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Women's Liberation—A Revolutionary Struggle Against Capital

by Anna Gold

There have been some profound changes for women in the average US home, and even TV advertisers have had to sit up and take notice. All the way from men selling soap powders and Campbell soups, to women climbing out of race cars to praise STP, the product pushers are telling us something that we've known for a long time now: traditional roles are changing. Women aren't buying the "weaker sex" rap any more.

The changes are demonstrated in other ways that have more significance than the concessions that manufacturers make to sell their products. For the first time in history more than 50% of women have joined the workforce, and they are breaking into traditionally "male" and higher paying jobs in ever greater numbers.

Both men and women from all walks of life are identifying with the demands for equality for women — equal pay for equal work, the right of women to control their bodies, their right to protection from physical abuse, the need for training to insure that women can work all jobs, and so on. Childcare is no longer seen as a demand that concerns only women. There is an increasing understanding throughout society that men need to participate in a full and responsible way in family life as well.

STRUGGLE INTENSIFYING

These changes haven't happened without a fight. If anything, the struggle has intensified over the past year. While the movement for the democratic rights of women has broadened, the opposition has also steered itself for the struggle. While superficial changes are now considered acceptable, such as "non-sexist" ads, clearly the ruling class has every in-
place".

That's why Patsy Fleming, a Black single mother was forced to resign from her post as Executive Director of the White House Conference on Families in June of this year. That's also why Carter fired Bella Abzug from her position as co-chair of the National Advisory Committee for Women after she criticized Carter's budget priorities. It's OK for women to talk about "women's issues", but it's certainly not acceptable for them to attack a bloated military budget. That's men's business!!

In fact, if we evaluate the score card for the past year we are forced to conclude that at best the struggle between reaction and the progressive movement for the democratic rights of women has been a draw. Yes, there have been victories, perhaps the most significant of which was the extension of the ratification deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment. Pregnancy disability benefits were finally mandated by Congress, and new HEW guidelines were adopted which take steps to protect women from sterilization abuse. In several important cases the courts restored custody of their children to Lesbian mothers. In Oregon the first voter referendum on denying public funds for abortion was defeated.

And in many ways, perhaps most importantly, the women's movement has taken serious steps to forge alliances with labor and with civil rights activists. In April of this year the president of the National Organization of Women (NOW) became the first women's leader to address the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades National Conference, and a number of labor and civil rights organizations have taken a clear stand in support of the ERA. On October 8, 1979, NOW decided to support federal representation for the District of Columbia, a long-time demand of the Black liberation movement.

However, the defeats were significant as well. Though the deadline for the ERA was extended, the amendment was turned down in two states during the recent elections. Funding for abortions continues to be virtually non-existent for women on public assistance and daycare centers have been mercilessly closed down. Rape has been the fastest growing crime in the US, and the high incidence of wife abuse is only now coming to full light.

Women haven't fared much better at work. They continue to earn an average of 60% of what men earn. Only 11% of women workers are in unions as compared to 27% of working men. Union leadership is still for the most part white and male, and even the ILGWU, with 80% women membership, has no top woman official. The Bakke and Weber anti-affirmative action cases have threatened the opportunities of all women, and have had an especially disastrous effect on minority women.

Reaction has indeed been organized and visible in the last year. It has focused its energies on attacks on abortion, the ERA, the gay rights movement, affirmative action, and the cost of social services, to galvanize support for a reactionary anti-working class program. In New York, the Right-to-Life Party won the third slot position in the recent elections, underlining the danger of underestimating the force of this current.

CAPITALISM AND MALE SUPREMACY

The New Right's focus on turning back the gains made by the women's movement over the last decade is no accident. Phyllis Schlafly, Anita Bryant, and Martin Mullen are mouthpieces for the most reactionary sectors of Big Business. They express, in the most direct way, the interest the capitalist class has in maintaining the inequality of women.

Women provide unpaid labor in the home, raising a new generation of workers. Women form part of the reserve army of labor — employed in the lowest paying jobs — hired in boom times, let go in hard times. The social and economic position of women is a source of massive profits for the monopoly capitalists. This inequality has a political significance and is a source of division within the working class, crippling its ability to mount a united fight.

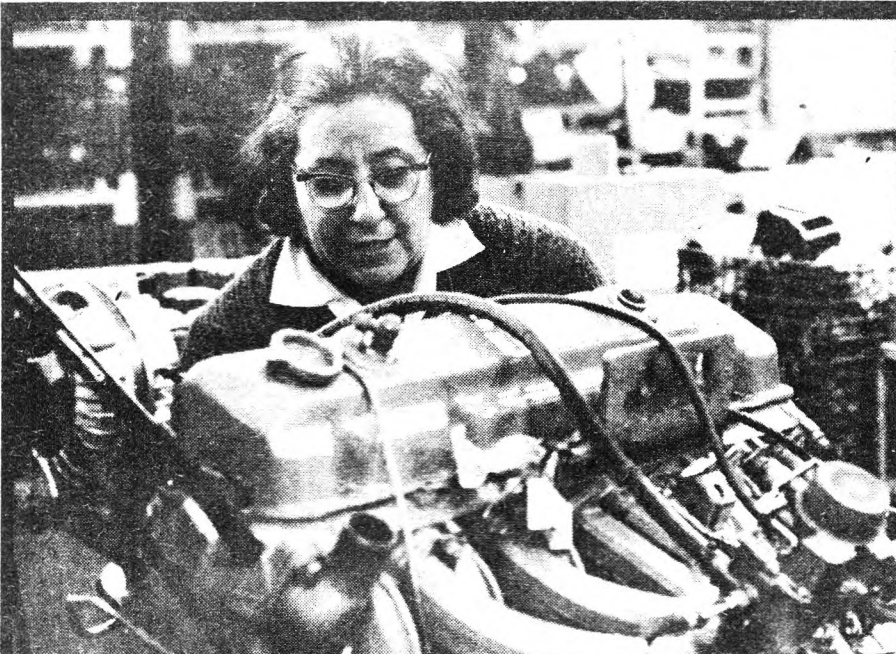
The subordinate position of women in the home and family and the unequal position of women in the labor force are bound together. The economic dependency of women, isolated in the home and excluded from most jobs historically, provides the basis for women being relegated to the status of second class citizens on the job. At the same time, maintaining discrimination against women in relation to work and production is necessary in order to keep women in an inferior position in the home.

Given this it is clear that the New Right's concern with affirming the values of the traditional family is not a matter of sentimental attachment to the "good old days". The right to abortion, that is, the right of a woman not to have a child, is a focal point of this attack in large part because of capital's requirement that women must be first and foremost bearers and rearers of children.

It is also clear that the New Right rhetoric and anti-feminist backlash which is often couched in abstract moral terms (right to life) or focused on trivial social questions (co-ed bathrooms) is really about maintaining the power and profits of the capitalist class.

Because oppression of women is a necessary feature of capitalist rule, it fol-

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Working women have played an important role in building this country and in fighting for the rights of all working people. International Women's Day on March 8th commemorates the struggles of women all over the world.

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Women's Liberation

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lows that women's liberation can only be realized by its overthrow and the building of socialism. For this reason it is important that working class women provide leadership for the women's movement — for only conscious women from the working class have absolutely no interest in maintaining the capitalist system.

And just as the movement for the democratic rights of women must focus its blows against its actual enemy, capitalism, so the working class as a whole must understand the suicidal nature of the divisions within it. Until the working class itself is both consciously anti-sexist and anti-racist, both the movements for equality and the broader struggle against capitalism will be significantly blocked.

THE ROAD FORWARD

Now, if we analyze events of the recent period of the basis of this understanding, it becomes much clearer why the "New Right" has been relatively successful in blocking a more rapid advance by the forces fighting for the equality of women. Essentially, while the last year has seen significant advances, the organized women's movement remains significantly isolated from the broad workers movement. This isolation is tremendously aggravated by the historic failure of the broad women's forces to seriously take up the particular oppression of minority workers, especially women.

The isolation of the organized women's movement from the labor movement has, of course, two sources. The trade unions have rarely taken up the needs of women in a consistent way and have often turned their backs on both the women's movement and the civil rights movement. This fact is most graphically illustrated by the low level of unionization of women, and also by the fact that the vast majority of union officials are white and male. This failure on the part of the workers' movement in general has left it weak and divided.

But the women's movement also has played into this weakness, and has been responsible in part for its own isolation from those forces which can insure victory. First the struggle has tended to be led by women from the middle class, who have shown a consistent blind spot towards the problems of the masses of working women.

Large sections of the movement have focused more on the needs of women in leadership or in professional occupations, only paying lip service to the needs of working women and women on welfare. Problems such as occupational hazards in the factory, the need for affirmative action to insure upgrading into higher classifications, the need for affordable, quality childcare, decent housing, and so on, have been slighted.

Most significantly, the broad organized women's movement has failed to take up the special needs of minority women, thereby isolating itself from the powerful movement of oppressed minorities. Throughout our history Black and Spanish-speaking women have played a leading role in organizing unions, demanding decent housing and schooling for their families and rebelling against a system determined to crush them. Because today's women's movement is predominantly white and middle class to a large extent explains its inability to successfully resist capitalism's attacks on women.

Both the strengths and weaknesses of the broad women's movement were well illustrated by the historic massive march for the extension of the ERA deadline on July 9, 1979. The march received the support of portions of the workers' movement as well as major civil rights organizations. These endorsements reflected the positive shift in focus by such organizations as NOW towards building alliances and developing grass roots organizing.

However, the composition of the march was a graphic illustration of the road left to travel. While some labor and civil rights leaders were there, and large numbers of working women did march, the event was strikingly white, with relatively few men present. The demands of the march were kept narrow by the leadership, which failed to link the struggle against Bakke with attacks on the ERA.

The anti-Bakke demonstration was a further testimony to the weakness of the alliance the organized women's movement has with other movements. While numerous groups have made statements in support of affirmative action and even filed support briefs, they have been visibly absent from mass mobilizations and organizations formed to fight the attacks. This absence is most distressing if we

understand the particular importance of affirmative action for oppressed minority women.

The ability of the organized groups to mobilize large followings in the defense of women's rights has already been demonstrated. The direction now for the movement for the democratic rights of women is clear, and important steps have already been taken which reflect that understanding.

The desire to build alliances with the workers movement and with civil rights

groups has begun to be put into practice in a meaningful way. If these links are to develop real strength, the women's movement must take up as central the needs of working class and minority women. And as such a program becomes real, and as the three movements see their goals as directly linked with each other, the women's movement itself will gain the invaluable leadership of conscious working class and oppressed minority women — a leadership which will insure the anti-capitalist understanding necessary for victory.



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Philadelphia Workers' Organizing Committee

Who We Are



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

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

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

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

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

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

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Labor Round-up

Massive British Strikes Challenge Wage Guidelines



Public service workers demonstrate in London to protest the British government's 5% wage increase guidelines which have been in effect for 4 years.

For the past four years the British Labor government has set 5% wage guidelines, and British workers have had it! A rapid series of strikes have swept across the country in protest.

This past November Ford Motor Co. workers struck, and after 11 weeks won a 17% wage increase. Since then, trade union resistance to the guidelines has been spreading fast.

First to go out in the recent wave of strikes were oil tank drivers, members of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU). Following that, 100,000 truck drivers, also members of TGWU, went on strike against the Road Haulage Assn. which carries more than 70% of Britain's freight. They demanded a 22% raise which would give them \$130 for a 35 hour week. For a month, effective picketing halted delivery of everything from food to building materials (although the union allowed delivery of perishable food and drugs). The strike ended when drivers settled for a 20% increase, setting a new standard for other industries.

During this same time, rail service was halted as 27,000 engineers and firemen staged work stoppages every other day in protest over train drivers' wages.

At the height of these struggles, the 1.5 million member National Union of Public Employees (NUPE), representing ambulance drivers, garbage collectors, maintenance people and other service workers, staged a one day strike and rally in protest over their wages and working conditions, demanding \$120 a week. On January 22, NUPE was joined by TGWU, the General Manual Workers Union and Health Service Employees, as 300,000 trade unionists from all over Britain gathered in front of Parliament.

On February 5, the walkout of school cafeteria and custodial workers closed 2,000 schools. And 100,000 auto workers in 36 plants are scheduled to strike this week (2/10) because the government-owned company refused to grant a promised wage increase to the lowest paid workers. Negotiations involving coal miners, power workers, teachers and bus drivers are coming up in future weeks.

Meanwhile, the government has been blaming the unions and striking workers for the closing of hospitals and schools. These workers are the lowest paid and can't live on wages within the guidelines. Prime Minister Callaghan said unions were operating "free collective vandalism." So far the government has not acted on its threats of declaring a state of emergency. It may impose a wage freeze.

For the most part, corporations are letting the government confront the unions, hiding behind the government's wage limits. But in some cases they have fought more directly. United Biscuit Co. got a favorable court ruling against "secondary picketing" (picketing of companies not directly involved in a strike). Other companies have been laying off workers — 200,000 to date.

So far, the kind of victories and unity happening in Britain, aren't happening here. Nationally, the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) and locally others have settled within Carter's 7% guidelines. But the Teamsters' contract runs out at the end of March. With the same kind of militancy and unity shown by British drivers and service workers, the 300,000 Teamsters will be able to set a new wage standard as well.

NLRB Ruling Favors Unions

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has recently ruled that unions have the right to company statistics of the number of minorities and women in their employ. The NLRB also ruled that unions should have access to the same information about job applicants.

These rulings are the result of unfair labor practice charges filed by the International Union of Electrical Radio and Machine Workers (IUE) against Westinghouse. IUE claimed it needed the data to prevent discriminatory practices in hiring and upgrading.

Sun Ship Contract Settled

Three thousand Sun Ship workers, members of Locals 802, 804, and 806 returned to work the second week of February. Members of Local 802 had settled a week earlier and were honoring the picketlines of the draftsmen and clerical workers.

The six-week strike forced the company to drop many of its take away demands. The company attempt to speed-up helpers by shifting them from department to department, to make separate seniority lists to make it easier to lay off unskilled workers, and to virtually eliminate union protection in grievance hearings were thwarted.

However, the settlement and the whole posture of the strike represented an effort to compromise on how much the company could take back. The wage increase of 8%, 7%, and 6% minimum and ranging up to 31% over three years with increased productivity was only 20 cents more than originally offered and will not likely keep up with inflation.

Job descriptions were virtually gutted through an incidental work clause. This allows the company to require any one to work out of craft for up to two hours per day. Absenteeism clauses which prevent workers from taking needed days off when sick will force shipbuilders to endanger their health or lose their jobs. Speed-up was written in throughout the contract.

The company kept momentum for the entire strike. The only question seemed to be how far they would advance. The union leadership never made public its counter-proposals and never attempted to rally the rank and file behind even a minimum program of contract gains.

The entire strike was run with the game plan, if there ever was one, kept from all but the official board of the union. The most potent weapon that the

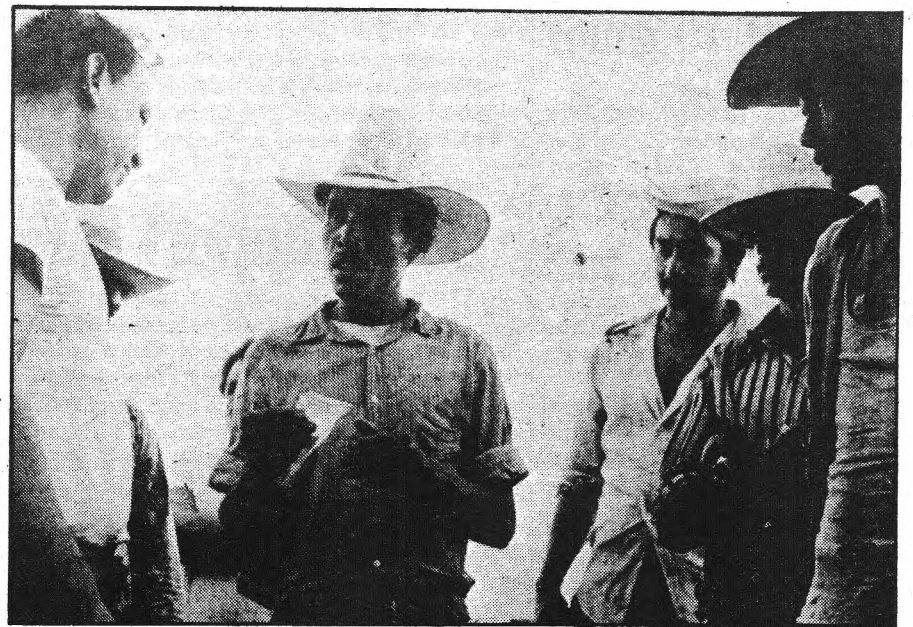
union had, the united strength of the rank and file, was kept on the bench. It was never used to turn the tide and take the union off the defensive to win any real gains.

The only strategy of the union leadership seemed to be to fall on the ball and run out the clock before the company scored any more gains. They held no mass meetings between the first day of the strike and the contract ratification, distributed no strike pay, nor made any attempt to mobilize the rank and file. At the contract ratification meeting they misrepresented the weaknesses of the contract.

The rank and file, weakened by long layoffs just prior to the strike, demonstrated a willingness to weather a long strike, but was not organized enough to offset a vacillating union leadership. Traditionally the primary source of militancy in the yard, Black workers were for the most part conspicuously absent from the strike and picket line. The settlement reflects how sorely they were missed. The company offensive is not going to end with the strike. They're going to push hard to make the most of a contract that leaves the ranks wide open for harassment and firings.

The company offensive can be brought to a halt only by Black and white workers who passively opposed the company during the strike joining in active struggle against company aggression. Anyone in the union leadership who takes a strong and active stance against the company should be supported and united with, but the leadership has clearly demonstrated that it cannot be depended on to lead the fight.

Black and national minority workers will be the hardest hit if the company has its way in enforcing the contract. Unless the company offensive is brought to a grinding halt, all Sun workers will suffer from harassment, firings, and layoffs.



Lupe Sanchez, Organizer for the Maricopa County Organizing Project, talks with farmworkers. This contract is a milestone in the struggle for the rights of undocumented workers.

Undocumented Workers Sign First Contract

The first contract ever to be negotiated with undocumented workers was just signed by 300-400 workers at Goldman Inc.'s Arrowhead Ranch outside of Phoenix, Arizona. The citrus ranch happens to be owned by Senator Barry Goldwater's brother.

The contract provides the workers with \$1.13 per bag of lemons picked now and \$1.35 per bag by September. The contract also contains a health insurance plan and an economic development fund that the ranch has to pay 10 cents an hour into. Workers now live under horrible conditions in shacks made out of orange crates.

However, the contract doesn't deal with immigration laws, and Lupe Sanchez

of the Maricopa County Organizing Project, is afraid Border Patrols will still round up and deport the undocumented workers.

Meanwhile, in California a United Farm Workers strike involving 3100 workers against eight lettuce growers is going strong in its third week. The growers are unable to get Mexican labor, documented or undocumented, to scab.

The growers, who supply 1/3 of the nation's winter iceberg lettuce, stand to lose \$1 million if a settlement is not reached soon. The strikers are demanding a one year contract with a 40% wage hike which would amount to \$1.50 an hour increase. Most farm workers earn under \$4 an hour now.

Auto Emergency

Runaway Shops: Corporations Chase After Bigger Profits

by Bruce Bodner

"Our profits aren't high enough," says Budd, "so your jobs will have to go."

Cheaper labor is the basic reason for runaways. But why is labor cheaper in the South, or in Canada, in the first place? There are two important reasons.

First, working people in the older industrial areas are better organized. The factories have been here longer, unions are stronger, and more workers are union members. Therefore, the companies have been forced to deliver some benefits and higher wages, although it is certainly not what it could be.

Second, where working people are organized, the government can be more effectively pressured to protect workers' rights — to join unions, for example, or to have a safe workplace.

In the South, most industry has been established since 1950. The companies have used every trick learned in fighting our unions to prevent organization among new workers recruited from small towns and farms. Particularly important has been the use of racism. Unions have been portrayed as organizations designed to throw whites out of work in favor of Blacks, or vice-versa, in slick company

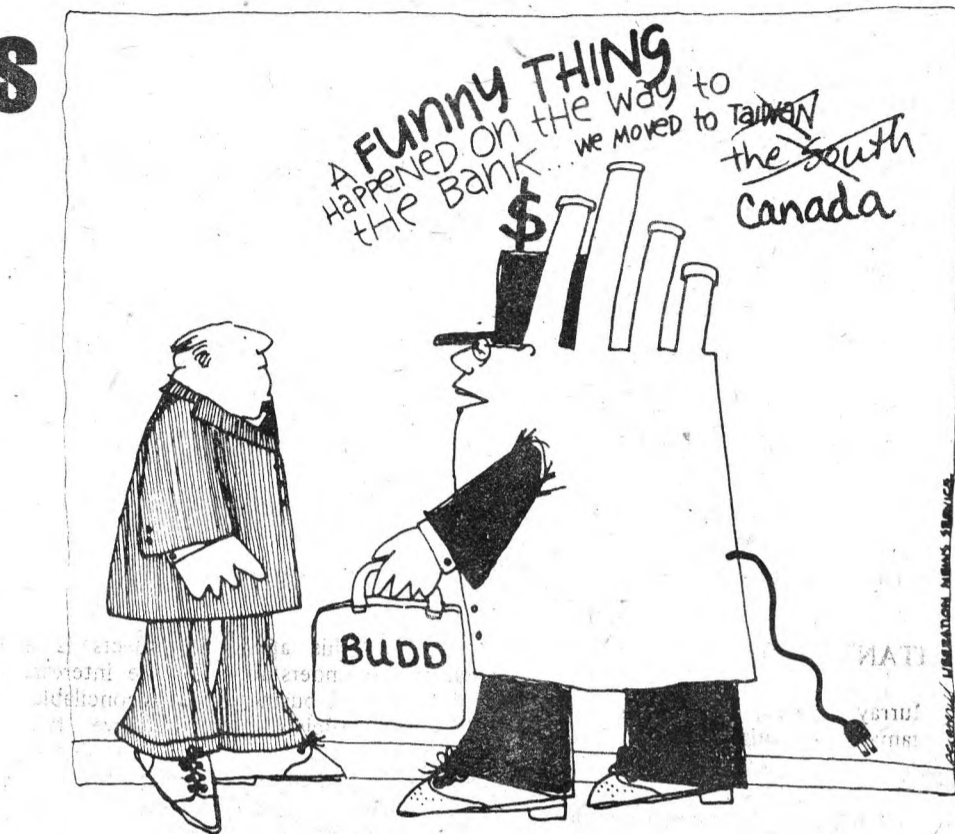
propaganda given to workers. The major unions, so far, have not given enough time or energy to defeat these tactics.

Where unions are weak, the government is more easily able to step in on the side of the companies. In Canada, a government imposed wage freeze has opened a \$2 an hour gap in autoworkers wages over the past four years, providing millions in extra profits for Budd and the other auto companies.

Clearly, the monopoly corporations which benefit from lower wages have used all their influence to create and maintain low wage areas, through intimidation of workers, and manipulation of governments friendly to their interests. Then they come back to Philadelphia (or New York, or Detroit) and put their workers on the street.

Budd is playing out a ruling class strategy that has been carefully developed, both politically and economically, to increase their profits. Many workers are beginning to see that a runaway is not just part of an abstract economic trend, but an attack on their wages and working conditions just as certainly as a demand for cutbacks across the bargaining table. And they have just as much right to fight against a runaway as against a wage cut.

The majority of workers at Red Lion have over 25 years of service. They know,



as do the younger workers, that their hard work has provided Budd with the profits it is now using to relocate. Over the years, Budd has put millions into a pension fund for its workers. By abandoning the city before those workers reach retirement age, Budd expects to fold that money, and the profit from investing it, back into the company treasury. Most members of UAW Local 92 don't think that's a fair shake.

There's a fight for jobs going on now at the Red Lion plant in Northeast Philadelphia, between 900 workers and a billion dollar corporation. In other articles, we will discuss the strategy and tactics of the workers in this struggle. But Budd is not unique, and the fight to make Budd and other corporations honor their responsibilities to Philadelphia workers has to become the fight of Philadelphia working people as a whole.

FIGHT THE BUDD RUNAWAY !

By S. Bunting

Far more people than the 1500 members of UAW Local 92, at Budd Red Lion stand to win if Budd can be forced to keep that plant open. All Budd workers will benefit, as the strength of the major UAW locals which bargain as a unit with Budd will be maintained. The UAW, one of Philadelphia's strongest unions, has been hard hit by runaways in the past. Keeping Red Lion open will not only preserve an important local, but will set an example for other Philadelphia unions and workers that runaways can be fought and stopped. Jobs can be saved.

Even workers who are not faced by runaways stand to benefit. The loss of a plant like Red Lion will cost Philadelphia tax revenue. Less corporate tax money means fewer city services and more taxes for those remaining. The loss of jobs means the loss of millions of dollars spent in Philadelphia, cutting jobs in retail and service industries.

This runaway, like the rest, is part of a national corporate strategy to escape the responsibilities companies have to their workers. Since a runaway affects far more than those receiving the pink slips, it makes sense that those workers, in this case the members of UAW Local 92, cannot, and should not, have to fight alone to save their jobs.

What's involved in a winning strategy? In the *Organizer's* view there are two battlefronts. On the economic front, as workers and union members, the UAW

can directly challenge the company through traditional trade union tactics. On the political front, Local 92 can rally the working class of Philadelphia and its allies to political action designed to pressure the state and federal governments to take action against corporations which want to run away.

HOW TO BUILD SUPPORT

Before we present specific goals in each of these areas, it is important to look at certain methods of organizing, which along with a correct program and demands, are necessary to win.

The success of trade union tactics and political action depends on unity, mobilization, and education. To build support from other local unions, it is not enough for Local 92 simply to send letters to other local presidents. Red Lion workers must leaflet the gates of other plants to explain their situation and win rank and file support. Within the UAW, rank and file activists in other locals must be contacted to pressure the UAW International to fight against this and other runaways. Busloads of UAW 92 members should drop in on Region 9 Director Ed Gray and ask why he isn't fighting tooth and nail for their jobs.

To support the political struggle against runaways, demonstrations must be organized at the plants threatening to leave, and at City Hall and in Harrisburg to encourage legislative action.

Simple letter-writing campaigns will not do. UAW Local 92 members and

other Philadelphia workers are not asking favors from their congressmen, but demanding their rights. This must be backed by strong public presence — assemblies of workers, not mounds of paper.

The Black Political Convention last December proposed a three point program to fight runaways through legislation: 1) two-year notice of intention to move; 2) mandatory severance pay; 3) company payment of job training costs for laid off workers. These principles have also been put forward in HR 76 in the US Congress, and in Senate Bill 337 in Ohio, and are clearly of benefit to all workers. But they won't come about without sustained pressure.

Educational meetings, organized through unions and community organizations, and again with leafletting, can build understanding and support for this fight. By taking a lead in political action and the fight against runaways in general, Local 92 members can win broad support for their fight.

The involvement of as many rank and file members as possible is necessary to make this program work — the leadership of Local 92 cannot and should not try to handle alone the work of organization, communication, and education. Educating and training the rank and file in this work will also prepare the union in case strike action is necessary to stop the plant movement.

During the coal miners' strike in the winter of 1978, strike supporters here in Philadelphia organized several demonstra-

tions and an educational rally of over 300 people which raised money for the miners' strike fund.

The national miners' support movement put pressure on the coal companies and the government to give in to the miners' just demands. Instead of breaking the back of the United Mine Workers, as the companies hoped to do, they now face a more tightly knit union, and many other workers learned a lot about the power of organization.

When workers at Rheingold brewery in New York staged a sit-down to save their jobs in 1974, it became a public issue, and the company could not enforce an injunction. The Rheingold workers saved their jobs for two years, and won better pensions and severance pay.

In 1976, when Philadelphia General Hospital was about to close, District Council 33, the hospital workers' union, organized a march of 2000 workers and supporters from the Hospital to City Hall in protest. Unfortunately, Council President Earl Stout, at that time a friend of Mayor Rizzo, stopped after one demonstration. But think about it. How many would have been needed to force the mayor to back down? Certainly much more could have been gained by continued action.

In the April issue we will look more closely at specific tactics and program — but a banner is worth little without workers to carry it.

Bulletin

If Budd Co. has its way, by the fall almost 1000 workers from the Red Lion plant will join the tens of thousands of Philadelphia workers left jobless by runaway shops in the past ten years. It's not a new problem, but it's one working people in Philadelphia have not yet solved. Some workers have seen two or three jobs leave them stranded. Can working people fight back, and keep jobs here? Has it been done before? How?

For the next few months, the Organizer will try to answer these questions. Our focus will be Red Lion, but the experience of Budd workers can be useful to all of us.

Jobs Conference Draws 500

S. Bunting

"It's a crying shame when we have to beg these corporations for crumbs for the workers." The speaker was Joe Ferrara, Area Director of the United Autoworkers (UAW), addressing some 500 trade union and community activists assembled at the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers (ACTWU) union hall for a Conference to Save Our Jobs.

Ferrara was speaking about negotiations with the Budd Company which is threatening to eliminate 900 jobs at its Red Lion plant. "Begging for crumbs" pretty much summed up the approach to saving jobs of the top labor officials and politicians who dominated the podium at the conference.

MILITANT TALK

Murray Finley, President of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, I.C. Glendenning of the Federation of Phone Workers and Evelyn Dubrow of the International Ladies Garment Workers, all delivered militant sounding speeches.

They lambasted Jimmy Carter and Congress for ignoring the needs of working people and for pandering to the monopoly corporations. They deplored the cuts in social service spending while corporations continue to rake in federal subsidies.

Finally they complained about the intolerable length of time it takes to even squeeze any legislative concessions out of Congress - 14 years to get inadequate pension insurance and 5 years to pass a gutless Humphrey Hawkins, full employment bill. These sentiments naturally found support in the audience.

What should be done to save jobs, to stop runaway shops, to create more jobs? The speakers put forward many good ideas for new legislation designed to address these problems. But when it came down to how to win these demands, these leaders had nothing more to offer than the same strategy of backing the "pro-labor" politicians and quiet lobbying for legislation, a strategy that by their own admission had achieved little.

UAW leader Joe Ferrara noted that the predominantly Democratic Congressmen, who were only too glad to take labor's money, also received contributions from corporations and usually did the corporations' bidding. Ferrara's solution was to urge unions to give more money to these same politicians, as if labor could out bid the monopoly corporations.

What this approach reflects is a failure to understand that the interests of labor and business are irreconcilable. Elected officials cannot serve two masters. Labor must organize independently instead of trying to buy a piece of the capitalist's political action in the Democratic Party.

Furthermore letter writing to Congressman and polite lobbying at the Capitol isn't enough to win labor's program. Mass action by the millions of workers is needed. This is how labor won the 8 hour day, unemployment insurance and every other real reform it has wrested from the employers. But the labor bureaucracy shies away from such action because it threatens their cozy relationship with big business.

These labor leaders carry over the same philosophy into collective bargaining. In trying to discourage the conference from taking action on saving jobs at the Budd company, Ferrara said



organizer photo

Some 500 trade union and community activists participated in a recent Jobs Conference. The focus of the day was on stopping runaway shops and how to fight the loss of jobs due to layoffs and cutbacks.

"sensitive negotiations" were under way with management and any action might scuttle them. Here again, rather than rely on the militancy of the workers, the international labor leadership is counting on promises of cooperation and "reasonableness" to move the company.

Saving jobs is going to take a fight - a fight at the bargaining table, on the shop floor and on the picket line - a political fight from City Hall to Washington - a fight that will require the mobilization of labor and its allies. The top echelons of the labor leadership have no taste for such a fight.

LESS TALK, MORE ACTION

This fear of action and distrust of the rank & file was thrown into sharp relief in the workshop on runaway shops attended by some 150 people.

The workshop planners intended to treat the "participants" to another series of speeches and allowed for almost no input or discussion from the floor. But after a few speeches the restive rank & file in the workshop began to speak up anyway.

A Red Lion Budd worker made the point that it's one thing to talk about the runaway shop in general, it's another thing to do something about actual cases. He proposed that the conference focus on stopping the layoff of workers and on the potential closing of the Red Lion plant, arguing that a successful campaign could inspire and inform other attempts to stop runaway shops both here and across the country.

Specifically the proposal called for a mass demonstration, publication of a pamphlet on runaways and for the conference continuations committee to include rank & file participation and develop an ongoing focus on the Red Lion issue.

Even though the President of the Budd Red Lion local spoke against the proposal the clear sentiment of the meeting was in its favor. Other Budd workers spoke in support of the proposal as did UAW members from the Gould ITE plant which is also threatening to runaway. Supermarket workers joined in, concerned about the recent Food Fair shutdown.

This call to action from the floor scared Joe O'Brien of the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) who

was chairing the workshop. He hustled through three more speakers and simply ignored the raised hands of those in the audience. The workshop leaders then simply announced that they would report back *their* proposals to the plenary from the workshop without bothering to put them to a vote. When angry workshop participants clamored for a vote on the proposal advanced from the floor by the Budd Red Lion worker, the chairman simply turned his back on the meeting and acted as if it were adjourned.

CONFERENCE SHOWS POTENTIAL

Nevertheless, workshop members succeeded in having the proposal reported to the plenary meeting. Other workshops on community economic development, manpower programs in the private sector, public service employment and defense spending and conversion to peaceful production reported back a variety of progressive proposals. The conference, however, took no definite action in relation to any of the proposals. A continuations committee was set up and various working committees to plan action. Thus the potential exists to build on the conference and create a broad city wide movement to save jobs.

In spite of the obstruction on the part of the top labor leaders, the conference can be counted as a success. It brought together hundreds of grass roots leaders and militants from both the unions and the neighborhoods. Some 400 of those at the conference were trade unionists. One third of the participants were Black and almost half were women. The overwhelming majority of those in attendance came out of the rank & file movement in the unions and the grass roots of the community. The conference shows the growing mood of anger and the desire for action among Philadelphia's working people.

The forces present were clearly to the left of the Conference leadership. Rank & file and community activists, along with honest and progressive local trade union leaders, now need to insure that the generally positive measures that came out of the conference become the basis for a real action campaign.

The labor bureaucrats who put peace with the corporations over the interests of the workers would undoubtedly like everyone to go back to sleep now that the conference is over. But if the mood of the conference participants is any indication, they're bound to be disappointed.

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organizer photo

All of those who addressed the conference gave militant sounding speeches, but they offered little in the way of concrete solutions to the problems that face the workers of Philadelphia. People went to the conference with hopes of finding answers and action, but the conference took no definite action on any of the proposals handed up by the workshops.

What's Needed for Transport Workers to Beat the SEPTA System?

by a bus driver

"We can't stop them from proposin' and they can't stop us from disposin'." So said Transport Workers Union (TWU) President Merrill Cooper as he ripped SEPTA's 11 take-back proposals to shreds. He set off a raucous ovation from 1400 transit workers who had gathered on February 4 to learn about contract negotiations. Cooper promised that negotiations would not begin until the take-back of the no-layoff clause and the proposal for part-time workers were off the table. And while responding to questions from the floor, he made it clear that he intended to repudiate Carter's 7% limit.

MEMBERSHIP READY TO FIGHT

The large turnout indicates that the last contract's 44 day disaster has not taken the fight out of the rank and file, but made them more aware of how united they must be to win. According to one older worker, "People are more interested in this contract than they've ever been before."

After the last strike, TWU members identified weaknesses in the way it was conducted — 1. the membership was not pulled out to the picketlines and 2. there was poor communication between the different garages and also between the leadership and the rank and file on the progress of negotiations.

Thus far, the leadership has initiated several reforms to meet this criticism. First, regular mass meetings are being held with the next one to come on March 11, four days before the contract expires. Second, a leaflet called "News from 5th Street" is being passed out at all locations updating progress on the negotiations. However, there has been no word from the leadership about picket duties.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

A critical aspect of such a program is the need for affirmative action, measures to correct SEPTA's history of discrimination against minority and women workers. Minorities and women

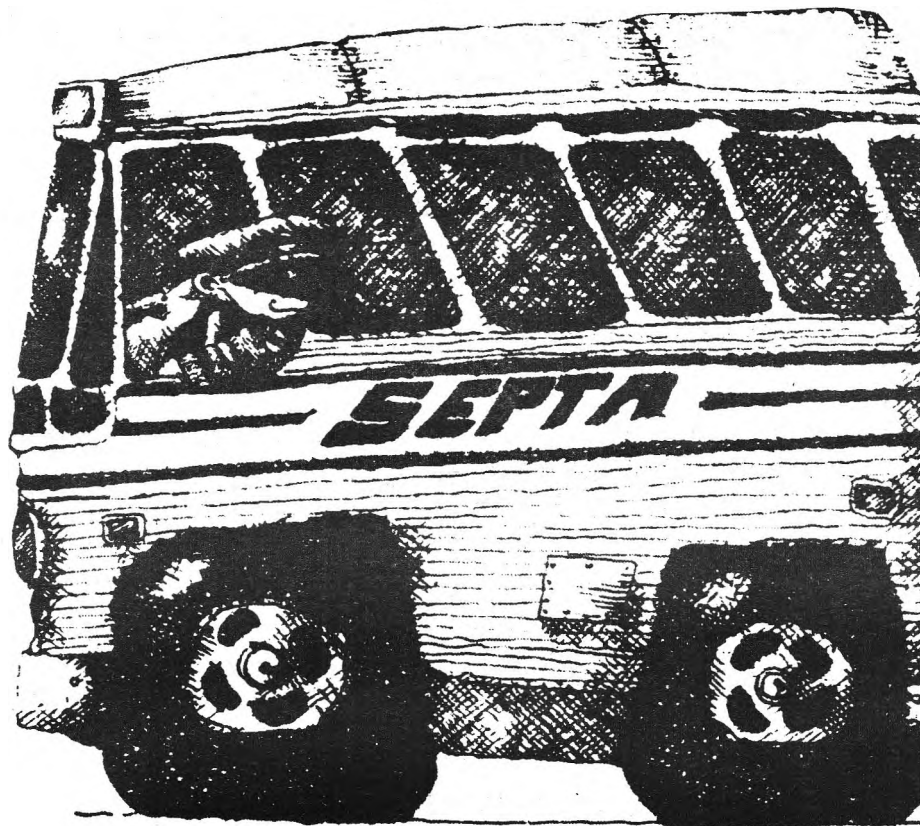
remain underrepresented in the better paying, more skilled job classifications. Management plays on this inequality to pit the workers against each other.

While minority and women workers have an obvious and particular interest in ending discriminatory policies, all workers have a stake in this fight, not simply because discrimination is unfair, but because only by taking up the fight for equality can workers forge the lasting unity necessary to win their common demands.

At the same time it is important not to place the burden for past and present discrimination on the white and male workers. It is SEPTA management which is responsible for racist and sexist policies and it is SEPTA management which should pay the price for correcting these inequalities.

A demand consistent with this perspective is for upgrading to be based on seniority with an affirmative action override. This means that when a job opens up all workers interested in it would bid on it with the job going to the most senior applicant. However if minorities or women were underrepresented in the job classification as a result of past discrimination, the opening would go to the minority or woman applicant with the greatest seniority and this practice would continue until the composition of the classification reflected the composition of the labor force as a whole. At this point upgrading would be based strictly on seniority.

High seniority white or male applicants, who were bypassed in order to meet affirmative action goals, would receive the pay increase that goes with the new position and would assume the job itself once the affirmative action goals were achieved. Taking up the struggle for a meaningful affirmative action program in the contract will strengthen the unity of the workers in fighting the company's take away attempts and in winning across the board gains.



BUILDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

When asked from the floor of the February 4th meeting how he was going to win community support, Cooper revealed plans to take out newspaper ads similar to those used by the teachers' union last fall. But this is not enough. To win support and counter the propaganda barrage of SEPTA, the Rizzo administration and the City's pro business newspapers, the union must champion the interests of the riding public.

SEPTA riders want and need high quality, safe service at a price they can afford. SEPTA management will inevitably try to pit the public against the transit workers by arguing that a decent contract will require a big fare increase. The union needs to take a stand in opposition to an increase, calling for the funding of the new contract through taxation of corporate income and the wealthy. The owners of the corporations and the big banks benefit from the existence of the transit system, but as usual it is the working people who have to pick up the tab.

Unsafe vehicles pose a danger to drivers and riders alike. The union needs to project strong demands to the community in this area. Since the layoff of 155 maintenance workers in 1975, the workers have suffered from intolerable speed up, and equipment has not been properly serviced. The workers' demand for more mechanics is clearly in the interest of riders too. Similarly the demand to have the right to strike over health and safety violations is of vital interest to those who have to ride busses with worn tires and trolleys with bad brakes as well as those who sit in the drivers seat.

Another concern is cutbacks in service. Two years ago SEPTA eliminated

several routes. Countless other routes run irregularly. The Black community is particularly hard hit since SEPTA management is not exactly color blind in parcelling out its meager services.

For instance at the Allegheny depot the best busses are reserved for the 38 and 44 routes which go to City Line Ave. and Ardmore. In many instances when one of these busses breaks down, a replacement vehicle is pulled right off a 33 or 48 line which service North Philadelphia, regardless of how many passengers it is carrying.

Another example of SEPTA's racism was management's response to a protest from riders in the predominantly white Roxborough section. Equipment in the Allegheny depot was in such bad shape that during the cold weather as many as 40 busses couldn't get onto the street. The Roxborough residents rightly protested the effect this had on the A route which serves their neighborhood. Rather than fix up the equipment SEPTA's answer was to take busses off routes serving the Black and Puerto Rican communities. Not only did this further undermine already lousy service in these neighborhoods, but it didn't solve Roxborough's problems as service remains poor on the A route.

The union needs to link up with community protest against poor service. It needs to hit SEPTA's racist policy of robbing Peter to pay Paul and demand decent service for all riders in Philly. It must challenge the city's policy which puts money into the Gallery and the Commuter Tunnel while allowing housing and city transit to decay.

With a militant and united rank & file and broad community support the Transit Workers can turn back SEPTA's take away offensive and reverse the defeat of two years ago.

Toward a Decent Contract . . .

The following demands reflect the needs of SEPTA workers. Most are measures that need to be incorporated into the new contract; others are demands that the union must fight for politically.

I — INCOME PROTECTION:

1. \$2.00 an hour wage increase — No to Carter's 7% limit
2. Full medical coverage including optical and an increase in company disability.
3. 100% cost of living allowance
4. Sunday work at time and a half
5. Pensions — COLA adjusted quarterly
6. Six paid personal holidays per year

II — FIGHT DISCRIMINATION

1. Affirmative Action to upgrade minority and women workers
2. Make the Company pay for the burden of past discrimination
3. Establish a union committee to investigate and combat discrimination

III — JOB SECURITY

1. Retention of No-Layoff clause
2. No part timers
3. 30 hour week for 40 hours pay
4. 30 years and out with full pension regardless of age
5. Hire more mechanics

IV — UNION RIGHTS

1. Right to strike over greivances, health and safety violations
2. Scheduling of runs and disciplinary procedures to be determined by negotiation between union and management
3. Elected union safety committees in each depot with power to inspect and stop vehicles.

V — FOR A BETTER PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM

1. No fare increase — fund system through taxation on big business and the rich
2. Restore cutbacks in service — stop discrimination against Black and Puerto Rican communities
3. No unsafe vehicles on the street

Teachers on the Picket Line... Coast to Coast Fight Against Cutbacks

By Jack Owens

As working class anger and frustration rose throughout 1978, the ruling class continue its desperate efforts to pin the blame on workers themselves for skyrocketing inflation, higher taxes, and disappearing job security. In a classic effort to divert and divide us, they have increasingly tried to scapegoat public employees, who have suffered mass layoffs, as the cause of drastic cuts in services for the entire working class, especially minorities who are concentrated in our largest and hardest-hit cities.

Our increasingly minority public school systems and their teachers have been favorite targets of this high-powered right offensive. In California, for instance, Proposition 13 was touted by the right as the answer to high property taxes. The real result of Proposition 13 has been a gigantic tax giveaway to big business with massive cuts in social services and loss of jobs for the working class. In the San Francisco school district alone, Proposition 13 has meant ten closed schools and 1000 layoffs. Newly hired minority and bilingual teachers were the first to go in this 80% Black, Chicano and Asian school system.

TEACHERS STRIKE BACK

Public employees and teachers specifically have fought back against these attacks. Teachers are shedding false notions of "professionalism" which once kept them away from unions, and are learning that organization, unity and militancy are the sole keys to their survival.

From Fall River, Massachusetts to Daly City, California teachers hit the bricks in record numbers in 1978. By the end of September some 80 teachers' strikes had affected more than half a million students — more than double the 1977 figures.

Historically, school administrations have been able to divide teachers from their most natural allies — parents and students — by portraying teachers as greedy, lazy, and racist. Too often, teachers' unions have seemed to confirm these charges by refusing to actively champion demands around better education and by refusing to deal with school desegregation and other aspects of the struggle against racism in our schools.

By contrast, the 1978 struggles showed that teachers in many areas are beginning to understand the critical need for unity with the communities they serve.

The 17 day strike by the Bridgeport Education Association (BEA) was the longest in Connecticut history, and the 274 (out of 1274) teachers jailed was a national record. The major significance of the Bridgeport strike, however, was the unprecedented unity between teachers and parents which stemmed from the BEA taking up parents' demands as their own — such as demands for more teacher specialists in art, music, gym and remedial reading.

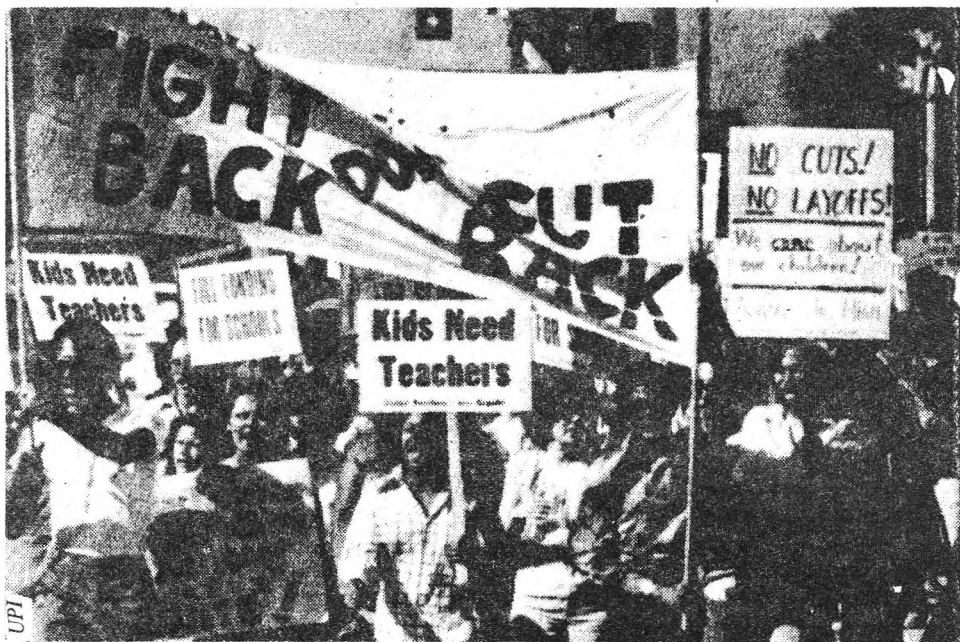
Edna Castillo, mother of two, summed up the parents' feelings when speaking for the Spanish American Development Agency. She said, "We're backing the teachers because they are entitled to a raise; we're willing to go to jail with them. The mayor can throw all the teachers in jail — but he can't throw the whole city in."

The BEA won only modest wage increases, but they won the hiring of more teacher specialists. Most important, the strike has left a legacy of solidarity for parents and teachers who plan to build an on-going city wide organization to fight for better education.

Heightened parent-teacher solidarity was not isolated to Bridgeport. In Fall River, Massachusetts 850 teachers striking for more than three weeks in defiance of a court order were joined by a parents support group which called for a boycott of classes.

And here in Philadelphia groups like the Parents Union which took an anti-union stand during the 1972 strike, came out in full support of teachers' demands for no layoffs and reduced class size — support which contributed to a surprisingly early settlement.

In 1978 Cleveland became the first major US city to default since the Depression. The response of Cleveland's city officials was predictable — wage freezes and threatened layoffs for thousands of city workers. Refusing to bow to intimi-



Teachers struck in record number last fall. Much of the success they had at contract settlement time came from linking up with their most natural allies — parents and students. Above, a demonstration against Proposition 13, reactionary legislation that has meant 10 closed schools and 1000 layoffs in the San Francisco school district alone.

dation, teachers, school custodians, and school nurses struck for six weeks — the longest school strike of 1978 — for a 20% wage hike, better benefits, and a guarantee of no repeat of the seven payless weeks they endured last spring. Their determination is an example for besieged city workers around the country.

In September, under a court-ordered metropolitan desegregation plan, the predominantly Black Wilmington, Delaware school district was combined with the 11 largely white suburban districts into a single New Castle County school district. The 12 previously independent districts all had different pay scales, and the refusal of the New Castle County school board to equalize pay at the highest level sparked a district-wide walkout in October. Wilmington teachers won many of their demands setting an important precedent for metropolitan desegregation plans elsewhere.

AFT — REACTION AT THE TOP

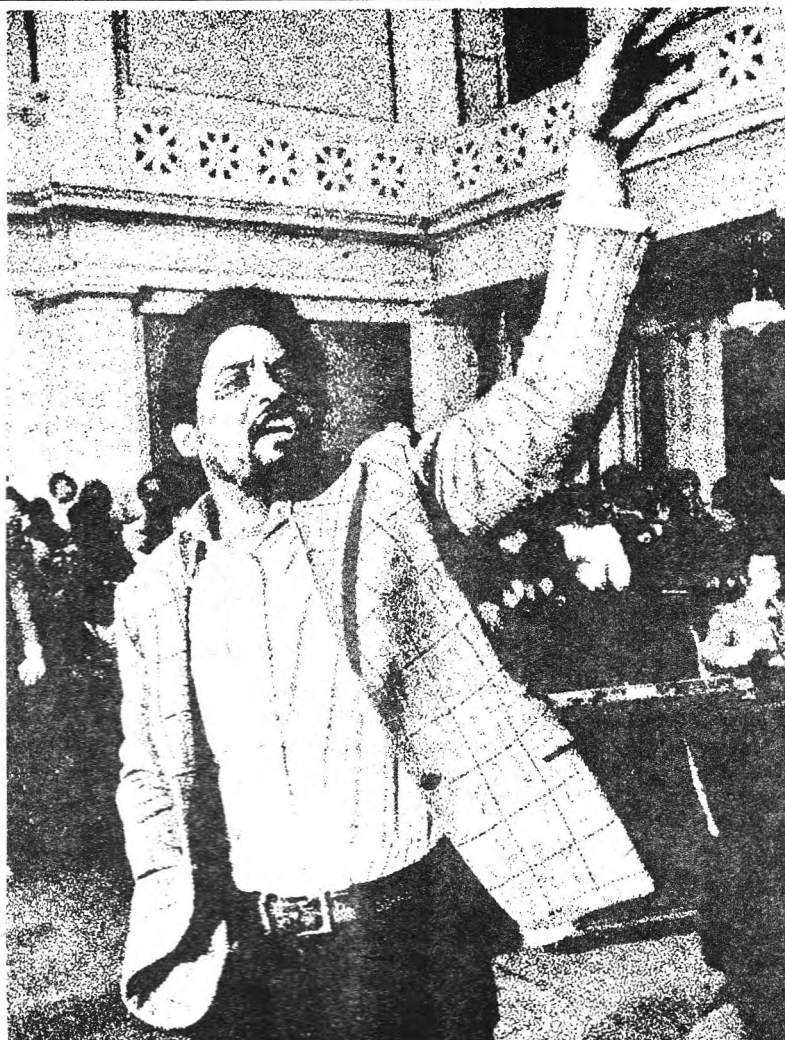
In the face of the nation-wide offensive against public school teachers, the national American Federation of Teachers (AFT) leadership — starting with its racist and anti-communist presi-

dent Albert Shanker — failed utterly to mount a spirited counterattack.

Only one of nine resolutions presented by the AFT National Executive Council dealt with the crisis in education, and progressive resolutions from the floor were consistently voted down by the pro-Shanker convention. Resolutions calling for opposition to the current military budget and support for the Transfer Amendment, which proposes shifting Pentagon funds to social services, were defeated. So was a resolution calling for shifting the tax burden to the wealthy.

In spite of these defeats the AFT rank and file was able to make its voice heard. William Simon, president of Local 6, Washington, DC and outspoken critic of Shanker and racism, was elected national vice-president, and 400 delegates attended a luncheon hosted by the AFT Black Caucus — a leading force in the anti-Shankerite opposition.

The hard-fought battles of 1978 delivered a clear message to the ruling class that teachers are not going to passively stand by and see their jobs taken away and public education destroyed.



Inquirer

Milton Street and the Battle for Decent Housing

by Ron Whitehorne

"We're all fired up, ain't gonna take it no more" — this is what Milton Street and hundreds of demonstrators have been trying to tell City Council and the Rizzo administration. What people are fired up about is the city's neglect of the housing needs of Philadelphians and the "recycling" of poor neighborhoods into upper middle class enclaves.

For several years City Council has turned a deaf ear to the housing complaints of Black North Philadelphians, Puerto Rican residents of the Spring Garden area, whites from lower Kensington and countless others. This indifference produced the frustration and anger which boiled over into a confrontation in the Council chambers last month.

Rather than listen to the people's grievances, City Council had the demonstrators ejected and arrested. Rather than

address the city's housing crisis, George Schwartz and company found it easier to turn cops with black jacks loose on the galleries.

Seeking to avoid the real issue, the city hall gang has focused on Milton Street. They engage in pious denunciations of Street's "disruption" of council and his "disrespect" for the law in picketing the Gallery. Even Silent Frank Rizzo got in the act, calling Street "a bum and an anarchist" who "represents everything that is wrong."

WHAT'S WRONG WITH MILTON STREET

What is "wrong" about Milton Street is that he refuses to accept the idea that Blacks and poor people should roll over and lie dead when the city turns their homes into parking lots or society hill

(continued on page 20)

Steelworker Talks about the Weber Case. . . .

A Blue-Collar Bakke

by Oliver Law

As some one who works in a mill it makes me mad. As a former steelworker I think it's a disgrace that a "brother" steelworker could spark this attack.

OK, I know you're all wondering what I'm talking about. Well, it's the Brian Weber vs. Kaiser Aluminum and United Steelworkers of America case. Its outcome could have the most damaging effect on the labor movement in general, and on Black and other minority workers specifically since I don't know when. It's that bad.

Brian Weber works at the Kaiser Aluminum plant in Gramercy, Louisiana. The plant opened in 1958. When Black workers applied for jobs at Kaiser they found that they would only be hired as janitors. Blacks were given different types of badges than the white workers. There were separate showers and separate drinking fountains for Black and white workers.

These forms of discrimination were practiced by Kaiser not only at its Gramercy plant but at its other Southern plants as well. From its earliest days, Kaiser set up a company-wide system of racism.

At Gramercy the Black workers organized to fight, but as of 1969 they held only 10% of the production jobs in the plant, even though Blacks make up about 40% of the population around Gramercy. And getting into skilled maintenance jobs, well they could forget it.

In 1969 under pressure, the company increased its hiring of Black workers for production jobs, but the maintenance workforce was, as always, strictly white.

Presently, of the approximately 800 jobs at the plant, close to 300 are skilled maintenance or craft jobs — electricians, millwrights, painters, etc. As of 1972 out of the 257 craft jobs only five were held by Blacks. In 1973 it got even worse, when the maintenance jobs increased to 273 and Blacks were left with the same five. Clearly, up until 1974 Kaiser had a hiring practice that was racist and discriminatory.

Kaiser's policies did not benefit its white production workers. In order to keep Black workers out of maintenance,

and in order to save the cost of an apprentice program that would upgrade workers from production into maintenance, no one without maintenance experience, Black or white, was upgraded from production into maintenance.

By the late 1960's the company could not legally exclude Blacks from an apprentice program and get away with it, so they excluded everybody, and saved themselves some money. The racism of the company was clearly hurting the white workers too.

KAISER FORCED TO HIRE BLACKS

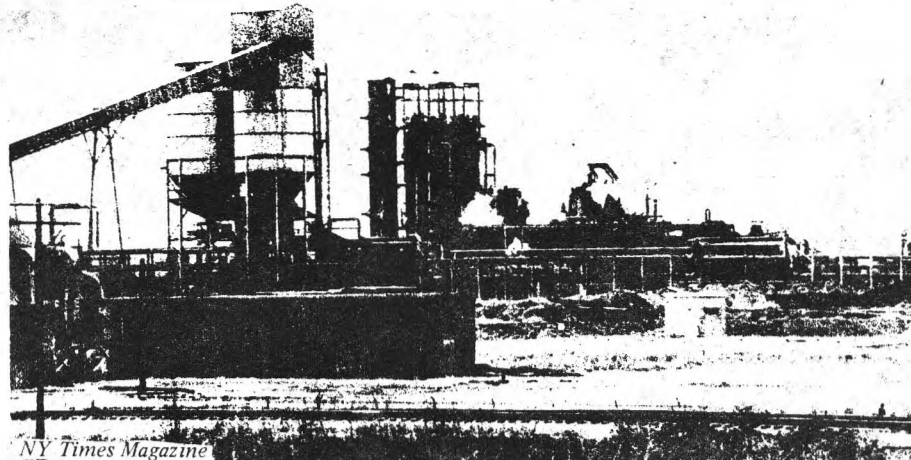
In its February 1974 contract with the United Steelworkers of America, Kaiser agreed to set up an on-the-job training program for the crafts, which included an affirmative action provision. Did Kaiser do this out of the goodness of its heart? No way!

Facing lawsuits and organizing by Black workers at many of its southern plants, along with pressure from the USWA, Kaiser finally had to face up to the realities of this world and end its decades of blatant discrimination and racism.

The program at Gramercy was to eliminate the effects of past discrimination through affirmative action. It worked like this: The requirement that you needed previous experience in the craft job that you wanted to go into was eliminated, and all union members could therefore bid on the maintenance jobs.

One minority worker was to be accepted to the training program for every white male admitted. The highest seniority white males bidding on their half of the training slots were to be accepted. The highest seniority minority workers, to make up for the company's history of discrimination, were to get the other half of the slots open. This fifty-fifty ratio was to continue until the percentage of minority workers in maintenance equaled the percentage of minorities living in the area of the plant.

Again, this program did not hurt white Kaiser employees. On the contrary, by giving the white production workers, previously excluded from these jobs along with Black workers, a chance to bid on the positions, the program was of di-



Kaiser Aluminum's plant in Gramercy, Louisiana, 25 miles northwest of New Orleans. The company eliminated its apprenticeship program as a result of Brian Weber's law suit. This benefits the company financially and hurts all the workers at the plant, Black and white alike.

rect benefit. Affirmative action providing that half these jobs go to Blacks until they were represented proportionally in those categories was fair, given the history of discrimination. It also is in the interest of all the workers since it aims at removing the inequality which the employers persistently use to divide and weaken us.

The first classes started in 1974, with a total of 13 workers, seven Blacks and six whites. Then Brian Weber stepped into the picture.

Brian Weber is a white lab technician at the Gramercy plant who applied for one of the training positions and was turned down. Weber then filed suit to overturn the union contract and eliminate its affirmative action provisions, charging reverse discrimination.

Before we go any further, let me make some things clear. First, if the training program had been operated strictly by seniority, without affirmative action, Weber would still not have gotten in. His seniority was too low for him to get in, even if no slots were held open for minority workers.

Secondly, the ability of Black and other workers to build seniority in order to compete for these new training programs had, through no fault of their own, been hindered by Kaiser's refusal to hire many minority workers, for any jobs, until 1969. If the training slots had been filled by strict seniority, few, if any, Blacks would have been upgraded. This is why an affirmative action provision was put into the contract.

ALL WORKERS GAIN FROM AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Thirdly, it was in the interest of all the workers to fight for the new training program and for the affirmative action provision. The white workers alone could never have forced the company to start an apprenticeship program that was going to cost Kaiser plenty of money. The Black workers would gain nothing in pushing for a training program that didn't include affirmative action, because without affirmative action no Black workers would get into the training program.

The affirmative action apprentice program was in the interest of all the workers at the Gramercy plant and this reverse discrimination suit is hurting all the workers.

In 1976 when a US District Court judge upheld Weber's claim of reverse discrimination, Kaiser ended the training program at its Gramercy plant. Weber, and Kaiser Aluminum through Weber, are using racism, past and present to divide the workers at its plant and to kill a training program that was helpful to and needed by all the workers at Gramercy.

The reverse discrimination decision was upheld by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in November, 1977, and was accepted by the US Supreme Court in December of 1978. If the Supreme Court rules in favor of Weber, most if not all of the contractual affirmative action provisions that have been won in the past may be put to rest. This would be an attack on Black and other minority work-

ers and the rights they have fought for and won over the years. And it would be a block to the unity between Black and white workers that is needed to improve all our lives.

Nationally and locally, groups are forming to fight against the Weber decision. Here in Philadelphia the Ad Hoc Committee for Affirmative Action has been formed to educate people about the case, and to build support to fight against a pro-Weber Supreme Court decision. The Committee will be having a one-day conference on April 7th, and we encourage all people to attend.

I want to get personal again. In the steel mill where I used to work, the discrimination that prevented minority workers from upgrading was as obvious as at Kaiser in Gramercy. In the two departments where I worked, we had one Black electrician and no Black millwrights.

The conditions for production workers in my department were bad, and there was a definite need to fight to improve those conditions. No way was the company going to spend money just to make our lives better. They had to be forced to do this.

The only way we could force the company to do this, and get backing from the union, was for all of us, Black and white, to unite and stand together. The only way we could get that togetherness was for us white workers to deal with the question of racism, and how the company was using racism to discriminate against the Black and other minority workers at our plant, like keeping them out of maintenance.

Although I know we could have done better, we did try to deal with racism, with how the company was discriminating against the Black workers. In so doing, we built a unity among ourselves that helped us to take on the company and win improvements that helped us all.

Where I work now it's the same way. Blacks and other minorities are mostly excluded from the maintenance union. Until we white workers deal with this type of racist discrimination, we won't be able to build the unity necessary to fight against low wages, bad health and safety conditions, speed-up, etc.

The Weber case is a direct challenge to us, to our unity, and as such is a threat to the labor movement in general, and to Black and other minority workers specifically.

One more point about the Weber case. At the Kaiser plant in Gramercy, as in most factories, there were no women in any of the skilled maintenance jobs. Part of the affirmative action program killed by Weber's suit against Kaiser was to hire and upgrade women workers until they made up 5% of the maintenance force. The reason behind affirmative action for women is the same as for Black workers, past discrimination by Kaiser. Although the figure of 5% is unlaughably low, even this figure was a step forward in the fight to equalize the rights and conditions of working women.

Weber sparked this attack. It's up to us to tell the Supreme Court what they can do with it.



Brian Weber at home with his Elvis posters and his tapes. The outcome of his law suit against Kaiser and the United Steelworkers of America will have a profound effect on affirmative action programs. The Supreme Court is expected to rule on this case in June.

A Program to Guide Us

The Struggle Against Sexism

Communists must fight sexism wherever and whenever it appears, both as a practice and as an ideology. We understand that it must be attacked primarily at its roots — discrimination by the capitalist class. Capitalism has a direct interest in maintaining this discrimination for three reasons: 1) the “free” maintenance and reproduction of labor power (housework); 2) superprofits from super-exploitation of women workers; and 3) a class divided because of sexist ideology — a division which helps prevent the working class from developing the kind of unity necessary to win its emancipation.

While the capitalist class directly benefits from sexism, it is the working class which pays for this discrimination. The reserve army of female labor means lower wages for everyone and the constant threat of unemployment. Furthermore, the divisions within the class lead to fewer women being unionized, undercutting the strength of all unions.

Because sexism, like racism, is one of the mainstays of the capitalist system, we focus our struggle for the emancipation of women on the capitalist class. The struggle against sexism is a classwide concern and must be approached on the basis of class struggle.

Finally, we understand that the basis for the liberation of women lies in the degree to which they are brought into the process of social production. The isolation of women in the home can only have a retrogressive effect on their consciousness. We therefore focus our energy on facilitating the trend of women to enter the labor market, and we focus our organizing on these women. We also recognize the need to end the particular discrimination suffered by women on the basis of age, and marital status.

We must be very clear that the struggle for democratic rights for women cannot be separated from the struggle to end racial oppression suffered by national minority women and men. In particular, Black women face the triple oppression of class, sex and race. While they represent the largest and most active sector of the female labor force, they hold the lowest paying and least desirable jobs. Only by consciously attacking racial discrimination will the struggle for the emancipation of women be moved forward.

Further, while we must constantly maintain our focus on the primary contradiction between the struggle for the emancipation of women and the needs of the capitalist class to maintain their oppression, we cannot ignore the secondary contradiction of sexist ideology within the working class.

We are confident that truly progressive reforms can be won by a class determined to fight for the democratic rights of women. The cost of these reforms must be borne by the corporate ruling class, not by more taxation on working people.

We are clear, however, that fully socialized production and full equality can only be won with socialism. Ultimately, the liberation of women is integrally bound up with the struggle for socialism. It is imperative that the leading elements in the fight for the democratic rights of women consciously link their movement with the overall revolutionary struggle of the working class for socialism.



Women in North Carolina prepare tobacco for hanging.

Credit: Chip Berlet/LNS

1. END DISCRIMINATION ON THE JOB. Women, especially oppressed nationality women, are channeled into the most menial, unskilled, marginal and low-paying jobs. In all spheres of industry and service, sex discrimination must be ended. We need:

- An end to all forms of direct and indirect job-related discrimination.
- Affirmative action programs to promote equal employment for women and national minorities in both the public and private sectors, with a special focus on national minority women.
- Union-run, federally funded vocational training and job placement centers focusing on the needs of women and national minority workers, especially in providing training for areas previously closed to them.
- Extension of workers' benefits to all workers — including household workers, migrant workers, part-time workers.

2. GUARANTEE OF JOBS OR INCOME. Because of systematic sex discrimination women are paid so low, or have so little access to better jobs, that they cannot support themselves and their families. We need:

- Jobs for all who are willing to work, coupled with a massive training program at full pay, union scale. Unemployment compensation available to women and youth entering the job market.
- Guaranteed minimum annual income with protection for the individual rights and dignity for the recipients. Oppose all forms of “workfare” which force poor women to slave and scab for an income.

3. FULL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN AS MOTHERS. Because women are childbearers they are denied the right to maintain seniority, return to work and develop stable working situations because of the discrimination they face. We need:

- Pregnancy/maternity leave guaranteed for as long as medically recommended — at full pay with no loss of seniority. Childbirth or adoption leave available to either parent for up to six months full pay with no loss of seniority. One month paternity leave available at full pay.
- Federally funded quality childcare available from the age of six weeks on a 24-hour basis for all guardians regardless of ability to pay. Development of workplace based nurseries to facilitate contact between infants and parents, especially nursing mothers.



Guardian

4. QUALITY HEALTH CARE. Soaring health care costs and sexism in the medical system have a special oppressive effect on women. We need:

- Federally funded health insurance and services, available to all regardless of ability to pay.
- Legal right of all women to control their own reproductive systems:
 - Free, safe and widely available contraception.
 - Free safe abortion on demand.
 - Protection from forced sterilization; an end to the systematic attack on national minority people.
- Federally funded research into drug and medical procedures which have particular significance for women. Special focus on occupational health and safety hazards which endanger the reproductive capacity of all workers. Elimination of health hazards on the job.

5. FAMILY LAW. The marriage law maintains the oppression of women within the family. We need:

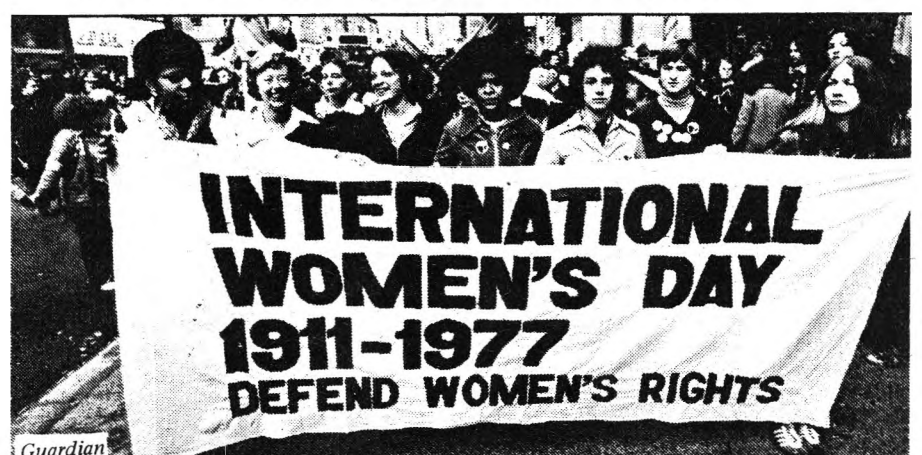
- Low cost, no-fault divorce available to either party, guaranteeing the rights of women and children to support as necessary.
- Equitable consideration of both parents' rights and responsibilities in care and custody of children.

6. END PHYSICAL ABUSE. Because of the history of women as chattel and as sex objects, they are victims of abuse both in their families and in the broader society. We need:

- Absolute protection for women against physical and sexual abuse. This includes reform of rape laws; protection against rape by fathers and husbands; shelters available to battered women and children regardless of ability to pay.

7. EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN IN ALL ASPECTS OF SOCIETY. Women must gain equality in every sphere of this society. The problems are particularly acute for national minority women and there is a historic link between the struggle for the democratic rights of women and the struggle for the democratic rights of national minorities. The struggle against sexism must proceed hand in hand with the struggle against racism. We need:

- End discrimination before the law; end sex bias in all state and federal legislation; pass the ERA; extend protective legislation.
- End discrimination in housing, insurance, credit requirements.
- End discrimination in the criminal justice system.
- Equal access to all educational, vocational, athletic programs and facilities. An end to sexist curriculum in all such programs and facilities.



Guardian

Demonstration in NYC, Int'l Women's Day 1977.

An Interview with TWO WOMEN ORGANIZERS

Bea Lloyd has been a member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) Rank and File Committee for six years. As a Black woman trade unionist, Bea has also been involved in the Black Liberation movement, both here and in the South, and in the Women's Movement as well.

Marlene Bodner helped form the Bell Workers Rank and File Committee in Local 1944 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) in 1974. She has been a shop steward in the local and is currently running for that position again.

ORGANIZER: Why did you get involved in your unions?

Marlene: As a reaction to my company's policies...the pressure put on telephone operators daily by the company and the lack of union presence. As a co-worker put it: "I'm tired of taking this shit."

Bea: I wanted to know about my basic union rights. I wanted to find out what was in our contract, health benefits and things that related to shop conditions. I found out that it's only through the sharing of knowledge and experience that we can help each other.

O: Is discrimination against women a big problem on the job?

Bea: I work in clothing where all the better paying jobs are held by men — the cutters, the top job, there isn't a single woman. And there is no upgrading system so a woman could get a shot at these jobs. Women not only have the low paying jobs — they get harassed the most. To the boss we're not women, just "girls".

Marlene: It's the same at the phone company. Most operators are women. Most better paid, more skilled positions are male. The harassment is something terrible — you even need permission from your supervisor to go to the bathroom.

O: What's the general view of women's liberation at work?

Marlene: The women think it means being less feminine and the men think it means stealing their jobs. The media hasn't given a true picture of the women's movement and that's where these ideas come from. But then you start talking about things like chores with women; you find their husbands are getting into cooking and grocery shopping. The men still aren't doing the laundry or taking care of the children — those things are considered too hard for men — but they are doing other chores.

Bea: A lot of women bring up things like co-ed bathrooms and having to lift as much as a man. What I say is it means equal pay for equal work, being able to buy a home if you're a woman, and so forth.

O: What's your experience been in building unity between men and women workers?

Bea: My shop is mainly women although the Rank and File Committee has lots of men members. Men find it difficult to view women in a leadership position. Just in sitting down and talking with men about union activities, the men automatically figure you don't know what you're talking about.

Marlene: Yeah, without even listening to what you're talking about. When we put out a leaflet the men always say it's pretty good but there are some points that they don't agree with. When we press them on what they are so we can be sure to represent all the points of view among the workers, they say let them think about it. Then they don't come up with anything.

O: How do you see your role in building Black/white unity?

Marlene: I think it's to expose what's really happening. For instance IT&T whipped out this thing saying that the federal government, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, is making them upgrade only Black workers. First of all, it's not true. Secondly, the company is concealing its own history of discrimination, like right now they're being sued for \$75 million for discrimination. This company propaganda spread division and pitted white against Black which is just what the company intended.

Our caucus investigated the upgrading pattern in the company to find out the facts of the matter. We found that by and large, white men are still getting upgraded most, next white women, then Black women and least of all Black men because they aren't even getting hired. The truth was just the opposite of what the company said. When we published the statistics it was a real eye-opener for the white workers.

Next the Rank and File Committee formulated a contract demand that put upgrading on a seniority basis with an affirmative action overlay. This means that seniority could be bypassed in order to meet affirmative action guidelines, something we think is necessary if past discrimination is really going to be dealt with. But the worker bypassed would get the same pay increase as the worker selected. This put the burden for discrimination on the company rather than the white or male workers. After the composition of each job category reflects the composition of the labor force, then upgrading would be strictly by seniority.

O: Is there a special contribution that Black women organizers have to make?

Bea: It seems to me that the special contribution of Black women is through educating the masses so they don't see any struggle as one-sided. Every struggle really affects all of us. You can't say this just affects this group or that. We are Black, we're women and we're workers so we see things from all of those vantage points or at least we're likely to. Black men sometimes talk like all Black people are brothers forgetting that half of us are sisters. And white women too often forget the problems of Black women are not identical to their's.

When I read the story of *Union Maids* I was inspired by Sylvia Woods. She was a strong person even when she was young. When she first went to work she only struggled for herself. Then people showed her you can fight better together. She took it to heart and went on to build a lot of unity — Black and white, men and women.

Marlene: I feel that Black women know more about how to struggle because they've had to fight hard from the time they first put their feet on the ground.

Bea: That's right. And that knowledge is passed down from one generation to the next. The struggle never stops.

O: What changes has your organizing activity made in your family life?

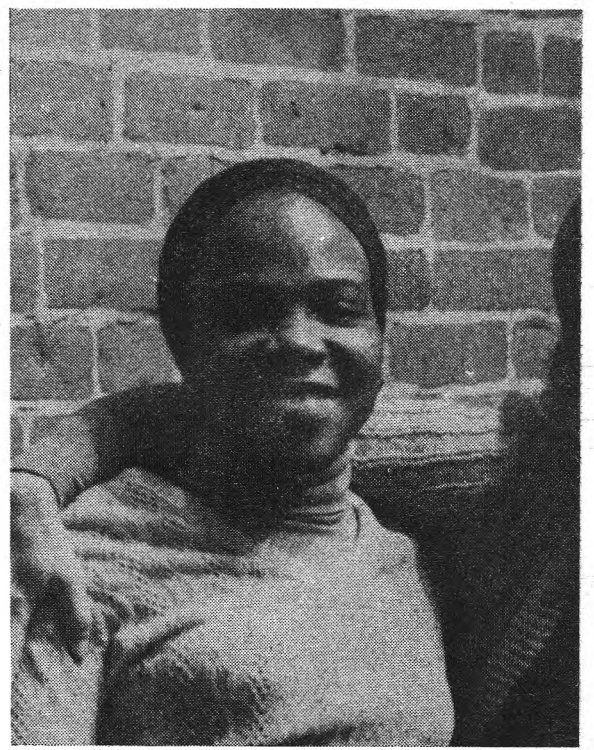
Marlene: The changes have been real positive. Before, I pretty much had all the responsibilities for the house and children. Now my husband takes a good part of the load. He and the children and I all share the housework. Now I feel I participate in the world and not just in the home.

Bea: It's been hard on me. My activity has isolated me from my friends and family. Because I'm single, I have a tendency to put more energy into organizing than into spending time with family and friends. You have to find a balance between your political and personal life.

Marlene: I know what you mean. This week, for instance, my kids hid my typewriter ribbon. I think they were trying to tell me something. But the time my family spends together is more focused now. It has to be. We get more out of the time we spend together even though the actual time is less.

O: Marlene, you have three daughters. Do you think they've been positively affected by the work you do?

Marlene: Definitely. Seeing me combine an independent life with family responsibilities is good education for them.



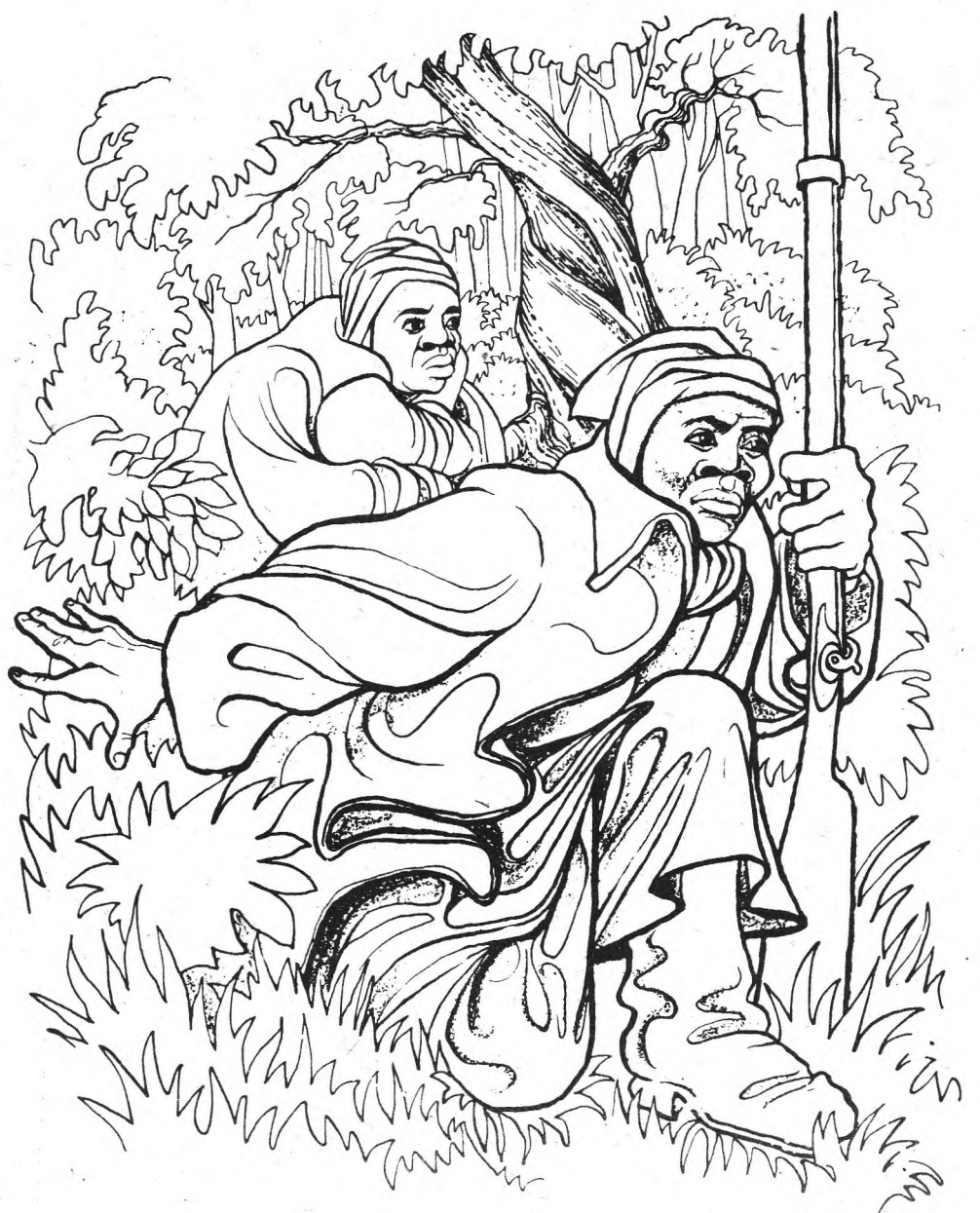
Bea Lloyd (left) is a member of the Amalgamated (ACTWU) Rank and File Committee. Marlene Bodner is a shop steward.

They're going to understand that marriage and children aren't the only options they have. They see me writing papers, giving speeches, being on TV, instead of just seeing me over the stove. They see me as a person that's part of the community.

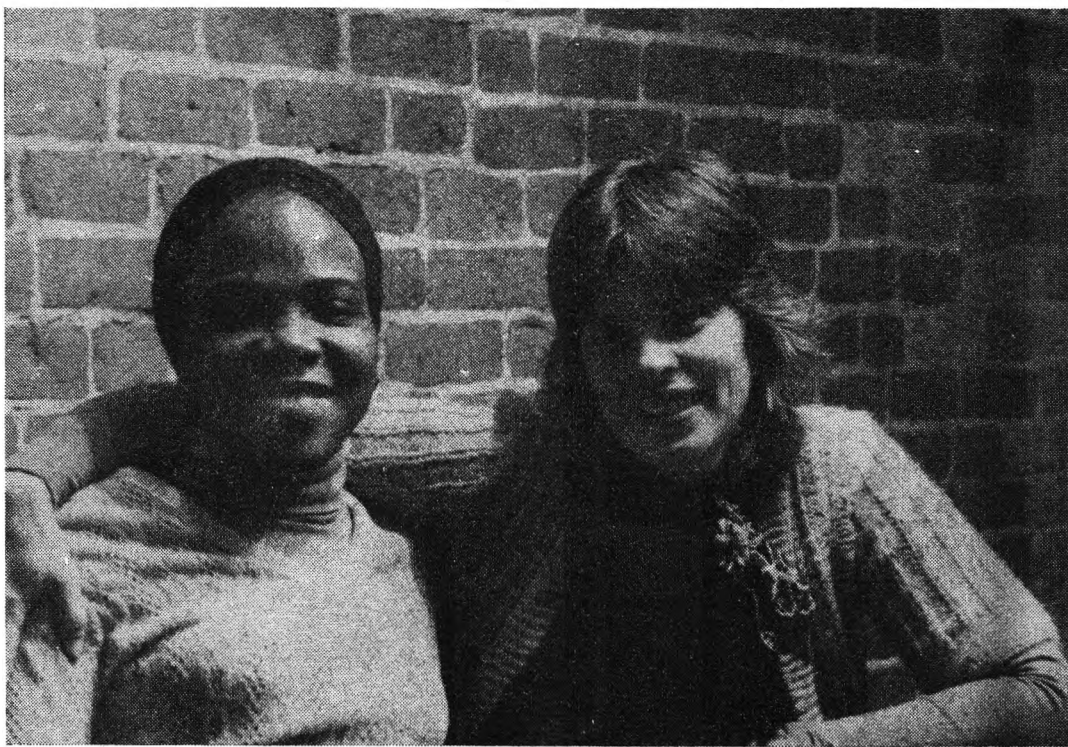
O: You'll hear a lot of people say that women just don't care about unionism and make lousy union members. What do you say to this?

Bea: When we were out on strike in 1974 many women were told by male union officials to stay away from the picket lines, that they weren't needed and that picketing is a man's job. These are the same men who then turn around and say: "See, the women weren't out on the picket line and don't give a damn about the union." In spite of these officials, the women carried the main burden of the picketing at many shops. Look at the Farah strike in El Paso — the men workers there will tell you the women fought just as hard as they did.

WORKERS' VOICES



An Sp Wome



organizer photo

Bea Lloyd (left) is a member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) Rank and File Committee. Marlene Bodner (right) helped to form the Bell Workers Rank and File Committee and is a shop steward.

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Marlene: Look at the great Flint sit-down strike in Auto — if it weren't for the women surrounding the plant, passing food in through the windows and hitting the cops over the head the strike wouldn't have been won.

Bea: Right, and the role women workers played in winning the eight hour day... you could go on and on. They've always underplayed women's role in labor history, just like they leave out the role of Black workers. The truth exposes all those stereotypes and myths that they use to divide us and keep us down.

O: What future do you see for the women you work with?

Bea: Struggle, struggle, struggle. Because if we ever stop struggling we'll never win equal rights.

Marlene: I agree with Bea. We've got lots of struggle ahead. And that struggle is going to produce a better world, not just for women but for everybody.

The following is excerpted from a speech given on International Women's Day of 1977 by Mark Klimo, a long time activist in the UAW and presently a committeeman in Local 813 at the Budd Company Hunting Park plant. Klimo speaks for a growing number of men in the trade unions who understand that the struggle for women's liberation is the struggle of all workers. The labor movement cannot go forward unless it takes up this struggle.

In the plant I work in women hold the lowest paying, unskilled jobs. Women are material handlers, jitney drivers, press operators and assembly welders. To my recollection the only skilled woman worker at Budd was a pipefitter, and she was not only harassed by her foreman and male co-workers, but given unusually difficult jobs to do by the company. They fired her, and she has won her case for reinstatement. However, the company has appealed that decision to a higher court.

Women have little job security. They are the last hired and the first laid off. Chances for upgrading their job classifications are extremely limited. And this is made doubly difficult because the majority of the hundred or so women hired in the past five years are Black women who face the added burden of racial discrimination. Two years ago, a Black woman production worker was literally hounded out of her job by a group of male workers

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WORKERS' VOICES

HARRIET TUBMAN: FREEDOM FIGHTER

As we celebrate IWD it's only natural that our thoughts turn to women leaders of the past. The distorted history we are taught minimizes, if it does not leave out all together, the contributions of women. Thus it was something of an exception when, a few months ago, a T.V. special was aired called *A Woman Named Moses — the Story of Harriet Tubman*. In spite of many weaknesses, the show did recognize Harriet Tubman's leadership in the struggle against slavery and the fight for women's rights.

Born into slavery around 1820 in Dorchester County, Maryland, Harriet became a conductor on the underground railroad. She made some 19 trips into the South and carried a cargo of over 3000 slaves to freedom. By these actions Harriet cost the slaveowners an estimated \$200,000 by relieving them of their human "property". She caused a state wide panic among the planters and got a hefty price on her head as a result.

At her first women's suffrage meeting with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the 1880's, Harriet pointed with pride to this experience: "I was the conductor of the Underground Railroad for 8 years and I can say what most conductors can't say — I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger." Her example and her organizing work in the abolitionist movement were major

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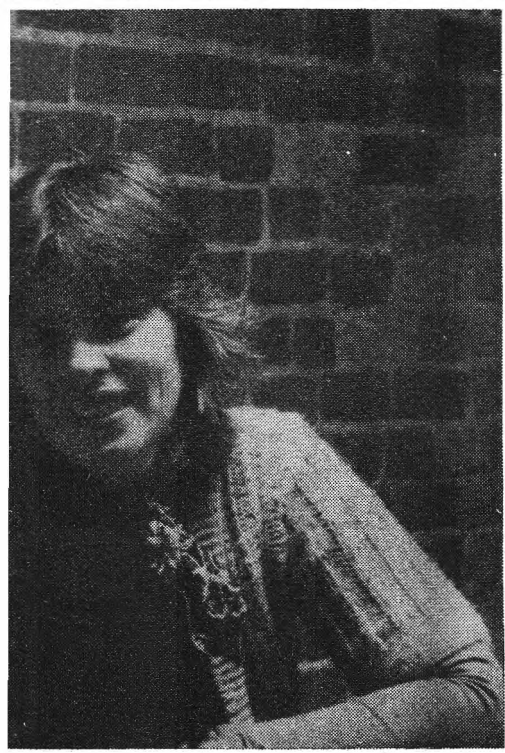
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After the war Harriet worked with those she had helped to escape to help them become self-sufficient. She also became involved in the struggle for women's suffrage. All of her work was accomplished in the face of the fierce racism of slavery and the often times equally brutal conditions of Reconstruction. She fought for years for a military pension with which to sustain herself. In her own words: "You wouldn't think that after I served the flag so faithfully I should come to want in its folds."

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An Autoworker Speaks About Women's Liberation



organizer photo
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and their foreman. The union did little or nothing to support her, and she became so upset she quit. We helped her to get unemployment compensation by testifying at her hearing, a small victory of sorts. Unfortunately, this sort of sexist harassment is not uncommon at the plant.

Corporations like the Budd Co. promote discrimination. They use women as a reserve army of labor. They pay women less and pocket the difference. They hire them in boom times and lay them off when things get slow. They pit men against women to divide the workers. They say to the men: "Look, there are plenty of women out on the street that would be more than happy to have your job, so you better not complain about what you got." They use this threat to depress wages and working conditions for all workers.

Furthermore, women are generally prevented from playing a full and equal role within the unions. In the auto industry, the attitude of the UAW leadership toward women is one of blatant paternalism. The "ladies" or the "girls", as women are coyly referred to, receive scant recognition and their grievances go unanswered.

The companies are going to fight to maintain the second class status of women workers because they profit from this situation. The labor bureaucracy that has a hold on our union fears any kind of struggle and is hardly likely to champion the cause of equality for women. Only a movement from below, from the rank and file workers, can make the unions move and begin to challenge the employers.

For this to happen men workers have to understand equality for women is not a threat to them. Nor is it something we just "support" as somebody else's struggle. We have to understand it's our struggle too. I think more and more men are coming to understand this. But a number of backward ideas, cultivated by the media and the companies and unfortunately by some union leaders as well, stand in the way of this understanding.

MYTHS THAT HOLD US BACK

We have to knock down these myths. Like the idea that women really don't need to work and just do it for "pin money". Over 40% of the workforce is female; and women, like men, in nine cases out of ten work for reasons of economic necessity. In the typical working class family both husband and wife must work to make ends meet. A large percentage of working women are the sole support of their families.

Who benefits from this "pin money" myth? The employers use it to justify paying women lower wages, for denying women workers adequate maternity leave, for refusing to provide childcare, and so forth. This doesn't just hurt women workers, but the whole family which depends on her income and needs these services.

Or let's take the idea that women cannot do "man's work". In the auto industry this prejudice is widespread. It's a myth pure and simple. In fact what has been called women's work — house-cleaning, shopping, cooking, doing the laundry and most importantly bearing and raising children — is and always has been hard and physically taxing.

True, there are a few jobs in industry which cannot be performed by women. These jobs, which require extra-

ordinary physical strength, should not be done by anyone, male or woman. After all automation does not have to mean speed-up. It could and should mean the elimination of back-breaking work.

When I first started as an assembly welder there were jobs that women had on the production lines that I had great difficulty in doing because they were bone-ass laboring jobs which I was not used to. But these women did them and had been doing them for years with great speed and dexterity. During World War II tens of thousands of women entered the workforce as heavy equipment operators, welders, machine operators and laborers. No one said they couldn't hack it then, yet these jobs some thirty odd years later are still seen as the special domain of men.

WOMEN AND THE UNIONS

Then there is the myth, put succinctly by a shop steward in my plant, that "women make lousy union members". This makes me especially mad because my wife spent many long hours helping to reorganize an AFSCME local here in Philadelphia, often in spite of the half-assed assistance of "the good union man" who was assigned by the union to help the organizing drive.

The whole history of the labor movement — from the struggle for the 8-hour day to the Flint Sit Down Strike — contradicts this idea. And if you look at where the action is today in the unions — the Farah strike, the organizing drives among hospital workers and dozens of other cases — women are continuing this history.

Of course it is true that if women are greeted with hostility or paternalism by male union officials, and if male co-workers view this treatment with indifference, then women are not likely to get involved in union affairs.

The same attitude carries over toward worker's wives. Just a few weeks ago my union president refused to allow wives to enter our meeting to discuss ratifying a new contract. He would not even allow the wives to enter the lobby and get in out of the cold. As long as wives are left "out in the cold" they are not going to be sympathetic and supportive of their husbands union activity.

Underlying or complementing so many of these ideas is the thinking that women are good for only one thing — that they are sexual playthings whose main purpose is to satisfy men. This can be seen in hundreds of ways in my plant — ogling every woman that passes by, remarks that women should be home making babies and spaghetti, sexist jokes and pornography, the double standard that women should be faithful while men can play around. . .

Men are encouraged to see themselves as high-powered sex machines, the John Wayne or John Shaft image, lady-killers, always on the make. If you don't measure up to this standard, then you are taught to see yourself as weak, henpecked or not a "real man". These stereotyped sexual roles get in the way of men and women seeing their common interests and building supportive and satisfying relationships.

Men have a special responsibility to take up the struggle against sexist ideas and the practices they aim at justifying. We cannot afford for the enormous real and potential contribution of women to the struggle to go unrealized.

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Gladys Baez: A Women of the Sandinista Front for the Liberation of Nicaragua

by Jenny Quinn

The story of Gladys Baez came to me in a round about way. She was never in Time magazine or Vogue. In fact, her name has probably never appeared in the US press. Like a lot of women's history and culture and like much of the history of people's struggles around the world, her story came to me by word of mouth.

I first heard of Gladys Baez last year, from Margaret Randall. (Interviews with Ms. Randall have appeared in past issues of the Organizer) Margaret Randall is a writer, born in the US. She was forced to seek exile in Cuba in 1968 because of her involvement in the student movement in Mexico. She returned to visit the US for the first time in seventeen years, and I was able to talk with her during her stay in Philadelphia.

Margaret told me about her book on Doris Tijerino, a Nicaraguan revolutionary, which will soon be printed in English. She said that the changes that Nicaraguan women have made in order to deal with the harsh realities of the struggle in their country have been an inspiration to Cuban women. The story of Gladys Baez, which Doris Tijerino told Margaret Randall, is a good example.

A comment that Margaret made at the end of our conversation reflects the spirit in which I want to tell the story of Gladys Baez. She said that our conversation had been much like others she had had with activist women all over the world. We can learn so much from each other's lives, despite the differences in culture and language. In this spirit I pass on the story.

I don't know whether Gladys Baez is alive or dead today. I don't know if she is in prison or free to fight. But I do know a little about her country, which sets the stage for her story and makes it more vivid and understandable to us.

Nicaragua suffered major military invasions in 1853, 1854, 1857, 1894, 1910, 1912-25, 1926-33. As a result of this military bullying, and maneuvers by US companies, the US has economic control over Nicaragua. Labor is cheap — the people are forced to work for almost nothing. Cotton, sugar, meat and coffee make up 60% of Nicaraguan exports.

The illiteracy rate in Nicaragua is 70%. In the countryside, it is even higher — 86%. The rate is higher yet among women. Out of every 1000 babies born, 102 die in infancy. Half the deaths each year are children under fourteen. Only 8% of the people have sewage service; 9% have indoor plumbing. The examples of the results of exploitation for the profit of US companies are many.

It is easy to see the poverty and misery of everyday life in Nicaragua. Today there is a people's war in response to these conditions. The war is led by the Sandinista Front for the Liberation of Nicaragua — Gladys Baez is a member of that organization. This is her story — which Doris told Margaret, and Margaret told me.

"In my life in the Organization and among women comrades, I had the chance to get to know Gladys Baez better. She was a valued comrade. She was my age. She comes from a small agricultural town too. She was the only daughter of a woman of the people, a woman who devoted her whole life to washing and ironing. Gladys married very young and had two children from that marriage. She worked to help support her family. At her job, she joined other workers — first in union work and then in the Organization. She was a comrade who never had the opportunity to study much, to go to school. She developed basically through her militancy and her reading, yet she was very able.

"Once she told me that she had to face some very difficult situations in her life. First, her husband loved to drink and he abandoned her with two little ones. She had to work, and to top it off, she plunged into union affairs and went to meetings and talked about socialism and the Cuban Revolution.

"Once, because of her activities, the priest in her town excommunicated her. The consequences of this were that in the stores they wouldn't even sell her any food, much less extend credit. She told me her family wouldn't even visit her or give her any help because she had been excommunicated. At one point she thought she was going to starve, because she couldn't buy any tortillas or corn meal or anything at all. No store would even sell her salt.

"Her union comrades said she should move out of town, but she refused. She refused to leave the town and said she'd survive, and that she was going to break the isolation imposed by the priest. With the help of some comrades, she obtained food and continued working in the union, kept on going to meetings, until, little by little — this over many years and with a lot of struggle and explaining to people — she reestablished her relationships and was able to make the people practically lift the 'moral disgrace' that was weigh-



ing her down. She has still remained firm after all these years. Her mother is sick now, practically paralyzed. For Gladys this situation is difficult, because she has to attend to her children.

"Gladys is the comrade responsible for the work done in the Patriotic Alliance of Nicaraguan women. When the Alliance was organized there were no materials for communications, for issuing bulletins, and it was amazing to see how Gladys got things from nowhere. She taught herself how to use a typewriter, learned to draw, even wrote revolutionary songs and poems.

"She is a woman with unimaginable resources. She never leaves a job unfinished for lack of means or because there's no one to write. She's really a comrade who can lift the spirits of any militant.

"It's incredible to see how she makes really extraordinary efforts and accomplishes jobs, almost without preparation or resources. She has never refused to do a job because she didn't have the ability or wasn't given enough to work with.

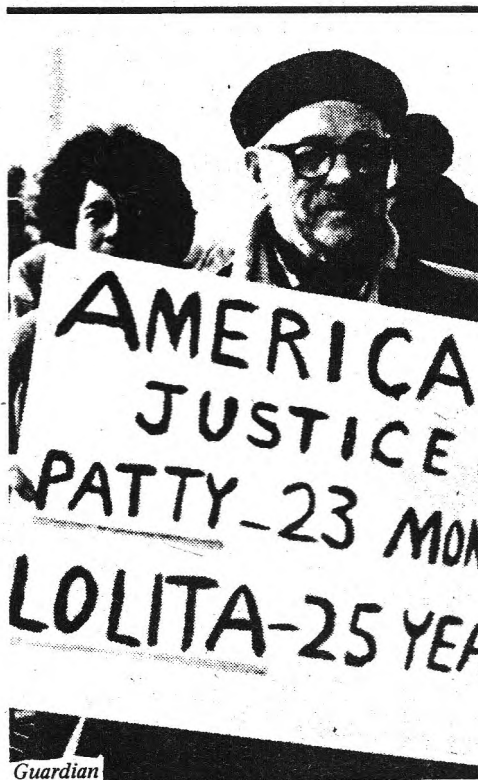
"Gladys is such an extraordinary person that she really makes you stop and think when some small difficulty keeps you from doing a job or makes you lose heart. I've never seen her sad. In spite of all her family problems, all she has suffered, she keeps her spirits up.

"When we were together in prison, she organized cultural sessions with the regular prisoners. And she conducted study circles without any materials. . .

"It was really admirable to see how she was constantly interested in the problems of others when she had so many of her own. Once her mother wrote her that her two children couldn't go to school because they had no shoes. Her answer was that they should be sent barefoot, and if they weren't welcome without shoes, they should stay home. Yet even when her mother was telling her about her own children's problems, she was concerned with the children of the other comrades, and it was then that she organized a birthday party to celebrate the birthday of my son. . ."

Gladys Baez and her story — and how her story made its way to the pages of the Organizer — is what International Women's Day is all about. All of the women involved in bringing this story to the reader are communists. We are all mothers. We all work to raise our families. We all gain strength from the lives of other women who are fighting for a more rational and just society.

We will continue to organize the struggle and the birthday parties — two parts of our contribution to the next generation.



Money Talks for Patty Hearst

Patty Hearst is free — a boon for political prisoners — a sign of humanity from the White House? Hardly. Money talks, even through a scandal like the SLA days of Patty Hearst. The daughter of William Randolph Hearst, who is one of the richest men in California, could not have been expected to serve her full term. She is, at last report, off to Puerto Rico for her honeymoon. This is a terrible irony for the Puerto Rican Nationalist prisoners, who have been denied the right to return to their country. Lolita Lebron and the three other prisoners have sat in US jails for close to 30 years.

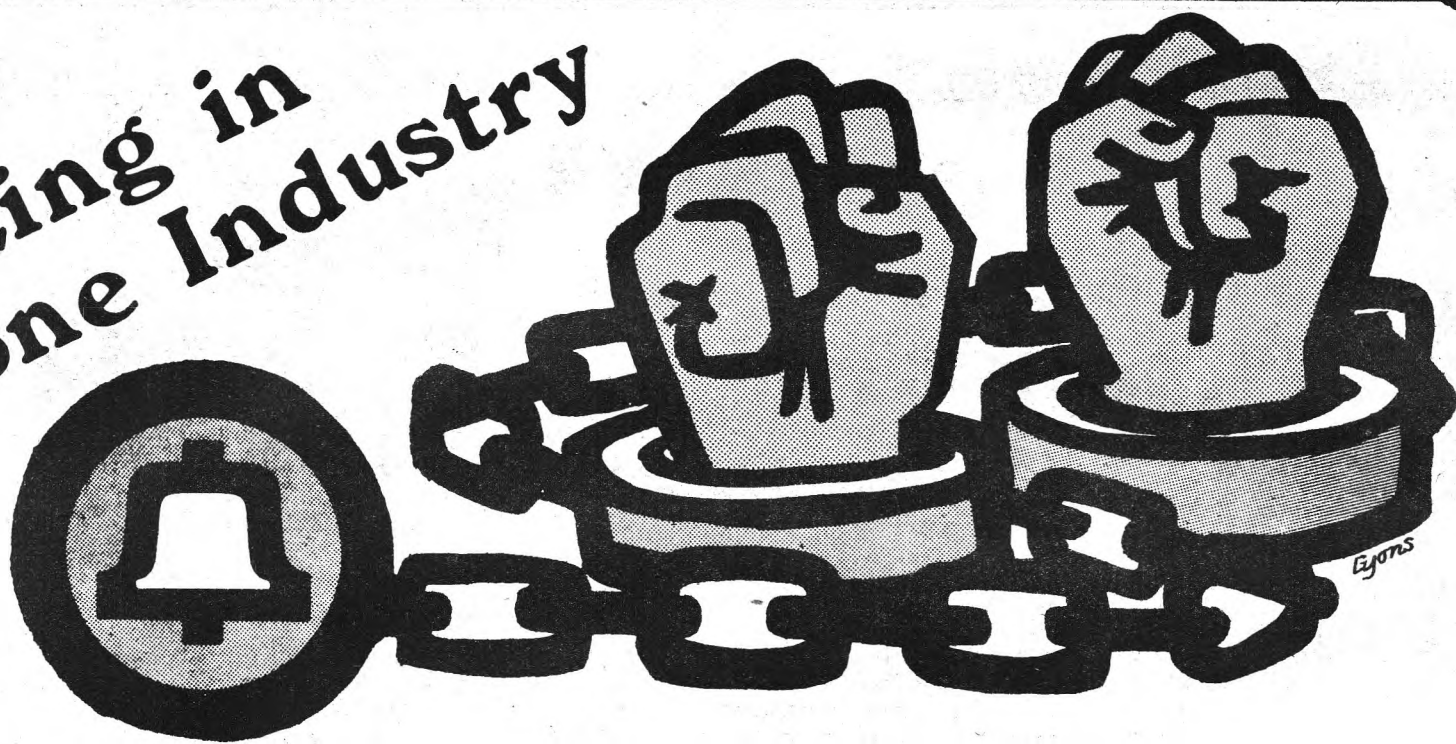
Carter recently denied them a commutation of their sentences, because his cohort Romero Barcelo, colonial governor of Puerto Rico, said that they were

dangerous. Dangerous to folks like himself, who stand opposed to the liberty of Puerto Ricans who express a determination to free Puerto Rico from the colonial relation to the US.

Another situation which hangs in the balance is the case of Ben Chavis. The only member of the Wilmington 10 not on parole, he has served as their spokesperson through years of struggle. If Patty Hearst can be freed after bank robbery and terrorism, why not a minister and community activist whose only crime is fighting racism and a system of rotten education for Blacks.

Send Carter a letter, a telegram, or give him a call, if you think his recent hypocrisy is as blatant as we do.

Part 2 Union Organizing in the Phone Industry



March 8, 1946 was an historic day for telephone workers. For the first time, AT&T negotiated and agreed to a national contract, signing an agreement with the National Federation of Telephone Workers (NFTW).

Previously the company had refused to bargain nationally. Instead the Bell system had negotiated contracts only on a local basis. As a result the workers had been in a weak bargaining position against the huge phone monopoly. Furthermore, the local agreements differed widely as to wages and working conditions, furthering division and fragmentation among the workers.

The NFTW had arisen in 1938 as a response to this situation. It was not a real national union but a loose federation of independent local unions, most of which were originally company unions.

This weakness was evident in the 1946 negotiations when only 17 of the 51 local unions affiliated with the NFTW were willing to strike if an agreement was not reached. The remaining unions did, however, announce they would honor picket lines. This rather feeble display of unity on the part of the phone unions was sufficient, in 1946, to bring AT&T to concede a national agreement.

FIRST NATIONAL STRIKE

The company was determined not to be caught off guard again. They prepared to take away in 1947 what they had been forced to give up in 1946. The result was the first national phone workers strike. On April 7, 1947, 350,000 telephone workers hit the bricks. The strike affected Bell System workers in all but nine states. Besides the NFTW unions, seven unaffiliated groups, six in New York, and one in Pennsylvania, also walked out.

Even though the NFTW had joined neither the AFL or CIO, unions from both organizations generously supported the strike. The United Mine Workers lent the NFTW \$100,000. Outright contributions ranged from \$20,000 given by the International Ladies Garment Workers of the AFL to \$25 from the small CIO affiliate, the United Waste Paper Workers.

In spite of much sacrifice on the part of telephone workers, many of whom struck for close to a month, the strike was a failure. The AT&T succeeded in setting aside the framework of national collective bargaining that had been won the year before. The company pressured the local unions successfully to sign local contracts. Wage settlements varied greatly from local to local, ranging between two and five dollars more per week. None of the major demands of the NFTW were met.

The NFTW leadership itself pinpointed the main reason for the strike's failure:

"We were trying to make a federation of unions do the kind of job which can only be done by one union in the telephone industry. The later stages of the strike demonstrated that the separate organizations composing the National Federation would act separately and individually — based on their own autonomy — when the going got rough."

FORMATION OF THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

The outcome of the 1947 strike brought home to the members of the NFTW, rank and file and leadership alike, the urgent need for a truly national telephone union. Just a few days after the strike ended in defeat, the NFTW became the Communications Workers of America (CWA), doing away with the emphasis on local autonomy which had plagued the organization from the beginning.

At the same time the CIO put a rival organization in the field, the Telephone Workers Organizing Committee (TWOC). The TWOC charged that the CWA, which was unaffiliated with either the AFL or CIO, was isolated from the mainstream of the labor movement, and that even with its new structure, the CWA was a patchwork of divisions and locals with no coordinated strength. The CWA, in turn, accused the TWOC of dividing telephone workers at a time when unity was desperately needed and for the first time was within the grasp of telephone workers.

Meanwhile, both the AFL and CIO were courting the CWA, seeking its affiliation. While the old NFTW had shied away from joining either national federation, the support the phone workers had gotten during the strike of the previous year did much to break down this aloofness.

The AFL already had a union in the industry — the IBEW. The AFL leadership held that the CWA could join only through the IBEW, a craft union with a handful of locals of phone workers. The CIO, on the other hand, offered the CWA full fledged status as an international union and promised the merger of the TWOC with the CWA.

The CIO's commitment to industrial unionism and its more aggressive approach to organizing the unorganized also made it more attractive than the craft-minded AFL with its reputation for chairwarming. Thus at its 1949 convention in Chicago, the CWA voted to join the CIO. Thus in the space of three years, unionism had come of age in the Telephone industry — a national contract, a national strike and finally a national union.

PHONE WORKERS TODAY

The gains of those years hardly put an end to the struggle between the phone workers and their monopolist employers. The Bell System, today no less than before, continues to try to keep phone workers weak and divided.

Phone workers today face critical problems. Wages are low relative to many other industries. Poor working conditions and harassment are big problems, and the current move toward much greater automation has already produced many layoffs and threatens countless more.

In the face of these attacks phone workers still lack the kind of fighting, united organization to successfully defend themselves. Although the majority of telephone workers today are members of the CWA, there are still a number of IBEW locals and independent unions in the Bell System. This fragmentation remains an obstacle to united action.

Departmental and craft divisions remain sources of weakness.

This summer, when CWA workers staged a walkout over the issue of forced overtime, the leadership of the other Bell unions were not even informed of the action, let alone asked to join and support it.

Even within the CWA there was not unity. Only some locals walked out and then found to their dismay that CWA International President Glen Watts would not support them. This kind of experience is typical of what is wrong with unionism in the phone industry today.

The Bell System has always sought to divide its workers along racial and sexual lines and this practice continues today in spite of public relations eyewash about Bell being an equal opportunity employer. Historically Bell refused to hire Blacks except for low paying maintenance or custodial jobs. In 1950, Black workers made up only 1.3% of the AT&T workforce. The Civil Rights movement forced the opening up of more jobs in the 1960's.

As a result of civil rights legislation, in 1972 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission forced the Bell System to adopt an affirmative action program to make up for past discrimination against minorities and women. Yet seven years later, the major concentrations of Black and women employees are in the lowest paid departments in the company.

WORKERS FIGHT BACK

Today there is a growing movement by rank and file phone workers and embracing many local leaders to throw off the last remnants of Bell's company unionism. In Philadelphia a Rank and File Committee has grown up within the IBEW local of telephone operators. In Atlanta, CWA workers publish a rank and file newsletter. In Chicago a local CWA official has spoken out aggressively against Bell's divide and conquer, racist policies.

These are some of the seeds of the new union spirit growing among Bell workers. The future of unionism in the phone industry rests with this movement.

SOLIDARITY WITH SOUTHERN AFRICA

The United People's Campaign Against Apartheid and Racism is sponsoring a series of workshops as part of the week of activity called for by the Northeast Conference for the Liberation of Southern Africa. Childcare will be provided; admission is \$1.00; for more information call UPCAAR at 271-7179.

Monday, April 2, 1979: *The US and Southern Africa*
The role that US corporations, financial institutions and foreign policy plays in Southern Africa.

Calvary Methodist Church, 48th and Baltimore, 7:30 pm

Tuesday, April 3, 1979: *Racism and Apartheid*
The relationship between the liberation struggle in Southern Africa and the Black Liberation Movement in the US.

Speaker: Rosemary Mealy
First United Methodist Church of Germantown
Germantown Ave. and High St., 7:30 pm

Wednesday, April 4, 1979: *The Support Movement in the US*
How do US workers, students, and community activists support the struggle in Southern Africa?

Speakers: Michael Simmons and Kathy Emminizer
United Electrical Workers (UE) Union Hall
5700 N. Broad (Chew St. entrance), 7:30 pm

Thursday, April 5, 1979: *Zimbabwe*
Speaker: Tafataona Mahoso
AFSC/Rufus Jones Room, 1501 Cherry St., 7:30 pm

Friday, April 6, 1979: *Demonstration against US Banks investment in South Africa*
Provident Bank, Broad and Chestnut Sts., 4 pm

Reminder: UPCAAR meeting Thursday, March 15.

In commemoration of the massacre at Sharpeville, South Africa on March 21, 1960, UPCAAR will show the documentary film *South Africa: The Rising Tide*.

Roosevelt's New Deal...

Gift from Above, or Push from Below?

by Duane Calhoun

Most Americans believe that Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the man who pulled our country out of the Depression. In school, we're taught that FDR gave the unemployed jobs and relief checks, gave the elderly Social Security pensions, and gave workers the right to form unions. This belief in Roosevelt and the New Deal is one of the reasons why many workers still believe that genuine change can be achieved through the Democratic Party. But this version of events in the 1930's is a myth.

Roosevelt and the Democrats gave the American people very little. Working people fought for the New Deal reforms, at the cost of many dead from police and National Guard bullets. Roosevelt's administration gave as little to this grassroots revolt as they felt they could get away with.

Raymond Moley, one of Roosevelt's "Brain Trust" advisors, said: "Remember, Roosevelt at the start was a very conservative President. People didn't realize that. In the first place, he was a very prudent governor of New York. He balanced his budget. He was not a spender. We resisted all the efforts of radicals... to spend a lot of money in public works. Roosevelt said: 'there aren't more than a billion dollars of public works that are worth doing.' They wanted five billion dollars. So he compromised on three billion... a split between what he said and what they wanted."

THE FIGHT FOR JOBS

When FDR took office in 1933, there were over 12 million unemployed — one in every four workers. In many places the crisis was worse yet — only one in ten garment workers in New York City had a job. The average yearly earnings of those who had jobs was only \$1086 — down from \$1543 in 1929. Nearly 70% of all families in Philadelphia were over a month behind on their rent; the story was about the same everywhere.

Back then, there was no such thing as welfare or unemployment compensation. The poor could beg for money from local private charities, and they would get whatever the administrator decided to give, if they got anything at all. The other choice was to go to the public workhouse, which was very much like prison. In 14 states "paupers" were denied the right to vote.

But working people didn't just quietly starve while waiting for the 1932 elections and Roosevelt. From the beginning of the Depression, organized looting of food by hungry workers broke out in every major city.

The Communist Party called for a demonstration of the jobless on March 6, 1930, and one million unemployed workers turned out in New York, Washington, Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle and dozens of smaller cities. The marchers carried banners reading "Work or Wages" and "Fight-Don't Starve".

When jobless workers were evicted from their homes for falling behind in their rent or mortgages, organized groups of unemployed would move them back in again, furniture and all.

Local officials were forced to make concessions. Local relief spending went up by \$170 million from 1929 to 1932. Still, less than \$27 per year was being spent for each of the 12 million unemployed, and many jobless workers got no benefits at all.

In New York City in 1932, the average relief check was \$2.39 per week, and only 25% of the unemployed got that. It was in the middle of the growing demands of the unemployed for work or wages that FDR took office in 1933.

At first, FDR responded by starting direct Federal payments for relief. The average monthly check went from \$15 per family in 1933 to nearly \$30 in 1935. He also started the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935, promising to create a job for every able-bodied worker.

By 1936, WPA employed 2½ million workers. These concessions took much of the steam out of the militant unemployed organizations. By 1938 many unemployed leaders were working for the WPA, and the anger of the average jobless worker was blunted by a feeling that FDR was really trying to help them.

But with the heat off, jobless benefits were cut. After WPA began, direct Federal relief payments were stopped, supposedly to be picked up by the states. Instead, many states cut payments or abolished relief altogether. New Jersey issued begging licenses instead of money to its jobless citizens. Meanwhile, the WPA never came near providing a job for every able-bodied worker.

In 1936, the peak year for WPA, there were 10 million still unemployed. In 1938, \$768 million was cut from the Federal relief and job programs with over 11 million still out of work. WPA funds were cut again in 1939. It took World War II to "solve" the problem of unemployment.

THE FIGHT FOR THE UNIONS

FDR's first big "reform" in Federal labor policy was the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). This law guaranteed workers the right to organize unions without coercion by employers, and set minimum wages and maximum hours. It also gave industry the right to regulate

production and fix prices. The "guarantee" of workers' rights was so vague, and the benefits to industry so obvious, that even the Chamber of Commerce came out in favor of NIRA.

But workers believed in that guarantee, and responded with a hurricane of union organizing. The United Mineworkers increased its membership from 60,000 in 1933 to 529,000 in 1934. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers went from 7000 members in 1932 to 132,000 in 1934. Three times as many workers went out on strike after NIRA was passed in 1933 than in 1932.

The corporations fought back. They set up company unions and intimidated their workers into joining. Ninety percent of the half-million steelworkers were signed up in these "employee representation plans". GM announced that they would only deal with employees through such a plan, and would never recognize a union. They fired union supporters right and left. They spent \$80 million on labor spies in 1936 alone. And Roosevelt, "labor's champion", did little or nothing about it.

The NIRA did lead to a slight increase in wages and a decrease in hours. But the Code Authorities that set wage and hour standards in each industry were packed with corporate executives. Only 23 of the 51 Code Authorities had any voting labor representatives at all.

Many companies violated the law, but by March of 1935 none of the violations cited by the National Labor Board had been stopped or punished by the courts. Bethlehem Steel defied the law outright by publicly refusing to obey an NLR order. They were never prosecuted. Then, in May 1935, the Supreme Court declared NIRA unconstitutional.

The result of this corporate offensive (and of FDR's hands off attitude) was the decline of union membership as quickly as it had risen. In 1935, the number of

union members reached a new low point — less than one in ten workers. Workers didn't stop fighting back, however; the number of strikes grew every year from 1933 through 1935.

Meanwhile, Senator Robert Wagner was pushing his National Labor Relations Act in Congress. When he first proposed it in 1934, FDR opposed it, and the bill was defeated. Wagner tried again in 1935.

During the hearings, supporters of the bill gave some telling reasons why Congress should pass it. Legal protection of workers' right to organize was one. Another was that by increasing workers' purchasing power through union organization, more goods could be sold at a profit.

Wagner also argued that if the bill were not passed, the communists (already the key leaders in most of the union drives) would win over millions of workers to the idea of revolution in America. The only members of FDR's cabinet to testify did not support or oppose the bill, and Roosevelt himself was silent on the subject. He didn't come out in favor until he signed the bill (passed by Congress) into law on July 5, 1935.

The Wagner Act was an important victory for labor, but it did not give workers real rights unless they were ready to fight for them. Employers continued to fire pro-union workers and continued to use scabs and spies. Local and state governments still used police and National Guardsmen against strikes. For the most part, Roosevelt and his administration did not try to stop them. Unions were won in the major industries by winning strikes, often paid for in blood.

The first major victories were in 1934, when barely organized workers struck and won — auto parts in Toledo, truck drivers in Minneapolis, and longshoremen in San Francisco. These three

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Breadline 1937. Jobless workers got little, if any, relief from the federal or state governments. Various programs were implemented by the Roosevelt administration, but they were unable to solve the unemployment problem. Only all-out war was able to end the Depression.



Bella Abzug (with hat) and delegates to the National Women's Conference march through the streets of Houston. It was a mandate from this conference in 1977 that resulted in the establishing of the National Advisory Committee for Women.

Behind the Firing of Bella Abzug

by Emma Markey

Why did President Carter set up the National Advisory Committee for Women? Why was Bella Abzug fired from her position as cochair of the committee?

Jimmy Carter did not establish the National Advisory Committee for Women because of a commitment to the liberation of women. The committee was a concession to the mass movement against women's oppression. Specifically,

the advisory committee was set up as a result of the National Women's Conference that was held in Houston in November of 1977.

Such presidential "advisory" committees are traditionally powerless and have historically served as mere window dressing. That this National Advisory Committee for Women would actually dare to do what its title outlines — advise the President on affairs that concern and influence the lives of women in this country — was clearly beyond the scope intended by President Carter and his cronies.

Let's look at the facts. Carter was to meet with the committee members for the first time on January 12. A previously scheduled November meeting was cancelled by the 40-member committee because Carter had allowed only 15 minutes to meet with them. Before the January meeting, the committee issued a press release — customary practice. It is the content of the press release that led to Abzug's firing.

The press release criticized the Carter administration's domestic policies. It opposed Carter's anti-inflation program, the proposed cuts in social services, and the increases in military spending. It condemned Carter's support for withholding Medicaid funds for abortions and opposed welfare cutbacks. The committee understood that all of these programs and policies would have a negative affect on the lives of women in this country.

COMMITTEE DISAPPOINTS SMILIN JIMMY

Carter expected the committee to limit itself to the narrowest "women's issues." Instead the committee members quite correctly, made some connections between economic conditions, defense spending and the status of women. In so doing they stepped on Jimmy's sensitive toes. Carter expected the committee to pat him on the back for the token gestures he has made to the women's movement. Instead the committee made the unforgivable mistake of biting the hand that feeds you, rightly criticizing the reactionary policies of the Carter administration.

The impression has skillfully been created that Bella was canned because of her "abrasive" personality, because she is "pushy", "uncooperative" or "hard to get along with." This glosses over the fact that over half the committee agreed with her stand and resigned to protest her firing. Apparently all these women suffer from "pushiness." This whole justification is just another version of the idea that the oppressed should know their "place." They should be polite and grateful for whatever crumbs are thrown their way. The women on Carter's committee were simply getting "uppity."

Men who have "embarrassed" the administration are privately slapped on the hand and then make a public apology and continue their job. Women are treated differently — a simple, clear reflection of sexism. As Abzug stated: "When men in an administration are fired they usually have committed some crime. When women are fired, it's usually because they have spoken out."

Roosevelt's New Deal . . .

(continued from previous page)

strikes, all led by socialist or communist workers, riveted the attention of the American people and were a big boost to workers' morale.

The fight for unions was decisively won by the wave of strikes in 1936 and 1937. The most important of these was the Flint sit-down strike against General Motors that began December 30th, 1936. Starting in the Flint, Michigan Fisher Body plant, the strike spread overnight to 112,000 GM workers, from Kansas City to Detroit to Toledo. Flint was the center of GM's empire, and GM was the biggest corporation in the US. Once the open shop was broken at GM, a wave of unionism swept through the rest of industry.

Before the sit-downers victoriously marched out of the plants on February 3, 1937, they and thousands of other union members picketing outside fought a hand-to-hand battle with the GM guards and Flint police. When the courts ordered the plants cleared, Democratic Governor Murphy sent the National Guard. The Guard set up machine guns and howitzers, pointing at the key plant. The strikers welded the doors shut, and made piles of bolts and iron bars near the windows.

Ten thousand workers, many from other union and as far away as Ohio, marched outside carrying American flags and two-by-fours. The Women's Emergency Brigades, carrying pipes and baseball bats, stood in front. The Governor and the Guard backed down, and Roosevelt asked GM management to meet with the United Auto Workers Union.

The Union won, getting a six-month contract with only one clause — recognition of the UAW as the sole bargaining representative of the workers. That victory electrified workers everywhere, and by the end of the year the new industrial unions alone claimed over three million members. There were 170 sit-down strikes in progress in March 1937 alone, involving 170,000 workers.

Many more examples of Roosevelt's real role could be cited. When a national steel strike was called in May, 1937, 16 workers were killed and 307 injured

by scabs, company guards, police, and National Guardsmen. When the steel workers appealed to Roosevelt to stop the slaughter, he replied, "A plague on both your houses."

When workers at North American Aviation in Los Angeles struck, Roosevelt sent in troops to take over the plant and to force the workers back to work under the gun, breaking the strike. The point is that while FDR and the Democrat-controlled government did make some important concessions to labor, it was the revolt of the people from below that forced these concessions.

THE END OF THE DEPRESSION AND THE WAR

Another persistent myth is that FDR and the New Deal brought America out of the Depression, and got the economy rolling again. The New Deal did have some effect. Unemployment dropped from 12 million workers in 1933 to eight million in 1937. But the New Deal did not come near ending the crisis.

In August, 1937, the floor dropped out again. Within three months the production of manufactured goods dropped by more than 25%. The number of jobless workers shot up again to over 11 million in 1938.

In 1940, over ten million were still unemployed (one out of every six workers), even though war production had already started to gear up. War spending was increased four times over in 1941, yet four million remained unemployed. It took all-out war to provide jobs (including duty in the armed forces) for all the unemployed.

Roosevelt staff man Joe Marcus admitted this when he said, "Just think, in 1939, we were back to the industrial production of 1929. And you had a ten-year increase in population. If it weren't for the war orders from France and England, there's a question if we would ever have hit that point. The war did end the Depression."

The war years were more of the same, but hidden behind appeals to patriotism. Roosevelt's wartime "equality of sacrifice" slogan was so much hot air. Workers' real take-home pay did go up some, but mostly because workers were

putting in lots of overtime. Meanwhile, prices and profits went through the ceiling. The number of unemployed climbed back to three million right after V-J Day. Actually, the real number was closer to six million if the women workers forced out of industry are counted.

If FDR and the New Deal really served the interests of the capitalist class and not the workers, why then was Roosevelt the object of so much scorn and hatred from the rich? It is true that to many, if not most, of the members of the capitalist class, FDR was "that man in the White House".

The newspapers, taking their cue from Big Business, regularly denounced the New Deal as "socialistic" and dangerous to the morality and institutions of the free enterprise system.

But it does not follow from this that FDR was, in fact, a champion of the working class and an enemy of the monied interests. Roosevelt and that section of the capitalist class which support-

ed him were simply more farseeing representatives of Capital's interests.

They understood that the government had to play a more active and far-reaching role in the economy if the capitalist system was to survive. They grasped that a combination of concessions and populist rhetoric had to served up to the workers to undercut the growth of genuinely radical and revolutionary currents among the masses of working people.

Roosevelt's greatest service to the capitalist class, a service not fully appreciated at that time, was to create the modern Democratic Party as a political institution that could draw in and contain the dissident movements generated by the Depression.

Roosevelt's advisor, Raymond Moley, referring to his former boss, said, "My interest, as was his, was restoring confidence in the American people, confidence in their banks, in their industrial system and in their government." That's what the New Deal was all about.

Organizing Committee for an Ideological Center (OC-IC) Bulletin # 1

NOW AVAILABLE...

OC Bulletin No. 1 — The debate on Principle 18

Should Recognition of US imperialism as the Main Enemy of the World's Peoples be a line of demarcation with 'Left' Opportunism?

The first edition of the discussion bulletin of the Organizing Committee for an Ideological Center...contains 13 theses on why it is essential to demarcate with 'left' internationalism as adopted by the Steering Committee of the OC, an article on why the OC should reject principle 18 by 4 member organizations and an article in defense of principle 18 by the Steering Committee. An in depth discussion of international line and its implications for party building and the effort to build a tendency in opposition to left opportunism.

OC Bulletin No. 1 is available for \$1.00 from: SUB, Box 7275
Baltimore, Md. 21218

Write for information on bulk orders.

FOOD FAIR FOLDS

by Paul Cummings

When a big corporation goes bankrupt, who really loses their shirts?

Philadelphia's working class lost 4400 jobs in January as Food Fair, a major marketing corporation, permanently closed 93 local Pantry Pride and Penn Fruit supermarkets. The closings and massive layoffs were ordered by Food Fair creditors, led by First Pennsylvania Bank, in order to collect the debt owed to them by the corporation. The principal owners of Food Fair, the millionaire Friedland family, by contrast came out of it in minks and diamonds; they have actually profited off of the Penn Fruit-Pantry Pride collapse in recent years.

Food Fair revealed its bankruptcy several months ago. A federal judge awarded its creditors the power to sell about one half of Food Fair's holdings so that they could get their money back. Last October this led to the sale of Food Fair's New York and Connecticut divisions known as Hills grocery chain. On Jan. 26, the judge ordered 128 more stores, mainly in Philadelphia, to be closed and sold. The J.M. Fields company, also owned by Food Fair, is next on the auction block.

Across the East Coast 6000 ex-Food Fair employees and hundreds of thousands of consumers are paying a heavy price for this sort of ruling class justice. While legally unchallengeable, the court-ordered closing have put workers out on the streets with no way to pay their mortgages and heating bills, or feed their families. Also, many Philadelphia neighborhoods have been left with no supermarket. Hardest hit are poor and elderly people without cars who must now take long bus rides to get their groceries.

Both Penn Fruit and Pantry Pride employees are fired up over what is being done to them. About 150 union members set up a picket line in front of First Pennsylvania January 25 and demanded that the bank continue its loan to Food Fair to allow the stores

to stay open. First Pennsylvania has made major loans to South Africa to support apartheid, and union members joined in the call to bring that money back to Philadelphia.

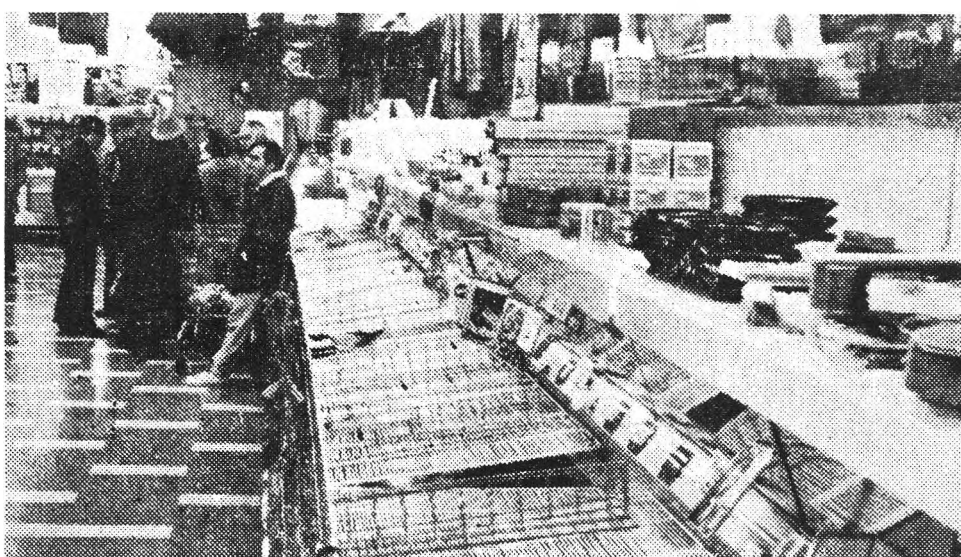
Union members are enraged at the fact that Grant Gentry, the new president of Food Fair, was given a cool two million dollar contract to be the hatchet man for the banks. A close look at Gentry's strategy shows that he is following the beaten path of other major Philadelphia firms by moving the company's focus south, where it can take advantage of lower wages in the "right to work" states. Food Fair will continue to operate its Baltimore-DC-Virginia divisions and will keep most of its Florida stores open.

WHY FOOD FAIR WENT UNDER

The bankruptcy is apparently the result of several causes. One is a sharpening of competition among capitalists. Food Fair's biggest rival, Acme, the largest supermarket chain in the area, has for months been lowering prices. Now that Food Fair is gone, it is expected to raise them again and to buy up some of the Food Fair stores.

Another cause is mis-management. Food Fair's overexpansion, and particularly the purchase of the J.M. Fields company, caused it to run out of cash and get behind on its payments to its creditors.

Mismanagement has also meant rampant stealing at the top. The Friedland family, founders and controlling stockholders of Food Fair, and the family's friends seemed to have found the silver lining in this dark cloud. Reports in Forbes magazine reveal how the Friedlands have milked the Food Fair corporation out of huge sums of money, through arranging highly profitable deals with the food brokerage companies also owned by the Friedlands. These brokerage companies are the "middle-men" that go between the big food-producing companies like Campbells or Kellogs and the retail outlets. Among the list of legal thieves are:



Empty shelves and a few customers during the going-out-of-business sale. Food Fair - the fifth largest supermarket chain in the US, closed 93 Pantry Pride and Penn Fruit stores in the Phila. area. 4400 workers lose their jobs, and thousands of consumers are inconvenienced.

Richman Associates, a Philadelphia food brokerage house, owned by Harold Friedland,

Filigree Foods Inc., a N.J. wholesaler, 60% owned by the Friedland family.

Vendors Distributer Inc., a Jersey City distributor of specialty food, owned by Jay Lerner, brother of Food Fair's ex-president Marvin Lerner,

Service Corporation, a Miami distributor, owned by Bill Cohen, Harold Friedland's best friend.

A recently filed suit by Food Fair stockholders claims that the Friedland family has "reaped unfair profits and Food Fair has been damaged in substantial amounts." Ex Food Fair executives admitted that they often had to sign deals with the above mentioned suppliers at unreasonable rates for merchandise or stand the risk of being fired. The Friedland family, which controls Food Fair through only 15% of the total stock, has pocketed more than enough money through these deals to make up for the recent dip in the value of its Food Fair holdings.

UNION RESPONSE

Wendell Young, president of the local Retail Clerks Union which represents Food Fair employees, blasted the sacrificing of 6000 jobs to save Food Fair as "the essence of American business." However he declined to organize any real

resistance to the closings, discouraging mass picketing against First Pennsylvania and the Friedlands. Militancy on the part of the laid-off employees might scare potential store-buyers away, he maintained.

Young did pledge at a mass union meeting that any store which was re-opened without a union contract would face mass picket lines. The union membership roared its approval. But even this amounted to settling for crumbs, since less than half of the 93 closed supermarkets are expected to be re-opened; therefore half the employees would still be jobless.

Retail Clerk Union members who work for other big grocery chains are carefully watching the situation. Any reduction in contract terms granted to an outside company which buys the 40 best stores will set an important precedent for big losses in the next set of negotiations.

Ironically, next to the headlines which announced the massive layoffs in the food industry were headlines proclaiming the gain of thousands of jobs in the armaments industry, due to Philadelphia winning a major naval contract to overhaul the aircraft carrier Saratoga. Under capitalism there is a never ending struggle between guns and butter (or aircraft carriers and food-stores). As the economy sinks towards a new recession, Philadelphians are being told to bite the bullet.

The Life and Times of Cecil Moore

by Jim Griffin

When Cecil Moore became President of the Philadelphia Branch of the NAACP in 1963, the city's white ruling class reacted with alarm. To them, Moore was a dangerous radical who by demanding

equality for Black people was trying to move "too fast." The city's Black establishment was none too happy with Moore either.

Within a year after he took office the "respectable and responsible" Black

"leaders" were condemning Moore for employing "bombast, silly threats and other ineffective antics which are more consistent with the program of the Black Muslims than with the approach and methods of the NAACP."

It is a measure of Cecil Moore's success that when he died last month at the age of 63 both his present and past enemies felt compelled to pay their respects. An object of scorn and hostility for most of his political life, in death Cecil Moore became respectable.

George Schwartz, having only days before ejected hundreds of Black people from City Council for demanding more funds for housing, delivered a eulogy praising Moore for his contributions. Al Gaudiosi, the mayoral candidate who made a political career by advising Frank Rizzo, made sure he showed up at the wake. The management of the Trailways Bus Company, which had refused to hire Blacks as drivers until Cecil Moore organized massive protests in 1965, sent a big bouquet of flowers.

But most of the 5,000 people who came to honor Moore were just ordinary Black people - students and their parents from the now integrated Girard College, hundreds of former clients whom Moore represented in court whether they could pay or not, and thousands who marched on the picket lines over the years.

FROM THE COURTS TO THE STREETS

Cecil Moore was born and raised in the coal country of West Virginia where

his father was a doctor. After going to teachers' college and working a series of odd jobs, Moore joined the Marines during World War II. Like many Black GI's, Moore drew a lesson from his wartime experience: "I made a living killing for this country in the Marines," he later remarked. "I was determined when I got back that what rights I didn't have I was going to take, using every weapon in the arsenal of democracy."

Moore came to Philadelphia while still in the Marines in 1947. He was honorably discharged four years later. In 1953 he graduated from Temple law school and was admitted to the bar the following year at the ripe old age of 39.

But Cecil Moore made up for lost time, taking on a record number of clients, mostly poor people. At one point Moore's caseload became so large that a special judge was appointed to do nothing but hear Moore's backlog of cases.

Cecil Moore didn't get rich as the busiest lawyer around City Hall. Few clients could afford the full fee and Cecil let it go. But the IRS didn't and he went to his grave with the tax people in hot pursuit.

Cecil Moore was not your textbook model, criminal lawyer. He nevertheless won more than his share of cases, 75% by his own account. Moore fought like a Marine in the courtroom, going after judges and prosecutors alike with a tongue as sharp as a bayonet.

(continued on page 18)



Cecil Moore addresses a rally to desegregate Girard College in 1968. The integration of Girard College was a victory for the people of Philadelphia and a highlight of Moore's political career.

Myths about Communism

Cuba's Communist Party— Revolutionary Leadership or Self-Perpetuating Elite?

by Jim Griffin

A popular story that made the rounds in Cuba during the early years of the revolution expresses some of the contradictory feelings with which many Cubans viewed their revolution. A journalist interviews an elderly man: "What do you think of the schools, the housing and the social services now as compared to before?" asks the journalist. "Oh, no comparison," replies the old man. "Things are so much better now." "And what do you think of nationalizing the land and the factories?" "Very good," replies the old man. "And wages, working conditions, the unions now?" "Wages are higher, conditions better, and the unions now are for the workers," the old man answered. "And what about communism?" the journalist asks. "Ah, now that's where the revolution went wrong," the old man replied.

Years of anti-communist propaganda under Batista, during the years of Yankee domination, made many Cubans suspicious of Communism. At the same time they enthusiastically embraced the concrete policies promoted by Cuba's Communist Party. Yet many other Cubans quickly made the connection between the popular policies of the revolutionary government and its Marxist Leninist political orientation. One of the most popular songs of the 1960s went:

*The Americans say that Fidel's
a Communist
The Americans say that Fidel's
a Communist
Well, if Fidel's a Communist —
Put my name down on the list!*

The Communist Party of Cuba, and for that matter the parties of countless other socialist countries, enjoy the confidence of the masses. That is something that we in the US have a difficult time accepting. We are led to believe that the role of the Communist Party is incompatible with democracy and rests on coercion. We are taught that communists in the socialist countries are a self-perpetuating elite, separate from and above the masses. The concrete case of the Cuban Communist Party provides a means of testing the truth or falsehood of these deeply and widely held attitudes.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The purpose and role of the Communist Party of Cuba is proclaimed in the Cuban Constitution: "The Communist Party of Cuba, the organized Marxist Leninist vanguard of the working class, is the highest leading force of the society and state, which organizes and guides the common effort towards the goals of the construction of socialism and the progress toward a communist society."

Why is such a "leading force" necessary? To make a revolution requires political leadership. It requires a sound theoretical and political understanding which can generate the necessary strategy and tactics. It requires a disciplined organization capable of translating this understanding into action. It requires the drawing together of the most conscious and committed partisans of the oppressed, who will have the ability and the moral authority to lead.

A Communist Party, as a vanguard of the working class, represents a synthesis of these elements. Some may think that revolutions occur spontaneously, when the people simply get fed up and decide to move. But even the most shallow reading of the actual history of



A workers' assembly in preparation for the 13th Congress of the trade union federation.



A new member of the Communist Party is nominated.

The people of Cuba actively participate in running their country. Communists and non-Communists alike are nominated and elected to office. The masses themselves select the candidates for membership in Cuba's 200,000 member Communist Party.

revolutionary struggle shows that this is not the case.

After the working class has taken power the need for this leadership in no way diminishes. The building of socialism is a highly conscious process that faces many difficult obstacles. The Communist Party represents the leading element in this process.

This is in no way incompatible with the fullest participation of the masses in determining the course of socialist construction. On the contrary, the act of drawing in the masses itself requires political leadership.

The anti-communist view of the Party rests on a false division. On the one hand there are the masses, anxious for power but denied it. On the other there is the Party, a faceless bureaucracy monopolizing power and determined to exclude the masses.

In reality the masses do not form a politically homogeneous force. There is a backward strata where the weight of old ideas is strongest. Elements among this strata may side with counter-revolution. Most will be aloof, suspicious and distrustful of the revolution. Individualistic and selfish behavior will be most deeply rooted among this strata, behavior that goes against the grain of collective effort and cooperation.

There is a middle strata, which encompasses the majority of the working people. Characteristically, these elements support the revolution and participate in its processes. But this support and participation co-exist with doubts and tendencies toward passivity — reflections of the weight of old habits and old ways of thinking. Depending on circumstances,

this strata's active commitment to the revolution may deepen or it may wither.

Finally there is the most advanced strata — those with the clearest understanding and commitment — those who willingly sacrifice their narrow individual interests in order to push forward the revolution — those who have demonstrated by their practice their ability to lead.

The building of socialism requires that a patient and persistent effort be made to overcome the distrust of the most backward elements, while isolating the incorrigibles. The confidence and participation of the middle strata must be deepened. These things in turn depend on correct leadership from the most advanced elements. Marxism-Leninism and organization in the form of a Communist Party, maximizes the quality and impact of this leadership.

THE PARTY AND THE MASSES

In Cuba the Party was not and is not something that exists separate from and above the masses. The Party is drawn from its fighters. Fidel, Che and the militants of the July 26th movement had proven their courage, ability and devotion to the interests of the masses in waging the armed struggle against Batista. The cadres of the Cuban Communist Party had years of experience leading the struggles of Cuba's workers and peasants. The modern party is a merger of these two revolutionary trends. The men and women who formed the party represented the best of Cuba's workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals.

Of course the social origin of this generation of leadership and its past practice do not guarantee the Party

will remain committed to its goals. Only if the Party is accountable to the people, only if it retains its roots and ties among them, and only if it is invigorated by the best of each new generation of revolutionaries can it retain its vanguard role.

As we saw in our last article, contrary to prevailing anti-communist prejudice, Communists are not automatically winners in Cuban elections. Many non-Communists are nominated and elected. A grass roots, democratic process of selection encourages the weeding out of those who put their careers before the needs of the masses.

The masses themselves select the candidates for membership in Cuba's 200,000 member Communist Party. To become a Party member a person must be nominated by their fellow workers. Meetings at the workplace are held for this purpose. The person's qualifications are thoroughly and freely discussed, a vote is taken and a recommendation is submitted to the local Party organization. The Party must report back to the workers its action on these recommendations and the reasons for it. In this way those selected for membership are the recognized leaders of the workers, those who enjoy their confidence and respect.

Again contrary to popular thinking, most Party members are not state functionaries but remain workers and acquire no special privileges. This also promotes close ties between the Party and the masses.

The Party's role in policy making and administering the state is through the institutions of People's Power. Party decisions do not automatically become state policy, nor does the Party have any coercive power to impose such decisions.

Typically the Party submits its proposals to the People's assemblies where Party members argue for their adoption. As Raul Castro explains: "The Party can and must make suggestions, proposals, recommendations...but it must never hand down decisions, never impose decisions, never take any manner of reprisals as regards an organ of People's Power or members of such organs who do not agree with or carry out something the Party has suggested."

THE PARTY'S FUTURE

Can a Communist Party degenerate, become separated from the masses, become repressive and undemocratic? Yes this is possible and no Party, including the Communist Party of Cuba, is immune from these dangers. It is not surprising nor in and of itself any cause for alarm that in Cuba, as in virtually all socialist countries, the Party makes errors, some Party members fall into bureaucratic habits, and undemocratic abuses exist. Socialism is not utopia, and it must be built with the imperfect human material bequeathed by capitalist society.

If the Party strengthens its ties with the masses, practices internal democracy and engages in rigorous self-criticism, there is no reason to believe that these inevitable blemishes will grow into scars.

From the beginning the Cuban Party has been unafraid to acknowledge its shortcomings, criticize itself and take active measures to correct problems. The lack of a developed institutional framework for Cuban democracy posed a long term danger that has now been addressed with the adoption of the Cuban constitution and the holding of the First Party Congress. The Cuban Revolution, as it begins its third decade, is alive and well.

Iranian Revolution Enters New Stage

By Jenny Quinn

On February 12, the new revolutionary government of Ayatollah Khomeini officially took power in Iran. A scant five months after the militant strike of Iran's oil workers, which led to a general strike that crippled Iran's economy, Khomeini has called people back to work to begin the stabilization process. The speed with which the Iranian revolution has unfolded, and the speed with which it continues to unfold, is incredible to onlookers and to participants alike.

The movement to oust the Shah and bring about a democratic revolution in Iran was characterized by a unity of essentially different forces...the religious mullahs, sections of the business community, and the Iranian working class. With the Shah gone and his state machine in chaos, this unity is beginning to break down and the contradictions between the different elements in the Iranian revolution are coming to the fore.

The more conservative elements, led by the Iranian bourgeoisie, will now try to rein in the mass movement and restrict the scope and forward motion of the revolution. The revolutionary-minded workers, peasants and students want to push on.

NEW STAGE IN REVOLUTION

The growing divergence between Khomeini and the leftist People's Fedayeen, whom Khomeini has denounced as "satanic elements", is an expression of this new stage in the Iranian Revolution. The present focal point for this struggle is the question of the Army. In order to make the revolution the people had to be armed. A loose-knit popular militia, embracing various ideologies and factions, emerged to challenge the Shah's military for power.

In the confrontation that followed, the Shah's army disintegrated with thousands of rank and file soldiers going over to the revolution and countless others simply throwing down their guns and deserting Bakhtiar's sinking ship. Only a section of the officer corps and a handful of units remained loyal to the regime, and they were quickly overwhelmed.

Now the Khomeini government is calling on the armed people to turn in their guns, but many are turning deaf ears to this plea. The masses know from their experience that their armed strength is the power on which the revolution rests and they instinctively are not yet ready to surrender it. The left is calling for a new people's army based on the revolutionary militia with officers elected by the soldiers. Khomeini and the new government want to reconstitute the old army, shorn of the most reactionary pro-Shah officers, but with the old structure essentially intact.

The reorganization of the economy is bound to be another struggle. Enormous quantities of capital have left the country with the members of the deposed ruling elite. The Shah himself took an estimated \$21 billion, more than the gross national product of dozens of third world countries, into exile with him. Production is in disarray.

While workers in some industries have returned to work in large numbers, the oilworkers have been reluctant to continue production without certain guarantees. They want assurance that oil for domestic production not be given to the regular military. Khomeini's representative on their committee resigned because he insisted that the influence of "non-Islamic ideas" was too strong. This is representative of a growing division between the Khomeini regime and the Marxists, whose influence is strongest among the oilworkers.

stayed leaders of the Negro community: "It is from their lofty perch midway between the integration they long for and the segregation from which they have profited that every principle of Negro progress has been sacrificed."

On his second try Moore was elected President of the NAACP. Moore struck a new note in his acceptance speech: "No longer will the plantation system of white men appointing our leaders exist in Philadelphia," he said. "We will expect to be consulted on all community issues which affect our people."

GIRARD COLLEGE

No one had ever consulted Black people about the admissions policy at Girard College, a fortress-like institution of learning occupying several square blocks in the heart of North Philadelphia. The will of Stephen Girard restricted attendance at the school to white, fatherless boys. Girard College, with its high walls, was a symbol of segregation, a prime example of property rights dominating over human rights. In 1965 Cecil Moore launched a crusade to desegregate Girard College.

The NAACP traditionally relied on legal tactics and the courts in the fight for equal rights. It viewed the militant, direct action methods of the '60s with distrust. As a result it had lost the initiative in the civil rights struggle to younger, more aggressive organizations like SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) and CORE (Congress On Racial Equality). In leading the Girard College struggle Moore was to take up the tactics of the new generation of freedom fighters in the South rather than the conservative methods of the NAACP.

On May 1st, 1965, the picket lines went up at the gates of Girard College. They were to stay up for more than two years. A continuing series of demonstra-

KHOMEINI WALKS TIGHT ROPE

Khomeini and the forces he represents are engaged in a difficult balancing act. The Ayatollah seeks to hold the left at bay. He also continues to face danger from the right, both in the form of a regrouping of pro-Shah elements and from foreign imperialist intervention. The lessons of an earlier period in Iranian history can't have gone unnoticed.

The nationalist and Islamic government of Mossadeq, which pushed aside the Shah briefly in the early 1950's and carried out some democratic reforms, also took a hard line on domestic communists. The Tudeh Communist party was brutally repressed by Mossadeq. While he was fighting the left, the CIA organized a coup which took his life and restored the Shah to power.

Khomeini so far has displayed real skill in negotiating this tight rope. At the same time he denounced the People's Fedayeen, he handed over the Israeli embassy to the PLO, a symbolic act bound to be popular among the left-leaning masses. Khomeini has also assembled a broad cabinet which ranges from pro-Western capitalists like foreign minister Sanjabi, to Marxist-sounding intellectuals like radio and TV boss Ghotbzadeh. Significantly, the genuine left representing the revolutionary aspirations of the peasantry and working class is excluded from the cabinet.

The Iranian revolution is far from over. The question now is whether the democratic revolution will be extended, consolidated and eventually go over to the socialist revolution, or whether it will become stalled and be dragged backwards. The revolution already has many lessons to teach revolutionaries in other countries. The experience in Iran confirms once again that when the masses unite, know what they want and have the

tions, sit-ins and arrests mobilized thousands of Black people, shook the walls of segregation, and finally brought them tumbling down. On July 5th, US District Judge Joseph S. Lord ruled that Girard College was violating the 14th Amendment and ordered its desegregation.

While the ultimate decision was handed down in the courts, the battle was really won in the streets as Moore recognized. He praised the demonstrators for their "loyalty, sincerity and desire for freedom in staying on the streets", counting this as the main thing that delivered for "all citizens the benefit of democracy."

Moore's aggressive leadership transformed the NAACP from a tiny elite to a mass organization. In the first six months of his presidency the organization tripled in membership. Moore's militant tactics and his preference for plain language in dealing with the city's white establishment did not endear him to the NAACP's old line leadership.

More legitimate criticisms were also leveled at him...that Cecil ran a one-man show and that his ego got in the way of working with others. Eventually he was deposed as the dominant force in the local NAACP by breaking up the branch into several sections. Membership declined and Moore, shorn of his power base, lost ground to a younger generation of Black leaders, many of whom won their spurs in the Girard College campaign.

The last stop in Cecil Moore's career was City Council. Here Moore's irreverence and wit were a refreshing contrast the dull pomposity of Schwartz, Jannotti and company. But the fact is that Cecil Moore was over the hill, and the quality of his leadership was inconsistent at best. Poor health, aided by a passion for bourbon whiskey, took their toll on his body and mind.



Ayatollah Khomeini

will to take it, no force can stand in their way. The Shah's huge secret police machine and his multi-billion dollar military with the latest in the Pentagon's hardware were virtually powerless in the face of the revolutionary movement.

Neither the support of the CIA and the rich US corporations nor the veiled threats of Jimmy Carter could save the Shah or his compromise candidate, Mr. Bakhtiar. The strength of this movement is far from spent. That is why there are powerful people both in Washington and in Tehran not sleeping well at night.

In this last year of turmoil and struggle, while Cecil Moore always came down on the right side in the end, he was often out of touch with his constituents. The sorely felt need for Black leadership in Council led many activists to look elsewhere for a new representative in this year's election.

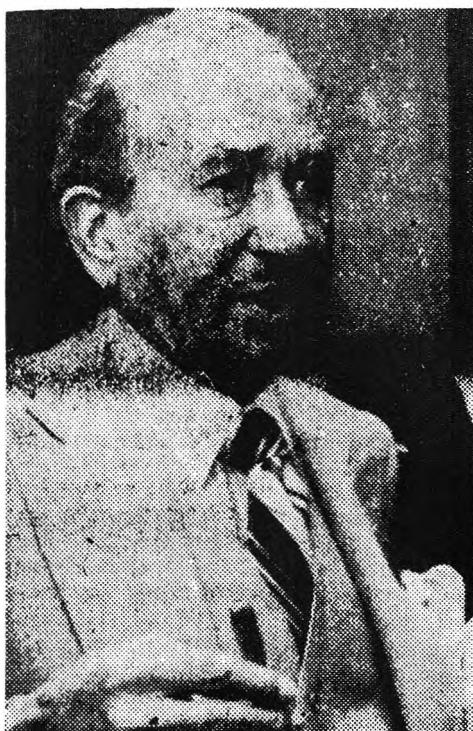
MOORE'S CONTRIBUTION

Cecil Moore's political vision was limited. While he identified himself as a champion of the Black masses and scorned the pretensions of some upwardly mobile, middle class Blacks, he himself was affected by the outlook of this class.

He rejected the idea of an alliance between Blacks and labor, and was cynical about any possibility of Black-white unity. In response to the indifference or hostility of much of the trade union leadership to the Black freedom struggle, he urged Black workers to quit the unions. (He actively pursued this course in relation to the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers.)

Moore was a confirmed anti-communist and not above divisive, red baiting attacks on both Black and white militants. Finally Moore lacked the broad internationalism that led Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and the younger generation of Black freedom fighters to link the struggle for Black liberation here with the fight to end the war in Vietnam and liberate Africa.

In spite of these limitations Cecil Moore deserves his place in the pantheon of Philadelphia's leaders. His spirit of militancy, and his uncompromising identification with the cause of equality, and his rude candor in confronting the oppressors of Black people are strengths that will continue to inspire present and future generations. Those who hold power would rather forget these strengths and turn Cecil Moore into a harmless icon. In this they will surely be disappointed.



The late councilman Cecil Moore.

Cecil Moore

(continued from page 16)

While his many critics thought him "unprofessional", the people who know what it's like to be on the wrong side of the law thought Cecil was just fine. Many owe their freedom to Moore's efforts. And those who are not free haven't forgotten him either. The residents of the Delaware County Prison sent a big bouquet of roses to the wake.

It was not in the courts, but in the streets that Cecil Moore won the most important victories. Moore wanted to see a more aggressive struggle for civil rights. He saw the NAACP, then the leading civil rights organization in the city, as "a bastion of snobbery, a big social club." Moore had harsh words for the "self-



China and Vietnam and the Question of War

By the PWOC Political Committee

Events of the last two months have thrown a sharp light on the international aims and intentions of the present leadership of the People's Republic of China. Having concluded an agreement to establish full diplomatic relations with the US, Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping visited here and preceded to upbraid the US imperialists for a lack of decisiveness in dealing with the "trouble" in Iran and for generally being too soft toward the USSR.

In an interview in *Time* magazine, Teng gave a novel twist to Chairman Mao's theory of the three worlds, saying without qualification that he viewed the US as part of "the united front against hegemonism." Later in Japan Teng criticized the Carter administration for its failure to "punish" Cuba. Shortly afterwards Teng gave Washington an object lesson in what he meant by launching his punishment of Vietnam, "the Cuba of Asia."

People's China, once a militant champion of the interests of the international working class and oppressed peoples in the struggle against imperialism, has now become part of a counter-revolutionary alliance with imperialism — an alliance aimed at the USSR and its allies. The price of this alliance necessarily is the abandonment of proletarian internationalism. China cannot block with the US, NATO and Japan and simultaneously support the struggles against imperialism now raging on every continent. It cannot and in fact it has not for some time.

The logic of the "united front against hegemonism" is collusion or at least neutrality in the face of the neo-colonial and counter-revolutionary maneuvers of the US imperialists and their European and Japanese cohorts. Not only has China become a partner in the grand anti-Soviet coalition but, as recent events illustrate, it is the most vocal and aggressive antagonist of the Soviets.

It is in this framework we must see the recent Chinese invasion of Vietnam. While publicly basing its invasion on alleged border provocations by Vietnam, the real reasons for China's actions are clear enough. Most immediately China aims at compelling Vietnam to withdraw militarily from Kampuchea, enabling the creation of a new Kampuchean government more friendly to China. Minimally China can expect that its actions will forestall the consolidation of a pro-Vietnamese regime in Phnom Penh. This is part of a larger design aimed at stymieing the growth of Soviet influence in South-

east Asia and elsewhere. The Chinese leadership expects that the "lesson" it is teaching Vietnam will not be lost on the Soviets.

CHINA PLAYS THE U.S. CARD

It is unlikely that China would even have contemplated such an action earlier. Its vulnerability to a militarily stronger Soviet Union ruled out such bold tactics. However with the new relationship with the US, China has a much greater latitude.

No one should doubt that the present invasion has the tacit support of the US. Washington's obligatory criticism of the Chinese action masks an uneasy connivance with Peking. When Teng alluded to his punishment plans while visiting the US, the Carter administration was silent. Since the invasion, the US has refused to take any concrete actions to compel the Chinese to reconsider its course. Blumenthal is off in Peking getting the trade negotiations rolling; the US went ahead and opened its embassy; and everything is business as usual. Great Britain, acting the roll of US surrogate in arming China, is going ahead with arms sales. In the UN, Andrew Young is insisting that Chinese withdrawal be linked with a Vietnamese pullout from Kampuchea. This linkage effectively dovetails with China's position.

The reason US imperialism supports China's invasion is obvious. As Ross Terrill, a long-time China watcher at Harvard's East Asian Center, said: "The strategic situation in Asia that is so favorable to the West and to the ASEAN countries will be solidified, in that Russia-China hostility, which is the foundation stone of the current balance of power, will no doubt get even fiercer." But Terrill also notes the reason why the US is nevertheless queasy about the invasion — the danger of war between the USSR and China. Terrill points out: "President Carter could not avoid committing US military power to such a fray, because a Russia that succeeded in putting China on the sidelines would have eclipsed America as Number One Nation." In short the risk in exploiting this situation which is so favorable to US imperialism, is world war.

CHINA'S RATIONALE

Given all this what can be said in defense of China's actions? Very little in our opinion. There is the tit for tat argument that since Vietnam committed an act of aggression against China's ally Kampuchea, China was compelled to respond in kind. If Vietnam were the expansionist minded Soviet puppet and

China the model of proletarian internationalism that Peking would have us believe, then this argument would have real force. But the truth is that China is not free from responsibility for Vietnam's actions in relation to Kampuchea.

From 1974 on, China's hostility to Vietnam has grown, because Vietnam refused to side with China's militant anti-Sovietism. Vietnam moved from a path of non-alignment to a close identification with the Soviet Bloc in large measure because it faced continued hostility from US imperialism. Vietnam has also had to contend with a deepening hostility from Peking as well. China's support for Kampuchea in its border disputes with Vietnam, and China's attacks on Vietnam, for its treatment of ethnic Chinese were Chinese "punishments" doled out for Vietnam's refusal to see the error of its ways in relation to Moscow.

Vietnam's very real fear of encirclement is what prompted it to push Pol Pot aside. We continue to think this action was a serious error and that Vietnam should withdraw from Kampuchea. However the facts of the matter undercut the view that China had no alternative but to invade Vietnam. China's behavior in relation to Vietnam, both past and present, is not dictated by any threat Vietnam poses to China's sovereignty and thus cannot be passed off as a necessary defensive measure. China views Vietnam as a pawn in its contention with the Soviet Union and treats it accordingly.

The fundamental rationale for Chinese actions is the view that the Soviet Union is a social imperialist power on the rise and as such poses the main danger to the world's peoples. Its hegemonism, that is, its drive to control other nations, is the greatest source of the danger of war. These arguments are the justification for virtually every move by China in the international arena, no matter what their implications for the causes of national liberation and proletarian revolution.

The real manifestations of Great Power chauvinism on the part of the Soviet revisionists and the deformations of Soviet society under their rule give a superficial credence to these views. They draw further on the prestige of Mao Tse Tung and the Chinese Revolution. Nevertheless a sober and all-sided analysis shows this line to be false. As we have argued countless times, the adoption of this strategic framework by revolutionaries in the US leads to a profound political disorientation and ultimately to collaboration with one's own ruling class against the interests of the world revolution.

WHERE WE STAND IN THE EVENT OF WAR

China's view that world war is inevitable is increasingly taking on the character of a self-fulfilling prophecy. To the degree that the "united front against hegemonism" makes headway, the Soviet Union is placed in an increasingly vulnerable and isolated position. By seeking to direct the aggressive drives of imperialism against the Soviets, China's actions promote the danger of war.

Historically Marxist-Leninists have been united in the view that should war come between the USSR and the People's Republic of China, China must be supported. This view rested on the assumption that such a war would come as part of the attempt of the Soviets to hegemonize China. It would be a case of defending revolutionary socialism in China against the aggressive Great Power chauvinism of the Soviets.

This view is no longer tenable. Given the alignment of China with US imperialism, support for China in a war with the Soviets is objectively support for the aims of US imperialism. If China stands in danger of losing in a protracted war, the US imperialists will inevitably intervene. Short of such intervention, the imperialists will take advantage of the situation to recoup its losses and extend its dominion on every continent. Contemplate the fate of the struggle in South Africa, to name just one instance, under these circumstances. If the Soviet Union is tied down in a war with China, counter-revolution will have a field day all over the world.

However one chooses to view the class character of the USSR and its role in the world, it seems obvious that the contention between the US and the USSR and the balance of power between them has provided a favorable context for revolutionary movements on an international scale. A war between China and the Soviets would profoundly alter that balance in favor of US imperialism with disastrous consequences for the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples. For these reasons revolutionaries everywhere have an urgent interest in preventing such a development. And under the present circumstances the principle catalyst for such a war is the policy of the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party.

In our view, this analysis is a logical extension of the principle that US imperialism is the main enemy of the world's people. The grave implications of the present world situation underline the importance of the struggle for this principle among Marxist-Leninists and the insistence that it must be a line of demarcation between Marxism and opportunism.

Nurses Address Organizing Problems

By Kim Wright

Turning anger into action was the theme of a series of educationals presented by Nurses Unite. The series grew out of questions from nurses attending a showing of the film "The Politics of Caring." In that meeting we found that we shared similar frustrations and anger about our jobs but knew little about how to turn that anger into meaningful action. Although some of us have found individual ways of dealing with certain problems, most of us have either put up with things the way they were or changed jobs in an attempt to find one where things were not as bad.

In our training programs they teach us that nurses are professionals; that we will do all sorts of wonderful and exciting things in caring for our patients' complete needs; that we will be important and respected members of a health team, providing for the psychological and physiological needs of "our patients." They teach us that there are different levels of nursing and that some of us are better than others simply by virtue of the wisdom our schooling has bestowed on us.

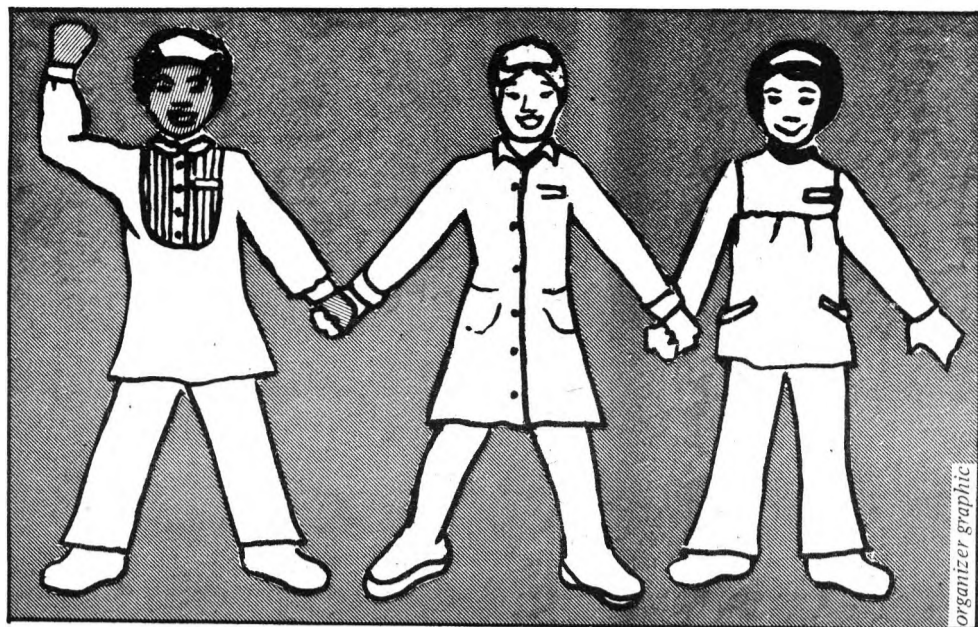
In reality we are understaffed and underpaid. We have different titles, but in

order to just keep our patients clean and fed, we must all work together. We are made to feel guilty if we cannot get 12 hours work done in 8 hours, and if we are not willing to work double shifts. We become bitter, disillusioned and frustrated and often take it out on our co-workers. We often blame each other for our poor working conditions, failing to see the real cause of our problems. Even when some of us become aware of the ways in which the administration exploits us and the patients, we have little or no idea what to do or how to do it.

GETTING IT TOGETHER

The problems of how to organize, how to build unity among all levels of nursing, and how to deal with our day to day problems were discussed through panel presentations and group discussions. Forty nurses representing LPN's and RN's from hospitals all over the city participated. Speakers from rank and file caucuses and the Workers Rights Law Project discussed their experiences in organizing and the legal rights we have in the workplace.

Through the presentations and the discussions that followed, it became clear that there are several roadblocks we must



overcome to develop unity and the power to make changes in our institutions.

Gaining unity between the different levels of nursing means seriously taking up the struggle against racism which the administrators have long used to keep us divided. We must also develop a complete understanding of the false promises made by professionalism. We need to have an idea of where we are going and what we want when we get there. We found that most other groups have developed some sort of program and list of demands or needs that they share, and have used this as a platform for winning people to their side and measuring their successes.

We know that accomplishing these tasks is no simple matter but we felt that we were moving in the right direction after two meetings.

Nurses Unite plans to continue these meetings so we can come together and develop the tools we need to raise demands and wage struggles in our individual hospitals, and even city-wide.

Nurses Unite invites all interested LPN's, Aides, and RN's to attend the next meeting:

**March 14, 1979 at 7:30 pm
American Friends Service Committee
15th & Cherry Sts., Phila., Pa.**

For more information write to:

**Nurses Unite
PO Box 12283
Philadelphia, PA 19144**

Workers Rights Law Project

The Worker's Rights Law Project (WRLP) wants to inform people of its existence and development. We want to let people know what we can do for the rank and file movement in Philadelphia and what help we need.

The WRLP is made up of lawyers and rank and file activists and is set up to help workers with legal and organizational help with the shop work they are doing. The project is growing in numbers — lawyers and shop people — which is helping us develop a specific program for the project.

This program includes two committees: one for outreach and the other for literature. The outreach committee has responsibility for contacting different caucuses, interested unions, and individual shop activists and for setting up meetings between them and a team from the project consisting of a lawyer and shop activist. This team, along with the staff

and chair of the project, will be the contact between the project and people we have met.

Some of the services we offer aside from answering specific questions is to provide literature. We will inform you about educationals the WRLP is giving, and tailor educationals to your needs. We offer rank and file organizing experience and help, and hopefully in the future we can provide a channel through which the different caucuses and individuals in the city can meet each other and discuss their experiences.

We want to build cross-caucus financial help for legal expenses, and cross-caucus physical help when different support actions occur. This is the type of help we can, or soon will be able, to provide.

The second committee is for literature. We have a brochure about the

project, and a brochure with answers to many of the legal questions people ask on the shop floor (like do I have a legal right to have a shop steward present at a meeting with the company?).

We also have information on discrimination and the right to strike which will aid the caucuses, progressive unions, and individual activists in their work. This literature is in the process of being printed, and most of it will be available soon.

In addition, we have gotten involved in different actions throughout the city. We are involved with the Ad Hoc Committee for Affirmative Action around the Weber case and are helping to build the Committee's conference on April 7th.

As we get the WRLP in high gear we can serve a purpose far beyond a strictly legal information service. How can you help? First off, we need your participa-

tion — channel your legal questions to us. Get your caucus and other activists to support the project by setting up a meeting with us and establishing an on-going relationship. Come to our meetings and educationals, and bring people from your workplace if possible.

The next meeting of the Worker's Rights Law Project will be held on March 26th. Call LO3-1388 for the location. Beginning at 7pm we will have a social hour with refreshments. The actual meeting will start at 8pm. We hope that rank and file activists from different shops will come and meet to discuss their mutual activities, and to participate in the WRLP meeting.

If you have legal questions that you want answered in writing, you should write to us (Worker's Rights Law Project, 3rd Floor, 1425 Walnut St., Phila., PA.). We will answer your question through various papers, including the *Organizer*. This way we can have an on-going dialogue and help other people through these questions and answers. For further information call LO3-1388.

Milton Street

(continued from page 7)

town houses. Street refuses to accept the God-given logic of Big Business — housing must wait, but not the Gallery or the Center City Commuter Tunnel. What's more, Milton Street refuses to limit his objections to polite protest. He urges people to get out in the streets and make a stink.

The Rizzo administration acts as if the charge that the city is recycling neighborhoods is just a paranoid fantasy of Milton Street. The fact is that recycling has been a Rizzo policy from the beginning. Only recently did city officials openly admit it. In an interview in 1973 Bernard Meltzer, Rizzo's brain truster on housing, argued that most of North and much of West Philadelphia should simply be "written off" and housing programs should be concentrated on saving the "better" neighborhoods. The poorest areas should be allowed to deteriorate and then eventually be redeveloped for upper income people. John Gallery, the housing czar at City Hall, is a long time advocate of this policy. Gallery got his start locally 9 years ago as the planner who advocated ripping up North Philadelphia and turning it into a site for the Bi-Centennial.

The immediate focus of the housing controversy concerns the use of Community Development funds — federal monies appropriated for housing. Again the city administration alleges that Street's charge — that the city neglects the housing needs of poor neighborhoods, particularly North Philadelphia — has no basis. Frank Rizzo, in an interview with Larry Kane of Channel 10, blankly asserted that North Philadelphia is getting 25% of the community development money; and therefore that Street has no just complaint.

THE TRUTH ABOUT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MONEY

What are the facts? Back in 1977, the city received a \$57.4 million community development grant from HUD. Of this sum, only \$8 million was slated for housing. The Rizzo administration sought to award \$20.7 million to the police department, but had to back down in the face of community protest. North Philadelphia west of Broad Street, Milton Street's turf, was to get \$870,000 or a little more than 1% of the total grant. As a result of community protests organized by Street and others this amount was increased to a little more than \$5 million in May of 1977, still less than 10% of the total grant.

The present application, now approved by City Council, seeks \$67.7 million in CD funds. North Philadelphia as a whole (treated as the area from Front to 33rd and from Girard to Lehigh) is slated for \$11.445 million, some 16% of the total amount, not 25% as Rizzo assured us. Meanwhile, \$17.4 million is being spent on management and administration.

Even if the total sum was to go for housing in the neighborhoods that need it, it would only be a tiny drop in the bucket. To put these figures in proper perspective, the Center City Commuter Tunnel is being funded to the tune of over \$300 million. It is projects like this and like the Gallery which get the lion's share of public money. This is why Street's push for a boycott of the Gallery is a logical and necessary step, and not a public relations gimmick as his critics charge.

Many liberals and editorial writers, comfortable in their center city ivory towers, have conceded the correctness of Milton Street's demands but deplore his tactics. Lenora Benson, chair of the Americans for Democratic Action is typical. She accuses Street of "atrocious behavior", of creating a "carnival" and "ludicrous hooliganism". Moreover, his

actions are "calculated and cynical" and motivated by "ruthless ambitions."

If Milton Street had gone to City Council bowing and scraping with his hat in hand, North Philadelphia would not get a dime. Street's militancy did succeed in getting the allotment for his district increased by 475% between November and May of 1977. Mass action like the City Council demonstrations has made housing a major city issue. Polite chatter like the ADA specializes in will never move the politicians to do anything more than yawn. As for Milton Street's motives, why are his ambitions more objectionable than those of Bill Green or Bill Klenk? At least Street fights for his constituents. These attacks on Street, even when they are couched in terms of support for his aims, are just another variation on the racist theme that Black leadership should be "responsible", i.e. not so uppity.

Now Milton Street faces contempt charges, a \$5,000 fine and a possible jail sentence. This is not just an attack on him but an attack on the whole movement to win better housing for Philadelphians. He deserves every ounce of support we can give him. Street should be acquitted and the real criminals, who stand in contempt of the housing needs of the people of this city, should be booted out of office.