

The ORGANIZER

Time to Fight Big Oil!

Independent truckers, whose survival is on the line because of spiraling prices for diesel fuel, have stopped hauling freight and started raising hell. And the truckers' strike is only the tip of the iceberg. The anger of the US people at empty tanks, long lines and high prices is approaching the boiling point. 2,000 people battled police in an act of frustration over the shortage at a busy intersection in Levittown, Pa. last month. And as William Hill, head of the Independent Truckers Alliance, said: "We ain't seen nothing yet."

The Carter administration and big business have tried to pull the wool over our eyes. They try to blame the gas crisis on the Arabs in spite of the fact that imported oil is coming into the US at a rate well over that of last year's. Or they turn it around and try to blame it on us, preaching at us from their plush offices about how "greedy" we are.

But the US people aren't buying it. In a time of genuine emergency or crisis

most people are more than willing to sacrifice or tighten their belts. But it's crystal clear to working people, even if it escapes the "experts" in Washington, that the reason we can't get gas is because the big oil companies want bigger profits and are deliberately cutting back supplies to drive prices up. The oil barons are the real gluttons. Jimmy Carter is doing their bidding by deregulating domestic crude prices and Congress is following suit in spite of a few squawks for the benefit of the folks back home.

While anger and frustration is widespread, it has yet to find a real political expression. Organized actions by truckers and service station owners are the most positive signs of the growing fightback. But these are too narrow in their focus and lack the social power to really buck the monopolies and their friend in the White House. A broad people's movement with a clear program for ending the crisis is what's needed. Organized labor, in particular, has to bring its weight to bear on the energy question.



In Levittown, Pa., 2000 angry people battle the police. Spontaneous demonstrations and near riots broke out at gas stations across the country. Independent truckers and consumers are mad as hell. We must launch a well-planned campaign against the oil companies and the government in order to put an end to this fake gas and oil shortage.

The only way to get anything more than short term relief is to take the production of energy out of the private, profit hungry hands of Exxon, Gulf, Mobil and Co. and bring it under public control. This demand is under increasing public discussion as the crisis deepens. Even the friends of "free enterprise" in the AFL-CIO executive council like George Meany are beginning to talk about it. Rank and file sentiment is gravitating in the same direction. The time is ripe for a mass movement to end the blackmail by big oil and force energy policy to respond to popular needs.

We can't wait for such a movement to be organized from above. If we do, it probably will never get beyond the stage of talk and a few congressional hearings. Left forces must act now to assemble the broadest possible coalition to push for a people's energy policy and an end to the gas crisis. Initiative from below combined with appeals for union leadership, com-

munity leaders and elected officials to take action can bring such a broad movement into existence now.

The PWOC is taking such initiatives with the aim of organizing a mass protest toward the end of July. We urge that the protest be organized around the following slogans and demands:

- 1) ROLL BACK GAS PRICES — prices for gasoline, diesel fuel and home heating oil be rolled back to pre-crisis levels.
- 2) NO DEREGULATION — the demand for deregulation is corporate blackmail. It means higher prices and no appreciable increase in production until the middle 1980's, if then.
- 3) PUBLIC OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF OIL — nationalize the holdings of big oil, administer production and distribution through a popularly elected management.

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Letters To The Editor...

Women's Reproductive Rights

To the *Organizer*:

The May issue of the *Organizer* failed to report a significant political development for women and for the left, both here in Philadelphia and across the country.

March 31 was an international day of activity in support of women's right to control their own bodies — the right to abortion, safe contraception, and freedom from forced sterilization. Here, the newly formed Philadelphia Reproductive Rights Coalition drew 300 people to a center city march and speak-out, demanding the defeat of the Hyde amendment (which cut off federal Medicaid funding for abortion) and the enforcement of the new federal regulations to prevent sterilization abuse. The march was a boost for the coalition's ongoing work, which is now focussed on the campaign to defeat Hyde and on basic educational work about abortion, contraception, and sterilization.

But this is not the whole story. In New York City on March 31, 5000 people turned out for a march with the same themes raised in Philadelphia and an additional demand to stop the planned closing of half the city's public hospitals. In Boston, 5000 people marched for reproductive rights, and there were smaller rallies in over a dozen other US cities. It was the first massive public response to the so-called "right-to-life" movement and its attacks on women. In these actions in the US and rallies in other countries around the world, the role of US imperialism in promoting genocidal population control policies among third world people was highlighted.

Unfortunately, up to now it has been the "right-to-lifers" who have been organizing a powerful grass-roots movement.

The rights won in the struggles of the women's movement leading up to the 1973 Supreme Court decision — that women are free to decide to terminate unwanted pregnancies — have been effectively taken away from millions of

women. For example, the Hyde amendment has led to a 99% drop in abortions paid for by the US government and to a number of women dead from cheap, illegal abortions.

Poor and working class women, and especially black and brown women, have been hard hit by these attacks on abortion rights and by forced sterilizations — just as they have been among the main victims of inflation, unemployment, and growing attacks on social services and on affirmative action. The anti-abortionists are at the core of the right-wing movement that is threatening the democratic rights of women and third world people, as well as organized labor and gay people.

What is especially disturbing is that the "right-to-life" movement has struck such a responsive chord among so many women and men of all classes. In a climate of social disintegration, family breakdown, and economic crisis, anti-abortionists are appealing to the (false) security of traditional values about women's place and repressive attitudes toward sexuality. These conservative values may seem like something to grab onto today, but they have been responsible for keeping women at the mercy of men for hundreds of years.

But the anti-abortionists threaten not only women, but the movements of all working people. As long as the right wing is able to present itself as "pro-life" on the issues of abortion, it will be hard to focus public attention on the *real* threats capitalism, racism and sexism pose to human life, threats which the right wing is in large part responsible for backing up. Financial supporters of the anti-abortion movement — including groups like the John Birch Society, the KKK and the American Nazi Party — will be able to gain credibility. And people's real fears about our social and economic crisis will continue to be manipulated by the right-wingers, so that anger is channeled at one another in ways that divide and paralyze

the movements of poor and working people.

We believe that we must respond in defense of abortion rights by building a broad-based movement to fight for a whole spectrum of reproductive rights. We must put forth a complete program of demands that are essential for women to gain control over reproduction. It must be a program that links abortion not only with contraception and the sterilization issue, but with the right to childcare and decent health care, freedom of sexual preference, the right to a job and a safe, healthy workplace, freedom from discrimination, and so on. With such a program, we feel it will be possible to present a positive vision as an alternative to the traditional role for women, and a movement that addresses the need for new forms of community created by the breakdown of the family.

March 31 showed the real possibilities of such a program. The movement for reproductive rights has become a significant force within the women's movement as a whole, and it has put pressure on the whole movement to deal seriously

with the needs of working class and minority women. We hope the *Organizer* and the PWOC will also see the need to pay more serious attention to the reproductive rights movement.

For more information on the Reproductive Rights Coalition, call 241-7160.

— Phila. New American Movement

The Organizer responds,

We appreciate this letter which compensates for our lack of coverage. The PWOC did endorse the March 31st action but our participation was minimal and the failure to cover the event in the Organizer was certainly an error. The PWOC is currently weighing the possibility of a more active, on-going commitment to the Phila. Reproductive Rights Coalition. In any event, we certainly agree with the importance of the question and the danger posed by the "right-to-lifers" and will strive to expand our efforts and overcome our weaknesses in this area.

Capitalism & Technology

Dear *Organizer*:

Your article "Marxism and Nuclear Power" in the May *Organizer* raises the question of the relation between technology and class struggle. Classes struggle not only over the division of the wealth created by technology, but also over the direction in which technology is developed.

Capitalists will explore the technological innovations which are most profitable to them, not just "efficient" in some abstract way. For example, the assembly line is an excellent method of production for the capitalist because it enables him to control the pace of work for all the workers and squeeze out the most production, at the expense of the workers' well-being.

We can all see how workers struggle with capitalists over the price paid for electricity. But we need to learn more about why capitalism has tended toward

emphasizing nuclear power. Among the factors involved would be: 1) the links of nuclear power to military development of nuclear energy (and the role of military spending in general in directing technological development), 2) the profits to be made from monopolized, capital-intensive sources of energy, and 3) the political connections that have allowed the industry to shift nuclear risks to the public.

Marxists must concretely show how nuclear power and other "technological" questions are actually class questions. On this basis we can best contribute to building the anti-nuclear movement in alliance with other popular movements. And we will be able to show how similar questions will arise in relation to development of solar power and any other technology as long as we live under capitalism.

Comradely
A.M.
Cambridge, MA

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

Yellow Cab Drivers Sold Down the River

If there was ever an example of a rank and file being sold down the river by a corrupt union leadership, the recent Yellow Cab strike is that example.

When the Philadelphia drivers' contract expired 14 months ago, they were ready to strike, having suffered pay and benefit cuts over the last six years, but the Teamsters International refused to sanction a strike. It's generally known that the International and the owners of Yellow Cab have close ties; the owners have borrowed \$4.3 million from the International's pension fund to buy and fix up a Philadelphia hotel.

When the contract expired, Yellow Cab petitioned Bankruptcy Court for protection from creditors and scrapped employee pension and medical benefits.

It also owes current employees and retirees \$1 million in back wages, vacation, and missed pension payments.

A month ago, contract negotiations resumed and on June 4, the company gave its final offer, a further reduction in work benefits and pay with a productivity clause which would allow the company to fire any driver that failed to produce "sufficient" business. The 400 drivers of Local 156, who work on commission, voted unanimously to go on strike without waiting for the International's sanction. Scores of drivers who lease their cabs and whose contract doesn't run out for another year, honored the picketlines.

Two days later the International ordered them back to work, and the rank and file responded by unanimously voting

to defy the back to work order. The International also undermined negotiations between local officials and Yellow Cab by holding its own negotiations with the company.

On the sixth day of the strike, the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission, at the request of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, declared that suburban and independent cab operators could operate city-wide. In the end, local leadership succumbed and urged acceptance of a contract that increased wages by only \$1 a day this year with no provision for future years, and a modified version of the productivity clause the company first proposed. The membership reluctantly accepted it by a vote of 104 to 92.

It is not unusual for the Teamsters International to pull this kind of stunt. In Madison, Wisconsin, the International put the Teamsters local under trusteeship because they felt the local leadership was getting too militant. They probably would have done the same to Local 156 if the local's leadership had not finally gone along with the International and settled.

It is for these kind of reasons that Teamsters for a Democratic Union formed within the union, to restore it to a democratic union with rank and file control.

Clerks Merge with Meatcutters

On June 7, the Retail Clerks Union and Amalgamated Meatcutters merged. At the beginning of the week, each union met and agreed to the merger, and on Thursday they met together to make it final.

According to at least one union member, the merger can only be a positive step. Now that the two unions have merged, battles over jurisdiction (which union will represent which workers) will cease and the two can work together organizing new shops. The new union will be the second largest union in the country, with more money to organize more and bigger places, and with more political clout.

The idea has been in the works for some time, but there has been some resistance from high up officials who would lose their high paid positions as a result of the merger. Rank and file activists and groups exist within both unions, and hopefully they can organize to put the new clout of the union to its best use.

Election for Oil Workers

The 165,000 members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) will face a real choice in their August election for union president. The present OCAW president is retiring. Tony Mazzochi, now an OCAW V.P. and a well-known progressive labor leader, is running for the top post against Bob Goss, also an OCAW V.P.

Mazzochi has been a pioneer in the health and safety movement. Under his leadership, OCAW hired the largest occupational medicine staff of any union. Mazzochi also helped mobilize OCAW efforts to push through health and safety legislation such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. He has supported rank and file education and struggles on health and safety.

Mazzochi also has a good track record on other progressive issues. He promoted a nuclear test ban treaty in the 1950's, and in the 1960's he opposed the Vietnam war through Labor for Peace. Recently, he helped initiate a Coalition for Reproductive Rights of Workers, to resist forced sterilization due to workplace chemical exposures.

It is expected to be a tight election. In the absence of an organized rank and file upsurge, the election results will be heavily influenced by OCAW district leaders. Of the nine OCAW districts, Mazzochi has greatest support on the East Coast (he is from New York City) and in Canada. Goss has strong support on the West Coast. The vote will be taken among delegates to the OCAW convention in Florida this August.

Bell Telephone : Profits by Contempt

by John Foley

Good 'ol Bell has finally made it. It took long years of planning and development, but so callous and self-centered a machine could not be conceived of in one day or by one mind.

What has evolved in the company is bigger than one boss, one department, or even one Bell System. It is a corporation-wide philosophy with one simple principle: "Make bucks and the hell with anyone, workers or the public, who tries to take an inch!"

I am what the company refers to as a "former." That is, a former employee. I was fortunate to find a job outside the cesspool they call Directory Assistance. It only took me two or three seconds to decide to quit, even though I now make about half as much money as I did under "Muth's" wing. Don't get the wrong idea. This is not a bid to talk anyone into leaving Bell. My financial state — as an unmarried white male — made my "getting by with less" much simpler than if I had larger money problems like most operators.

I look upon myself as a casualty of Bell Telephone's active contempt for its hard working employees. **Active contempt.** That's not an accident. **Active contempt.** That's a program designed to keep workers, especially telephone operators, in such constant fear of reprisal, discipline or in the case of many of my friends **DISMISSAL**, that many are scared into keeping their mouths shut and grovelling and thanking Bell for any little scrap or crumb it throws their way.

I am a casualty because my mind and body are not and will never be the same after three and a half years at Bell. I came to Bell with 20/20 vision. After three and a half years in the Directory Assistance "stress tank" (which sent me to the hospital three times for a total of five and a half weeks for nerve-related illness) my vision was destroyed by constant close up work. I can't read a damn clock ten feet away anymore. If you don't believe me, I have all the hospital bills, eye doctor bills, lens prescription and glasses bills for anyone to examine. And do you think Bell paid for my glasses? If you work at the phone company, you know that's a laugh.

Since I left Bell, three friends and former co-workers of mine were fired. Shamelessly, without regard for their own or their dependent families' welfare. One, for allegedly raising her voice, two more because of an arbitrary absence program, which is used about as fairly as a Kangaroo Court. It's interesting to note that two of these "axed heads" were at the hands of *one* manager, whose contempt for the workers is so deep that she probably derives some sort of sick pleasure from her unspeakable treatment of the operators.

In closing, I say — don't be a casualty. Let them know you won't take it. Bell has lost an unemployment compensation case with the woman who was fired for raising her voice. If she wins her case in Arbitration this August 9, it will be a win for all operators. This woman had the courage to raise her voice to the company and she is winning. It's time to raise your voice. Tell "Mutha" Bell you're as "mad as a HUMAN BEING, and you're not gonna take it anymore!"



A People's Victory... Weber Case Defeated!

IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE... On June 2nd 25000 people marched on Washington demanding that the Supreme Court knock down Brian Weber's claim that he was a victim of "reverse discrimination." Weber, a white worker at Kaiser Aluminum's Gramercy, Louisiana plant, called on the courts to dismantle an affirmative action program that provided access to skilled trades for minority and women workers previously excluded from these areas. On June 27 the Supreme Court ruled against Weber, upholding the legality of voluntary affirmative action programs such as Kaiser's which was the result of collective bargaining between the company and the United Steel Workers. The court's ruling, while narrow in its scope, is a clearcut victory for the movement to defend affirmative action. The *Organizer* will analyze the ruling more fully in our next issue.



Organizer photo

Clothing Workers... Know Your Rights!

by Joan Kern

What's in a union contract? Clothing workers in Philadelphia would like to know what's in theirs. Most are unaware of the particular provisions in their Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) contract. It's hard to demand your rights if you don't know what they are. As a result, various clothing shops in Philadelphia take advantage of this lack of information. Machine-down time, waiting time and reporting pay are good examples. Workers are rarely paid in these circumstances or if they are paid it's not the correct amount. Here are some things to watch out for:

1. You are entitled to waiting or down time pay after a *total* of 30 minutes waiting throughout a day. You do not have to wait 30 minutes each time you run out of work or your machine breaks down before you are entitled to be paid.

2. Sometimes your employer will make you eligible for partial unemployment compensation instead of paying you down time, etc. Don't accept this substitute. It forces you to dip into your unemployment reserve, leaving less to collect later when you might need it, and it allows the bosses to ignore their legal obligations to you. They're just trying to save themselves money. (They have to pay into your unemployment fund no matter what.)

3. Often the company pays you minimum wage when you fail to make minimum piece rate because your machine is broken. Then that money is deducted from your paycheck the following week. Workers who have fought having this minimum deducted have won but have ended up with just that — minimum wage — when they are entitled to their *average hourly earnings* during the time that they wait for work or to have their machine fixed.

4. A trick the bosses use to get out of paying reporting pay is to tell workers that they can go home because there is no work but of course they shouldn't ask for reporting pay because they didn't sit and wait for five hours. Again the company is picking your pocket. If you have waited

in the morning without work and are sent home, you are entitled to five hours reporting pay. (If you have waited a total of 30 minutes without work and are not sent home then you are entitled to waiting pay.)

This is what the ACTWU contract says about these circumstances:

(25) Machine-Down Time and Waiting Time

An employee paid on a piece rate basis who is required to wait for work due to machine breakdown or other cause beyond his control shall be compensated at the rate of his average hourly earnings for all such waiting time in excess of 30 minutes per day. Any employee who finds it necessary to wait for work shall, on each such separate occasion notify his immediate supervisor both at the beginning and end of such waiting period. Payment for waiting time shall cover only such time as follows such notification. The employer may transfer such employee to another machine or job during

waiting time. In addition to the grievance and arbitration procedure set forth in paragraph 31 of this agreement any dispute or question as to the interpretation of this article may be referred to the national office of the Association and the union.

(26) Reporting Pay

Employees who report for work at the regular starting time, or at such other hour designated by the employer, shall be paid their established time or piece rate earnings for all work performed between the hour they reported for work and the hour they are dismissed, but in no event shall they be paid less than 5 hours, or 3.5 hours on Saturday. This clause shall not apply in the event of power failure, fire or other cause over which the employer has no control. Failure of other employees to report to work shall be considered cause over which the employer has no control only if an emergency arises which it could not foresee and it has taken adequate steps to train and provide relief workers.

These are just three items mentioned in the ACTWU contract — there are many more and all are important. A contract is a legal, binding document that affects your life daily. How do you go about getting a copy of your own so you can refer to it any time you need to?

Go down to the union office on South Street and ask the Joint Board Secretary, Mr. Russo, for a copy. It may take you two trips because people will cross-check your files to make sure you've paid your union dues, etc., and will tell you to ask your business agent. They may tell you they have no copies (they have a lot), that you haven't paid your clinic fees (which doesn't matter).

They may try to give you a booklet which is small and has a blue cover like the contract but is the union's constitution and says so at the top. What you want has "Agreement" written at the top of the cover. Remember, and if necessary remind the people you are dealing with that you are legally entitled to a copy of the contract. The ACTWU Rank and File Committee took the union to court over this issue and won.

Once you get your contract, share it with your co-workers. Talk about what's in the agreement. The more people understand their rights, the easier it is to stick together and fight back.

Hospital Contracts Expire

On June 30, the contracts of many hospitals and nursing homes in Philadelphia expire and a strike is likely. It's likely because as of now hospitals are "offering" only economic takeaways and union busting language. They are offering a 7% wage increase (Temple is only offering 4%) out of which all increased benefits have to come. Given the rate of inflation, this really means a wage cut-back. They also want to increase probationary time for temporary and permanent employees and for upgraded employees.

What is the union demanding? Each hospital has a different contract, but some typical demands emerge. At Giuffre (St. Lukes), the union is demanding a 20% or \$40/week wage increase up front, a continuation of the current cost of living adjustment (COLA) with an increase

over 10% inflation, and an increase in on-call pay from \$10 to \$15 and \$18 on the weekend.

At Hahneman Medical College and Hospital, the union is demanding that the hospital increase its monthly contribution to the benefit fund based on gross payroll from 10% to 13%, and to the pension fund from 7% to 8%. The union is also demanding legal supervision of hospital payments into the benefit funds.

Another crucial demand at Giuffre raised by the rank and file, is a demand for no outside contractors in any department where there are workers laid off. Hospitals have been using outside contractors in various departments such as service and maintenance, and laying off workers at the same time, in an attempt

to bust the union. In one department, 13 workers were laid off because of subcontracting. Another demand raised to strengthen the union in all hospitals is super-seniority for union delegates in their bargaining units.

The federal mediator's fact finding decision falls somewhere between the hospitals and the union. The decision for wage increases was \$18 the first year and \$15 the second year, continuing with the present COLA, with a cap, and a 1% increase each year of the hospitals' contribution to the benefit fund. The state fact finding decision for Temple has not been issued yet.

As we go to press, three area hospitals are on strike—Jefferson, Temple and Einstein South. At this time it's hard to say what else may develop.

Life and Death in Southwest Philadelphia

by Ron Whitehorn

The 6000 block of Regent St. in Southwest Philadelphia is a narrow, treeless street of aging row houses. Once all white, the street now houses Black families as well. An elderly woman who has seen the street change describes her Black neighbors with respect and concludes that "Black and white can live together peacefully." But a young man expresses another view: "Around here you grow up and you just hate n-----s." It was this ugly sentiment that propelled someone to shoot and kill 13 year old Tracey Chambers and wound two other Black youths. Francis O'Neil grew up on Regent Street, and Francis O'Neil is currently being held for murdering Tracey Chambers.

Francis O'Neil is white, 22 years old and, like many whites and twice as many Blacks, is out of work. Francis O'Neil comes from a neighborhood that for years has been shortchanged — a neighborhood that needs more housing, better schools and city services — a neighborhood where Blacks and whites struggle to get by. Tracey Chambers was growing up in the same neighborhood and faced the same problems, but worse. The two young men had a lot in common. Plenty of reasons to get together a fight for a better break for themselves and their neighborhoods. Instead Francis O'Neil, or someone like him, gunned down Tracey Chambers.

Francis O'Neil isn't just some nut. His neighbors say, "He was the best of

the bunch." It says something when the "best of the bunch" is capable of killing because of skin color. Southwest Philadelphia seethes with racial tension and violence. Too many people think like Francis O'Neil. The whites who live around Bartram High School, where the current wave of violence began, will tell you that it's an eye for an eye. They talk about how Black teenagers beat up on whites while attending the virtually all-Black high school in the predominantly white neighborhood. They largely discount Black charges that whites attack Black students going to and from Bartram.

SOURCE OF RACIAL VIOLENCE

Of course there are Blacks who beat up whites. The thing that is so terrible about racially inspired violence is that the targets are as likely to be the innocent as the guilty. The white student who was beaten around Bartram is, according to friends and neighbors, a real likeable guy who never had a bad word for anybody. This kind of violence is misguided and counter-productive no matter where it comes from.

But generally speaking, whites misunderstand the roots of racial violence. Most of it is white against Black and not the other way around. And when it is Black against white you have to take into account that it is largely a misplaced reaction to a very real experience of racial discrimination and oppression.

I lived in Southwest Philly for a while. Up the block, a Black family lived with 24-hour police protection for over a year following repeated attacks on their home by white youths. But how many white families have been bombed out of their homes in Black neighborhoods? How many Blacks have staged violent protests when whites were bused to their schools? How many Blacks have refused to serve whites a cup of coffee at a lunch counter?

Blacks have organized and waged militant struggles directed not against ordinary whites, but against institutions which discriminate on the basis of race. Some whites equate the existence of armed Black groups like the Black Panthers with terrorist white groups like the Nazis or the Klan. But there is a crucial difference. Blacks have generally armed themselves to protect their community from racist attacks while groups such as the KKK have taken up arms to intimidate, brutalize and kill Blacks whose only "crime" was standing up for their rights.

Whites need to recognize that the burden for racial violence is on the white side of the fence. The rulers of this country, from the slave-owning plantation owners to the modern-day owners of the giant corporations, have been white and have tried to keep Blacks down. Racism has not benefited the masses of white working people. On the contrary, by sowing division and a false understanding of who is really responsible for our problems, it has

helped keep us down too. Yet all too many whites have been indifferent or even hostile to the struggle for Black equality. The number of whites who belong to the Ku Klux Klan and go around committing acts of racial violence is a small minority. But the number of whites who actively speak out and organize against these atrocities is also a small minority.

Black and white not only have to live together peacefully. Black and white have to overcome racism and wage a common struggle for common aims. The only alternative is more Tracey Chambers', more Francis O'Neils and more division that benefits only the bankers and corporate big shots who get fat off our labor.

In Southwest Philadelphia, people are making a start. There are people like Frank Curso, a young white who put up a fifteen hundred dollar reward for information leading to the arrest of the killer of Tracey Chambers. There's a group called Whites Against Racism that plans a picnic to raise money for the three Black and one white who are victims of the present racial violence. There's an inter-racial group of mothers who are working to create some common understanding and action to improve their neighborhood. This is what's needed.

Actions and organizing efforts such as these provide a rallying point for people opposed to racism. They provide a basis to begin to win over those under the influence of racism, and to isolate the die-hards who urge violence.

Black Political Convention to Reconvene Moving toward an Independent Ticket

by Jim Griffin

Voters who think there's not a dime's worth of difference between David Marston and Bill Green, who rightfully suspect that neither mayoralty candidate offer the people real change, may very well have a real alternative this November. Efforts are underway to put together an independent slate based on a genuinely progressive platform that speaks to the needs of Philadelphia's working people.

INDEPENDENCE FORCES

This activity is coming from two sources, the Black United Front and the Consumers Party. The BUF is reconvening the Black Political Convention, which earlier this year adopted the Human Rights Agenda, backed a number of progressive candidates in the primary and supported the candidacy of Charles Bowser for mayor. The Human Rights Agenda calls for a whole range of reforms directed against racist, corporate domination of the city and aimed at improving the conditions of life for both Black and white working people. In the wake of the defeat of Charles Bowser, who refused to support this program, the more independent activists of the BUF see running a slate based on the Human Rights Agenda as a logical and necessary alternative to supporting either of the two parties, or sitting out the election.

The Black Political Convention is scheduled to convene on July 15th. Convention planners see the need to support progressive candidates running in the Democratic column as well as nominating independents to oppose Rizzaites and fencesitters in the councilman and row office races. There is a determination to reaffirm the importance of the Human Rights Agenda and not allow the question of program to be pushed to the background as it was during the primary.

The convention will need to decide whether to utilize the offer of the Consumer Party (C.P.) to place its ballot position at the disposal of a broad people's movement or to run a slate under the auspices of a new organization. The practical advantage to running on the Consumer Party line is that it avoids a time consuming petition drive. Politically speaking, as the C.P. is an already established Party with a clear commitment to independent political action, this route would have the effect of strengthening the independent character of the campaign.

The Consumer Party has taken initiative on its own to build an independent slate with a broad based appeal.

Early last month the CP called on city councilman Lucien Blackwell to run for mayor. Blackwell responded by indicating that while flattered, he would not consider such an option until the question of Bowser's challenge to the legality of the election was settled. The Party has since organized a "Draft Blackwell" campaign aimed at showing him he has the support to make a bid.

Some BUF activists were disturbed by this unilateral effort on the part of the Consumer Party, feeling that it upstaged the Convention and would thus foster division in the ranks of independents. The Black Political Convention, as the broadest expression of the independent movement, is the natural vehicle for determining a mayoralty candidate.

The Consumer Party, however, has clarified its position. It is prepared to accept the verdict of the Convention and plans to bring the Draft Blackwell campaign into the Convention rather than counterpose it to the Convention process. The Consumer Party also unites with the basic thrust of the Human Rights Agenda. Its own program coincides with it at many points. The Party argues that Blackwell as a councilman with a progressive record and a leader in the Black movement and the labor movement would be an effective candidate against Green and Marston.

DIVISIONS IN ESTABLISHED BLACK LEADERSHIP

A key question is, where does Charles Bowser stand? Bowser retains a strong influence on the basis of his primary showing and his championing of Black anger over election irregularities. From all indications, Bowser is seeking to consolidate a position as power broker from which he can deal with the Democratic Party leadership. From this standpoint the option of supporting an independent slate has a certain appeal but so does the Marston gambit. Both options are possible tactics to maximize leverage within the Democratic Party rather than leading to a real break with it.

Bowser encounters a real difficulty if he opts to support Green in exchange for greater influence in the Party and city government since he made much of Green being the tool of the old Rizzo machine. For the time being Bowser is keeping his options open. Independents must bring pressure on him to respect the verdict of the Black Political Convention.

Meanwhile two influential Black leaders, Congressman Bill Gray and State representative John White, have come out for Green. Both had been compelled to support Bowser during the primary in the name of Black unity, but now are follow-



Guardian/cpf

ing their own lights and have thrown a monkey wrench in Bowser's vision of a political brokerage house with himself as chairman of the board. In yet another development, Milton Street has threatened to throw his support to Marston if Bowser does not proclaim a slate of his own.

All these maneuvers threaten to whittle away the broad Black unity that has emerged over the last year. It also indicates the readiness with which some Black leaders are prepared to trade their influence with the masses for a few crumbs from the political establishment.

Neither the Democrats or the Republicans offer a way out from poverty and racism. "Lesser evilism" and pragmatic calculation which sells the Black vote to the highest bidder among the capitalist parties will not produce Black political power, but only a new cycle of raised expectations, defeat and demoralization. Leadership which proposes such a course,

no matter how great their present credibility, does a disservice to the Black community.

FROM THE BOTTOM UP

With or without the established Black leadership, BUF activists are proceeding to mobilize for the July convention. Community groups, rank and file trade unionists and a variety of political organizations are expected to attend.

While the convention grows out of the Black people's movement and reflects the special concerns of the Black community, convention planners envision a multi-national slate that can unite Blacks, whites and Hispanics around a program of demands that serve all working people. In all likelihood the Convention will be followed with a broader meeting that can build this kind of unity for the campaign.

Philly's Gay Pride Rally Draws 1000



June 26, "Stonewall Day" is the date referred to as the beginning of the Gay Liberation Movement. Across the country demonstrations and rallies were held to commemorate gays fighting back against their oppression. Above, San Francisco march on June 24.

Between 700 and 1000 gay men and lesbians, along with some non-gay supporters participated in Philadelphia's "Stonewall to San Francisco" Gay Pride Rally on JFK Plaza Saturday night, June 16. The crowd listened to militant speeches by local activists Kay Whitlock, who presented a feminist perspective on Lesbian and gay liberation, and George Bodamer and Joanne Montgomery, who recounted the history of the gay liberation movement in Philadelphia.

Karla Jay, well known lesbian author, with Allen Young, of several books on the gay liberation movement, spoke enthusiastically of the history of that movement, and its commitment to support for the struggles of other oppressed groups in our society.

A short message in solidarity with the struggle for liberation in South Africa, commemorating the third anniversary of the Soweto rebellion, was deliv-

ered by Walter Lear, and a memorial service for Harvey Milk and George Moscone was conducted by leaders of Philadelphia's gay religious organizations. Several musicians and poets rounded out the evening's program.

Approximately 40% of those attending were women, although the representation of gay and lesbian minorities was only about 10%. While full participation of women in the program was a step forward for Philadelphia, the lack of involvement of Blacks and other national minorities represented a continuing weakness.

As the largest and most politically focused gay rights event in several years in Philadelphia, the rally may have provided a launching pad for organizing for the October 14th National March for Lesbian/Gay Rights in Washington, DC, this fall.

Teamster Rank & File Rebellion

Taking Back the Union

by Duane Calhoun

"People think that big unions are so strong, but now our contracts are negotiated on the golf course. This union is an empty shell waiting to be crushed."
—Bill Slater, Teamsters Local 468.

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters is the largest union in the US, with almost two million members in trucking, warehouses, offices, canneries, and all kinds of factories and service industries. It's also one of the most undemocratic and corrupt at the top. For quite a while, the headlines have been full of news about Teamster officials and their mafia friends stealing from the union pension funds.

Many Teamster officials hold three or four different jobs at once, all appointed by other officials and each paying \$20,000 or \$30,000. Frank Fitzsimmons, Teamster International President, has the highest official salary of any union President in the world — \$160,000 in 1977.

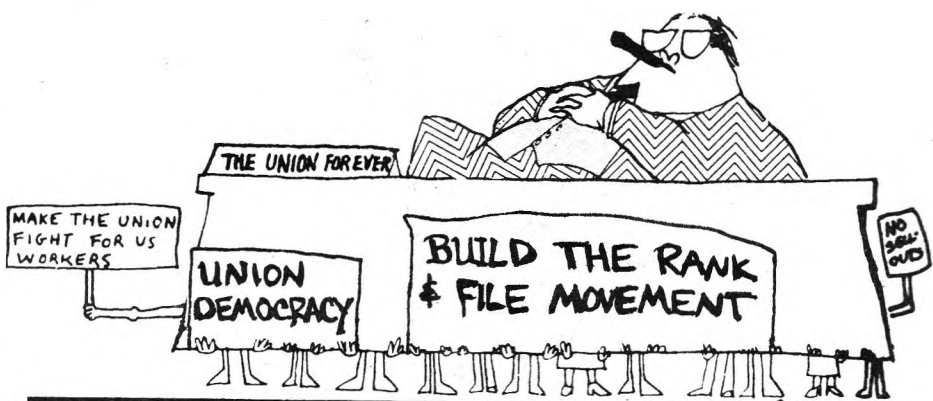
When it comes to ruling with an iron hand, Teamsters bureaucrats wrote the book. Contracts need only a one-third vote of the members to be accepted, not 51% as in most other unions. In 1976, the car-haulers contract was voted down twice by over sixty percent of the car-haul drivers, yet the International union declared it accepted. In 1973, steelhaulers voted their contract down by the same margin three times, and were forced to accept it by the International.

Over half of the Convention delegates are appointed by top officials, and these delegates in turn are the ones who elect the top officials. Rebellious locals can be put into trusteeship at any time, meaning that the International steps in and names new officers who will do their bidding. At the 1976 Convention, President Fitzsimmons answered the critics of the union bureaucracy: "For those who would say that it's time to reform this organization, that it's time that the officers quit selling out the membership of their union, I say to them — Go to hell!"

Like Bill Slater, most rank & file Teamsters are well aware of the sorry state of their union. Some don't care as long as they make that "big money" (the average hourly wage for truck drivers is about \$10, and some earn more). Some feel it's hopeless to try to change such a rotten system. But there are plenty of Teamsters who are fed up, and have decided it's time to take matters into their own hands. Right now, at least 10,000 rank & file Teamsters belong to reform caucuses in the union — the largest and best organized rank & file rebellion in any union in the US today.

FASH

The three major organizations among rank & file Teamsters are the Fraternal Association of Steelhaulers (FASH), Professional Drivers Council (PROD), and Teamsters For a Democratic Union (TDU). FASH was founded in 1967 by drivers who haul steel rods, sheets, and coils, and who own their own trucks. The Teamsters Union bargains with the companies for these owner-operators, as



dorchester community news/organizer

well as for the steelhaulers who drive company-owned trucks.

After years of being neglected and ignored by the Teamster bureaucracy, steelhaulers in Gary, Indiana staged a wildcat strike against both the companies and the union in 1967. After 7 weeks, they won their first pay increase in eleven years. FASH was born out of that strike. Its goals were to push for a better contract for steelhaulers, and for the right of steelhaulers to vote separately on their own contract. The Teamsters constitution allows all union members to vote on all the contracts, meaning that warehouse freight drivers and others vote on the steelhaulers contract, even though it doesn't affect them.

Over the years, FASH became discouraged by the obstacles to reforming the Teamsters, and began trying to get steel haulers to pull out of the union, making FASH a separate union of steelhaulers. Their strategy became dual unionism. Most steelhaulers realized that

they had far more power being a part of the same union as other truckers, regardless of how rotten the officers of that union were. As a result, FASH began to lose support.

Its last strike in November, 1978 got less support than ever before. Many former FASH members have joined the Steelhaulers Organizing Committee (SHOC — a branch of TDU) as a result of TDU's role in the Steelhaulers wildcat strike this April. The SHOC/TDU strategy is to unite all dissatisfied Teamsters to take back their union, not pull out of it.

PROD

The Professional Drivers Council (PROD) was founded in the early 70's after a conference on truck safety organized by Ralph Nader. It is the largest of the three organizations, with about five thousand members, mostly long-haul truck drivers. From the beginning, PROD has been heavily influenced by liberal lawyers, and has focused its strategy on newspaper exposures of union corruption, law suits, and lobbying for legislation in Washington.

Over the past year or so, PROD leaders have begun to see the weakness of this approach, and are putting some effort into organizing from the bottom up — campaigning to make local union by-laws more democratic, circulating petitions for rank & file contract demands, and running candidates in local union elections.

PROD takes up the issues of union democracy and corruption, as well as bread-and-butter issues like wages, hours, and safety. The leaders stay away from deeper problems, such as the racism that excludes Black workers from the best-paid jobs in the industry. PROD has been very hostile towards Teamsters with socialist or communist politics, and has made the same kind of public attacks on these workers as the union bureaucrats have made.

In 1977, the PROD national office sent a letter to PROD members claiming that socialists would "obtain their goals through infiltrating rank & file groups, and through striking to cripple industries and ultimately the country and our government." In other words, they claimed that socialists are devious foreign agents who want to make us all slaves. More recently, PROD has stopped such slanders, and did print a mild article against Red-baiting in a recent issue of their newspaper *Dispatch*. But with its political narrow-mindedness, and with its top-down strategy, PROD has a dim future. Many well-intentioned PROD members realize this, and have been pushing for some kind of working unity with TDU. As TDU continues to grow and to become more effective than PROD, such pressures will increase.

Although PROD has gotten the most headlines and has the most members, it's no longer the strongest or most effective of the rank & file organizations. That role is now played by Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), with about 4500 members in almost 40 local chapters.

WORKERS' VOICES

The Roots of Fitzsimmonsism

The corrupt, business unionism represented by Frank Fitzsimmons is nothing new in the Teamster's union. Here are two descriptions of former Teamster leaders. The first is by Sidney Lens, a former union organizer, from his book *The Crisis of American Labor*. The second is by Farrell Dobbs, the Trotskyist leader of the Minneapolis Teamster Strike, from his book *Teamster Rebellion*.

FROM RAGS TO RICHES

"The late Daniel Tobin, former President of the Teamsters Union, recalled in a moment of nostalgia...that he and the president before him used to sleep in the same bed in a \$2.50-a-week hotel room to save the union money.

"...By the time Daniel Tobin...retired from the presidency of the Teamsters Union in 1952 he was earning \$30,000 a year and the union was providing him with a \$45,000 home, rent free, free trips around the US and Europe for himself and his wife, a guarantee of a full pay pension after he retired in 1957, plus the free use of a \$162,000 mansion in Seattle. When Jimmy Hoffa took over the reins of the union in January, 1958, its treasury was a nice substantial \$41 million, and its new building in Washington, D.C. was \$5 million worth of lavish luxury.

"Hoffa, Beck, and Tobin were all once poor workers, but like so many other Americans they had climbed the ladder from rags to riches. Their story was not too much unlike that of many industrial magnates who had started as factory workers at the turn of the



century and ended as presidents of great corporations. Many unionists who think of their movement as more ethical than business have qualms about leaders who earn big salaries and live high; and undoubtedly they are right."

THE TEAMSTERS IN 1933

"...in 1933...the IBT had around 80,000 members nationally. Daniel J. Tobin had been general president of the organization since 1907 and he was a simon-pure representative of business unionism. He boasted in the *Teamsters Journal* that IBT members were 'not the rubbish that have come into other organizations.' The union didn't want people to join, he added, 'if they are going on strike tomorrow.'

"Apart from teamsters and stablemen, by then more or less a thing of the past, IBT membership was confined pretty much to truck drivers, helpers, and

platform workers at loading docks. Not only was the overall craft structure a narrow one, there were even narrower craft subdivisions within the organization. Members were divided up into separate local unions more or less according to the different commodities they handled. Each local in turn zealously guarded its jurisdiction over the given subcraft on which it was based.

"By dividing the workers organizationally in this manner Tobin was able to run the union with an iron hand. For that purpose he also maintained a staff of general organizers who were directly responsible to him. Their primary duty was to enforce Tobin's dictates and to report any signs of dissidence within the organization. Tobin himself, remained aloof from the rank and file. He laid down the law through the *Teamsters Journal* and called offenders onto the carpet at his headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana."

"TDU is growing like a prairie fire", according to Ken Paff, national organizer for TDU. About 1000 Teamsters have joined TDU since last summer, and over 50,000 read the TDU newspaper, *Convoy*.

TDU

TDU grew out of Teamsters for a Decent Contract, a group of United Parcel Service and freight drivers who came together during the 1976 contract negotiations. They led a number of wildcat strikes that year, including a two-week walkout in Detroit Local 299 — Jimmy Hoffa's old local. One of TDU's two national chairpersons, loading dock steward Pete Camarata, was one of the leaders of that strike.

From the beginning, TDU has emphasized a grass-roots strategy of organizing thousands of rank & filers to fight for their rights: better contracts (especially in the areas of job security, working conditions, safety, and shorter hours), democratic by-laws, the right to vote on all contracts and to elect all officers, and an end to race and sex discrimination on the job and in the union.

TDU has branches for three of the major contracts negotiated by the Teamsters — Carhauled Contract Committee for car-haulers, UPSurge for United Parcel Service, and Steel Haulers Organizing Committee for steelhaulers. TDU's strongest base is among the drivers who haul cars from the auto factories. A Local 299 carhauler told the *Organizer* that, "Carhauled Contract Committee has contacts at almost every company and in almost every barn, thousands of contacts among the twenty-eight thousand carhaulers." TDU members have also been elected to local office in several big carhaul Locals.

Besides these branches, TDU also has local chapters, where all TDU members in a local union work together on by-laws reform, circulating TDU literature and signing up members, and in local elections. (Workers in the same local may work for many different companies, and may do very different kinds of work.)

TDU has been pretty successful so far. Their biggest victory was in the April 1979 wildcat strike of steelhaulers, led by TDU, which resulted in the TDU/SHOC demands being won in the final contract. They got a wage increase, payment of sick days (including those they were never paid for under the last contract), and the right to a separate vote on their own contract. (NOTE: the *Organizer* mistakenly reported in the June issue that the steelhaulers did not win the right to a separate vote. They did, although it was by mail ballot instead of secret ballot in the local union halls. See the June issue for details of the steelhaul wildcat.)

TDU also got a few of its demands in other major 1979 Teamster contracts, including Carhaul and Freight. Among carhaulers, about 30 local unions passed resolutions supporting the TDU/CCC demands. In freight, about 18 large locals passed similar resolutions. *Business Week* magazine described rank & file influence on the Freight contract this way: "Two groups of union dissidents, PROD and TDU, plan to hold rallies during the last week of negotiations to demand an expensive contract. Both groups have already had some impact on the talks by pushing for a reduction in hours worked, better pensions, and health and safety measures — demands the union bargainers are emphasizing. But the two groups are not strong enough to bring about a contract rejection in a ratification vote." This turned out to be a pretty accurate

estimate of what TDU was and was not able to do in the Freight negotiations.

TDU members have won by-law reform in over a dozen locals — changes such as elected stewards and Business Agents and the right to vote on officers' salary increases. TDU has also won local elections in several locals — St. Louis Local 604 (3000 members, mostly carhaulers), Flint Local 332 (4000 members, also carhaulers), Lynn Massachusetts Local 42 (3000 grocery drivers), Oklahoma City Local 886 (8000 members, one of the largest locals in the South), and a small carhaul local in Florida (where a slate supported by both TDU and PROD won). TDU has also made good showings in such major locals as Pittsburgh Local 249 (6000 steelhaulers) and Detroit Local 299. TDU counts hundreds of shop stewards among its membership.

TDU has shown more understanding of the deeper problems facing the working class than has FASH or PROD. Point 10 of their *Rank & File Bill of Rights* reads, "Employers have used the difference in age, race, and sex to divide us for decades. We oppose these injustices and divisions. Support affirmative action to correct past injustices. Employers should bear the cost of their past discrimination, not the members."

At their last national convention, they voted to oppose the racist Weber court decision, and some of their local chapters actively worked to publicize the case and to have it overturned. At the same time, articles dealing with racism or sexism are few and far between in the newspaper, *CONVOY*, and anti-racist demands are not given a big emphasis in TDU contract proposals. This weakness certainly has something to do with TDU's weakness in sections of the union such as canneries, warehouse, and factories

(where Black and Hispanic workers are concentrated), compared to their strength among the mostly white truck drivers. Nor has TDU made much mention of other political issues. For example, while they denounced Carter's wage guidelines, TDU leadership has not used the opportunity to educate the rank & file about the control of the Democratic Party by the rich, and the urgent need of labor to move towards forming a new third party of the people.

Most TDU leaders agree that these issues are vital, but they say they fear alienating the rank & file if they go too far into "left field." It's a good thing that they want TDU to be a real workers organization and not a sect. But the kernel of this viewpoint is a lack of faith in the working class.

As a dynamic, growing movement the Teamster rank & file rebellion holds great promise not only for the Teamsters but for the labor movement as a whole. At the same time the left within the movement is going to have to address its weaknesses more consciously and systematically if it is to grow into a mature class struggle alternative to the Fitzsimmons brand of unionism.



The Karen Silkwood Case

by Oliver Law

For those of you who haven't seen the movie *The China Syndrome*, there is a scene in the film where someone is driving to a hearing where the safety of nuclear plants is being investigated. The person driving to the hearing is carrying papers that prove the nuclear plant shown in the film is unsafe. On the way, a car comes behind the one driven by our friend, and after a short chase pushes him off the road and down a short cliff. Our friend lives, but the papers he was carrying are gone. This scene did not come out of the head of a Hollywood script-writer, but rather it is taken from real life, and death!

MURDER TO KEEP THE LID ON

This scene was written about Karen Silkwood, who was murdered on the night of November 13, 1974. She was murdered while driving to a meeting with a *New York Times* reporter. She was carrying documents which proved that conditions at the Kerr-McGee nuclear fuel plant where she worked were unsafe. The people who forced Silkwood's car into a wall, and removed the documents from her car while she lay dying, hoped that this would be the final chapter in a long history of attempts by Karen Silkwood to show that Kerr-McGee was contaminating its workers with deadly radioactive plutonium. They were wrong!

Almost anyone who works in a plant knows that it is unsafe. Some are better than others, but when push comes to shove, it's profits first, safety last. It is the same in the nuclear industry, the only difference being that lack of safety means radioactive contamination. The Kerr-McGee Co., the US's largest miner and processor of radioactive uranium, pushed production over safety.

In the summer of 1972 Karen Silkwood went to work for Kerr-McGee at its Cimarron, Oklahoma plant. The plant worked with radioactive plutonium for nuclear reactors. From the beginning, Karen Silkwood saw the unsafe conditions and fought against them. Silkwood became health and safety liaison for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union which was organizing at her plant.

On November 5 and 6, 1974 Karen discovered that she had been contaminated by plutonium. At first it was thought that she had been contaminated at the plant, but on Nov. 7 it was discovered that she was contaminated before entering the plant. Investigators from the plant went to Silkwood's apartment and found radioactive plutonium in the cheese and meat in her refrigerator.

A few days later officials from Kerr-McGee came to Silkwood's apartment at 3:00 AM without any warning, and told her that because of the contamination everything in her apartment would have to be destroyed. Everything Karen had was taken to Idaho and buried. The reason for this was that Kerr-McGee was hoping to find the papers which they knew Karen had which proved that they had faked X-rays on the welds of the fuel rods they were making. The papers were not there, but a few days later the documents were removed from Karen's smashed car, never to be seen again.

KERR-McGEE GUILTY

Karen Silkwood was not forgotten, nor the cause she had fought for — safe

working conditions. Aside from the questions concerning her death, the question of how the plutonium came to be in her refrigerator, and the unsafe conditions at her plant became issues which the Supporters of Silkwood forced a Federal Court to examine. On May 18th, 1979, a federal jury found Kerr-McGee at fault for the plutonium in Silkwood's apartment, and awarded her relatives \$505,000 in actual damages, and \$10 million in punitive damages. This was the first time that a company had been successfully sued for radiation contamination outside of the workplace.

Everyone in the trial agreed that Karen had been contaminated by the plutonium in her apartment, so the issue became how the plutonium got there. Kerr-McGee had the gall to argue that Silkwood had brought home the plutonium herself, that she had purposely contaminated herself to dramatize the unsafe conditions at the plant. Nobody, including the jury, bought that. Rather, the whole trial turned on Kerr-McGee's continual safety and health violations, and on the fact that the government standards for radiation were a joke.



Kerr-McGee nuclear fuel plant at Cimarron, Oklahoma where Karen Silkwood fought for safe working conditions is now shut down. Karen Silkwood's family was awarded a \$10.5 million settlement because she was contaminated by radiation before her death.

Judge Frank Theis ruled during the trial that plutonium is so unsafe that Kerr-McGee was to be held liable for all emissions of radiation, even if the company met government standards. The Judge said that governmental standards need not be "accepted as right or accurate if they defy human credence."

KAREN DID NOT DIE IN VAIN

The federal jury looked at the government standards, they looked at the reality of radiation contamination and its effects on people. The jury listened to Kerr-McGee's testimony as to how safely they ran the plant, and they listened to the workers who had to live under Kerr-McGee's programs. It became clear that the only safety Kerr-McGee was interested in was the safety to make as much money as possible.

The jury listened to Kerr-McGee's tale of how Karen Silkwood had stolen plutonium from the plant and put it in her cheese and meat. They also listened to the testimony about Karen Silkwood, about the changes she wanted for her co-workers and herself, about the improvements in the workplace which would make it safer. They looked at Kerr-McGee. Their verdict, interpreted by OCAW Vice-President Anthony Mazzochi as "a vindication of Karen's efforts and proof positive that her claims to us about what was going on inside the plant were accurate. It's a milestone in making plants safer for workers. . ."

The case of Karen Silkwood vs. Kerr-McGee is not over. On the company's side there are the appeals that they will make hoping to overturn the jury's verdict. And for the Supporters of Silkwood there is the fight to show even further Kerr-McGee negligence in its production of fuel rods, as well as bring to light the facts concerning Karen's death.

The Supporters of Silkwood need our support, and we need them. To make contribution or for further info: Supporters of Silkwood, 520 Butternut St., NW, Washington, DC 20021 (202-882-5508).

CENTRAL AMERICA : Repression and Revolution

by Kate O'Hare

On May 20, millions of Americans tuned into the national news and saw ABC reporter Bill Stewart executed by government troops in Nicaragua, a small country in Central America. The government troops, known as the National Guard, are fighting a war against the people of Nicaragua.

The brutal execution shown on TV was unusual for two reasons: the person killed was an American, and a cameraman got the murder on film. Every day the National Guard murders numerous Nicaraguans in cold blood: they take no prisoners. Sometimes those murdered are members of the Sandinista rebel army, but more often they are innocent civilians.

The Guard killed over 3000 in the Sandinista rebellion of last September, which almost toppled the dictator Somoza. Most of those killed were civilians, not Sandinistas. The National Guard indiscriminately shot all young males after retaking some areas from the Sandinistas.

In the current Sandinistas offensive, it is likely that the death toll has already surpassed that of last September. Murders by the Guard are common, what is rare is that anyone films them.

Nicaragua is not alone. Both El Salvador and Guatemala, two neighboring countries, have also been plagued by vicious military repression by the government. In El Salvador, again by an unusual coincidence, a CBS cameraman filmed a massacre which took place on May 8.

If you tuned into Walter Cronkite that night, you saw army troops fire on unarmed demonstrators on the steps of a church. The demonstrators climbed over each other in a desperate attempt to reach shelter inside the church. Twenty-three dead bodies remained prone outside.

In El Salvador too, the army is at war with its own people. Over the past

two years hundreds of other demonstrators have been killed. Hundreds more have been arrested at night, pulled from their beds, carried away to be shot and thrown into ditches on the outskirts of town. It's rarely on American TV, but the deadly war goes on every day.

In Guatemala the military government has created the Secret Anti-Communist Army — a network of informers and murderers which has been killing Guatemalans at the rate of 15 a day over the past year. The targets are anyone who organizes a trade union, or speaks too loudly in favor of democracy, or even asks too many questions about someone else who has been murdered by the Secret Anti-Communist Army.

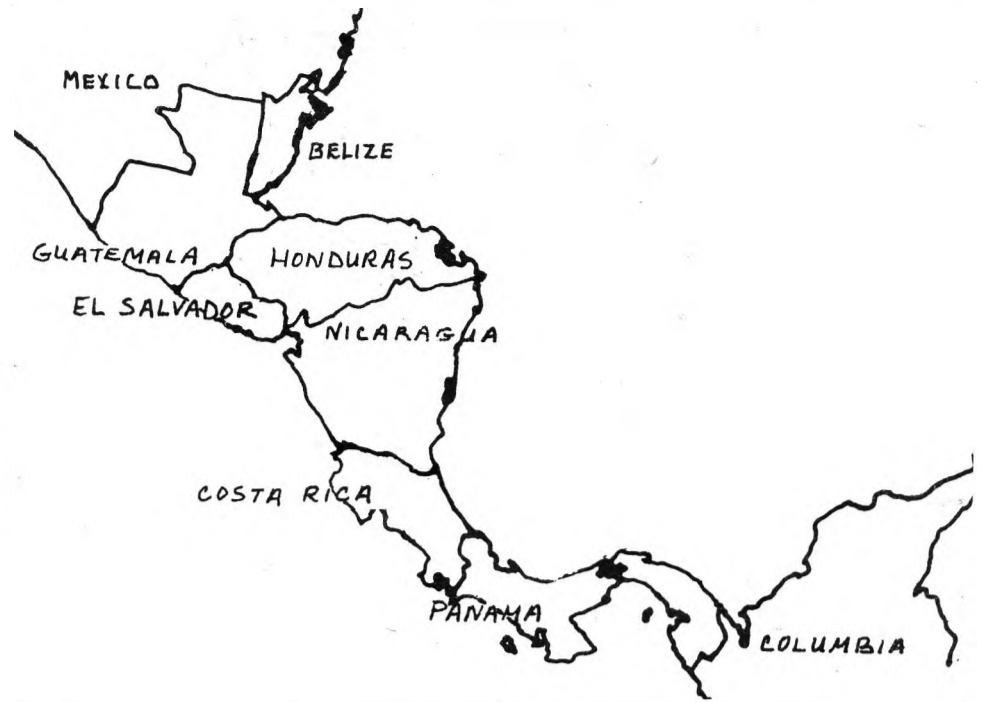
TROPICAL PARADISE?

These days much of Central America looks more like Nazi Germany than a tropical paradise. The murders and tortures for which more southern countries like Chile and Argentina have become notorious are now commonplace in Central America as well. Why?

Central America has always had military governments which ruled with an iron hand, backed by the United States. Many countries in Central America have never had democracy. Repression is particularly intense now, with civil war going on in Nicaragua and close at hand in El Salvador and Guatemala.

The people in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala have been taking steps to get rid of the military dictatorships which have ruled their countries for as long as anyone can remember. Nicaragua has taken the lead. There the Sandinista Liberation Front has organized an army of 20,000 guerillas which is taking on the government's force of 12,000 National Guardsmen.

The Sandinistas have the support of the people, and can count on civilians to help them at the barricades during confrontations with the National Guard, but the battle has spread beyond the borders of Nicaragua. Guerilla groups are active in both Guatemala and El Salvador.



The mass movements in those countries have carried out strikes and demonstrations against their governments on an almost daily basis, despite the repression. In all three countries moderate opposition elements have been increasingly pushed aside, as people see that it is impossible to reform the present system when there are no free elections, no freedom of the press, and no freedom to organize trade unions.

In all three countries the Carter administration has done little to stop the government terror, despite all the talk about human rights, and despite the fact that the US has enormous power in the region. As in Iran under the Shah, the US finds itself bound to repressive and unpopular regimes by decades of economic ties.

As the crisis has deepened, traditional rivalries between countries have been set aside. Instead, the left and the right in each country has sought alliances with their counterparts across the border.

In December of last year the Presidents of Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador met secretly on a farm in Guatemala to coordinate strategy. Last March leaders of the various guerilla movements met in Honduras. In September last year 30,000 people marched in the streets of Guatemala's capital city in support of the Sandinista guerillas in Nicaragua.

Increasingly, analysts are pointing to a new "domino" theory which holds that if the left can overthrow the govern-

ment in one country in the region, then other military regimes would be in danger of being overthrown as well. The US has played a role in uniting the various military regimes through the Central American Defense Council which is made up of military units from different countries and coordinated by the US.

Today the military dictators in Central America no longer rule with confidence. The popular struggle against these governments has been gaining ground in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. A region right in the "backyard" of the US, known as a stable spot for US business investments, has become yet another trouble zone for the US State Department and the military regimes with which it is allied. US businesses have invested about \$600 million in the three countries, and US investment accounts for 3/4 of all foreign investment.

Our job in this country is to support the struggles of the peoples of Central America to rid their countries of terror and military dictatorships which are supported principally by the US government. All of Carter's talk about human rights is hypocritical: when it comes to choosing between democracy and a safe climate for US business, the Carter administration has always chosen the latter. In Central America this had meant a slight tap on the wrist for the military governments in the name of human rights, along with quiet military and economic aid to make sure the generals can win their war against their own people.

El Salvador: The Next 'Domino' ?

by Kate O'Hare

The people in El Salvador face a regime as bad as Nicaragua's. The military has run the country almost without interruption. The last mass opposition movement occurred in 1932 when a peasant revolt was crushed by the military with 30,000 deaths — 3% of the population. The revolution had been led by Faribundo Marti, who fought with Sandino in Nicaragua before going back to El Salvador. One of the main guerilla groups today is called the Faribundo Marti Peoples' Liberation Forces.

The military in El Salvador has refused to accept the election of moderate opposition figures to the Presidency in 1972 and 1977, altering the election results which had overwhelmingly opposed the military candidates, and sending the opposition leaders into exile. In both cases the army then attacked demonstrators who poured into the streets to protest the fraud. Over 30 people were killed in 1977.

4.5 million people live in El Salvador. Five families own 22% of the land, while

70% of all farmers own only 6% of the land. El Salvador has the lowest average caloric intake in Latin America, and 75% of the children under five suffer from malnutrition.

The government has organized a 70,000 member spy network called "Orden" (Order) to control the population. It is Orden which has been responsible for much of the killing of opposition figures. Over 125 people have disappeared in just the last year. Their relatives have formed a Committee for the Disappeared Prisoners, but the government continues to deny any knowledge of their whereabouts.

The Church has been a particular target of right-wing violence; in the past two years, 19 priests have been expelled, 12 tortured and jailed, and four killed, for their work in favor of the poor. The Archbishop of El Salvador, Oscar Romero, openly opposes the military regime and denounced the military's "uniformed terrorism." He has been nominated for the Nobel Prize.

The urban factory workers have become an important force in opposition to the government, along with the traditionally militant peasantry. In 1975 a number of unions and peasant organizations came together to form the Popular Revolutionary Bloc, which has 30,000 members and has been leading the recent demonstrations against the military. The current unrest began in March when 120 workers at the Constanca shoe factory occupied their plant seeking seemingly moderate demands: transportation to work and better bathroom privileges. The army attacked the factory, killing eight workers and wounding 20.

Over 100 workers remained in the factory for four more days despite the repression, threatening to blow up the factory with dynamite unless the military withdrew. The strike was finally settled as the company met the workers' demands.

WORKERS LEAD STRUGGLE

The Constanca strike led to a number of other strikes in protest, carried out by union affiliated with the Popular Revolutionary Bloc. The electrical workers, 1200 strong, went out for their own wage demands and also in solidarity with the workers at La Constanca. Their strike paralyzed the economy until it was settled.

The government then kidnapped five of the leaders of the Popular Revolution-

ary Bloc. The Bloc, in response, seized the French and Costa Rican Embassies, demanding the release of the leaders, who the government denied having arrested. Finally the government released two of the leaders and sent them into exile, while continuing to deny that they held the other three. The Bloc then also occupied the main cathedral in the capital city San Salvador, and it was here on May 8 that the army killed 23 demonstrators.

Despite the repression, the Bloc went on to occupy three more churches and also the Venezuelan embassy. 20,000 demonstrators attended the funerals of the people killed on May 8. On May 22, the army again fired on demonstrators, this time killing 14 outside the Venezuelan embassy. The same day, one of the guerilla groups assassinated a top government official in retaliation.

While the moderate opposition is weak and small, the more radical left has a large popular base in El Salvador. Unfortunately, it has been unable to unite. Besides the Bloc, which is the most militant of the mass organizations, there are two other mass coalitions which are slightly smaller. There are also three guerilla organizations, each one allied with a mass organization. Two were founded in 1970, one in 1975. Until the left is able to overcome its internal differences, it will find it hard to overthrow the military, despite the overwhelming unpopularity of the government.

Nicaragua: Somoza on the Ropes

by Kate O'Hare

Nicaragua is a country of about two million people which has been run by one family, the Somozas, since the 1930's. The Somoza family owns much of the wealth of the country, and is in charge of the National Guard, the country's army. They came to power in the 1930's with the help of the US Marines, who were just ending a 21-year occupation of Nicaragua. The Marines created and trained the National Guard. They also fought against and finally murdered Sandino, a popular leader who led an insurrection in an attempt to establish a democratic Nicaragua.

Today, the guerillas take their name from Sandino. The Sandinista National Liberation Front has been the main force in shaking the Somozas' long hold on power. The Somozas have never permitted free elections, and open political opposition has been tolerated only when it has been weak. The Sandinistas have stepped into this political vacuum and gained the support of most people in Nicaragua over the course of the last 17 years of struggles, since their founding in 1962.

Today unemployment in Nicaragua is 40%, 46% of the children die by the age of four, and 60% of the nation is illiterate. 50% of the population lives in the countryside and has an annual income of only \$150 per person. Meanwhile, the Somoza family fortune is estimated to be \$500 million, and the family owns 25%

of the country's usable land and 26 of the nation's largest businesses.

The present crisis in Nicaragua was touched off in January of last year when government agents assassinated the leader of the moderate, open opposition, newspaper editor Pedro Chamorro. The assassination brought calls for Somoza's resignation from all sectors of society, and sparked massive demonstrations and a general strike which paralyzed the country.

The moderate legal opposition came together in the Broad Opposition Front, led by businessmen who opposed Somoza's stranglehold on the economy. But the Sandinista guerillas took the next step. In August of last year they captured the National Palace in the capital city of Managua, taking over 1000 hostages, among them many top government officials. Somoza was forced to give in to their demands of freeing political prisoners, paying money, and allowing the Sandinistas out of the country.

In September, the Sandinistas led a nationwide insurrection. They captured four of the largest cities in Nicaragua, but were unable to hold them. The insurrection was premature. The National Guard used tanks and airplanes against the guerillas and their civilian supporters in a war which lasted several weeks. When the National Guard retook the cities, according to a report by the Organization of American States, it wantonly killed thousands of civilians. The Sandinistas sur-



The flag of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, the leaders of the Nicaraguan insurrection to throw out the military regime of Somoza.

vived with their ranks intact, and the population rallied even more to their support instead of bowing down under the terror.

After the September insurrection, the US government became alarmed at the prospect of a takeover by the guerillas and pushed negotiations between the Broad Opposition Front and Somoza. These broke down in January of this year, however, as Somoza refused to call a plebiscite to determine if he should resign.

Since then, the Broad Opposition Front has fallen into disarray, and the National Patriotic Front has arisen as an alternative. The Sandinistas are represented in the National Patriotic Front, as are many trade union and community organizations. The Broad Opposition Front recently sought joint talks with the National Patriotic Front.

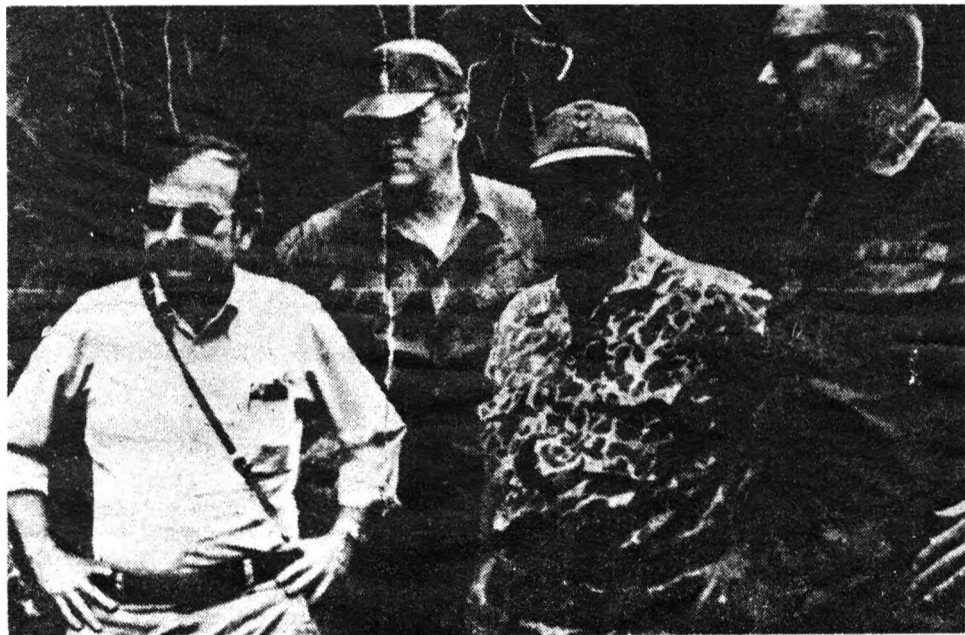
UNITED STATES' ROLE

Meanwhile, the US gave up on trying to replace Somoza. Instead, the US

recently voted to give Nicaragua a new \$40 million loan from the International Monetary Fund, opening the way for new loans from private banks in the US. Somoza spends 43% of the budget on the military. The US has also recently installed a new ambassador in Nicaragua, with previous services in Vietnam, Guatemala and Uruguay, all countries where repressive regimes have fought a war against their own people.

While the US was maneuvering to prop up Somoza, the Sandinista guerillas rearmed, with much heavier equipment and many new recruits. Earlier this year they captured two cities and held them for more than a week, wearing down the National Guard and testing their capabilities. Meanwhile, they reconciled their internal differences. Three previously competing factions united; this time they actually merged, going beyond the more limited military coordination achieved in last September's insurrection.

(continued on page 17)



Many of the leaders of the National Guard, Somoza's army, were trained in the US. US military advisors (above) in Nicaragua with the National Guard. US workers must demand non-intervention by the US government.

CONDECA: Pentagon in Central America

The Central American Defense Council (CONDECA) was formed by the Pentagon in 1961 after the US government was startled by the success of the Cuban revolution. CONDECA is a joint organization of the armies of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. CONDECA is run in consultation with the US Southern Command in the Panama Canal Zone.

The Pentagon played a key role in overcoming the traditional regional rivalries in Central America in order to set up CONDECA. The idea behind CONDECA is mutual aid. In case of "internal subversion" each country would use its own army to repress the opposition, but in case things got out of hand, any country could count on the support of the military of the other three countries. Panama and Costa Rica were originally planned to be partners in CONDECA, but they have adopted a more progressive political position and have never been active.

It is possible that CONDECA will be used by the US to intervene in an even more massive way in Nicaragua. It has happened before. To protect Somoza after the big Nicaraguan earthquake in 1972, when homeless Nicaraguans were outraged at the Somoza dictatorship, CONDECA intervened. Troops from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador came into Nicaragua, to make sure "law and order" were maintained.

It should be remembered that the officers of these armies were trained at US military schools. According to US Army figures, nearly 14,000 Central American officers have been trained by the US. Five-thousand of them were from Nicaragua, which has received the largest amount and most consistent support of any country in the region from the US military.

Guatemala: Labor Fights Back

by Kate O'Hare

In April Manuel Lopez was delivering Coca-Colas on his regular route in Guatemala City. Two men stepped up to him and knifed him to death. The reason? Manuel Lopez was a union leader at the Coca-Cola Bottling Company, a union which has been in the forefront of opposition to Guatemala's government. Last December the president of the Coca-Cola workers' union was also murdered. Many of its leaders are now in exile.

One of them, Israel Marquez, testified this past May at a Coca-Cola stockholders meeting in Wilmington, Delaware. He argued in favor of a resolution calling for management to investigate labor abuses in Guatemala. "In Guatemala, crime is referred to as Coca-Cola," he said. The resolution, sponsored by US church groups, was voted down.

The repression suffered by the Coca-Cola workers is not unusual. Guatemala's military have gained notoriety around the world for their violence against Guatemala's people. Over the years, the military has organized several "civilian" death squads to eliminate any political opposition.

Last year, when asked by a reporter about the death squads, the Minister of the Interior claimed the government could not control them and said "it's everyone for himself" out on the streets. Currently the military is opposed by one guerilla group (the Guerilla Army of the Poor) and by increasingly militant and widespread unions of peasants and workers.

Widespread opposition to the military was expressed after the massacre in May 1978 of 100 unarmed peasant demonstrators at Panzos. Over 100,000 Guatemalans demonstrated against the murders by the Army. Much of the opposition then supported Colom

Argueta, a moderate leader. But those who hoped for reform within the existing system through Argueta and his United Revolutionary Front were disillusioned when Argueta was gunned down last March. In response over 200,000 turned out for his funeral. Since then the government violence has continued, claiming about 15 lives a day, mostly rank-and-file leaders.

The trade union movement has played a key role in the struggle against the government. In October 1978 all sectors of the popular movement came together, led by the trade unions, to call a general strike against the government's attempt to double city bus fares. This increase would have resulted in a 30% reduction in the monthly income of city workers. The government's response to the strike left 40 dead, 1200 arrested, and 2000 fired from their jobs. Several unions were declared illegal for their support of the strike. Nevertheless, the government lost and was forced to back down, keeping bus fares at the same price.

Recently, over 140 popular organizations have come together to form the Democratic Front Against Repression to expose government violence and aid the families of victims. Such an organization is overdue. Government violence has long been notorious in Guatemala. Amnesty International estimates that the government killed over 20,000 Guatemalans between 1966 and 1976.

The cause of such wide-scale repression in Guatemala, as in the other countries of Central America, is an unjust distribution of wealth and the force used by the wealthy to keep the poor from redistributing that wealth. The military has run Guatemala with a free hand ever since the reform government of Jacobo Arbenz was overthrown by the CIA and United Fruit Co. in 1954.

The Brown Decision 25 Years Later

by Jack Owens

One day in 1950, Oliver Brown, a welder at the Santa Fe railroad yard in Topeka, Kansas, and his wife Leola received the usual notice reminding parents to register their children for the upcoming school year. They knew, however, that they were not intended to register their daughter, Linda, at the Sumner School four blocks from their home, because Sumner was one of 16 Topeka elementary schools for whites only, and the Browns were Black. Seven-year-old Linda would, instead, have to walk through the railroad yards and then catch a bus to all-Black Monroe School.

When the Browns defied the Topeka School Board and tried to register her at Sumner School, they were denied. They, along with other Black Topeka parents then joined other Black parents in South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware and Washington DC in the legal assault on segregated schools that four years later was decided in their favor and has become known simply as "Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas."

"Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

—Supreme Court of the United States
May 17, 1954

Brown vs. the Board of Education (Brown) was the high point of 60 years of struggle for desegregation which began in 1896 when the Supreme Court, in *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, put the Constitutional stamp of approval on "separate but equal" facilities.

"Separate but equal", of course, was a hoax from the start and was never meant to be more than a thin legal cover for the inequality which had for generations denied minorities decent schools, housing jobs, health care, and equal protection under the law.

To the thousands of Blacks who were lynched or imprisoned in the 60 long years of struggle between *Plessy* and *Brown*, the popular notion that the Supreme Court was "giving" *Brown* to Blacks out of generosity or moral conscience would have seemed a cruel joke which hid the truth—that *Brown* was a concession wrung reluctantly from the ruling class at a great cost in human suffering.

Regardless of the Supreme Court's motives, however, *Brown*, by breaking the legal back of segregation, marked the springboard for the struggles of an entire generation—from the sit-ins of the '50's and '60's, to the Black Panthers, to the struggle of Black sanitation workers in Memphis, to today's struggles for affirmative action and—again—desegregation.

The 25 year struggle for school desegregation since *Brown* represents the clearest possible example of bourgeois tactics in the arena of the reform struggle: grant concessions only when forced to by mass militancy; constantly work to keep the effect of reforms as narrow as possible; and when the mass movement quiets down, scramble like hell to take back as many reforms as you can get away with.

The US Civil Rights Commission in their latest status report on public school desegregation documents the extent of ruling class success in this case. One-quarter century after *Brown*, 46% of minority children still attend segregated schools. The percentage of Black children two or more years behind their grade level for the age is twice that of whites, and since *Brown* this gap has widened.

If decisions of the Earl Warren Supreme Court provided a springboard for the Civil Rights movement of the '50's and '60's, the Warren Burger Court, through the "doctrine of intent" has provided the springboard for reaction and

racism in the '70's. Simply put, the "doctrine of intent" means that in order to win broad correction of segregation (such as busing) it is no longer sufficient to prove the existence of segregated schools; it must also be proved that school boards and/or municipal governments have purposefully promoted segregation.

THE COURTS TODAY — THE DOCTRINE OF INTENT

While the effects of discrimination are clearly visible, the *intent* to discriminate is more difficult to establish and legally prove. More important still, racial inequality does not depend on the conscious promotion of discrimination, but reflects the consequences of past discrimination and the present "natural" logic of the profit system and capitalist institutions. The doctrine of intent serves to get the courts out of the business of addressing discrimination and leaves the structure of racial inequality intact.

St. Louis, Missouri, is a highly segregated city—in 1973, 148 of its 181 schools had a student population either 90% Black or 90% white. In spite of this, US District Judge James H. Meredith found that the St. Louis school district could not employ busing as a remedy. Meredith's comment on the case sums up the essence of the current trend:

"As a matter of general principle, assigning school children to schools in their neighborhoods does not offend the Constitution. Likewise, racial imbalance in schools is not in itself a violation of the Constitution."

In 1977 the Supreme Court overturned a lower court-ordered busing plan for Dayton, Ohio. In arguing for the Dayton Board of Education, attorney David C. Greer took the racist misinterpretation of *Brown* to the limit. He argued that *Brown* meant only that a school district must operate a single school system and deny no child access to education on the basis of race. Even if a school board gerrymandered school district boundaries to insure total segregation, he argued, it would still meet the *Brown* criteria of a single school system!

St. Louis; Dayton and Columbus, Ohio; Detroit; Austin, Texas; Omaha, Nebraska—the list of cities where the Supreme Court has overturned desegregation orders grows longer every day.

Nowhere in the original *Brown* decision is there any justification for the "doctrine of intent". This raises the question of how two Supreme Courts 25 years apart could make such totally divergent interpretations of the law. The answer is that the law, despite the myth that it stands above classes, is nothing more than a vehicle for ruling class policy. In 1954 one interpretation of the law was expedient—in 1979 a different interpretation is more useful.

In spite of the doctrine of intent, discrimination has been blatant enough in many cities to force court-ordered busing. Often in these situations the effort has shifted to discouraging and demoralizing minorities by placing the burden of busing on their shoulders, meanwhile leaving their second-class schools unchanged.

For example—in Indianapolis, Indiana, an 11 year battle for desegregation ended in Judge Hugh Dillin ruling on April 24, 1979, that 8000 Black Indianapolis students were to be bused to achieve desegregation, but no white students were to be bused. He reasoned that since Blacks were "claiming" to be suffering from inferior education they should not regard massive one-way busing as an imposition. A classic example of making victims pay for the crime. Similar decisions have been handed down in Queens, NY, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and elsewhere.

"SEGREGATION ACADEMIES"

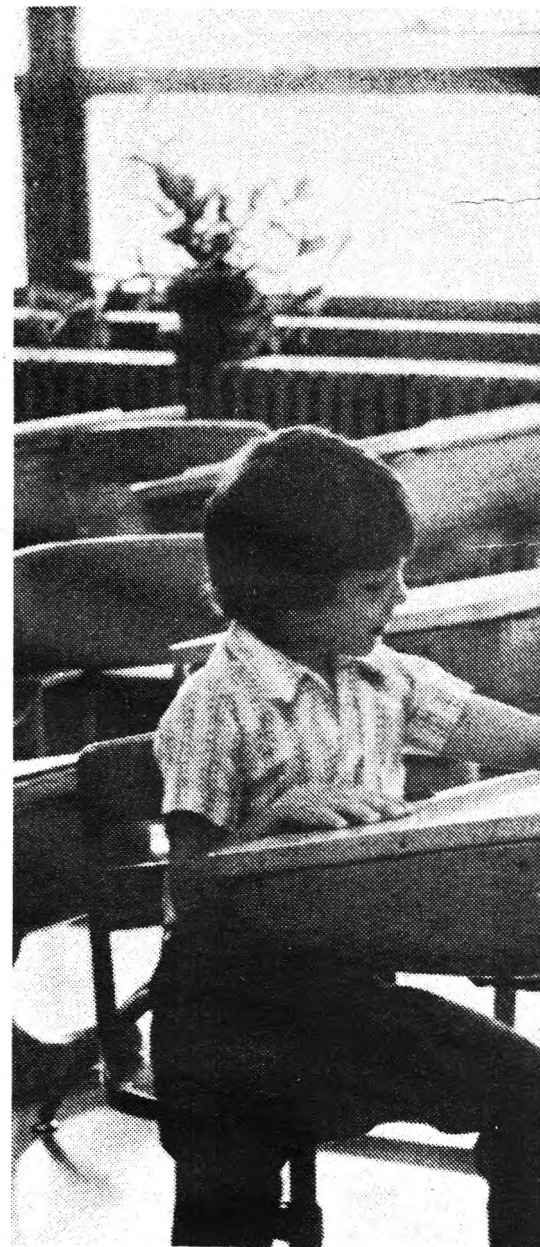
While the courts have been the chief molders of ruling class policy, the executive and legislative branches have also played their part. Last year, for example, the Internal Revenue Service—an executive agency—threatened to remove the tax-exempt status of private all-white schools founded strictly to avoid desegregation—the so-called "segregation academies". An immediate outcry by racists across the land, however, caused the IRS to back down immediately with barely a whisper of protest.

Congress, meanwhile, has passed legislation sponsored by Senator Joseph R. Biden of Delaware that forbids federal agencies from cutting off funds to school districts that refuse to bus children for the purpose of desegregation.

Meanwhile public school systems in cities with increasing minority populations are simply being financially abandoned. Here in Philadelphia we have seen the steady increase in budget cuts, school closings, and layoffs parallel with the increasing percentage of minority students.

In Clarendon County, South Carolina, (one of the original petitioners in *Brown*) the public school system has one white student and 2029 Black students. All other white children have either crossed county lines to attend white public

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In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that segregated US school systems are still largely segregated. For all, Black and white, is the only way to benefit from such a campaign.

Bankers Happy with

by Jack Owens

"This city cannot afford the school system it has anymore."

—John Bunting, Chairman,
First Pennsylvania Bank,
May, 1977

"I consider it a major financial achievement in this country to present this budget that for all intents and purposes is balanced today."

—Michael Marcuse,
School Superintendent,
May 30, 1979

John Bunting and his banker friends must be pleased—Philadelphia finally has a school system it *can* afford. Marcuse's open joy in announcing a balanced school budget for 1979/80 reflects the number one priority shared by both school officials and the banks—namely, "fiscal responsibility."

If Marcuse's first priority were the education of Philadelphia children, we might have expected his glee to be tempered by concern that: 1) seven of the eight school

districts scored below the national norm of the latest California Achievement Tests; 2) Philadelphia high schools are graduating a disturbingly high number of functional illiterates; 3) the schools are doing a grossly inadequate job of preparing our young adults for a shrinking job market which has left an estimated 50% of minority youth unemployed.

Mr. Marcuse has conveniently forgotten that next year's balanced budget was made possible only by massive cuts the preceding two years. A \$173 million deficit in the 1977/78 budget led to the lay-off of 3750 school employees, school closings and program cuts by the score—including a 50% cut in vital counseling services.

It was this same 1977/78 deficit which put virtual control of the schools into the hands of the banks. In classic blackmail fashion, John Bunting demanded the right to have final approval over school budgets as the price for a \$50 million loan which finally erased the \$173 million deficit. Bunting bluntly stated at the time that "we (the banks) have our



Philadelphia's Schools - Still Separate and Unequal

by Jack Owens

Twenty-five years after *Brown* and eleven years after the original Pennsylvania Human Rights Commission order to desegregate, Philadelphia schools are more segregated than in 1954! In 1957, 23% of Philadelphia public schools had at least 90% Black enrollment. Today that figure is 38%, and 69% of the schools are segregated by definition. In the words of Richard D. Hanusey, deputy school superintendent in charge of desegregation, Philadelphia's progress since *Brown* "makes the tortoise look like a jetsetter."

The legacy of segregation is seen daily in the under-equipped and understaffed schools prevalent in minority communities. As minority enrollment has steadily risen to 68% over the last decade there has been a corresponding series of budget cuts which have accelerated the decay of these same schools.

The 1978/9 California Achievement Tests - given nationally each year - show that only the predominantly white District 8 (the Northeast), with the best and newest schools, scores above the national norm. All seven other school districts are below the norm with the overwhelmingly minority District 5 in north-central Philadelphia having the lowest scores.

Adrian Davis, a graduating senior at 99.3% Black West Philadelphia High School (Philly's most segregated) expresses the results of this legacy: "The Cauca-

sian schools get everything. We're always at the bottom of the list. We get used books. . ."

THE FARCE OF VOLUNTARY DESEGREGATION

The Philadelphia School Board's answer to this indictment has been the sham "voluntary" desegregation plan in place since February. This plan was approved by the Commonwealth Court in 1977 in spite of the fact that similar plans elsewhere have never achieved significant desegregation.

The plan calls for the voluntary transfer of students to one of 33 schools with special programs that range from "magnet" schools like the High School for the Creative and Performing Arts to special enrichment centers emphasizing basic math, reading, and science.

Under the Commonwealth Court the Board must entice 19,500 students to transfer to these programs for desegregation purposes by June, 1980. In an effort to lure white students, the target schools have primarily been placed in areas like Queens Village where affluent white families are replacing Black and white working class families driven out by skyrocketing real estate speculation. The bulk of the worst schools in the heart of the minority communities have been left untouched.

To no one's surprise the voluntary plan has been a dismal failure. As of May 18, 3,287 students - only 150 white - had transferred, and deputy superintendent Hanusey had heard from only an additional 347 pupils - 67 white - who were prepared to change schools in September, 1979. If these figures hold, the School Board will have achieved only 20% of its mandated goal with only two semesters of the plan remaining.

If there exists anyone who still believes that Marcuse and the Board have any commitment to desegregation, recent events around Edison and Kensington High Schools should dispel such illusions once and for all.

Overwhelmingly Black and Hispanic Edison, with the lowest academic scores in the city and a physical plant unfit for even its rats and roaches, has been the source of parent anger for years. Nearby Kensington High, with the second lowest scores, is hardly better.

In overtly racist fashion, school policy for more than 30 years has allowed white parents from Kensington, Bridesburg and Richmond to send their kids to predominantly white Frankford High instead of Edison or Kensington.

Earlier this year in an attempt to shore up the embarrassing desegregation figures, Marcuse suddenly ruled out this option. Angry white parents vowed to keep their children out of public schools and a group of area legislators, led by State Representative Robert A. Borski Jr. threatened to work against increased state funding for Philadelphia schools unless the order was rescinded.

Under this barrage of racist intimidation Marcuse caved in and suggested that a new school be built. *Not* the new Edison High School promised for years, which would serve several thousand Black, white and Hispanic students, but an unplanned for, completely new school to include *only* the approximately 200 children of protesting white parents and an equal number of Blacks and Hispanics. To add insult to injury, Marcuse had the gall to claim the scheme was motivated only by his desire to foster desegregation!

When questioned by the press Marcuse complained that "You seem intent to find something ominous in this, some movement by the Board to subvert the desegregation process." Now Mr. Marcuse, *how* could we ever think such a thing?!

Black School Board member Augustus Baxter accurately summed up the response of the minority community: "We (the Board) didn't give a damn (about Edison) before, when it was just Black and Hispanic kids. . . They're openly and blatantly bringing it up that we've got to do something 'special' because white parents are angry."

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Michael Coers

ted schools were illegal. Today, 25 years later, massive campaign demanding quality education and this racist segregation. All our children will

New School Budget

own credibility at stake" - not to mention profits. This \$50 million loan, by itself, netted the banks a cool \$12 million in interest.

The 1978/79 budget was in the red a mere \$61 million - paid for by still more program deletions and the layoff of 1800 teachers and non-teaching school employees. Although these 1800 were rehired in February, 1979, as part of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers' September, 1978 contract settlement, the Board's eagerness to use the PFT as a scapegoat for the financial crisis bodes ill for the future.

Michael Marcuse should indeed consider this latest budget as a "major financial achievement". A predicted deficit of \$48 million in March had miraculously shrunk to \$18 million by mid-May and to zero by May 31.

This last minute bail-out reminds us of the financial juggling in 1976 which preceded the largest tax increase in Philadelphia's history. A tax increase needed to wipe out the \$80 million city deficit - uncovered only *after* the 1975 election of Frank "I held down taxes" Rizzo.

Nor should we forget the cutbacks made earlier this spring that paved the way for this 11th hour save. A job freeze - that is, layoffs by attrition - is expected to save \$12 million; less use of substitutes will save another \$5 million. What does the Board expect to do with children when their teachers are out? Perhaps they plan to put the kids to work cleaning the schools to compensate for the laid-off maintenance workers.

And naturally, more schools are to be closed: The School for All Ages; Learning Academies North and South; the William F. Miller Elementary School in Lower Kensington and a program for 75 emotionally handicapped children at the William Dick Elementary School in North Philadelphia.

As usual, the current round of cuts spared our overpaid bureaucrats and patronage hacks. Sandra Featherstone, pres-

ident of the Citizens Committee for Public Education in Philadelphia, pointed out at a School Board meeting this spring that while pupil services have steadily diminished over the past decade, "we have managed to maintain over 500 administrators with salaries in excess of \$30,000, regardless of their productivity or effect on education."

THE FUTURE

The self-congratulations of school officials seem a bit premature. Double-digit inflation will require significant budget increases merely to maintain programs at the current level. Who will pay?

Suburban and rural legislators are vehemently opposed to upping state subsidies, and declining funds for social services make additional federal dollars unlikely.

Successive city administrations have become increasingly subservient to big business demands for tax breaks and it seems a remote chance that either Green or Marston will reverse this process.

That leaves us with the prospect of trading off the schools for other vital city services or simply suffering the further dismantling of our public school system. Another prospect is the likelihood of further taxes on working people. School officials surely are already planning for more school closings, more deletions of programs: they are watering at the mouth in anticipation of a new round of layoffs when the current PFT contract expires on August 31, 1980.

The only hope lies with the people of Philadelphia who are concerned with the future of public education. We must prepare *now* for a bitter and protracted struggle. We must *unite* now and demand a permanent funding solution which includes: 1) an end to bank rip-offs; 2) the firing of do-nothing school bureaucrats; and 3) the taxation of those who can afford it - the banks and corporations which have had a free ride for far too long.

Ten Years of Stalling

A Brief Chronology of School Desegregation in Philadelphia

- February, 1968:** Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) declares the Philadelphia school system segregated and orders the Philadelphia School Board to prepare a desegregation plan.
- September, 1968:** School Board submits Plan 1 proposing once-a-week get togethers between students from segregated schools.
- July, 1969:** PHRC rejects Plan 1.
- August, 1971:** Plan 2 submitted by the Board and rejected by PHRC which takes the case to Commonwealth Court.
- August, 1972:** Commonwealth Court orders the Philadelphia School Board to submit a new plan to PHRC.
- February, 1974:** The Board submits Plan 3 which is rejected unanimously by PHRC.
- June, 1975:** The School Board submits Plan 4 to Commonwealth Court; PHRC submits its own plan to the court at the same time.
- February, 1976:** Commonwealth Court rejects both the School Board and PHRC plans.
- July, 1976:** The Board submits Plan 5 (the voluntary plan) to PHRC but fails to include the back-up plan for mandatory busing as requested by PHRC.
- September, 1976:** PHRC rejects the voluntary plan and again asks Commonwealth Court to enforce the desegregation order.
- July, 1977:** Commonwealth Court orders the School Board to proceed with the voluntary plan as originally submitted.
- August, 1978:** Commonwealth Court rejects PHRC appeal that a mandatory back-up plan be included.
- September, 1978:** Start of the 78/79 school year. The Philadelphia School Board has until June, 1980 to implement satisfactory desegregation under the voluntary plan.

PUERTO RICO ... Statehood or Independence ?

by Nora Santilli

Nora Santilli has long been active in building solidarity with the struggle against imperialism in Latin America. She is currently a member of the PWOC and an activist in the local Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee.

In a time when the oil monopolies are putting the screws to the people, when the US is experiencing a recession which makes us focus a lot of our energy on making ends meet, and when the revolution in Nicaragua is grabbing the headlines, it is easy to lose sight of other issues which have an important impact on our lives. One such issue is the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States.

As the only remaining US colony, Puerto Rico is a source of exorbitant profits for the US ruling class, an important "strategic pontoon" in the US military's international network, and a source of embarrassment in the United Nations — a formal vote censuring the US for maintaining its exploitive colonial control over Puerto Rico took place last year. So the ruling class faces a dilemma — how to keep the profits and the military control, while doing an effective face-lift on the ugly facts of colonialism.

REALITIES OF COLONIALISM

The current colonial status of Puerto Rico has proven to be a good deal for the corporations which invest there, and also for those which sell their goods to the Puerto Rican people. Puerto Rico is the largest per capita market for US goods today. This is because the development of the island economy has been twisted to fit the needs of US companies throughout this century.

Puerto Rico's agriculture has been wrecked, so it is forced to import 90% of its food. Production of clothing and consumer goods on the island is mostly directed to export by the US companies which own the factories, so that Puerto Ricans are forced to import clothing and other necessities. Control over significant natural resources is constantly challenged by the colonial master, so Puerto Ricans are unable to exploit them in a way favorable to the development of an independent economy. US companies have chosen to locate in Puerto Rico industries which bring back high profits but provide few jobs, so 30% of the people are forced onto the unemployment roles. Underemployment and low wages make 80% of the people so poor that they are eligible for food stamps, which 50% of the population actually receives.

Many working people in this country resent the fact that they pay taxes which go into paying for food stamps for Puerto Rico. In some cases, this resentment is accompanied by a stereotyped understanding of Puerto Ricans — they are lazy, etc., the usual racist explanation.

But there are others who resent paying for food stamps because they know that the top US corporations take out \$2 billion in profits from the labor of Puerto Rican workers, while US and Puerto Rican workers pay \$2 billion in taxes into a food stamp program for Puerto Rico. Thus, working people subsidize corporate profits, while the corporations take no responsibility for providing the employment or wages that could get people off food stamps. Puerto Rican workers resent this situation even more than US workers, as they are getting the least pay, while having to stretch their salaries to cover relatives who can't get work at all.

Another side of the colonial reality is that the government of Puerto Rico is in hock to US banks to such an extreme level that the banks are in a position to dictate policy — the way the banks have dealt with the Philadelphia schools, or the New York City fiscal crisis, only a thousand times worse. The govern-

ment is forced to employ 23% of the population to provide jobs, and is sinking deeper and deeper into debt to do so. At the same time that it provides one quarter of the jobs, it doesn't receive taxes from the major companies with investments due to a "tax holiday" which allows US companies to go tax-free because they were willing to invest in "developing" the Puerto Rican economy.

But back to the ruling class and their dilemma, which is that the current colonial situation cannot go on indefinitely. The economic crisis is getting worse in Puerto Rico, the international pressure is getting worse, and the resolution of Puerto Rico's status as a colony can only go one of two ways — statehood or independence. When Jerry Ford was in his final days as a lame-duck president, he made a statement favoring Puerto Rico's introduction into the US as the fifty-first state.

Other politicians have further developed the theme, and some with high



flown phrases about making Puerto Ricans first class citizens. When they talk about first class citizens, they aren't talking about finally allowing them to be first class citizens of their own sovereign nation. They are talking about taking away the last shred of national dignity and identity, and making sure that the oil which is rumored to exist in large quantity off the coast is turned into cash for the pockets of Exxon and Mobil rather than developing a small nation's ability to stabilize its economy.

THE STAKE IN STATEHOOD

There is more than talk about statehood. Many actions of the ruling class speak very clearly. The current administration in Puerto Rico is the traditional statehood party, the Progressive National Party (PNP). This administration has, with the approval of its US backers, changed the tax structure of Puerto Rico to make it more like a state, and has waged an unceasing attack on the two major threats to its statehood drive — the independence movement and the workers' movement.

The US Navy, which has a large role in Puerto Rico, has publicly backed statehood to protect US strategic interests in the Caribbean and Latin America. It has used Puerto Rico in the past to launch attacks on the Dominican Republic.

Private companies, as well as the Puerto Rican development agency, FOMENTO, are placing ads on TV which push "Puerto Rico, USA" and speak highly of the well-educated, dedicated Puerto Rican worker. For the first time in Puerto Rican history, there are two statehood parties — the second being the Democratic Party, headed by Franklin Delano Lopez, and heavily funded from the US. In 1981 there will be a plebiscite in Puerto Rico, a vote to decide between statehood or independence. Between now and then, the independence movement will be subjected to increasing political repression. The push toward statehood is quite serious.

Even if we don't have enough evidence to say that we can be absolutely sure that statehood is the conscious

choice today of the most influential members of the ruling class, we can look at their objective interests and figure out what is the most beneficial for their maintenance of control over Puerto Rico. Independence in a neo-colonial form — which means formal independence with behind the scenes political and economic control still in the hands of the US — is the way that the US deals with many Latin American countries.

But we can see, in the case of Nicaragua, that neo-colonial independence is still a real enough form of independence that progressives can fight for control of their own country. While they may have to fight covert military and political maneuvers by the US, the US isn't in a position to launch a full scale, open attack on the progressives. Neo-colonialism, however terrible it is in most cases, is still a step towards real independence when you are coming from colonialism. Statehood, however, would mean progressives fighting for national indepen-



directly combat the US government. Secession from the US is not recognized as a real possibility.

To the US ruling class, statehood would mean continuing the current exploitation, with the long-term political assurance that control won't be threatened or lost as it has been in Iran and other countries held under neo-colonial domination. It would mean a continuation of US workers' subsidy of profits for the companies. And it would mean that they could use any method they chose to crush the independence movement definitively. It would mean that the geo-political strategy of the military in which Puerto Rico plays an important part would be maintained. For the Puerto Rican people it would mean that their right to nationhood, supported by the majority of nations in the world, would be completely denied.

The employers can be expected to use statehood to step up their attacks on workers both in Puerto Rico and here. The large pool of Puerto Rican unemployed and underpaid workers would be pitted in an even sharper fashion than they now are against the unemployed and underpaid workers in the US — many of whom are Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican. Already jobs are continually shifted from highly unionized areas in the US to the South and out of the country altogether.

Whatever Puerto Rico's status, we still face the runaway shop, but the ability of union-busting companies to play their full hand could come with statehood for Puerto Rico. In the legislature, the facts and figures on unemployment in Puerto Rico can be manipulated to set what is known as a "negative precedent". Some states in the South and areas like New York City are already using this way. It means that laws ranging from those which protect unions to laws that govern federally funded services can be changed because of the unfeasibility of providing these services or protecting jobs in a deeply impoverished area. Therefore, the laws are uniformly bent or changed out-right and affect all areas. Programs are cutback nationwide in order to be

"fair". So Blacks in Philly are told that they cannot get x because the Puerto Ricans make it impossible. Poor and working people are pitted against each other to compete for slim resources.

In Puerto Rico itself, the unions and their attempts to further organize the island would be deeply undermined by an acceleration of a process that has begun under the current administration. By upgrading wages of those working for less than minimum wage and simultaneously busting the unions and bringing down the wages of organized workers, a uniformly unlivable situation is created, in which everyone works for a wage below what it takes to make ends meet. First class citizens free to do anything but protect their standard of living, have a say in health and safety, or build up the economy on a rational basis rather than to suit the needs of US companies.

WHAT SOLIDARITY MEANS

The people of Puerto Rico clearly bear the main brunt of colonialism, and would be the main victims of statehood. But both workers and poor people in the US would be hurt as well. The actions taken by the government of the US, which represent the interests of the military and the big companies, are made in the name of the US people.

We saw during the Viet Nam war that we can have an impact on US policy even when the government would rather ignore us. It is important that people in this country begin to take an active role in preventing the statehood drive from being successful — in support of the rights of the Puerto Rican people, but also on behalf of the rights of working people in this country. This is the meaning of solidarity — there isn't a significant difference between a healthy support of the rights of workers in this country and the rights of people in another country which is oppressed by US imperialism. If this solidarity isn't actively developed, we will have allowed another defeat for the working class and for democracy.

The Puerto Rico Solidarity Committee (PRSC) is an organization dedicated to solidarity between the people of the US and Puerto Rico. It has members with a wide range of political viewpoints and exists in a number of cities across the US. It is the organization which provides the best way to translate a feeling of solidarity into concrete and effective action. It is open to all people who favor the independence of Puerto Rico.

The perspective on statehood which I have put forward here — that it represents the main danger to the people of Puerto Rico today and that it is the option most in the interests of the US ruling class — is one that many of us in the PRSC hold to. We are discussing the question of statehood throughout the PRSC as part of a debate leading up to our national conference in July. Our national strategy for solidarity work with Puerto Rico in the next two years will either be centered on this position, or we will continue along in a situation in which lack of clarity on the options of the US ruling class will make our work lack the focus and coherence we need, a problem that we all agree has hampered our work.

The PWOC is represented on the National Board of the PRSC, and plays an active role in national leadership of the organization. The PWOC holds that it is imperative that the PRSC take a stand that statehood is the main danger, and that our program and strategy for the coming period reflect this reality. This is not any two year period — it is the two year period leading up to the plebiscite mentioned earlier, and a failure to act decisively in the coming period objectively means that we are capitulating to the aims of the US ruling class. We may find ourselves in the position, in 1981, of not having made a dent in the move towards statehood, if we fail to take a strong position now.

U.S. Rulers Divided

The Salt II Debate ...

by Jenny Quinn and Jim Griffin

SALT II (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty) is in trouble. A powerful rightwing lobby is going all out to scuttle the agreement on the grounds that it represents appeasement of the Soviet Union. At the same time many liberals and peace forces oppose the agreement because they believe it fails to check the arms race. Given this, SALT II faces a rough road in Congress and the Carter administration presently lacks the votes to assure passage.

DOES SALT = APPEASEMENT?

The argument that SALT "appeases" the USSR is a cover for those elements in the ruling class which believe that the interests of US imperialism are best served by getting tough with the Soviets. Represented in Congress by right wingers like North Carolina's Jesses Helms and Pentagon liberals like "Scoop" Jackson, these forces oppose arms control and favor escalating the military budget in a quest for a bigger edge in nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union.

Their argument that SALT II hands over to the Soviets an edge in strategic nuclear weaponry doesn't hold water. Presently the US and the USSR both possess nuclear arsenals capable of achieving what the atomic think tanks call MAD (mutually assured destruction).

Fundamentally, a rough parity of destructive power exists with each side able to obliterate the other in the event of nuclear war. If we can speak of an edge in such a situation, it is the US and not the Soviets who hold it. Those who argue that the Soviets have gained superiority point to the greater "megatonnage" and "throw weight" possessed by Moscow. But this quantitative edge is more than offset by the greater number of warheads held by the US and the more developed and thus more accurate delivery systems utilized by the Pentagon.

The SALT II agreement basically ratifies rather than alters the existing balance of power. SALT's right wing critics argue that the treaty imposes no checks on the newest Soviet weapon developments, notably the Backfire Bomber, and thus the Soviets will develop these to the detriment of the US. What this argument ignores is that the US retains its capacity to develop equally potent new weapons systems such as the Trident II submarine.

Significantly, the Soviets were willing to negotiate limitations on the Backfire Bomber but only if the US were willing to include systems like Trident II. The US refused to do so and this refusal has been the biggest fly in the ointment, dragging negotiations on over the last two years. Given this, the present treaty represents a concession and an accommodation on the

part of the USSR and hardly can be construed the other way around.

The right wing opposition to SALT should be seen for what it is — a call for radical escalation of the arms race in an attempt to use nuclear blackmail to keep the Soviets "in their place"— in particular, to discourage them from supporting national liberation and revolutionary movements which threaten US imperialism's global interests. This opposition aims at preserving imperialist domination over much of the world and is willing to intensify the risk of thermonuclear war to do so.

PEACE CRITICS OF SALT

The argument that SALT should be opposed because it does not really reduce the arms race has considerably more strength. SALT does not cut back the stockpiles of nuclear weaponry, excepting some obsolete items of no value to either party. It imposes ceilings on the production and deployment of some weapons, but these ceilings largely correspond to already planned levels of production and deployment.

For example, the Carter Administration points to the section of the new treaty which bans the deployment of sea-based Cruise Missiles for the next three years as a major concession on its part and a demonstration of its "restraint". The fact is that the US will not have the capability to deploy this weapon during this period so this "concession" is meaningless.

Some of the most important new strategic weapon systems are ignored entirely by SALT. The Carter administration is trying to sweeten the pot for the Pentagon lobby by backing the development of the MX missile, a \$30 billion white elephant which will be dragged about in trucks and hidden in trenches in order to avoid detection.

Peace critics plausibly ask, "If planned weapons systems are going ahead as scheduled, and expensive new weaponry is going to be developed, where exactly does the "limitation" come in?"

These arguments correctly pinpoint the continuing interest of the Carter administration in the arms race and the hypocrisy of its attempt to pose as an advocate of peace and disarmament. Both the liberal and right wing representatives of imperialism are committed to feeding the maw of the military machine.

But the peace critics of SALT miss the one sense in which SALT does serve to limit the arms race. If SALT II is rejected the likelihood is for an escalation of the arms race well beyond the level spelled out in the agreement. Even more important, the rejection of SALT II will



increase tensions and the probability of nuclear confrontation between the US and the USSR.

The defeat of SALT II will be a victory for those who favor a more aggressive US foreign policy and thus propel the US farther in the direction of military intervention and war. The defeat of SALT II will signal to the Soviets that they must increase their own arms production and prepare to counter a more aggressive US military and political thrust in the world. SALT II's glaring weaknesses certainly should be pointed out, and no one should be encouraged in the illusion that the treaty heralds a new direction toward world peace or a step toward disarmament. At the same time, SALT II should be critically supported as part and parcel of the struggle to combat the war danger and prevent the US from embarking on new and more dangerous foreign adventures.

WHO WANTS SALT?

The USSR's interest in achieving SALT is clear enough. The arms race imposes a far greater burden on the Soviet economy than it does on the more developed US. Costly weapons production holds back the Soviet effort to raise the standard of living of its people. Unlike the US, where military spending serves to artificially prop up the economic, the Soviet Union, with a planned economy and a labor shortage has no need of such inducements. Similarly, while the US must maintain its military forces to preserve an empire based on the exploitation of the peoples and wealth of other nations, the USSR has no investments around the world which it must preserve and expand.

It is the contention with imperialism which is the fundamental reason for the Soviet military build up. It is from the imperialist camp that the impetus for war and aggression comes, and as such the USSR's military serves defensive ends. In the context of defending its interests the USSR has on occasion committed aggression itself, as in the case of Czechoslovakia, but that does not alter the fundamental point.

The growth of anti-imperialist forces on a world scale is not the product of Soviet aggression or conspiracy as the US imperialists would have it. Rather, this growth is an inevitable expression of the people's struggle for independence, national liberation, and socialism. That this benefits the world position of the USSR in relation to the US is indisputable, but can hardly be laid at the door of alleged Soviet schemes for world domination.

US imperialism, on the other hand, is incapable of committing itself to

genuine peace. The whole logic of the imperialist system leads to militarism and the drive toward war. Why then would the imperialists agree to negotiate any sort of arms control agreement?

Presently US imperialism is declining and on the defensive, having suffered setback after setback in Vietnam, South Africa, Iran and elsewhere. The military strength of the USSR means that the US cannot freely intervene around the world without running the risk of war with the danger of nuclear destruction. In this situation the imperialists are compelled to exercise certain restraints and seek to keep their contention with the Soviets within definite bounds. This is the premise of detente. Within the framework of detente, the imperialists seek the greatest possible advantage for themselves.

This is the context for the present division within US ruling circles over SALT. The right wing, knowing how much the Soviets want arms limitation, argue that the US should only conclude a SALT agreement if the Soviets make major political concessions elsewhere — for example, abandoning their support for liberation movements in South Africa or giving greater freedom to internal anti-Soviet dissidents.

The pro-SALT forces, while also favoring some sort of linkage, fear that by trying to blackmail the Soviets around SALT the whole framework of detente will be threatened. Given the present delicate world balance of power and the US's position in it, this section of the ruling class views such a possibility with some alarm.

From the standpoint of the peoples of both the US and the USSR there can be no greater danger than the possibility of nuclear holocaust. The Soviet people, having lost 20 million of their number during World War II, have a very real fear of such a conflict. Public opinion polls and the strength of the peace movement during the '60's and early '70's are both indications of the deep yearning for peace on the part of our own people.

SALT II should be supported as part of the struggle for peace. At the same time we need to be clear that we can't rely on the Carters and Kennedys to check the war danger. Only an aroused and organized popular movement can do that. And finally, we must educate our people to the revolutionary understanding that only the abolition of imperialism can bring about lasting peace and bury the nightmare of thermonuclear destruction.

(Next month the Organizer will survey and analyze the attitudes of various left forces toward SALT II)



Inquirer

Affirmative Action and Layoffs

A New Look at Super Seniority

by Candace Newlin

In May the PWOC political committee critically re-examined its attitude toward the question of super-seniority in relation to lay-offs. We concluded that our opposition to this demand contradicted our overall line on affirmative action, the struggle for equality and class unity. The following article criticizes our earlier view and puts forward our current understanding.

The PWOC, consistent with our understanding of the centrality of the struggles for racial and sexual equality, has actively defended the principle of affirmative action. We have fought discrimination in hiring, on the job, and in the communities. We have opposed the efforts of the employers to destroy affirmative action via the courts and have struggles for affirmative action programs through collective bargaining.

Yet we have also held that super seniority, the practice of granting additional seniority to national minority and women workers as compensation for past discrimination, is not acceptable as a means of protecting the modest gains of these workers in a period of recession and lay-offs. In a 1975 *Organizer* article we characterized the demand for super seniority as "profoundly incorrect."

PWOC HAD THINGS BACKWARDS

In fact it was the PWOC which was profoundly incorrect. Our opposition dovetailed with and drew on the racist, chauvinist arguments that have been leveled against affirmative action generally.

We drew an abstract line between affirmative action for hiring and upgrading on one side and lay-offs on the other. Effectively we were saying white workers are willing to go a certain distance to build real equality on the job, but don't push it during times of cut-back because at those times narrow self interest dominates. Equality in the abstract and in specific instances, yes. But equality when that requires giving up certain historically acquired advantages, and therefore might force some white workers to temporarily tighten their belts, well that's going too far.

In an attempt to defend our position we were forced to resort to the same kind of arguments put forth by those opposed categorically to affirmative action: you're making the white worker pay (reverse discrimination?), and there must have been specific discrimination. We focused entirely on class-wide demands as solutions to the lay-off question — that is, the shorter work week and no lay-offs — without specifically addressing the need to protect the hard won steps toward equality made by national minority and women workers.

Seniority is not itself an absolute principle. It is one of several means to obtaining a higher principle — the

seniority" to insure constant union presence on the shop floor, and so on.

More recently the use of straight seniority has been challenged for both promotions and lay-offs on the basis that seniority was in fact acquired at a time when the jobs in question were effectively unavailable to oppressed minority and women workers. These job opportunities only recently opened up as a result of a mass political movement coupled with legislation and court challenges.

Without some modification of the seniority principle here, national minority and women workers find their

and its allies can provide the foundation for the complete abolition of inequality.

Affirmative action is a reform that can advance the struggle for equality within the framework of monopoly capitalism. It is critical that it be posed in the context of the fight for class unity and the struggle for it be linked with the fight for class wide demands. If this is not done, if the demand for affirmative action is posed in an abstract moral fashion divorced from class interest, the broad unity necessary to win the fight will not be built.

It was the failure to approach the question of super-seniority from a class standpoint that marked the practice of petty bourgeois reformists like the NAACP and the ultra left CP-ML.

In reaction to these errors we made a more serious error, liquidating the democratic demands of oppressed nationality and women workers in the name of building class unity. In so doing, we capitulated to the most backward forces in the trade union movement.

A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE ARGUMENT

Let's take a look at some of the arguments we made against "super seniority". The most serious one is that affirmative action in lay-offs makes white male workers pay for past discrimination and forces white workers to give up a portion of their well-being for the benefit of Black and women workers.

This argument is the basis of all the arguments against any affirmative action. It basically tries to defend the notion that white workers not only have the right to retain advantages acquired through past discrimination, but also that the retention of these immediate advantages can be consistent with the fight for equality and unity, and therefore is consistent with the struggle against the capitalist offensive. This is a profound error.

It is in fact impossible to end inequality and divisions without ending the expectation on the part of white workers and male workers to an unusual degree of job security — unusual as compared to minority and women workers. The defense of seniority as some kind of absolute principle is nothing but a

We must demand that any layoffs that do occur hit white and Black, men and women in the same way, leaving the same composition of the workforce after the layoff as before.

principle of equality, that an injury to one is an injury to all. Upgrading and lay-off according to seniority were hard fought demands aimed at ending employer favoritism on the shop floor and the arbitrary firing of older workers to avoid paying pensions. Seniority was and is seen by the working class as the fairest way to reduce internal competition over available jobs and promotions.

However, there are any number of ways to approach the question of seniority. In fact there have been numerous changes and improvements made to seniority provisions in the process of collective bargaining. . . . seniority according to classification has been replaced by plant-wide seniority, union officials have been granted "super

gains threatened by lay-offs. They are compelled to bear the principle burden when economic retraction occurs, and employers continue to reap the benefits of a huge racially and sexually defined reserve army of labor. Unless the labor movement addresses this it cannot really protect the interests of all its members and forge unity in its ranks. The demand for modification of seniority as a measure in the fight for equality, strengthens rather than contradicts the original logic underlying the principle of seniority.

At the same time, super-seniority, and indeed affirmative action programs generally, is not a magical answer to the problems of national and sexual oppression. Full equality is incompatible with the very existence of monopoly capitalism and only the revolutionary seizure of power by the working class

While the violent and disruptive "ROAR" in Boston has received the lion's share of publicity, slicker groups like BusStop in Los Angeles — without ROAR's ties to openly fascist groups like the Ku Klux Klan have emerged as an even greater danger.

Los Angeles, with the third largest school district in the United States, was found by HEW in 1971 to have the nation's most segregated schools. After a seven year court battle, the LA School Board was forced to implement a limited busing plan in September, 1978.

In May of this year anti-busing forces were successful in recalling LA's Board of Education President Howard Miller who drew up the desegregation plan. Anti-busing forces successfully counted on voter apathy to maximize the impact of their well-organized minority. Out of 1.65 million eligible voters only 21% went to the polls; of these, 58% voted to recall Miller — a mere 12% of the total LA electorate.

BALANCE SHEET ON BUSING

Scholars and intellectuals in the hire of the ruling, capitalist class have produced their share of studies that claim to show that school integration "doesn't work" or "makes little difference". But many other studies point to different conclusions:

1. Desegregation overall has helped Black children. Most studies show Black children improving their academic averages on moving from segregated to desegregated schools.

2. Black graduates of desegregated schools are more likely to attend college and earn more in their careers than graduates of all-Black schools.

3. Mandatory plans have been more successful than voluntary plans in improving minority achievement.

4. In most cases desegregation has had no effect on white achievement, with a few notable exceptions, such as Berkeley, California, and West Chester, Pennsylvania, where white scores improved.

Desegregation can challenge racist stereotypes sadly typified by questions asked during Black Awareness Week at all-white Audubon (NJ) High school: "Why do they dance so well?" "Why do they have big lips?" and "Why don't they work?"

In comparison, listen to 17-year-old Julie Babb, a white student in Charlotte, North Carolina, bused to a predominantly Black high school: "I have friends in private (all-white) schools and they aren't aware of what's going on in this world. I feel like we are more open-minded."

These facts underline the continuing importance of the struggle for school desegregation as part and parcel of the fight for equality and for Black-white unity. We must continue the fight to make the 25 year old *Brown* decision a reality.

Brown Decision ...

(continued from page 10)

schools or have enrolled in the private "segregation academies".

In an effort to avoid meaningful desegregation some school districts have instituted phony "voluntary" plans. At last count the Department of Health, Education and Welfare had obtained promises from some 200 school districts across the country to engage in voluntary plans. So far, none of these plans have led to significant desegregation. Even where schools have been desegregated, classes often remain racially separate.

Since September, 1978, Wilmington, Delaware, area schools have been operating under the nation's largest court-ordered metropolitan plan. Being careful to stay within the "doctrine of intent" guidelines, Judge Murray Schwartz ruled that the ten predominantly white suburban school districts had directly contributed to segregation and merged them with the predominantly Black Wilmington School District into a single New Castle County School District.

The Wilmington plan works to the extent that dire predictions of Boston-type violence have proven false. Black children, however, must still bear the brunt of desegregation — they are bused

for nine school years compared to three school years for whites. More disturbing is an emerging pattern of segregation by classes.

In a system 80% white and 20% Black, at least 25% of the classes have a Black majority. In Brandywine High School, for instance, one finds: a combined 10th and 11th grade English class with 14 Blacks and one white student; an all-white senior English class; an all-white physical education and health class; and all-white foreign language classes. Black parents correctly view with skepticism the official explanation by School Superintendent Carroll W. Biggs that such separation by race is done only to provide Blacks with "remedial help."

The lesson of Wilmington is that even with a relatively progressive plan constant vigilance must be maintained to prevent segregation from being slipped in through the back door.

The well-organized and well-financed mass anti-busing movement poses a serious threat to desegregation, especially in the absence of a mass movement that can effectively win undecided whites to support of desegregation.

smokescreen for this desire to have it both ways — build a powerful united movement but at the same time hang onto the illusory and short term advantages gained through racism and sexism.

As the job expectations of male workers are more than the expectations of white and women workers, then these white and male workers will tend to see their future as tied up with hanging onto their separate and narrow interests, rather than in joining hands in the common struggle with minority and women workers.

And what will be the attitude of Black and women workers to the plea for unity in the fight for broad demands if they continue to suffer disproportionately more lay-offs than their white and male co-workers, and if these workers are unwilling to take concrete steps to end this inequality? In fact the fight for affirmative action in all areas including lay-offs will significantly strengthen the movement for the shorter work week and against all lay-offs. In the last analysis we're either all going somewhere in the same boat or we're all in different boats racing one against the other, in a never ending exercise.

Now, of course, it is incorrect to perceive the solution in terms of making white workers pay. But it is equally incorrect to view it in terms of making Black and women workers pay for the capitalists' economic crisis. The only way to make the capitalists pay is to fight for full equality among our ranks and to focus on class-wide demands which will in fact make a difference. That's what was wrong with the ultra-left argument — they saw the fight for equality as the end of the question, and furthermore, they saw the fight for equality as one in the interests of oppressed workers only, not in the interests of all workers.

What about our former argument that such a demand deals a blow to the struggle for unity? We have for years stated that unity is meaningless if it is not based on the bedrock of equality. When we say that affirmative action in lay-offs sacrifices the interests of the class as a whole (unity) for the immediate interests of a limited section (minority and women workers) we fall into a very narrow concept of "interest".

In fact what we are doing is defending the sacrifice of the interests of the class for fear of speaking directly to the existing divisions in the class, in fear of not being able to convince white workers that their future lies squarely with the future of the class as a whole.

We were afraid that to push for affirmative action in lay-offs, because we felt that such a plan would jeopardize our fight for affirmative action in hiring. But if we are fighting for affirmative action in hiring on the right grounds and for the right reasons, then we have every reason to believe that we can win both.

Certainly we cannot move forward as a class without winning a full understanding of the basis for the fight for equality. Unprincipled unity is in fact no unity at all. We cannot take this on piecemeal, hoping to fool white workers into accepting partial steps. We must win white workers to the necessity for their own future of taking up the full struggle for equality, and then it becomes clear that the solutions put forward must be consistent.

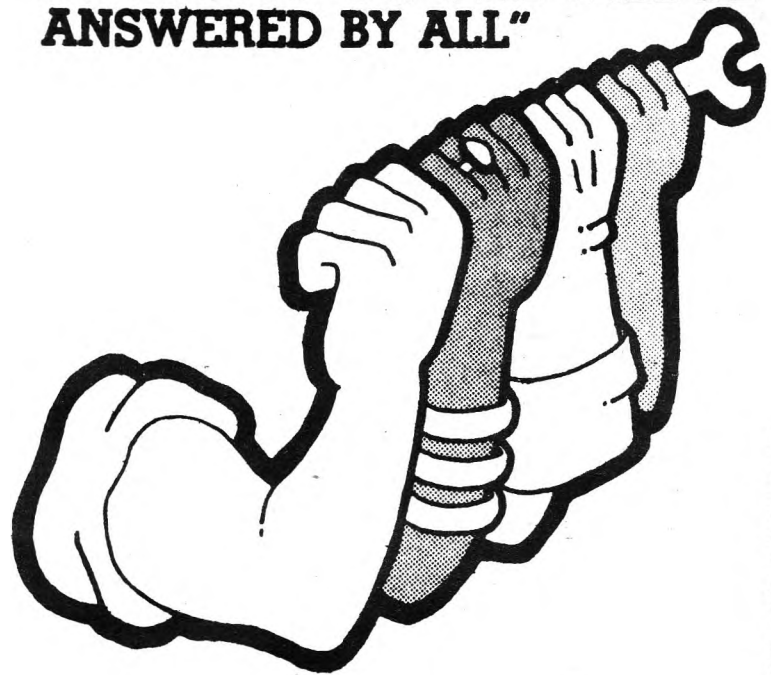
There are those who say that lay-offs are expected as the nature of the game, and that workers need to be able to depend on increasing job security as their time grows. Lay-offs are the nature of the game only because the working class is as yet too weak and divided to make the capitalists pay for their own crisis.

The right of workers to depend on increasing job security as they build their families is absolutely correct — but here we're talking of *all* workers, not just white or male workers. We will get nowhere in the struggle as long as we give back-handed support to the notion of maintaining the national minority communities and women workers as special pools of cheap and always available labor.

Finally, there are those who argue that affirmative action in lay-offs is just too complicated because of the wide divergence of skills and the already existing job trails between skilled workers and unskilled. But we have always said that these job trails, where they are discriminatory, must be abolished and that the capitalists must pay for their discrimination by being forced to take on the added expense of job training where bumping occurs. Yes, this will indeed mean disruption in the production process, but if the capitalists wish to avoid the disruption then they are quite welcome to accept the smoother solution, that of the shorter work week at full pay!

We make one more argument in our former position paper — one which, quite frankly, is just silly. We way that super seniority only speaks to a very small percentage of minority and women workers given the continuation of racism and sexism in hiring practices. This is obviously true and speaks only to the bankruptcy of putting forward this demand in isolation from a much broader and more comprehensive program. But it

"AN ATTACK ON ONE WILL BE ANSWERED BY ALL"



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is hardly an argument against protecting the gains of that "very small percentage" of workers who have through bitter struggle won real victories for equality.

OUTLINES OF A PROGRAM

In conclusion, we must still focus our work on the demands which will in fact represent an offensive against the ruling class and which point the way to long-term solutions to the present high unemployment and declining standard of living of the entire working class. We must step up the fight for the shorter work week and for no lay-offs, as well as for a guaranteed annual income funded by a tax on profits. We must continue to fight for full employment.

In situations where we suffer temporary defeat we must make sure that the interests of democracy are not sacrificed. **We must demand that any lay-offs that do occur hit white and Black, men and women in the same way, leaving the same composition of the workforce before the lay-off as after.** This can be accomplished in various ways.

First, we must try to minimize the number of workers layed off against their will by pushing for early retirement plans with full pension benefits. We can fight for voluntary inverse seniority lay-offs coupled with the demand for full supplemental unemployment benefits for all workers and extended recall rights. We can push in some circumstances for sharing of the work — either

fewer hours for everyone, or one week off per month for every worker.

If these measures fail, we must be prepared to fight for the modification of seniority to insure that any lay-off hits the same percentage of white, Black and women workers so that the composition of the workplace remains the same.

We must be very clear that we can only win our most urgent demands if we are able to unite the entire working class, Black and white, English and Spanish speaking, men and women into one single powerful movement. We must take from the ruling class its most powerful weapon — our own divisions. And we can build such unity only on the basis of real equality.

White workers must reject the perpetuation of unfair advantages, advantages which may appear appealing in an individual or immediate sense, but which only serve to lock us forever into an isolated battle for crumbs while the capitalists reserve the loaf for themselves.

We must make sure that our commitment to fairness and equality is unqualified and unswerving. We cannot afford to take half measures stopping short when times are rough — because it is precisely when times are rough that we can and must depend only on ourselves as a class. It is precisely when times are rough that we must make sure that the cornerstone of equality is not knocked out from under us.

To Our Subscribers

To all *Organizer* Subscribers,

When the PWOC launched the *Organizer* 5½ years ago, we didn't really know what we were getting into. We didn't know how much time, energy, or training were needed to produce and distribute, *consistently*, a quality working class newspaper.

We have made some big mistakes, but under the circumstances we have done well. Our energy has been concentrated in the front end: writing, layout, production. As most of you know, until recently we did not give distribution and circulation the attention they needed. We tended to collapse after the *Organizer* came off the presses, until the production cycle began again.

The result of this problem is that we have a very useful tool for the party-building movement which is not very well used. And this is where we want to focus our energy and yours. We need your help politically and financially to build the *Organizer*.

Each subscription we can obtain not only spreads the *Organizer's* viewpoint, but helps us toward financial stability. The working class is capable of sustaining media which serve its own class interest. In the long run, the working class is capable of sustaining its own vanguard of professional revolutionaries. Therefore, while sustainers are an important source of funding for the *Organizer*, our goal is that subscriptions, newsstand sales, and our other publications should basically support the *Organizer*.

We need you, as a current subscriber, to become an active propagandist with the *Organizer*, and/or a sustainer. Think about it. Can you take five *Organizers* a month and sell them to your friends and co-workers? Could an article from the *Myths of Communism* series be posted in your shop to help fight red-baiting? Does a report and analysis of the struggle for integrated public housing provide useful strategies for similar work in your city? Could our May Day article provide an introduction to their own history for members of your rank and file caucus?

Can you send the *Organizer* \$5 a month? This support can enable us to build our outreach program, put out more pages, and maybe bring our paid staff up to minimum wage. In addition, it will get you your *Organizer* via first class mail, a free sample copy each month, and a copy of each new PWOC publication as it comes off the presses.

In asking your active support for the *Organizer*, we also recognize our obligation to respond to your needs. Send us your criticisms, and suggestions, or better yet, letters and articles you would like to see published. Drop us a line about what happened when you tried to sell the *Organizer* at work. In developing our agent and sustainer programs we will make available to you reports from within the PWOC on our experience in learning to use the *Organizer*, hopefully in the form of a separate newsletter.

The crisis for the working class in the United States is deepening visibly, and the fight back, from shop floor struggles, to demands for affirmative action in jobs, housing, and education, to the "No Nukes" campaign, is heating up.

It's time for the *Organizer* to take off, too. Marxist-Leninists must play a leading role in this fightback, to insure its future, and we think the *Organizer* has an important role to play here. We hope you agree.

In solidarity and struggle,

Peter Doyle, for the *Organizer*/PWOC

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APR 6 1979

NNMLC Develops the Subjective Factor

PART 1

Re-establishing the "Left" Line on Party-Building

by Clay Newlin

Having barely completed its initial break with the ultra-lefts, our tendency is once again faced with the consequences of its inadequate rectification of modern "left-wing" communism.

A few months ago the anti-"left" tendency consolidated its political separation from the key manifestation of the ultra-left line. Led by the Steering Committee of the OC, the bulk of the tendency concluded a protracted struggle over international line begun some three years ago in the wake of Angola. Centralized and movement-wide ideological struggle forced the real thinking underlying opposition to the view that US imperialism is the main enemy to the surface.

It was demonstrated that this opposition shared with other aspects of the prevailing "left" line an absurdly "left" approach to the struggle against revisionism. And it was further shown that this opposition was rooted in dogmatism generally and, in particular, the belief that a deviation from "Mao Zedong Thought" is by definition, revisionism.

Just as the process of breaking with "left" internationalism was drawing to a close, a new struggle against ultra-leftism began to rage. Like the debate on international line, this new controversy also centers on the need to break with "leftism" on the political level — namely, on party-building line. But unlike those spearheading the defense of "left" internationalism, the headquarters of the backward elements lies *within* the anti-"left" tendency.

This opposition to a break with "leftism" on party-building line is cen-

tered in and around the leadership of the National Network of Marxist-Leninist Clubs (NNMLC). Their line is summed up in the slogan: "the central task of US Marxist-Leninists today is the rectification of the general line of the US communist movement and the re-establishment of its party." And their views are elaborated in a document entitled "Developing the Subjective Factor."

NNMLC'S VIEW OF ULTRA-"LEFTISM"

The NNMLC seems bent on the "rectification and re-establishment" of the "left" line on party-building. Their approach to the concrete tasks facing the tendency, their general party-building strategy and their conception of the party itself all reveal the most pronounced ultra-leftism.

Ironically, the principle error of the "rectifiers" is their incorrect approach to our rectification tasks. According to them, rectification should focus chiefly on overcoming the distortions of communist theory brought about by revisionism and only "secondarily" those errors caused by ultra-leftism (Developing the Subjective, p.35).

As a general formulation, no one could quarrel with this. But it is apparent that in the NNMLC's view overcoming ultra-leftism must be accorded a secondary priority even in the present period of our tendency's development. That this is their perspective is shown by their remark that "at some point (after party formation, perhaps? — CN), an all-sided summation (of ultra-leftism) must be developed" (emphasis added — CN; *ibid.*, p.24). And it is also clearly demonstrated

by the fact that none of the leading exponents of the rectification line have devoted any significant attention to developing a systematic critique of the ultra-leftism and its ideological roots.

To give only secondary weight to overcoming modern "left-wing" communism is a grave error. It not only disarms our tendency in its struggle against the ultra-lefts, but it is likely to lull it into a false sense of security. Our forces have just recently emerged from a movement where ultra-leftism has held ideological hegemony for over 20 years. All of our thinking has, to one degree or another, been molded by this experience. Given this, we can hardly afford to proceed on the assumption — without the reality — of a thorough-going break with "leftism".

Have we not seen sufficient examples of what the failure to rectify ultra-leftism leads to? Do we need another example of an organization that establishes its political credentials by criticizing the "leftism" of its predecessors, only to itself consolidate around a "left-wing" program? Must the anti-revisionist movement suffer yet another "vanguard party" of the type already so well known?

No! On the question of ultra-leftism, above all, we must be certain of our footing. The development of an all-sided critique of "left-wing" communism — identifying its principle manifestations, ideological roots and material basis — must be seen as our primary theoretical task. On the basis of such a critique, we must conduct a thorough rooting-out of "leftist" thinking in our ranks. This, and only this, can provide a firm foundation for proceeding with our efforts to elaborate program and strategy for the US revolution.

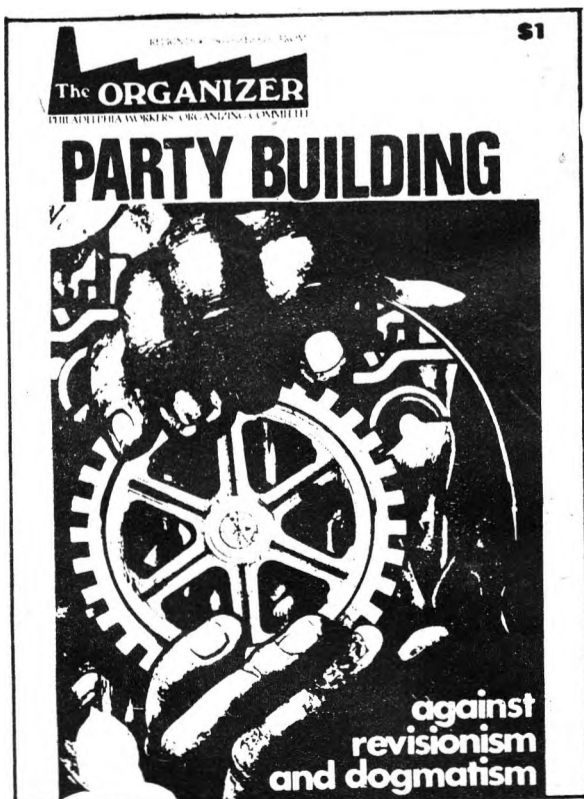
In the past, the failure to grasp the centrality of overcoming ultra-leftism was rooted in faulty historical analysis or simple-mindedness. In the former case the inability of anti-revisionists to sum up their own history of "left" errors led them to repeat them — even if in a different form. In the latter, it was assumed that it was merely sufficient to demarcate with "left" errors at the political level and leave the summation of the errors and their roots to "some point" on down the road.

UNDERLYING CIRCLE SPIRIT

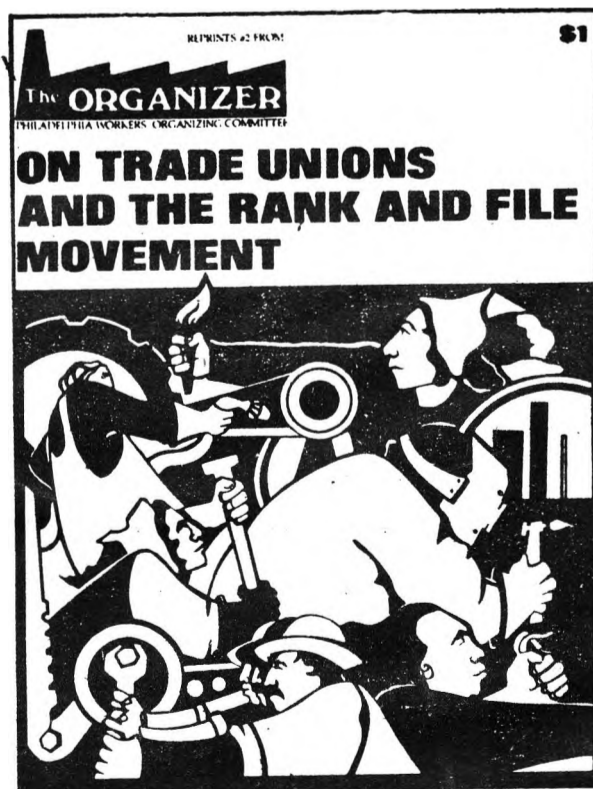
In the NNMLC's case, neither faulty analysis nor simple-mindedness is primary. Given the ultra-leftism inherent in their own line, the NNMLC leaders recognize that focusing on combatting "leftism" can only serve to undermine their influence in the anti-"left" tendency. Thus, they have an objective interest in diverting our tendency from deepening its critique of the "left" line.

Here we come upon a central underlying feature of the NNMLC approach to party-building. The NNMLC leaders do not proceed on the basis of consolidating the foundation and advancing the genuine interests of the anti-"left" tendency as a whole. Instead, they base their intervention in the communist movement on what is most likely to advance the influence of their own narrow circle.

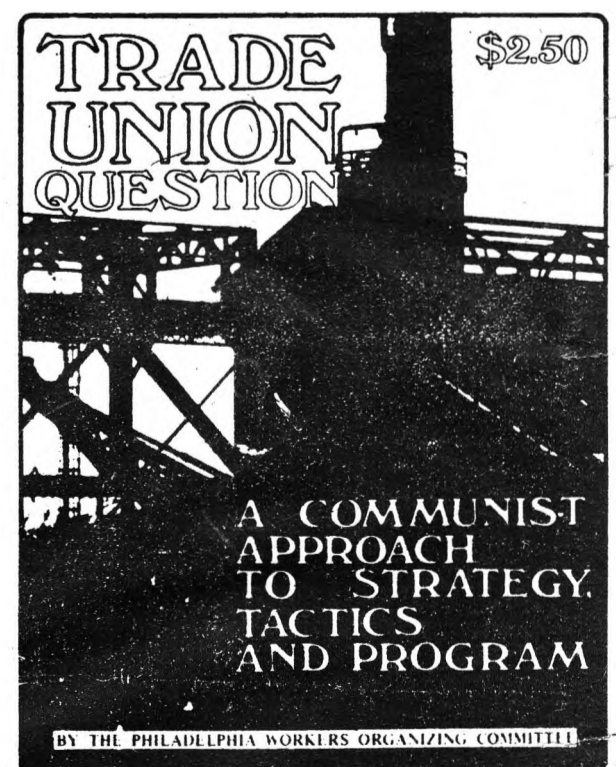
It is this narrow circle mentality — placing the interests of one's own circle of comrades above the interests of the communist movement as a whole — which underlies the NNMLC's approach to political struggle in the anti-"left" tendency. Rather than join with other



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forces in the tendency in common work designed to both secure our break with ultra-leftism and to lay a firm foundation for our struggle for a common party-building line, the NNMLC argues that we should fight for a division in our ranks along the lines of "rectification vs. fusion." This, they argue, is the "key struggle" within the anti-"left" tendency (ibid., p.5).

Now we do not deny that the debate over "rectification vs. fusion" may become a fundamental controversy in our tendency in the future. Nor do we maintain that any discussion of these differences will inevitably detract from consolidating the anti-"lefts."

Our principle objection is to making this the "key two-line struggle" prior to consolidating our critique of ultra-leftism. To leapfrog an all-sided summation of ultra-leftism will just lengthen the life of the more incorrect line. And it will also enhance the possibility of premature political division — i.e., division in the absence of a thorough contention between the two lines.

In addition, we object to the manner in which the NNMLC has chosen to conduct the discussion. Along with contention between lines, the NNMLC desires to add competition between organizations. In spite of the fact that they have no principled disagreements with the line of the OC, the NNMLC has set itself up as a competing center with that body. And to reinforce this competitive dynamic, all NNMLC members are bound as a matter of discipline to defend the rectification formula.

The addition of organizational competition reinforced by centralism (even if only on the NNMLC side) can only heighten the likelihood of a premature and unprincipled split. Debate will not take on the character of clarifying and sharpening differences between opposing views in order that the correct one can win out. (This, after all, should be seen as being in everyone's real interests.) In fact, it almost guarantees that "my organization over all" will become the watchword.

VIEW OF THE OCIC

The NNMLC does not just operate on the basis of its own narrow interests.

It has even attempted to elaborate a theoretical defense of the circle mentality. This defense finds its chief expression in an opportunist critique of the OC.

But before we expose its defense of the circle mentality, it is important to reply to a NNMLC distortion of the OC's line. The Club leaders argue that the OC is united around the "fusion strategy" for party-building. Their logic runs as follows: The OC is led by the PWOC. The PWOC is the leading exponent of fusion. Therefore the OC is guided by the fusion line.

The NNMLC knows full well, the OC represents the coming together of a number of political currents with differing overall party-building strategies. Certainly the fusion line is well represented, but it is hardly the exclusive view of OC members. The Tuscon Marxist-Leninist Collective has expressly opposed fusion and yet it actively participates in the OC. And even those who agree with fusion formulate it in different ways.

Does this mean that the OC has no party line? Of course not. While the line of the OC is limited, all of its members agree on the following points: 1) the immediacy of developing a genuine Marxist-Leninist trend in the communist movement, 2) the primacy of consolidating a break with ultra-leftism, 3) the necessity of struggling for a single leading center for the anti-"left" tendency, and 4) the centrality of the theoretical struggle in party-building.

By implication, all OC members hold that these four points (along with the OC's 18 points of unity) provide a sufficient basis for common work towards a party at this time. And all have also agreed to allow their differences around long-term party-building strategy to unfold in the context of common work.

Once the falsehood of the OC's consolidation around fusion is dispelled, the NNMLC's narrow circle spirit stands out in bold relief. From its very conception, the OC, more than any other organized form in the entire tendency, has stood for the demand that each narrow circle, without exception, subordinate itself to the struggle for a single center in the communist movement. Whether they be El Comite-MINP, the Guardian staff or the Club Network, this point has always been

central to the contention between the OC and its various anti-"left" opponents.

Of these three forces only El Comite-MINP has been able to provide a principled basis for its decision to remain outside the OC. The Guardian staff's arguments for separation from the OC have been exposed as a ploy for protecting its circle independence. And stripped of the argument that the OC has adopted the fusion line, what is left for the NNMLC but opposition to its own subordination to the struggle for a single center?

The NNMLC's circle mentality is even more clearly revealed in its critique of the "organizational scheme" of the OC. The NNMLC attacks the OC for a "federationist approach", a "fetish on organization over politics", "ultra-democratic approach to leadership", and the conception of an ideological center "as a mere administrative body, a place to organize debate and develop a leading line" (ibid., pp. 30-31).

None of these charges are true. The OC has consistently opposed a federationist approach to party-building and has repeatedly emphasized the primacy of politics over organization. It has neither advocated "electing a leading center" nor ever held that an ideological center can develop based on anything but a correct political line. This is indicated both by the failure of the NNMLC to make any attempt to substantiate its charges and the entire practice of the OC.

Since this is the case, the source of the NNMLC criticisms must be located elsewhere. Instead of being sought in genuine errors of the OC, they must stem from the NNMLC's own conception of how to forge an ideological center. Unfortunately, they have not elaborated their approach to a center — not at least in public.

Given the NNMLC's failure to set forth its views in public, we will have to rely on discussion between representatives of the PWOC and the leading ideologist of the rectification line. According to him, a leading center is forged by joint theoretical work and study between "leading elements" working largely in secret. These "leading elements" identify themselves and one another, and through discussions "synthesize a general line." In order to conduct their work, they must be free of organizational constraints of

any kind. And once their work is completed, they fight to win the rest of the communist movement to it.

A moment's reflection reveals the circle mentality implicit in this scheme. The "leading elements" are self-declared; they do not have to earn their designation as ideological leaders. They work in secret and thus can choose to conceal any disagreements that might tend to weaken their influence over the movement as a whole. They are free of any organizational constraints that might tie them to the rest of the movement or the working class. And they establish their influence by a fight for hegemony over the communist movement.

With this approach, no wonder the NNMLC accuses the OC of being "federationist", "ultra-democratic", "organizational fetishists", "administrators" and the like. As opposed to the OC's views, the NNMLC's line is an ideological justification for a small group of "leaders" to set themselves up as a "leading center" and contend for narrow hegemony in the movement. *In essence, it reduces the struggle for the party to contention for seats on the central committee!*

It is precisely this kind of narrow circle approach to party-building which was adopted by the ultra-lefts. The core of both the RU and the OL, for example, set themselves up as "leading centers", advanced a "general line" and fought to establish their own organizational hegemony in the communist movement. But neither proved capable of creating a genuine ideological center, of elaborating genuine program or of achieving genuine ideological hegemony.

Of course, their failure was primarily the result of ultra-leftism in general and not just the circle spirit. But their narrow circle approach to party-building played an important role in reinforcing the influence of "leftist" thinking. It did so for the simple reason that the shortest road to the desired seats on the central committee was paved with appeals to ideological backwardness among the communist forces.

The fact that the NNMLC has not broken with this aspect of the past shows just how far they are from overcoming their own ultra-leftism. In our next article we will explore their conceptions of party-building strategy in general and of the party itself.

NICARAGUA . . .

(continued from page 9)



Organizer photo

In Philadelphia, 200 people demonstrated in front of the Marine Corps recruiting office to demand NO U.S. INTERVENTION IN NICARAGUA. The demo was sponsored by the Coalition for a Free Nicaragua.

On the diplomatic front the Sandinistas won victories when first Costa Rica, then Mexico, and most recently Ecuador broke relations with the Somoza regime. By late May they were ready, and launched what they termed their "final offensive". In well-coordinated actions they succeeded within a few weeks in taking over 25 cities, including Nicaragua's second largest city of Leon. On June 4th they called for a national strike, and since then the national economy has been paralyzed. On June 17th they proclaimed a provisional government and named a five person Junta. The Junta includes one Sandinista and four other members of the opposition, including the widow of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, whose assassination last year touched off the civil war. It is clear that the Sandinistas had planned their offensive well.

Meanwhile, the US government found itself in an uncomfortable position, stuck with another dictator on his way out. On May 30 and 31, the Pentagon secretly flew in arms to Somoza, using Hercules transport planes leaving from US bases in Panama, in violation of the Congressional ban on arms to Somoza. Congress had cut off military aid because of Somoza's human rights abuses.

These flights were well-documented and denounced by the Nicaraguan opposition. It is certain that other covert military aid has been sent by the US to Somoza without being detected. The Pentagon has also made sure that El Salvadoran and Guatemalan troops were sent in secretly to help in Somoza's fight against the guerillas. The Sandinistas have denounced their presence, and captured a

Guatemalan colonel in Leon on June 5. So far, such efforts have been unable to sway the tide of the fighting to the National Guard.

In the face of increasing victories by the Sandinistas, the US evacuated 290 Americans from Managua in late June. The US then called a June 21 meeting of the Organization of American States to pressure for intervention by that body in Nicaragua. The US hoped that the OAS might intervene in order to mediate a political solution and save Somoza and his National Guard from military destruction by the Sandinistas, but the OAS was predictably unable to carry out this task. Meanwhile, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia called for recognizing the Sandinistas as legitimate combatants, and for recognizing the civil war as a fact.

On the ground, the Sandinistas captured one of Somoza's few tanks and turned it on the National Guard, as well as shooting down several C-47 gunships supplied to Somoza by the US. At the time this article is being written, the outcome of the current insurrection remains in doubt, but the Sandinistas have clearly come very close to toppling Somoza. Right-wing US Congressmen have taken out full page ads in the *New York Times* denouncing the Carter administration for not taking more action to help Somoza to prevent the Sandinistas from creating another Cuba, in the heart of Central America. The CIA is surely also at work doing what it can to defeat the Sandinistas, but it is possible that this time US imperialism is not in a position to thwart the wishes of the *N.Y.T.*, page 17

NUTS & BOLTS

"Nuts and Bolts" is periodically featured in the Organizer. Its purpose is to arm rank and file organizers with information and analysis that can be of practical value in the struggle on the shop floor and in the unions. Basic labor law, parliamentary procedure, and health and safety information are some of the technical areas that are covered. Also, we deal

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

Chemical Hazards in the Workplace

by Tom Mooney

Industrial workers are exposed to numerous chemicals. 80% of them are labeled with meaningless "trade names." The label doesn't give a clue about what the product contains. Worse yet, there is no information provided about the harmful effects of the chemicals or how to use them safely. What can workers do to protect themselves from hazardous chemicals?

There are some general guidelines for evaluating chemicals in your workplace:

1. Don't assume a chemical is safe because it is common. Until recently, asbestos was one of the most common industrial materials. Government scientists now estimate that 1.6 million of the 4 million workers heavily exposed to asbestos will die of asbestos related cancer.

2. Be suspicious when you are exposed to large amounts of any chemical. Almost all chemicals are hazardous to health if you breathe large amounts of them.

3. Be alert to illnesses or other health problems experienced by co-workers. Outbreaks of skin disease, breathing problems, or dizziness are a clue that there is some dangerous substance in the workplace.

The laws on toxic chemicals in industry do not adequately protect workers, but we can use the laws to help protect ourselves. The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) of 1970 established two federal agencies to deal with workplace health and safety. NIOSH (the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) investigates hazards upon request and recommends procedures for evaluation and control. OSHA (the Occupational Safety and Health Administration) actually sets and enforces standards. OSHA inspects workplaces and issues citations and fines against the company if the law is being violated.

In relation to chemicals, the most important rules enforced by OSHA are the TLV's (Threshold Limit Values). The TLV for a chemical is the maximum allowable concentration in the air averaged over 8 hours. There are about 500 chemicals, minerals and dusts which have TLV's, although many thousands more still have no legal standards for maximum exposure.

Because the TLV's are listed by chemical names, you need to know what a trade name product is made

of (its chemical names) to begin to find out if your exposure exceeds the TLV. The right of workers to know the chemical names of the products they work with is being contested by industry. However, there are several ways to get this information.

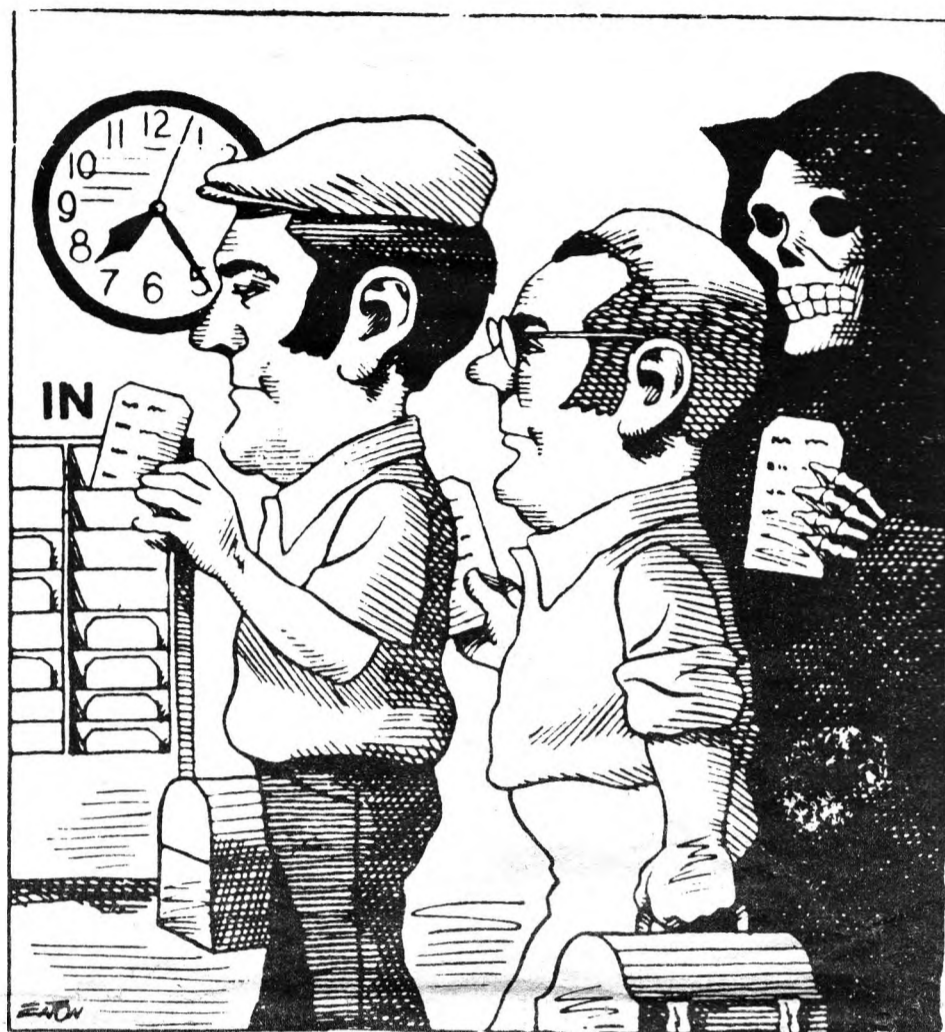
Under the OSHA law, any trade name chemical must have a "Material Safety Data Sheet" which is supplied by the manufacturer. You can ask to see this sheet. It should list all the hazardous ingredients in the product along with their TLV's. The sheet should also describe the effects of over-exposure and special protection workers should have when they use the material. If the company doesn't give you the data sheet, you can call NIOSH for help at 596-6716.

NIOSH will analyze a sample of the suspect chemical if two or more workers request it. If the data sheet the company supplies you with does not contain adequate information, you can request NIOSH to ask the manufacturer for a more complete data sheet. NIOSH also has listings which describe the composition of some trade name chemicals.

You can also use OSHA if you think you are being exposed to hazardous chemicals. You can request OSHA to come and inspect your workplace by filling out an OSHA complaint form, available from OSHA, 600 Arch St., Suite 4456, Phila., Pa., 19106, (phone 597-4955). The complaint form should describe specific hazards and where and when they occur. The form may be signed by an individual, a group of workers or a union representative. You may request that your name(s) be withheld from the company.

As part of the general inspection, the OSHA inspector will take samples of air in hazardous areas and analyze them to see if the concentration of chemicals exceeds the TLV. If it does, the inspector may issue a citation with a list of standards violations, along with deadlines for cleaning them up. It is important that a union or worker representative accompany the OSHA inspector on their tour. Also, OSHA can be requested to come to the plant unannounced and at any specific time. The employer may refuse OSHA entry, in which case OSHA must go to court to get a warrant to enter.

There are several limitations on the use of OSHA. OSHA does not cover public employees. Sometimes OSHA inspectors fail to identify hazards, and the OSHA laws are written so that the company has more rights of appeal after



an inspection than the workers do. The more informed you are about the nature of the hazards in your workplace when you fill out the complaint form, the greater your chances of getting a good inspection. Before you fill out the complaint form, you should be sure you understand fully your rights under the OSH Act.

The best place in the Philadelphia area to get advice on how to deal with chemical hazards is PhilaPOSH (Phila. Project on Occupational Safety and Health), 1321 Arch St., Room 201, Phila., Pa., 19107. (phone 568-5188). PhilaPOSH, a coalition of local labor and health workers, can provide technical assistance on identifying chemical hazards. It can also provide advice on how to use OSHA and NIOSH most effectively.

Because PhilaPOSH members have a lot of experience with health and safety problems, they can help develop tactics most likely to get results. PhilaPOSH also has a lot of free and low cost literature offering practical advice on subjects from the health hazards of a particular chemical to your rights under OSHA.

While OSHA should be defended and expanded (it is presently under heavy attack from the right), trade unions cannot rely totally on OSHA to protect health and safety in the workplace. Instead, unions must have health and safety protection written into their contracts. It's important that each local have a health and safety committee and an educated rank and file.

The union should be strongly committed to health and safety issues. For example, 21 UAW locals in S.E. Pennsylvania recently joined together to form a regional health and safety council, which can pool the experience and expertise of the local health and safety committees. Some OCAW locals have contracts guaranteeing their right to know the chemical names of products they work with.

Contract clauses that protect the right of workers to refuse to work with hazardous chemicals may be a more serious threat to the company than OSHA fines. This right can only be protected by a strong contract and a strong union.

Philadelphia Schools...

(continued from page 11)

FUTURE OF DESEGREGATION

As every monthly statistic drives another nail into the coffin of the voluntary plan, School Board cynicism becomes more open. At a district teachers' meeting recently a Board member admitted that the Board doesn't believe the voluntary plan will work, but are simply using it to buy time to stave off busing.

The Board may very well opt to petition the Commonwealth Court for an extension of the voluntary plan, and

although it defies logic, the Court has gone along with the Board so far and may be persuaded to grant such a request.

Given the uncertainty of this route one would think that the School Board would be making plans for an orderly transition to busing, devising a method to educate parents and answer their questions and fears about busing. At this time, however, there is absolutely no indication that the Board is making any such plans. If anything, they seem intent on heightening tensions. At a Home and School Council conference on desegregation in March, white parents were warned to

cooperate with the voluntary plan or "it will be Boston", raising the spectre of hatred, violence and bloodshed.

The School Board strategy seems to be: 1) fight busing until the bitter end; 2) promote racial tension and violence by making any busing plan as chaotic as possible; 3) use the resultant bitterness and confusion to demand a return to a voluntary plan, or better still, no plan at all. Every child and every community in Philadelphia will be harmed by this approach. The only winners will be the banks, whose profits will be even more secure from a united, multi-racial assault, and perhaps Michael Marcuse with his \$54,000 per year contract good until 1982.

"The Board of Education from 1968 through this present Board

administration had no intention to adhere to the Pa. Human Relations Commission mandate. . . . Twenty-five years after *Brown vs. Board of Education* it is my sincere belief that the Phila. Board of Education will never endorse, support, or implement any desegregation program, plan of effect that will bring about the changes other than through a voluntary effort."

—Augustus Baxter

The truth of Mr. Baxter's remarks is self-evident. It is up to the people, then to build a united, multi-national movement which, to be successful, must convince whites that quality education for all is impossible in schools which remain segregated by race or nationality.