problem facing workers. He warned that should the courts issue an injunction prohibiting the boycott, the union may call for civil disobedience and he would be ready to go to jail.

The grape growers have filed a wide range of court actions to harm him and his Petaluma Grape Workers Union. The union is being sued for $7 million for damages as a result of the boycott and other actions. The National Labor Relations Act, the growers are trying to stop other unions from coming to the aid of the farm workers.

The National Labor Relations Act, passed in 1935, specifically excludes farm workers from its coverage. Farm workers have no legal procedure through which they may select a collective bargaining agent or have the protection of the law in their attempts to unionize. For the growers are seeking to use the Taft-Hartley amendments of the law forbidding secondary boycotts against the very workers not covered by the law.

The Farm Workers Union in retreating with a broad spectrum of court actions. Their counter-offer of $3.5 million charged the growers with violating anti-trust and labor laws. They charged the growers with illegally conspiring to destroy the union and to destroy competition over wages so as to pressure smaller growers who wanted to join the union.

Another suit by the union charges that the largest grape growers are illegally draining vast amounts of federally-subsidized irrigation water. Federal water law limits a grower to irrigating 160 acres, and the union has charged that some growers are irrigating 1,000 acres and more.

This suit was filed on behalf of two small grape growers, who charged that the big corporate growers are preventing nearby smaller growers from getting subsidized water and pushing them out of business. The Reclamation Bureau’s chief has admitted that smaller growers have not been getting the water regularly while the larger growers did because there hadn’t been enough water to go around.

In another court action filed by the California Rural Legal Assistance on a class action on behalf of California’s farm workers, a demand was made to close all of the state’s 42 federally-funded Farm Labor offices by July 1, 1939, or compel them to operate under a fair employment plan requiring joint farm worker-grower control.

Grape-Oriented

The Farm Labor offices are notoriously grower-orientated and anti-farm worker. They are staffed with personnel working closely with growers and completely ignoring worker to worker calls for help, and they are often ignored their own rules and regulations and refer workers to jobs in fields without toilet or drinking water. The CRA action demands that no referrals take place unless the grower is in full compliance with state laws, pays the highest prevailing wage, and gives a guaranty of 40 hour work.

The grape growers, bankrolled by other agricultural interests, have hired the high-priced public relations firm of Whitaker and Baxter to counteract the sympathetic response of the American consumer and public to the farm worker’s plight. This is the firm which directed the campaign against "socialized medicine" for the American Medical Association at a cost of $3.5 million. They also did a job for the railroad industry with their "featherbedding" ads, and posters showing railroad workers singing. I’ve been leaving on the railroad..."

The same firm helped California’s song-and-dance San Francisco George Murphy to wash his "Consumer Agriculture and Food Protection Act" (S 2203), which would totally emasculate the farm workers’ right to strike and to boycott, the Bill would place farm workers under the jurisdiction of the National Labor Relations Board and the pro-grower Department of Agriculture.

Whitaker and Baxter have an enviable reputation of winning for every reactionary cause that has paid them to manipulate the media. The Farm Workers Office has $4 million to run a national counter-campaign. They plan to intensify their boycott against grapes by sending hundreds of boycott teams into new areas in the summer of 1939. They intend to make it a long hot summer for the growers and their supporters.

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WORKERS POWER MAY 1939 PAGE 11
The Eight Hour Movement and the Origin of May Day

Kevin Richards

In Europe, Japan and Latin America, and Russia and the Eastern European countries, May 1 is a workers' holiday celebrated with rallies, demonstrations and even strikes. But few people remember that the May Day tradition grew from the eight-hour day movements of U.S. workers during the late 1880s.

In this country the holiday is officially scored as "Communist," it's true that the so-called Communist countries - where in reality a small elite rules over the working class - use such celebrations to further the myth that these regimes are workers' governments, thereby helping to keep the elite in power. The rulers in this country have similar reasons for eliminating the holiday; the methods are different, but the purpose are the same. The United States wants workers to forget their history and traditions of struggle - so that they see power can stay in power more easily.

After the Civil War, America entered an era of rapid economic expansion in which the industrial economy first took shape. As has happened in all capitalist countries, businesses were established and expanded with the money saved by inflicting on workers long hours, terrible working conditions, and low pay. Industrial deaths and wage cuts were more the rule than the exception as the economy grew on the backs of workers.

Business Stranglehold

This situation was reinforced by the stranglehold of business interests over the "law-making process." In Illinois the state militia was organized in response to labor "disturbances" (as the National Guard is used against rebelling blacks today) and the desire to suppress the struggle of workers for any kind of decent living standards. There were few and mainly unenforced restrictions on employers, while most states had laws severely limiting the ability of workers to organize and strike. When the employers didn't find the laws favorable enough, they could usually count on their influence among politicians and judges to secure helpful court decisions.

In response to these conditions, the labor movement - which had quieted during the Civil War - revived more militantly than ever, and at the center of its concerns was the struggle for the eight-hour day. Workers' activity continued on the rise until the depression of 1873, but few won shorter hours or other concessions.

Despite the intensity of the struggle (100,000 struck for shorter hours in New York alone), workers were not yet well enough organized to overcome the resistance of the employers and their control of the government.

During this period there were attempts to form national organizations, but the movement remained primarily local and sporadic in nature.

When in the mid-1880's, the workers' movement surged again, the quest for shorter hours remained at the heart of the struggle. Workers who fought for better pay and conditions were met by companies using trainloads of scabs and the government using troops to break up strikes. Between July 1885 and June 1886, the Knights of Labor grew in membership from 100,000 to 700,000, and in 1884 the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions resolved that as of May 1, 1886 eight hours would be the legal working day.

The Federation itself was vague and half-hearted about implementing the resolution, and most of the leadership of the Knights of Labor was bitterly opposed to using strikes as a method. Yet there was little they or anyone else could do to prevent 1886 from being an historic year for the American working class.

Along with the labor movement, a radical movement developed after the Civil War, particularly in New York and Chicago and most notably among German workers. By 1886, it had an anarcho-communist ideology, calling for the abolition of private ownership of industry and the establishment of a "free society" based on cooperation and trade unions. In Chicago lakefront meetings and workers' rallies, often of a thousand or more and featuring anarchist and socialist speakers, became a part of the political landscape.

One of the most remarkable of these was a Thanksgiving Day rally of three thousand protesting the government's proclamation. "Resolutions against private property were passed and it was declared: '-., that we are thankful because we have learned the true cause of poverty and know (sic) the remedy, and can only be more thankful when the principles are put in force.'

Generalized to Anti-Capitalist Struggles

When the call for the eight-hour movement was first issued in 1884, the radicals weren't really involved. But by the beginning of 1886 they had thrown themselves wholeheartedly into it, in a way that labor's official leaders never did. At this time, the ten-hour day and the sixty-week week were standard with many workers averaging ten to thirty hours more per week. As the eight-hour struggle came to symbolize the workers' general fight against capitalism, the movement grew by leaps and bounds. And this time the struggle was national in scope and represents the first real nationwide strike activity of American workers.

In Chicago where the greatest struggle was occurring and where the workers were frequently fighting the police, everybody expected violence on May 1. No violence did occur on that day but thirty thousand workers marched, many thousands participated in it or watched various demonstrations. Then on May 3 a fight broke out between strikers and scabs at the McCormick Harvester plant. The police came and dispersed the strikers with rubber bullets and mace, killing one and seriously wounding several others.

In response, the trade unions called for a demonstration in Haymarket Square on the fourth to protest police brutality. The night before, several hundred members of Chicago's revolutionaries, some of whom made ready to address the crowd. The rally was only one of many scheduled for that night and remained unmolested until the end, when a column of police arrived and demanded without any reason that the crowd disperse. All of a sudden, a bomb was thrown into the column and the police opened fire, clearing the square in a matter of seconds.

Hysteria

Although the identity of the bomb-thrower was unknown and remains so till today, the government and the press quickly computed to create an anti-radical hysteria. Needless to say, the second trial of anarchists on May 4th was a farce. The sentence imposed was a death sentence.

The Haymarket affair was the first in a series of mass demonstrations that marred the US for the next twenty years. The government used the trials and executions as a way of silencing the radicals and repressing the movement.

EIGHTH our injustice and brought to trial on conspiracy-to-communer charges. All were chom- chen because they had been in and around the radical movement; four had been prominent leaders. None of those was ever proven to have had any connections with the unidentified bomb-thrower. However, this didn't deter the efforts of the press and the police to hang them.

Real purpose was to crush the revolutionary movement and stop its growing influence among workers. To this end, it was far better to convict and execute known radicals than to find out what really happened in Haymarket Square. The judge ruled it unnecessary that they be proven to have had any direct connection with the actual event, since their general advice that workers use force to protect themselves and bring about the end to the injustices of the society was reason enough to hang them.

As could be expected under such circumstances, all eight were found guilty - the only surprise was that one of them was spared the death sentence and received fifteen years instead.

Organized labor's first reaction to the Haymarket Affair was to forget the attacks on workers that the police had been making and condemn the indicted men. Labor's official leaders, then as now, were frightened by the growing working class revolt and the increasing influence of the radicals among workers.

Railroaded

At time went on, however, popular opinion and with it the opinion of many labor leaders underwent a reversal. More and more people came to the defense of the Haymarket Men and when the Supreme Court refused to hear the appeal, a virtual movement grew demanding the release of the "holiday" radicals. As a step to try to quiet public opinion the governor commuted the sentences of two men to life imprisonment while sending four to the gallows. One committed suicide before he could be hanged. But in 1893, Illinois' next governor, Ahlstrand pardoned the three survivors and by implication vindicated the other five. His reason was that he had examined the trial record and found that the men had been railroaded through court without there being any evidence that could rightfully convict them.

(Continued on page 11)
that they'll be willing to pay to clean up our water and our air." (Newsweek, "The Ravaged Environment").

In an economy torn apart by inflation, which limits most those least able to pay, including black people, poor people, and the working class in general, these kinds of solutions are absurd. Many ecology experts, are, unfortunately, willing to accept them.

The working class has a special place in the environment. The work of the working class is to replace the internal combustion engine, would do more toward ending automobile pollution than all the consumer boycotts, congressional letter-writing campaigns, and pressure politics in the world.

The one section of the working class that is mentioned in the Environmental Handbook is the farm workers. In an article called "Pesticides Since Silent Spring," Steven H. Neida describes his plight. "The farm workers, upon whom we depend so much to harvest our nation's food supply, live and work in near slavery. This is especially true for the migrant workers. There is no work during the winter months, and even when there is no work does not have to pay them the legal minimum wage (average income for farm workers: $1,232 a year). So the whole family goes to work, including the children, to earn as much as possible. Thus the farm worker family has close exposure to dangerous pesticides - from contaminated drinking water, from living in close proximity to sprayed fields, from 'drift,' being sprayed while working in the fields and from working among crops on which the residues of dangerous pesticides are still active."

Worried goes on to discuss the role of the United Farm Workers in fighting the pesticides, saying that this organization has the potential for being "one of the most effective power blocks for controls over the use of these dangerous chemicals."

This point is well taken but it also brings us back to the question of how and through whom one exercises that power. The UF/WCO leadership is firmly tied to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, and as long as this orientation is sanctioned by the bulk of the membership, no fundamental changes will be allowed. It is not in the interest of the capitalist class to abandon its efforts to obtain the most profit at the least cost, for the sake of something as 'irrelevant' as poisoning of the environment. No matter how much lip service the capitalists pay to the 'problems' of pollution, they will fight basic reforms tooth and nail, because these reforms must involve the destruction or restructuring of the institutions of capitalism.

Basic changes are in the interest of the working class, however, and workers organized on the job, in rank-and-file caucuses and struggle committees, can carry on the fight even while the union bureaucrats urge support to their local Democratic Party. In order for this to happen, the ecology movement must begin to direct a large part of its effort toward workers. Workers have every reason to join us once they will understand what's at stake. For a number of years, now, an important element in many strikes has been the issue of working conditions and, in general, it will be even more important as speed-up takes its toll.

We must take advantage of this fact to underline the relevance of the ecology movement to workers' self-interest.

The ecology movement, linked with the working class struggle and in other struggles for social change, will include black and brown liberation and women's liberation, soon meet enter the political arena. If it is to succeed, it must fight for a position of strength, linked with a Worker's Party, separate and distinct from the capitalist parties. We must begin now to work toward that goal.

**Strikes**

A strike by auto workers, which included the demand to replace the internal combustion engine, would do more toward ending automobile pollution than all the consumer boycotts, congressional letter-writing campaigns, and pressure politics in the world.
imperialism which is responsible for the Vietnam war, not violence in the movies. Similarly, it is capitalism which is responsible for the deterioration of the environment, not the victims of that deterioration. The moral-witness approach, whether to peace or pollution, is based on a liberal analysis of the nature of American society. Eco-politicism and eco-liberalism differ on tactics, but they agree on strategy.

Eco-anarchism. When eco-politicism is seen to be powerless to change society, a common reaction will be an effort to escape from society. There is a lot of talk floating around about utopian-anarchist colonies as an ecological strategy. These colonies would be located away from urban areas, and in them people would try to live in harmony with their environment. This usually means a rejection of modern technology, and a subsistence existence in small communities. This may look attractive to the harrumbled city-dweller, but it is rejected as living as an industrial society lies just over the hill.

Suppose it didn’t. What would you do when the baby got sick, and home remedies didn’t work? There would be no doctor to call. There would be no drug industry to develop anti-biotics. The baby would simply die. Agricultural productivity would be very low, and starvation would be widespread. The energy needed to provide essentials would be huge. In short, society would revert to a tribal, pre-industrial level of organization.

Humanity spent thousands of years trying to get out of that sort of existence. There must have been a reason why so many people felt so strongly about it. Communities are only tenable within the interstices of an industrial society.

Eco-terrorism. At a recent ecology meeting, someone suggested that to demonstrate the uselessness of building more freeways, the group go out and cause a massive highway accident. This would no doubt strike the suggestion seriously, but there will no doubt be some incidents of this sort of action.

In an article on “The Politics of Ecology” (February 15, 1970), Barry Weilheim says that in the summer and spring we can expect a series of radical ecologic actions: the bombing of more corporate headquarters, sabotage to the industrial machines that pollute and obstruct at airports and other transportation corridors. “The stupidity of such tactics is staggering. They are virtually designed to alienate any potential public support that the ecologists are likely to get; they are a form of suicide. The only way to counter such tactics is to set up an orgainzation for eco-repression (which is not distinguishable from ordinary repression).

Bombing and sabotage (no saying that nothing simple can be done) are an honor and honorable history in the labor movement. But they can only be valid as adjuncts to a larger movement, in very specific situations. Such situations do not now exist in this country, and the use of such rarely as justifiable by irresponsible individuals is a recipe for disaster.

Eco-masochism. This is an ecological counterpart to the notion of “white-skinned privilege”. American workers are held to be far too wealthy for their own good. This excess wealth is supposed to be the root of environmental problem. This must really seem like a grim joke to the average American worker, who lives very nearly hand-to-mouth. He needs a job, needs to eat. Even if his take-home pay can be doubled, he could easily spend all of the increase on personal expenses.

Any approach to ecological problems which stresses increased costs to the consumer is likely to be of no value. As long as this will necessarily have limited appeal, We have already had involuntary poverty.

This approach also diverts attention from consideration of the basis of the economy and the distribution of power in society. It is harmful in the same way that anti-litter campaign can be harmful when they are used as a vehicle for attacking cheap real problems.

Eco-socialism. There are very powerful forces at work within the capitalist system opposing any solution to the environmental crisis. Many well-entrenched interests are involved. It would involve an upheaval at least as great as the New Deal. Since this would ultimately have to be confronted worldwide, it might well be defeated by the powerful forces of international economic and political domination. However, there is a possibility of a genuine world revolution. A real possibility is an important subject for future debate within the ecology movement.

Whether or not planning under socialism is the only kind of solution, it must be presented as such, if only to prevent consideration of a socialist solution. It is the only imperative that ecological activities see themselves as part of the larger struggle for socialism and not as separate black and white, female and male, blue-collar and white-collar.

Many ecology activists, accustomed to regarding working people as the cause of environmental problems, will be unable to envision them fighting for solutions to these problems. In fact this fight has been going on on a local level for a long time, but is a health hazard on the job. Ecology activists should remind themselves that the Black Lung wildcat in the coal fields of West Virginia was generally seen as part of the ecology movement in addition to being part of the labor movement.

Working people must demand not only control of job conditions which endanger health, but control of the kinds of products that produce health hazards. They must demand that there be public ownership of the means of production. Working people will not find it easy to believe that anyone really believes the notion of devoting his life to the production of crap. It is in the nature of capitalism that the struggle cannot be confined to the level of the individual plant. If it is, it will be defeated by economic pressures, and it will not even begin to touch many of the basic problems.

The political and ecological problems, workers will be forced to generalize their demands to control of the entire planning process of society, which can only be achieved through control of the means of production. The ecological crisis, by focusing the attention of workers on the process of planning, may prove to be a powerful force for the creation of socialism.

Joe Feltenstein is an assistant professor of genetics at the University of Washington and a member of the Seattle International Socialists.

In every page of their book, Ehrlich is more cautious, but only slightly. "Coercion?" he asks, referring to a proposal for forced sterilization of Indians who have more than three children, "Perhaps, but coercion is a good thing. Aromaxxos are not at all the antitheses of Americans who are horrified at the prospect of our government imposing population control as the price of food aid. All too often the very same people are equally unwilling to restrict their own fertility if others disagree with our form of government or our foreign policy. We must be relentless in pushing for population control around the world.

But the policy is a logic of its own. A large, pre-rhythmically young population, unemployed and concentrated in the cities, may cause trouble. "In the I970s it will be a single battle on the present front, namely,较 Economize, and threatens real, red, raw, urban revolt." Unfortunately, population control alone will not develop the backward countries, and without development there is no way to stop the increase of population. This policy is at odds with the recipient governments and with American corporations looking for business in the third world, who would like to see an increase in production.

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Ecology: An English View

On his recent American trip, Harold Wilson offered his old buddy Richard Nixon a special relationship so that their nations could get together on the two great problems of our time: race relations and pollution, the destruction of our natural environment.

The Labour government's racetrack has an immigration effectively cleared the way for the running of the pollsters. Now our Harold has served notice that he intends to repeat this success in 1971.

As we all know, when he moves, he moves swiftly. As a result, since his return, the pollution problem has been debated in Parliament and the personnel for a permanent Royal Commission on the matter will be announced shortly.

All of a sudden our matters have hit upon the despolarization of our lives. We must be very careful not to dismiss the discussion just because we do not see those who started it.

Roughly the background is this. Some years ago, Rachel Carson published a little book called The Silent Spring. She said that the use of chemical pea-bitters in farming was flushing out man's natural allies along with the pests. Birds and beasts were being exterminated and soon spring would indeed be silent.

DDT prevents the formation of calcium. One of the results of its use in farming is that eggshells become thinner and thinner. To quote the New York Times. Food, too, is taking a hammering, with gods knowing what getting into it is the pursuit of high yields for high profit. Some commentators even suggested that the wonder drug be no one around to hear the silence of that silent spring. A clear cut example of human implications of the techniques of big business farming lies in the use of pesticides. As a result, people develop resistances to the antibiotics in their food.

If hospitalised, from a quite unrelated illness, they are found to have a mysterious immunity to the healing power of these selfsame antibiotics. Sometimes they meet an equally mysterious death.

Pesticides

Perhaps the most dramatic case of the moment is the destruction of our own crops. Mainly Mexican immigrants, their five-year-old strike demands a ban on the use of such pesticides.

After five years - including four of government-financed strikes by buying up all the boycotted grapes - the bosses thought they might agree to some sort of increase in the basic wage, even union recognition. But talks broke down on the question of pesticides. Californian grape workers lose their hair, their fingernails and their lives as a result of their continual contact with these pesticides. Needless to say, such crimes are not classified as the legal product of capitalism.

It may be that if and when there is some temporary conclusion to this five-year struggle, these crimes will be officially classified as 'accidents'.

Some workers will receive a few pennies' compensation if they lose the required number of fingernails. America's moneyhogs will thrust their chumps to reforming pride and other workers will continue to lose their hair and lives.

In some of its sectors, agriculture is consumed by a need for vast yields to satisfy the grain motive. When it is not, big business agriculture is concerned to avoid American or British overproduction which would surely sap the market price.

In Britain, the National Marketing Board pours millions of gallons of milk it has purchased down landlord cowpits. One theory is that this fact is due to the freight charges for not giving aid to the world's hungry.

America has a more advanced form of discrimination. With government grants financed by the poor, the huge meat and dairy and the various other sectors of the American working class - are doted on by the big farmers to make it worth their while not to grow anything.

But side by side with an agriculture consumed with profit-hunger and other forms of madness, there operates another monstrous industry.

Is it that the press and the TV see as the final threat. Industrial waste is consuming us, we have 10 years to live.

The machine has taken charge and it's all Bond Street to a packet of Woodbines that we've had it. Our cities are being made into gas chambers by exhaust and industrial fumes. Our technology is out of control.

First we must register surprise at this sudden discovery of the existence of our lives.

Vast sections of the world's population have long been aware of the miserable conditions of their lives. Their unspoken demands have been maimed by industrial accidents, the squalor of poverty, starvation and war.

They have struggled relentlessly over the last 150 years to get themselves out of just such conditions, although their success has been woefully far from altogether a smashing success.

Of course, it's not our technology which is out of control. We produce it and so we can change it.

It is not production itself which is killing us, but its social goals, the method and style of production which invariably accompany the relentless pursuit of private profit and the endless accumulation of capital, the prime purpose of capitalism.

The story goes that we are killing ourselves by our industry and our technology. It's not true, it can be, and we can lay down different social goals as soon as workers seize the power.

Our rivers are indeed poisons, our countryside raped and raped. Too so are our people, the victims of terrible mental disintegration, of industrial diseases and injuries in our artificially shortened lives.

Capitalist industry and agriculture are no longer procreative. At every level the possibility exists to eliminate every 'producent' whether it be to a hillside or to a human limb.

If we rack our memories we will remember an accident to a mountainmade mountain of waste. A gigantic coal-tipped above the village of Aberfan slid into the valley below, engulfing the village school and killing 116 children and 21 adults.

A 'disaster'! Even the word is politically loaded. No, no disaster, but rather the inevitable result of our system of production.

Men had put the tip where it was, many dying to dig it from the bowels of the earth. Other men knew it would be likely to collapse, for they had studied its structure.

After the slaughter men are now flattening it, a construction firm got an unexpected and profitable contract and dozens of buildings were finished and in need of the monument to private profit that is Aberfan.

Aberfan was 'pollution', Aberfan was 'industrial damage', and so on of the rest for the systematic rape of man and nature.

Aberfan and other so-called disasters are just one aspect of the devastation of our lives which - through the social metabolism - will become even more slowly, capable of raising vast sculptures of mental and physical delight out of a landscapes which sometimes seems able only to stifle and to kill.

Capitalist production, while in a stage revolutionising man's relationship with nature, proceeds without any concern for social production. It is an anachronism, overtype for replacement by community, the superior and truly human form of society which will issue from a worker's state.

If there is no concern for production for use and need, the normal state of capitalism is a highly organized state of chaos. A man of contemporary man, it is no surprise that it should be contemptuous of nature.

It can never be reformed. An economy cannot just switch production for war to production to combat poverty and scarcity. The society itself must be reconstructed and revolutionised.

Capitalism must waste its mad quest for the accumulation of capital through private profit. It must tax the working class to pay for its vast indigence in permanent terror and violence. It can never reconstruct itself in a fundamentally different fashion.

Capitalist production does not reign unchallenged, the mole of revolution digs deep. When, after many years, the readers and writers of Socialist Worker (and other papers like it) have succeeded in their struggle to build a man revolutionary party - that vital excavator which will enable us to reach the daylight and bury the stifling system of capitalist production relations forever - there will be no place for self-congratulation, even the narrow of a successful revolution will be an occasion of renewed activity. We will begin to move to towards a total alteration of our relationship with nature.

For the first time in history there will be a human nature, neither above nor beneath man, we will humanise man in our journey to humanise ourselves.

As Leon Trotsky wrote in 1924:

"The present location of mutations and rivers, fields and greens, steeps, forest and maritime coasts, should by no means be considered as final. Man has already carried out so far some from negligible changes in nature's map. But this only for schoolboy-boys' essays in comparison with what is to come.

'If faith could only promise to move mountains, technology, which takes nothing on faith, will really pull them down and shift them. However, it has done this only for industrial commercial purposes (quines and tunnels).

'In the future it will do it on an incomparably wider scale, in accordance with comprehensive productive-artistic plans. Man will make a new inventory of mountains and rivers. He will seriously and more than once amend nature.'

'He will eventually reshape the earth to his taste ... and we have nothing to fear that his taste will be poor.'

THE POLITICS OF POPULATION

Walter Daum

A new population control movement has come into being. It is partly a branch of the growing environmental movement, and partly descended from the older family planning organizations, but in focusing narrowly on overpopulation as the world's critical problem, this movement is really tangential to both of these streams, and very much in the Mahlavian tradition.

In leading spokesman is Paul Elrich, a biologist whose book "The Population Bomb" is circulating in an edition of a million copies. Elrich's thesis is twofold: 1) population growth is rapidly outrunning food production, and therefore mass starvation is unavoidable in the near future; 2) overpopulation is the root of all problems of modern society, including the shortages of housing, schools, hospitals and transportation, air and water pollution, crime, riots, slums, governmental repression, the gap between rich nations and poor, and the war in Vietnam.

It follows from these two assertions that the only solutions worth considering are those that directly control population growth, and that these solutions must be massive and immediate.

Under the circumstances, it is not hard to believe that the proposed solutions range from the pessimistic to the authoritarian. Some of Elrich's suggestions coincide with the programs of movements for social change; others however stand directly opposed to these movements. The urgency of the population problem can be used to divert attention from issues of war, racism and welfare. It has been used to give reactionary politics a liberal platform.

Demography and Society

Happily, Elrich's case is far from airght. His first thesis requires a projection of present rates of population growth into the future, a notoriously unwarranted task. Projections made by demographers during the depression years of the thirties forecast the depopulation of Western Europe. Estimates in the early forties predicted a post-war baby boom, but nothing like the one that occurred.

The difficulty is that the rate of population growth depends on social conditions, especially industrialization and urbanization first cause population to spurt by lowering the death rate, and later bring about a lower rate of growth by reducing the birth rate. The developed nations of the world have reached the second stage. The post-war industrialization of Japan and Italy, for example, was followed by a noticeable decline in birth rates.

The extraordinary increase in world population is taking place largely in the underdeveloped countries, chiefly because of medical advances, public health programs, and technological developments that have improved food distribution. In the third world, the second stage has not been reached. One explanation is that of Theo Robson: "The social and economic circumstances that control human behavior in most of the underprivileged parts of the world today, and for that matter prevailed almost everywhere in the past, children constitute the easiest and most rewarding source of emotional satisfaction, as well as a kind of insurance against the future. Only in prosperous countries have other incentives weakened this fundamental human urge."

The claim that population will continue to grow at the present rate relies, therefore, on the assumption that the third world will remain underdeveloped. Because of the existence and consequences of imperialism, this assumption is not unreasonable. But there is the alternative of social revolution - an alternative that the population controllers do their best to avoid.

Spokesmen like Elrich insist that taking the underlying social context into account would waste valuable time. As will be seen, the population control experts are on friendly terms with imperialism, and are willing to live with underdevelopment. Their "inaugiability of overpopulation" argument begins with a bias against social change, and thus necessarily misses the point. Another proposition required by the mass starvation thesis is the idea that food production cannot be greatly increased. Although new technological procedures are possible, British argues that bringing new lands under cultivation or developing new fertilizers and protein foods would be economically unfeasible. Perhaps so, but there is a choice being made between alternative uses of resources. Elrich does not, for example, point out that the arms budget appears to be permanently feasible for American capitalism. The development of agricultural resources is just one more category of useful production given a low priority in our society.

A curious statement that keeps turning up in The Population Bomb is that America's food surpluses cannot be used to feed the poor countries for much longer because they're nearly all gone. The source for this information seems to be a book that Elrich depends on for many of his arguments -- William and Paul Paddock's "Farmers' 1950". The Paddock reason that our surpluses are "gone" because they've been shipped out of the country under the Food for Peace program. And since they've been disposed of there's no need to produce them again. But Elrich fails to acknowledge agricultural production to meet only the needs of profitable domestic consumption and foreign trade. In other words, our farm surpluses will be "gone" if we make them by.

As it happens, the United States continues to reduce farm production in the face of worldwide underdevelopment. Wheat acreage allotments were cut by 125% for this year because of a world surplus; 25% of the food we'll consume this year will be shipped abroad and fed to people in Asia. It is very unlikely that even full use of American agricultural resources at present levels could provide the world with a decent diet, Elrich and the Paddocks exaggerate the potential help by creating unprofitable production as surplus.

It should be pointed out that Elrich's pessimism is not universally accepted. The British Medical Journal in an editorial of November 1968 stated: "At the moment, food production is increasing at a rate of 3% annually..."; however much our own ineptitude may produce conditions in Bihar, Mississippi and Biafra that could make the world seem doomed to eventual famine.

In sum, Elrich's mass starvation via overpopulation thesis rests on a number of unproven assumptions and overlooks the problem of the organization of society. His second thesis -- that overpopulation is the root cause of all evils -- suffers from the same flaws and moreover is supported by no evidence at all. Elrich simply assserts it, over and over again.

It is obvious that unlimited population growth would ultimately become THE problem, because of the finite size of the earth. But these limits have not been reached. Overcrowded conditions resulting from high population density are a phenomenon that has been experienced in the past, they existed in the ancient world and in medieval cities. Today's "overpopulation" as well as a social problem, not a biological one.

Atmosphere of Panic

The atmosphere of panic evoked by the population control enthusiasts enables them to put forth proposals that would worsen the social crisis mixed with measures aimed at ameliorating it. On family planning matters, they are naturally in favor of voluntary birth control and abortion, but involuntary control also turns up. Compulsory abortion for illegitimate pregnancies is one proposal. Elrich has become a resident population control advocate, told a Senate subcommittee that "the dispensers of therapy should be educated, not the recipient," liberating women from the pressure to define themselves in terms of the family, and eliminating real job opportunities and wages for women have been proposed in the same breath as compelling women to work outside the home -- either by law or by lowering all wages so that each family needs two incomes, (Kingsley Davis, in Science, 1967).

This suggestion is modeled on the population policies of several Eastern European "socialist" countries. Whether designed to increase the available labor force or to decrease the population, such manipulations work in the interest of elitist control. The population experts favor the liberation of women only to the extent that it fits their convenience.

Taxation and welfare policies put forward by the population controllers would concentrate their impact on poor and working class families. The major legislative proposal of Zero Population Growth, an organization whose president is Dr. Elrich, is to eliminate tax exemptions for each family's "excess" children. ZPG would deny that there are "normal" family sizes and in fact it makes an exception for families below the poverty line. Yet it would hurt mainly those with low incomes, and would not inhibit the wealthy from having as many children as they want to.

Other ideas around the population control movement are to cut off welfare benefits to mothers of more than some fixed number of children, and to stop awarding public housing on the basis of family size. All very (Cont. on next page)
On February 1st, the National Committee (quarterly council) of the New University, Conference, with about 200 people in attendance, expelled the Progressive Labor Party and the Worker-Student Alliance Caucus. The Progressive Labor Party (PL) charges of "anti-communism" and "anti-working class attitudes" could have been collected. The motivation of those who actually wanted to base the expulsion on political differences was very different from those who honestly felt that there was evidence of underhanded maneuvering. The leadership of the former position, John Mc Dermott of MIT, has put forward a proposal for the turning of NUC into a cadre organization, presumably with Mc Dermott's polities. The executive committee introduced the motion at the very start of the plenary, intending to ask all PL's and WSAers to leave if the motion passed. It was clear at the beginning that the votes for expulsion were present and the ensuing debate was extremely sloppy on the part of the supporters of expulsion. There were, however, several excellent arguments against expulsion made independently. At the end of the debate it would have been apparent from any transcript that the charges of "obstructionism" were just not substantiated. There will always be conflicting testimony, but the evidence as presented was exceptionally shoddy, rather than risk having to drag out those who had been expelled by force (although there seemed to be no objection to the shouting down of hillary Panum, a member of the WSA, by the chairman), the leadership clearly decided to abandon for one-half hour. Afterwards the group was told to reconvene in another room of the building in which the meeting was being held. PL/WSAers including chapter delegates who stayed were hissed at the door by guards. Food had been ordered in, and separate trays were left outside the locked doors for the partisans.

Many workshops later in the day it made it clear to all doubters that any real political bonds uniting the anti-PL side were extremely thin. For example, although NUC declared itself last June to be working for a "new American form of socialism" in which students and members of delegates attending did not yet consider themselves to be socialists. The majority seemed to favor some kind of "new working class" ideology, of the sort which would allow them to deal with the hardening of NUC (Rememember that Bernardine Dohrn ran for inter- organizational secretary of SDS on a new working class platform).

Politics Not Discipline

But the discussion at the national meeting itself demonstrated that it was not organizational discipline, but politics, that provided the thrust for the motion that the charged disciplinary infractions were far from substantiated. The charges, in general, of "forcing heavy debates" in chapters were very vague and at MIT, at least, the evidence of opposition opposed both to PL and the national leadership seemed to indicate that there was no basis whatever to the charge.

On the other hand, many speakers, including Heather Booth who helped motivate the motion for the expulsion committee, were opposed to stress political differences with PL, and there were many times during the conference when evidence for the familiar PL charges of "anti-communism" and "anti-working class attitudes" could have been collected. The motivation of those who actually wanted to base the expulsion on political differences was very different from those who honestly felt that there was evidence of underhanded maneuvering. The leadership of the former position, John Mc Dermott of MIT, has put forward a proposal for the turning of NUC into a cadre organization, presumably with Mc Dermott's polities. The executive committee introduced the motion at the very start of the plenary, intending to ask all PL's and WSAers to leave if the motion passed. It was clear at the beginning that the votes for expulsion were present and the ensuing debate was extremely sloppy on the part of the supporters of expulsion. There were, however, several excellent arguments against expulsion made independently. At the end of the debate it would have been apparent from any transcript that the charges of "obstructionism" were just not substantiated. There will always be conflicting testimony, but the evidence as presented was exceptionally shoddy, rather than risk having to drag out those who had been expelled by force (although there seemed to be no objection to the shouting down of hillary Panum, a member of the WSA, by the chairman), the leadership clearly decided to abandon for one-half hour. Afterwards the group was told to reconvene in another room of the building in which the meeting was being held. PL/WSAers including chapter delegates who stayed were hissed at the door by guards. Food had been ordered in, and separate trays were left outside the locked doors for the partisans.

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Elitism

It may be tempting to simply dismiss the troubles of the NUCers who supported the motion to conclude that their vague and unsubstantiated charges were utterly groundless. These difficulties in combating PL did lead to some outragously elitist statements on the part of the national leadership. And the idea that PL had been systematically and deliberately attempting to obstruct NUC seems to have little basis in fact. But there were, no doubt, real problems with PL, even if expulsion was not the answer. We have not yet resolved the question of how to carry on debate with the mass of students of some disciplined caucuses with a hard and deliberately simplified line can cause honest dissent in new organizations. The most outrageous of the elitist statements of the leadership came from Bob Goldwater, one of the two national secretaries of NUC. In a evening discussion of the majority's hatchet job, a great deal of rank and file discomfort came bubbling up, and the leadership stood its ground.

Most people seemed to feel uneasy about "the way it was done," not the expulsion itself, Rottenstein explained to them that it was necessary to act quickly, before PL paralyzed the organization. After all, we had "many unopiuflicated and unexcited chapters," with no "counterorganizational ideas." Among these ideas was the quaint notion that "civil libertarian standards as set by courts in a bourgeois state are applicable to private organizations." Although there was considerable disapproval expressed from the floor with what was termed, at one point, "PL paranoia," and although there was unsteadiness about the need for one of the more unsophisticated professor or graduate student, most found on the whole considerable relief in just talking out their doubts.

On the Saturday night session feeling satisfied with what Rottenstein had called the "admitedly heavy-handed and authoritarian action - leadership-oriented action - we had to face." In short, they accepted the leadership's explanation of their need to bring the subject up, precipitated by a split in the Columbia chapter, despite the fact that the executive committee had named a "residential memo" about it over a month before. (The memo, incidentally, cautioned that the matter should not be brought up unless it was certain to no action.)

The flurry of excitement over PL overshadowed other NC actions. The NC Report lists these as "a staff structure for 1970-71 including six full-time regional organizers; rules for the NUC convention in June; an informal education program for chapter implementation; a spring anti-corporate action program; and a program for the next National Committee meeting emphasizing women's caucus meetings, a male liberation session and education discussion on ecology issue actions."

As usual, the women's caucus was the healthiest part of the weekend.

Fearmongers

In assessing the events of the meeting it is important to add that PL played right into the hands of the fearmongers by going beyond just bringing as many people to the meeting as they could, which seemed entirely justified if there was any possibility of expulsion. For example, there seemed to be some argument that they did attempt to create a "paper chapter" at Princeton. Since members could not vote, only speak, the rush of PLs bullying up for new members, not as chapter delegates, was highly significant, but it did help to solidify opposition. It is possible to set up rules for accreditation which avoid most of the problem. But the NUC leadership seems to fear that they could be no democratic way to deal with attempted packing, and that it might be forced to "form its own paper chapters and bring its own ghost voters to the convention," Democratic ways of dealing with difficulty just don't seem to be on the menu, and those who ask for it are termed "unrealistic."

Unrealistic or not, we would seem to be the job of revolutionary socialists and all others committed to building NUC to work for more rank and file democracy, more membership control, and a program which can both speak to the problems of university people and orient them toward the allies which has the potential power the working class. There are many NUCers with this perspective, and they need all the help they can get.

Rank and File Democracy

Perhaps, back at the chapter level, the membership will overcome the tendency of the leadership to elitist manipulation and unprincipled action. Several chapters have already refused to implement the national decision. This is the ongoing program and discussion of the rank and file that will be critical in the months to come.

Judith Shapiro, elected to the NUC national executive committee in June, is a member of Seattle International Socialists;
Support the Conspiracy 10

The Gerson and Haberkern articles on the Conspiracy trial in the March IS were not really on the Conspiracy Trial - a more accurate title would have been “A Polite Attack on the American Left.” The article talked little about the Conspiracy trial itself and even less about support for the Conspiracy 10.

Indeed, dealing with the politics of the Conspiracy, the articles sit over politics by tying the Conspiracy to Weatherman tactics, Maosist thinking about white skin privilege, and Yippies muttering “incoherent phrases about destroying a monster by burning dollar bills and listening to acid-rock.”

The worst error was in stating that the Conspiracy calls for “the overthrow of AMERIUKA (indiscriminate lumping together the ruling class and the oppressed),” and that “In Chicago - a police state was never waged.” These changes are absurd.

Right from the start, the Conspiracy made it clear that they would show that the real conspiracy was this trial. They threatened they would not try to win by narrow courtroom procedures. Members of the Conspiracy have spent as much time as possible making speeches before, during and after the trial. They may not agree with IS, but they have said who the enemy is, and that we must win over masses of Americans to our side.

But back to the waging of the trial itself. Take two instances:

Pete Allen Ginsburg was a defense witness who described what he did at the convention; the prosecutor had him read some of his homosexual poetry. This is probably considered to be cultural and “freaky” and therefore “non-political” by Gerson and Haberkern. But when IS beaches the parades supporting Gay Liberation, this fails within their narrow definition of politics. Defense witness Linda Blom explained how the Democratic Convention had revealed the nature of the state. An ex-secretary, she had taken up self-defense.

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Attorney Kastner got contempt citations for many things - among them asking (political) questions of witnesses that had already been overlooked by the judge.

This list could go on and on, but IS articles are already too long and boring as it is, we would merely add that political differences between us and the Conspiracy should not be overlooked. But criticism should be made in a conciliatory way. We should spend more time discussing what they’re not doing (such as showing the connections between the struggles of the Conspiracy and the struggles of workers) and less time criticizing them for not doing it.

The following note was written by Abbie Hoffman, Tom Hayden, Fannie Davis and Dave Dellinger, while they were waiting to be shipped from the courtroom to jail:

“All goes well. They can’t attack us, no matter what they do. For what they have jailed on this most infamous of Valentine’s Days is not men, but an idea. The dream of freedom is in prison now, but there are no prisons in the land strong enough to hold it... for its time has come. Seize the time!”

Abbie T. Donovan

Moby Dick

Re Charles Tweed and Marx on women, together in a twisted one night stand in L.S., #8, April 1970. They hit the heat of it, from opposite directions.

TO MOBY DICK FROM THE OCEAN

We once gave life to each other-
How did we get so turned around, you and I? You, who’s name was to plunge, deep sea dive in salty water, me, who’s nature was to sustain weird in the current, crash, foam, splash, and lodge to the shore.

Now you are me and I am you, but opposed. Even worse, the meteorites have turned oceans into freeways, whales into cars, and I alone am escaped to tell thee how

From sailor into prisoners.

Fuck it. Let’s get back to nature or do it in the road.

Carmen Morgan

Letters from Abroad

England

I enclose my subscription for 10 issues of L.S. Congratulations on the standard of your publication, which was matched by Kim Moody’s article on the American Workingclass in our L.S. 46. Your L.S. seems to have a vitality in most of its content that is, perhaps, sometimes lacking in some of our material.

I was particularly struck by the description of the split in SDS which, it seemed to me, combined a very large and almost breathtaking commentary with analyses of great depth and perception. The latter brought home the seriousness of events which, from this distance at least, seem hard and almost unreal.

But I fear that the rise of the new militancy in the United States will probably have its British equivalent, though no doubt it will be a very different form. Your description of the organization common to RYN and PNS reminded me of the rigidly curtiling Socialist Labour League with its high turnover of membership and fatal tendency to accuse all other groupings of conservative leanings.

The internal romances within the Communist Party of Great Britain certainly will not have ended with the last congress. It would not be surprising to see the emergence of a super-leftist wing in the Party over the next year or so. The idea of a “stalinist group without a country” might well prove curiously attractive.

But the trouble with idle speculation is its inheren

P.S. If one of our members hasn’t done so already, I’d like to say that Hal Draper’s “Two Souls of Socialism” is undoubtedly the miniature classic of post war Marxism. In our branch at any rate it goes first on the reading list for new members. The only criticism I would make would be that the fact that he doesn’t give the historical reasons for supporting revolution from below might leave the impression that it is a moral rather than a scientific prejudice.

Peter Glatter
Birmingham L.S., (Great Britain)

The Moon

The best way to organize kids is through actions not leaflets. By actions we mean taking over a classroom with a racist teacher and explaining in a hard way why imperialism & racism have to be smashed. You can also march through your school with an NFL flag burning and probably get busted. We believe that white people have to be polarized. They must know that there is another side - a white fighting force supporting red world & black liberation. Many fights can occur but working class kids will begin to listen to you if you are willing to fight for what you believe in. Give whites a chance. Let them see that open leaflets can be different. Confront people with their racism. Push them up against the wall, they will listen. We use the NFL flag because we support the struggle of the Vietnamese and publicly do so. The people who you do reach by this method will be fighting street people instead of intellectuals and are valuable to the revolution. Don’t apologize over your ideas, push them out. You won’t immediately organize thousands but when you know you are right you won’t get discouraged.

A Weatherman

The Feet of the Great Helmsman

WALK LIKE HIM!

PAGE 26 INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST MAY 1970
We stand for socialism: collective ownership and democratic control of the economy through work- ers' organizations, and we stand for revolution from below and aimed toward building a classless society. We stand against international imperialism, completely opposed to all forms of class exploitation and solidarity with the struggles of all oppressed peoples.

We believe in socialism from below, not supplantation from above. Our orientation has nothing in common with the various strategies to predicate or reform the ruling classes of the world, or with the idea that socialism will come about through organizations formed by an elite. Socialism can only be won and built by the working class and all other oppressed people, in revolutionary struggle.

We oppose capitalism as a system of class exploitation and all other oppressed minorities for liberation. We support armed self-defense, independent self-organization, and the right of self-determination for the black community. We look to future control of the means of production by the working people, however, blacks cannot allow their struggle today to be subordinated to the present level of consciousness of the white workers.

We work to build the movement for women's liberation, both in society at large and within the radical movement. We support the formation of independent women's organizations, in which women will work out the organizational and programmatic forms of their struggles. Within these organizations, we push for an orientation toward organizing the working class women.

Women's oppression is bound up with the exploitation of labor in all class societies, thus the struggle for women's liberation can only be won as part of a broader struggle for socialist society. We do not counterpose women's participation in their own liberation movement to their participation in revolutionary socialist organizations. But women's liberation will not be achieved automatically from socialist revolution; women must build their struggle now, and continue their struggle, if they are to be free under socialism. This struggle, like that of other oppressed people, will be part of the forces which will begin to shake the capitalist order.

The struggles of students and young people against imperialist exploitation and aggression. We support popular revolutions against American domination and fight against the expulsion of American troops from all foreign lands. In Vietnam, we favor the victory of the NLF over the imperialists—but we believe that the struggle has established bourgeois democratic rule, not a socialist society.

We believe that an existing regime can be deposed. On a world scale, the "socialist" countries constitute a system of regimes and movements in different stages of development, but with a common ideology and social origin. In place of capitalism, this system has achieved and now aims at, not the abolition of class society, but a new type of class society.

In some areas (e.g. France and Indonesia), the official Communist parties—both "Soviet" and "Chinese"—have had back hand mass movements, in search for power through maneuvers at the top. Elsewhere, these movements have built up mass movements of immense popular energies in revolutionary opposition to the capitalisms. But the movements that have resulted from these movements do not organize the working class to seize power for itself, nor does it intend to establish a regime in which the masses themselves rule.

The revolutionary struggle expels capitalist imperialism and expatriates the native capitalist class, but the leadership aims at a social system in which that leadership exercises a ruling class through its control of the state which owns the means of production, and that of independent workers' organizations. Thus, where successful, these movements have played in power, not the working class, but a self-perpetuating bureaucratic elite.

Taking power in backward countries, these regimes have based their attempts to industrialize successfully or unsuccessfully on the crushing exploitation of workers and peasants. In all such cases, popular discontent ripens, but the struggle of the masses cannot be carried forward through the ruling party, but only in revolutionary opposition to it. This system is so less class-ridden, and in its fully developed form (as in the USSR) no less capitalist than capitalism.

In these countries we support and identify with the struggles—so long as they are organized, more often not of rank and file forces for their socialist birthright. We believe that socialism cannot be achieved in these countries without the overthrow of the ruling regimes.

In these countries we advocate revolutionary struggles as a spark for the "world revolution"—it alone offers the solution to the problems of poverty and underdevelopment, which continue to be the framework of a single country. But this international perspective must not depend on the mass struggles for liberation in individual countries, whatever the internal politics of the regimes. In the bureaucratic states as under capitalism, socialism means a revolution in which the working class itself overthrows its exploiters and dominates production itself.

Basing its work on the ongoing worldwide struggles against oppression and the ideas of revolutionary Marxism, the Socialist Party works to establish socialism, an international socialist movement which is both revolutionary and democratic, working class and internationalist: an international socialist movement in which the struggle's successes can fight for and win a new world of peace, abundance, and freedom that will be the foundationstone of classless society.
Lenin's internationalism needs no recommendation. It is best characterized by Lenin's irreconcilable break, in the first days of the world war, with that counter-revolutionary intervention into the march of events and the creation of the Second International. The official leaders of "Socialism" used the parliamentary tribune to reconcile the interests of the fatherland with the interests of mankind by way of abstract arguments in the spirit of the old Cosmovites. In practice this led, as we know, to the support of the predatory fatherland by the predatory forces.

Lenin's internationalism is not the formula for verbally reconciling nationalism with internationalism. It is a formula for international revolutionary action. The world's territory in the clutches of the so-called "civilized" nations has been partitioned off and divided between the predatory capitals. The arena where a gigantic struggle occurs, whose component elements are constituted by the individual peoples and their respective classes. No single major issue can be kept restricted within a national framework. Visible and invisible threads connect such an issue with dozens of events in all corners of the world. In the evaluation of international factors and forces, Lenin is free of all national prejudices.

Marx concluded that the philosophers had sufficiently interpreted the world and that the real task was to change it. But he, the pioneer great revolutionary of the time, in essence did not explain. The transformation of the old world is now in full swing and Lenin is the foremost worker on this job. His internationalism is a practical appraisal plus a practical transformation of the historical events on a world scale and with world-wide aims. Russia's and Lenin's feet is only one element in this titanic historical struggle upon whose outcome hangs the fate of mankind.

Lenin's internationalism needs no recommendation. But at the same time Lenin himself is profoundly national. His roots go deep in modern Russian history, he draws it up himself, gives it its highest expression, and precisely in this way attains the highest levels of international action and world influence.

At first glance the characterization of Lenin as a 'national' figure may seem surprising, but, in essence, this follows as a matter of course. To be able to lead such a revolution, without parallel in the history of peoples, as Russia is now living through, it is necessary not only to have an indomitable, organic bond with the main forces of the people's life, a bond which springs from the deepest roots.

Lenin personifies the Russian proletariat, a young class which politically is scarcely older than Lenin himself, but a class which is profoundly national, for it is capitalized in it the entire past development of Russia, to the very Russia's entire future, with it the Russian nation rises or falls. Freedom from routine and banality, freedom from impotence and convention, resoluteness of thought, audacity in action - and audacity which comprehension of the world's political situation - this is what characterizes the Russian working class, and with it also Lenin.

Combined Development

The nature of the Russian proletariat that has made it today the most important force of the world revolution, had been prepared beforehand by the entire course of Russian national history: the barbaric cruelty of the Czartarocracy, the insignificance of the privileged classes, the feverish growth of capitalism fed by the losses of the world stock-market, the estranged character of the Russian bourgeoisie, their doctrines, ideology, their shoddy politics. Our "Third Estate" knew neither a reformation nor a great revolution of their own and could never have known them. Therefore the revolutionary task of the Russian proletariat that assumed a more all-embracing character. Our past history knows no Luther, no Thomas Murner, no Mira-beau, no Danton, no Robespierre. Exactly for that reason, the Russian proletariat has its Lenin. What was lost in tradition has been won in the sweep of the revolution.

Science and Intuition

When Lenin, screwing up his left eye, listens over the radio to a parliamentary speech of one of the imperialist makers of destiny or goes over the text of the latest diplomatic note, a mixture of bloodthirsty duplicity and political hypocrisy, he resembles a very wise monkey whom words cannot cage nor vague phrases enslave. This is the peasant shrewdness elevated to genius, armed with the last word of scientific thought. The young Russian proletariat was able to accomplish what it has only by pulling behind itself, by its feet, the heavy mass of the peasantry. This was prepared for by our whole national past. But precisely because the proletariat has come to power through the course of events, our revolution has been able suddenly and drastically to overcome the national narrowness and provincial bigness of Russia's past his, Soviet Russia has become not only the haven for the Communist International, but also the living embodiment of its programme and methods.

By paths, unknown and as yet unspecified by science, by which the human personality is moulded, Lenin has assimilated from the national milieu everything he needed for the greatest revolutionary action in the history of humanity. Exactly because the socialist revolution, which has long had its international theoretical expression, found for the first time in Lenin its national embodiment, Lenin became, in the full and true sense of the word, the revolutionary leader of the world proletariat. And that is how his fiftieth birthday found him.

Pravda, April 23, 1929