

FIGHT THE ENERGY FREEZE BULLETIN

The Committee Against the Energy Freeze has held a successful demonstration against the 'energy crisis', but the crisis is continuing and deepening. Threats of rationing, \$1 a gallon gas, and gas production cutbacks are increasing; and already thousands of workers have been laid off, shortages of all kinds of goods have increased and the threat of intervention in the Middle East is looming in the background. One elderly couple even froze to death in the east as a result of the monopolies' hunger for profit. There is much work for us to do to mobilize the masses to fight the attack by the bourgeoisie. We have a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to organize the mass anger that exists against the energy freeze and Nixon, and in the course of fighting against these attacks by the ruling class to expose the entire capitalist system.

Since the late 60's, the economic crisis of U.S. imperialism has been developing steadily; despite a temporary gain in production and employment for a couple of years, the economy once again faces runaway inflation, stagnant production, and high unemployment. The energy crisis is the latest reflection of this crisis—the crisis of capitalism that is inevitable as long as the system exists. The energy freeze will be with us for a long time—as long as the system exists—and is bound to get worse no matter what the ruling class says about things getting better or what schemes they come up with to 'solve' the problem (like their plans for stopping inflation). We must begin immediately to build a massive fight-back against these attacks that are affecting workers more every day, and take advantage of this opportunity to raise the masses' political consciousness that the entire capitalist system is rotten, that it will never meet the peoples' needs, and that its days are numbered..

Our first step, the December 15 rally, was basically positive, both nationally and in the Bay Area. Many organization and committee leaflets were distributed and the response from workers was very good, noticeably more enthusiastic than many leaflets we have passed out. At one plant a couple of phone calls were received on the basis of the leaflets, and at another a worker was so impressed with the organization leaflet that he took it to the local newspaper and TV station for them to publicize. At the rally itself, there was a fairly good turnout, and it got some good coverage on TV and radio. Most comrades felt that the rally itself was good; it was spirited and militant with excellent speeches from the strikers from Farah and the Carpenters' Union and a good RU speech.

Due largely to the short amount of time that we had to organize the rally, there were shortcomings. The organization was not fully mobilized to take up the call and involve more of the active workers we have contact with. Also, there could have been more systematic publicity and contacting of other groups to broaden participation in the Committee.

However, beyond these shortcomings, there has been a tendency for some comrades to feel disappointed at the turnout. This doesn't take into account that today the majority of workers won't come to demonstrations. The crisis hasn't come down on them to the point of forcing workers to go to the streets, nor have they had contact with communist forces capable of raising their consciousness beyond a spontaneous trade union level. But this situation is changing all the time. The response to our leaflet was an indication of the tremendous potential. We must continue to move forward and take our line to the workers, and as the situation continues to change more and more workers will respond to fight-back against the "energy crisis." As the Farah striker said at the rally - we are not small - we are large and will surely grow. We are fighting in the objective interest of the masses - who are suffering and resisting more every day.

After summing up the Dec. 15th demonstrations around the country, the national leadership pointed out: "This was the first time we attempted something of this kind - using our national newspaper to make a general call for mass action. This can and should be an important function of the newspaper in the future. And as Lenin pointed out in What Is To Be Done? one of the major roles of a communist newspaper is as a "party organizer" (see Sec. V, "The Plan for an All-Russian Political Newspaper.")

The national leadership recognized that, to a degree, the call for demonstrations around the energy freeze, coming on top of the call for mass action around Throw the Bum Out, might add to the confusion of comrades, and to the sense of being loaded down with many "central tasks".

But the national leadership feels that, given the shift in the situation, with the measures adopted by the ruling class around the "energy crisis" and the immediate extra hardship this has placed on the people, and the clear indications that people were fighting mad about it, that it was generally correct to shift the overall emphasis to the energy freeze, while tying it in with Nixon and other demands. To some degree or another, it will always be true that the particular, immediate focus of our struggle will shift due to tactical shifts on the part of the enemy, and this is especially true now, with the developing crisis, more intense battles within the enemy camp, and rapidly shifting maneuvers on the part of the enemy in dealing with the people's movement.

As was said in the NCC report, the whole organization must learn how to play the piano -- and specifically, to "be prepared to substitute one main task for another with the development of the struggle and a change in conditions." (We are talking about "central tasks" here, of course, all within the framework of the general central task at this time -- to build the struggle, consciousness and revolutionary unity of the working class and develop its leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle.)

The national leadership recognizes that, on its part, it must do a much better job of grasping this method, and that, in connection with the Dec. 15 demos, we should have done a better job of consulting with lower levels of leadership in working up the general call, in formulating the general slogans, etc. The necessity of getting a general call out quickly, and organizing activity in response immediately to the energy freeze, made it particularly difficult to do this, but the national leadership and the whole organization must learn how to organize a quick response to ruling class attacks in the most systematic way, linking up struggles in the process. On the whole, despite certain weaknesses, the regional, district and local leadership, in consultation with national leadership, did a good job of combining the energy freeze with Throw the Bum Out - as put forward in the Revolution general call and in adapting the main focus of the demonstration to the conditions in each locality or city. In some cases, for example, where activity was gaining momentum around Throw the Bum Out, this was made the main focus, and the energy freeze was tied in with this; while, in other cases, the energy freeze was the main focus, and Throw the Bum Out was linked with this. And both were linked with other demands around other attacks on the working class.

While on the whole, this was very positive, there is a certain tendency toward right errors developing in connection with Throw the Bum Out and the energy freeze, which has shown up a little in the work around the Dec. 15 demos. In general, this takes the form of making Nixon, and not the whole ruling class and the system, the focus of attack. It is correct, for all the reasons put forward in the Nov. Revolution and N.B. #12, to make Nixon a focus of attack, but not the focus, in such a way that actually covers over the nature of the system and the fact that it is the system and the whole ruling class that is the enemy.

It is not only Nixon, for example, but the whole ruling class and bourgeois politicians generally, who uphold the interests of the oil monopolies against the interests of the people. Thus, it is not really correct to say, as we do in RU leaflets passed out in both the Bay Area and Chicago, that "Nixon speaks for the Oil Barons--Throw the Bum Out!" The key point is that Nixon speaks for the entire ruling class--not just a section of it--and represents the capitalist system. And it is not Nixon, but the capitalist system that is responsible for the "energy crisis" and the economic crisis as a whole (as the article in the Jan. Revolution makes clear.) To put it another way, the fight to Throw the Bum Out is one tactic of the proletariat at this time, along with the fight against the wage freeze, the energy freeze, aggression in Indochina, the Middle East etc. We cannot put forward, or even infer, that throwing Nixon out is the way to do all these other things--fight the wage and energy freeze etc.--without degenerating into revisionism. *No Revision in Ruling class*

It is also important not to tail but to deepen many workers' initial feeling that the energy freeze is merely some concoction, hoax or political maneuver of Nixon and the oil companies; we must help them understand this is a deep seated crisis that goes to the heart of the capitalist system and is happening independent of the will of any of these individuals.

The ~~S~~ National Secretariate has emphasized that these certain right errors that have shown up around the Dec. 15th demonstrations, and the work around Throw the Bum Out and the energy freeze, are, as we said in the NCC report, a counter-current to the generally correct line. The enthusiastic response of the masses to our work around these demands shows that we are doing our work correctly, in general. But at the same time, as the other side of this, we must remember, as the NCC report points out, the spontaneous tendency in the working class is mainly toward economism and reformism, and that if we tail behind this, we will make serious right errors. In other words, the work around Throw the Bum Out and the energy freeze must have as its object the raising of political consciousness and unity of the working class. To combat this right tendency, the national Secretariate has urged that all comrades study and discuss National Bulletin # 12 on Throw the Bum Out, and the article on it in the November Revolution, and also the December and January stories in Revolution on the "energy crisis." (The NCC report, and the documents around the struggle against D.H. W right will also be helpful in this context.)

We are continuing to help build the Committee Against the Energy Freeze and the struggle against the freeze. The heart of the committee must be the working class. The interests of the working class are in the interests of the broad masses in society. (For example note the stand taken by some petit-bourgeois forces like the gas station owners. Their demand is to raise the prices so they can continue to exist with the onslaught of the monopolies. While we support their fight and unite with them to the extent that they oppose the monopolies, it is obvious that their demands cannot unite the many and defeat the few.) The working class is the only class which in the long run has the potential consciousness, strength, and organization to defeat the monopolies. So our principle task in building the committee must be to work to build a strong core of working class activists for the committee.

Secondarily other sections of the population such as students, truckers, gas station owners, and other sections of the petit-bourgeoisie must be mobilized. We should try

to be flexible on this. At the same time we must struggle with them to direct their fight against the monopolies and maintain a fight that is in the interests of the majority of society.

To implement this line the Committee has decided to have a series of actions and meetings: there will be a general meeting January 2nd, a series of local workers meetings, and a Bay Area wide rally Jan. 20th. The key to making these plans a success is for the organization to be mobilized behind it and for the leadership in each area to take up the campaign strongly. In some areas organizational work teams have been set up to lead this campaign.

The meeting on January 2 (7:30 at the church on Magee and Kansas in Oakland where the other meetings were held) is a general meeting to kick off work for the demonstration on January 20. It is very important to try to bring as many workers--and other progressive forces--to the meeting as possible.

The local workers meetings are planned to be one of the main ways we can develop working class character and involvement in the '77' campaign. The meetings should take place in each area within a week of the Jan. 2 meeting. The meetings should be mainly workers with as few comrades as necessary (given the fact that comrades will be organizing the meetings and bringing workers to it). The purpose of the meetings is to provide a situation in which workers freely express their ideas on the energy crisis, what issues they feel are important, and how to fight it. These meetings will hopefully be a beginning for workers active participation in the struggle against the energy freeze. Comrades working in plants should be urged to take up this campaign in their shop in whatever way they feel is best (house meetings, union resolutions or whatever). Local leadership should also pay attention to relating the campaign to key industries or industries or sections of the population especially hard hit by the energy crisis.

The demonstration Jan 20 is one of a series of nation wide rallies. The date was chosen to coincide with the anniversary of Nixon's inauguration, the state of the union message, the anniversary of last year's rally as well as possible new announcements about gas rationing or production. The exact time and place of the rally haven't been determined but the plan is to try to have the rally and or march in a place where we can have as much contact as possible with masses of people. Comrades, we must go all out to build the activities of the committee, actively seek ways to broaden and expand the work, and begin to organize a massive movement under the leadership of the working class to fight back against these vicious attacks by the capitalist class.