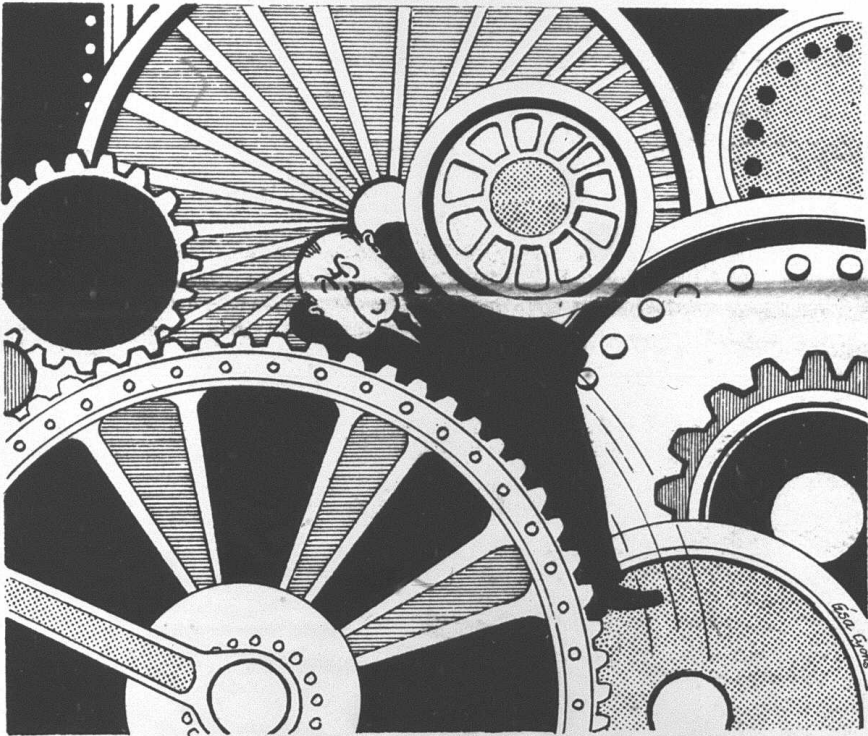


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socialist**

No.13 October 1969
.20 East Coast, .15 West

Ann Arbor Rent Strike



Strikes: Baltimore · France

Repression · Davis

Women Workers · Cuba

"The Hidden Proletariat" Ilene Winkler p 12

heavy weather

Rampaging through high schools screaming "Jailbreak," announcing that those who disagree with them are "running dogs" and "racist counter-revolutionaries," the Weatherman faction which controls the RYM-SDS (as opposed to the PL-WSA SDS) are warming up for what they themselves call a "Wargasm" in Chicago, October 8-11. Weather Bureau, the Weatherman leadership's term for itself, has announced that this is the first step in building a "Red Army." Plans for the demonstration represent sheer adventurism, creating a general atmosphere which can only lead to mass clubbings and arrests with no political gains to offset these losses.

Each issue of *New Left Notes* that appears is more divorced from reality than the one before. Weatherman says that the way to build a revolutionary movement among whites is to yell at people that if they think that they're oppressed, they should look at the Third World. Weatherman says that for the American working class to make a revolution in its own name would be "objectively racist and reactionary." People's needs are not something to be organized around, say the Weathermen. If you disagree, be prepared for a karate kick to the groin, since the Weather Bureau has just announced that anyone who does not accept the Weather forecast is the enemy.

Weatherman's glorification of terrorist acts has reached the point where many groups in the movement expect, not without precedent, to be attacked by "the vanguard." In Chicago, these antics will no longer seem amusing or infantile; they will very likely result in disaster, possibly tragedy. The left will have to work overtime to dissociate itself from the adventurous band which thinks that the only way to organize is to scream "give up your white skin privilege!" and then attempt to massacre infidels.

Also in Chicago, at the same time, RYM-II plans to hold a separate demonstration. RYM-II, led by Bob Avakian of the Bay Area Revolutionary Union, Mike Klonsky, and Noel Ignatin, split with Weatherman after uniting with them at the SDS Convention to fight PL. RYM-II plans to

march through North Chicago after demonstrating at hospitals and other community institutions with demands that these institutions be more responsive to the needs of the community.

Some radicals, over-reacting to Weatherman, seem to be retreating toward the National Mobilization Committee's concept of single-issue, middle-class-oriented, moralistic marches. But the fact is that militant multi-issue demonstrations can play an important role in building a movement. Such demonstrations, however, should grow out of ongoing organizing work.

Demonstrating at a hospital means nothing, no matter how good or bad the slogans used might be, unless roots have been sunk with those most clearly exploited by the discriminatory medical system—the hospital workers who are oppressed on the job, and the poor and working class people whose meager savings are sucked dry to pay for outrageously bad medical treatment.

But it is only in the last few weeks that RYM-II has broken with Weatherman and decided to stage its own show in Chicago. Four or five weeks is clearly not sufficient time to build the type of demonstration which RYM-II claims it is planning.

When this is coupled with the fact that it will be impossible for anyone (except those who keep up to date with the latest in movement factionalism) to distinguish between different groups demonstrating in Chicago at the same time, RYM-II's plans can only be viewed as a maneuver in its battle with Weatherman. To those outside the movement, RYM-II will be associated with Weatherman's adventurism; they are simply engaged in an internal movement skirmish, and RYM-II, the SDS faction most responsible for the resurrection of Stalin, deserves no help.

Weatherman and RYM-II are taking their faction fight into the streets of Chicago, and demand that everyone choose between them. Let's not play lesser evilism. We urge radicals to stay out of Chicago, and instead devote their energies to building a movement which takes its working-class orientation seriously.



Arson, Rape, and Bloody Murder, When the RYM Revolution Comes

On September 1, the National Convention of the Independent Socialist Clubs of America voted to reconstitute the federation as a centralized national revolutionary socialist organization, the International Socialists. The first meeting of the International Socialists National Committee the following day voted to change the name of the Independent Socialist to the International Socialist, beginning with this issue. The Program-in-Brief of the new organization is reprinted on p. 19.

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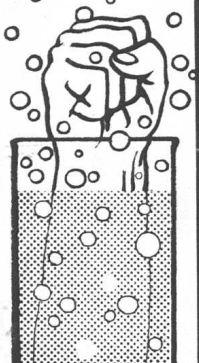
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Wildcat at Sparrows Point

Bethlehem Steel's Sparrows Point plant outside of Baltimore is the largest employer in the Baltimore area, and the largest iron and steel mill in the U.S. It employed an average of almost 28,000 people last year. The work force, almost entirely male (over 97%), is about 33-40% black; Steelworkers' Union District 8 has the largest percentage of black workers in the union.

The following is an interview with a member of the Baltimore Independent Socialist Club, who works at the Sparrows Point plant, and has been a long-time activist in a United Steel Workers local there.

Q. -- I understand there was a wildcat strike down at Sparrows Point recently. What happened?

A. -- Three weeks ago, approximately 150 men who work in the electrolytic department of the tin mill walked off their jobs as a result of the company telling an operator of one of the tin plating lines to go home.

For several weeks, the men had been trying to get the company to restore previous job classifications that had been eliminated as new equipment was introduced. The elimination of these job classifications had caused a drop in earnings; to force the issue of their job classifications, the men were refusing to run the electrolytic tin plating lines at the excessive speeds the company demanded.

Q. -- Did the shutdown spread beyond the initial 150 men?

A. -- As a result of the 150 men walking out, additional men were laid off in the next few days. The walkout lasted a total of 4 or 5 days, and by the end of that time approximately 1,500 to 2,000 people had been laid off altogether. The longer it went on, the more people got laid off.

Q. -- What were the reactions of the people who were laid off to the action of the men on the electrolytic lines?

A. -- I've been told by people who walked out that most of those who were laid off were at least sympathetic to what was going on, and in some cases were more than just sympathetic. Many were disappointed that they hadn't been told ahead of time that it was possible there would be a walkout, because they would have liked to walk out on some issues that concerned them at the same time.

Q. -- Did the United Steelworkers' local at Sparrows Point play any role in this wildcat?

A. -- Yes, it did. Whenever there's a wildcat strike, by contractual obligation the union must attempt on all levels to get the men back to work. In this case, the local union officials, while very sympathetic to what was going on, fulfilled at least the technical requirements of the contract, in the sense that they did call up men and urge them to go back to work.

Q. -- Did they play a leadership role in the strike?

A. -- No, they didn't. The actual walkout was not initiated by the men themselves, but was a result of the company telling an operator to either speed up the line or go home; when they sent him home, everybody walked off the job. But the groundwork for the refusal to operate the electrolytic lines at an excessive rate of speed have been laid by the men who worked on those lines themselves. Some of them are shop stewards, and therefore union officials at the lowest level. But many of them weren't, were just men working on the line.

Q. -- Were the issues that led up to the walkout re-

solved at the end of the strike?

A. -- Well, they haven't been as yet, no. There were other issues in addition to the question of job classification involved. One of the most important issues, for instance, was that of the health conditions that the men who work on the electrolytic lines have to work under. Some of these lines are using new chemicals and new types of processes to tin-plate and in some cases chrome-plate steel. What effect these chemicals have on people who handle them or breathe air polluted by them is as yet undetermined. The company doesn't seem to be in a particular hurry to find out what these chemicals will do to the men. But many of the men are worried about what effect these will have on them in the long run.

Q. -- What are the effects of technological innovation at Sparrows Point?

A. -- The company attempts to use every single change in the method or processes of production, and in the particular work routines as a means of reducing pay, getting more work out of the men, reducing the work forces and making a larger profit for its shareholders. The present situation on the electrolytic lines is a sample of their efforts.

Q. -- Was the wildcat an isolated case of resistance to this sort of technological speed-up, or have there been others?

A. -- Oh, yes. These kinds of things go on frequently. There's a continual resistance in one form or another to the attempts of management to get more production, in many cases for lower wages, out of the men.

Q. -- Do men in other units at Sparrows Point face the same health and safety hazards as men on the electrolytic lines?

A. -- Yes. There was one case that came to light recently that's particularly important in this respect. One of the processes involved in producing some of the finished steel products that come out of Sparrows Point is called "pickling"; passing strips and sheets of metal through tanks containing a fairly strong acid solution. This cleans the metal and prepares it for further operations farther on down the production line.



Since the pickler was first put into operation, there have been an extremely large number of men who have developed various kinds of sicknesses and sickness symptoms as a result of working around this part of the line. The problem with the pickler is that strong vapors rise from the acid solutions that are used in the process, and the ventilation has been insufficient to protect the men.

Recently, one of the men who works in the area became so incensed over what had been going on that he began, with the help of the union, to compile a listing of 87 men who presently work around the pickler or who have worked there in the recent past. Out of these 87 men, 86 had experienced some sort of symptoms: nose bleeds, sore throats, their teeth turning black, teeth falling out, pains in the chest, sores on their skins, vomiting, nausousness -- a whole range of things like this.

Some men have died while working on the pickler: their deaths were investigated, but some serious questions remain as to exactly what was the cause of their deaths. There's a lot of feeling that some of these men died as a result of the conditions they were subjected to while working on this line.

All these facts and figures were compiled and the union submitted it to the federal government, charging that the situation was in violation of one of the federal industrial health safety laws. As a result, the company has finally agreed to make certain changes in the conditions around the pickler, including improving maintenance of the ventilation system so that it works properly, making new covers for the acid tanks so that you don't have as many vapors escaping into the air, and so on.

But these kinds of conditions, bad ventilation, in some cases problems with sound -- high levels of noise over a period of time can cause men to lose part or all of their hearing -- are still common at Sparrows Point.

Q. -- Aren't government inspectors supposed to see to it that health and safety laws are upheld without the filing of grievances?

A. -- Yes, but they don't. When the government did send inspectors to see what was going on in the area around the pickler, the company went to extraordinary lengths to reduce the level of air pollution in the area on the day that they came down. They took steps that under normal circumstances had never been taken in the past, including slowing down the line, reducing the heat of the acid solution (what that means is that a lower level of vapors came off), and adding some sort of inhibitor agent to the acid.

Q. -- In addition to endangering the men who work there, does the mill harm the environment of the surrounding area as well?

A. -- Yes, a large amount of both air and water pollution is created by steel mill operations at Sparrows Point. In fact, one of the things that creates water pollution is the operation of the electrolytic lines: hundreds, perhaps thousands of gallons of acid solution are dumped every week into a small creek at the Point (and this is just one of the many operations that produces such wastes).

The creek that this acid solution is emptied into eventually opens into the Chesapeake Bay, so Chesapeake Bay, of course, receives a good part of the acid. The immediate results can be observed in the creek itself and some of the bottles of water immediately adjacent to it, where there is no fishing now as a result of this acid dumping, and a much-reduced level of all types of water life. Back in 1959, during the big steel strike, which lasted over 100 days, the creek cleared up. Fish reappeared in areas of water that had not had any for years, and people were able to fish again for a short time.

Similarly, it's very easy to see the air pollution at Sparrows Point from quite a distance; you can see the smoke and dirt rising from the whole area. I happen to go to work very early in the morning, just about the time when the sun's rising during the winter, and the sunrises are always very beautiful, with a lot of yellow and orange and red coloring around the sun -- caused, of course, by the large amount of smoke and dust in the air. The same effect can be observed in areas where there are forest fires. It's like that every day at Sparrows Point.

Recently, one of the local papers revealed that a government official had charged Bethlehem Steel and some other corporations in the Baltimore area with operating for some time in violation of anti-pollution laws. He claimed that steps would be taken to see to it that the conditions were remedied. Of course, nothing's happened so far to reduce the air pollution significantly.

THE STEELWORKERS

Q. -- How do the rank and file of steelworkers at the Point relate to the United Steelworkers Union and its locals?

A. -- Well, Sparrows Point has traditionally been an area of high opposition to the leadership of International officials of the United Steelworkers. By and large, the average steelworker at Sparrows Point believes that the international-level union officials are not doing the things they expect them to do, that there have been selling the men out in contracts, that they have not been fighting for and winning the kinds of things that the men really need.

The recent election of International officials offers a good example of an expression of this opposition. Nationally, a relatively unknown man, Emil Narick, who had been the assistant legal counsel for the United Steelworkers, ran for office against I. W. Abel, the incumbent International President, and received somewhere around 40 per cent of the votes. At the Point, the situation was more complicated because, in addition to the fact that Narick was running against Abel, there was an important contest for District Director of the Maryland district, between a man named Edward Plato and a man named Lee Simms.

Lee Simms, if elected, would have been the first black District Director in the history of the United Steelworkers. I. W. Abel backed Simms and, as a result, he himself received a larger number of votes than he could have otherwise expected; many black steelworkers voted for Abel simply because he had supported Simms.

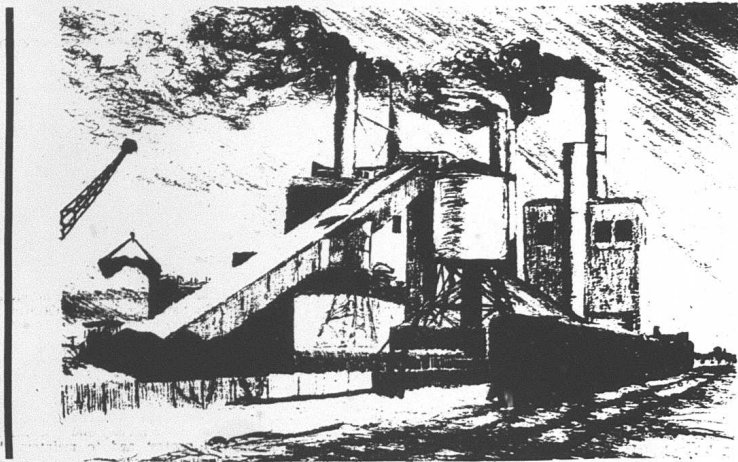
The contest for director of District 8, the Maryland District, like most contests for International and District level offices in the United Steelworkers, was a farce. Neither Plato nor Simms could be depended on to stand up for the interests of the steelworkers of the district -- to fight a militant and far-reaching fight against the steel industry in order to further those interests, or to carry that fight over into the political arena, as is absolutely necessary today.

Simms had been an International Representative to the district for several years, and had been active in organizing a number of locals. But by and large, he had had little if any experience in working with the two big steel locals in District 8 and had only held one office of shop steward; the first office that he held, and after that every single office that Simms held was an appointive office. In this case, he ran a poor campaign, dominated by International Representatives, and had little or no positive program to offer anyone, black or white.

Ed Plato, on the other hand, had held a number of elective offices. He had been president of Local 2609 at Sparrows Point, one of the two big steel locals there. He had been active as a leader of the Dues Protest Movement back in the 50's and early 60's.

But despite his reputation as a "rebel," Plato capitalized on a lot of racist sentiment against Simms. He refused to take steps to make it clear that this campaign was not a racist campaign, and that he intended to eliminate racial discrimination in District 8.

This is not to say that he didn't deny being a racist -- he did. But the facts speak for themselves. Ed Plato came out of a seniority unit at Sparrows Point -- one of the more highly paid units -- that has become noted for its exclusionist policies, for a way of



Power Richard Lyons

operating that has denied not only many black steelworkers admittance to this unit, but also many white steelworkers who didn't have an "in," who didn't have a friend someone who could get them into the unit.

In addition, despite the fact that Plato posed as being a "rebel," as being a great leader of "the little man" in the United Steelworkers, against the "big, bad international union officials," the facts about that speak for themselves also. Back just before March 20, when a special convention of the United Steelworkers was called by International officials for the purpose of getting a dues increase, Ed Plato refused to oppose that dues increase. As a matter of fact, as an International Representative to District 8, he came back to Local 2609, the local he had once been president of, and argued on the floor that the Local's convention delegates should support that dues increase. So despite his talk about being a rebel, recent history has proved that he is not a rebel, and that, in any case, he is not a man that can be depended upon to defend the interests of steelworkers.

Q. -- How are black steelworkers at the Point dealing with racism and what have been the reactions of white steelworkers?

A. -- There is an organization at Sparrows Point of black steelworkers called the Committee for Equality. This is an independent organization of black steelworkers who are attempting to eliminate racial discrimination at Sparrows Point. They've pointed out a number of instances of racial discrimination at the Point, including the system of hiring and job promotion that the company has used, which involves a lot of testing that's unrelated to the job, and has been used primarily as an instrument for stopping black men from being hired and promoted into the better jobs available at the Point. The Committee has called attention to the way seniority units are designed at Sparrows Point, to stop black workers from advancing into the better paying jobs.

They took their complaints to the federal government and have convinced the government that a large number of their complaints are valid. So presently, a few things are being done at Sparrows Point to eliminate some of these discriminatory conditions. Of course, there's a very long way to go.

The reaction of the average white steelworker at the Point to all this has been negative. Some of the younger white steelworkers who are more politically aware, and even some of the older guys may in certain cases be somewhat sympathetic, but by and large, they don't immediately relate to what's going on.

The Committee for Equality has not attempted to organize large numbers of steelworkers, black or white, at Sparrows Point. Rather than building a real movement of people, they've depended to a large extent on the federal government to wield the power that they hope will bring about the changes they want to see. If they begin to organize large numbers of people around a program of action, you're going to see people choos-

ing sides to a much greater extent than they have in the past on the question of that program.

Q. -- How would white steelworkers react if you appealed to them primarily on the basis of "fighting racism," or of giving up their "white skin privileges"?

A. -- The huge majority of them would think I was a crazy "nigger lover" and political discussion with them would probably end at that point. This doesn't mean that you can't fight against racism as a radical working at Sparrows Point. What it does mean is that while helping to build struggles against the company state and capitalism itself, you fight racism in the process.

It also doesn't mean, of course, that we should oppose independent black organizations. When black people are unwilling to be part of integrated working class groups, due to their past experiences with whites in such groups, then we should accept their position and work with them in whatever way possible. The independent organization of black steelworkers at Sparrows Point, while not radical or revolutionary in its present political perspective, has within it the seeds of a future radical working class movement. Hopefully, increasing numbers of white Sparrows Point steelworkers will begin to have a sympathetic organizational relationship to this group.

Q. -- Are people that you work with open to radical political ideas?

A. -- This depends on both the race and the age of the guy concerned. Black guys in general are more open to radical political ideas, and young black guys in particular. There's a growing openness to radical ideas among white guys as well, particularly young ones but not exclusively so.

In terms of shop issues and union issues, there's also a difference between guys who work in production

units with continuous processes that you have to stay at, and guys in skilled and maintenance-type jobs who don't work with continuous processes. The guys who work in production tend to be more class conscious, simply because their conditions of work are more oppressive, and they have less control over their work situation.

Many people who work in production units have to fight to get the time just to eat lunch or go to the bathroom. In the Electrolytic Department of the Tin Mill, for example, the company attempted to reduce the crew size on a line from four to three several years ago. Due to the resulting burden on the men in the unit, the men decided to shut the entire line down every time somebody wanted to go to the bathroom. As a result, the company eventually returned the fourth man to the crew.

Q. -- Have you been red-baited while working at the Point?

A. -- Yes. I was red-baited by certain individuals in the union as a result of my participation in the recent union election campaign, and I was red-baited by the company after I and several other men in my shop finally managed to force the company to do maintenance work on a faulty ventilation system that was the source of serious air pollution in the shop.

Of course, the latest thing isn't to be red-baited. If you try to change things, but to be SDS-baited, particularly if you're young.

At least as far as the company is concerned, they really don't care what you say about anything or what you think about anything, like being against the war in Vietnam, or for black liberation, or even for workers' power. The thing that bothers them is if you force them to spend some money to improve working conditions or wages. If you do that, you're a "bloody communist" or "SDS revolutionary" or both.

Q. -- Do the people you work with take the baiting seriously?

A. -- Not as seriously as people who don't know me, that I don't work with, but the reaction is mixed even among the men in my shop.

Q. -- Do you think it's worthwhile for political radicals to go into shops?

A. -- Very definitely. While I don't think that there should be a headlong rush for everybody to get a job in a factory, I think it's past time for at least some significant number of movement people to get jobs in industry.

There are various ways of reaching working people around issues that concern them (taxes, inflation, air and water pollution, etc.) such as independent political action, but the kind of working-class oriented political action campaigns that I'm interested in are clearly going to be most effective only when there are people in shops with direct working class involvement.

People who are really serious about a working-class perspective are going to have to be really serious about a shop perspective as well.

A LETTER FROM DETROIT

Who are the Concerned Unionists in Detroit? They are a small band of union members from auto, steel and other industries, who believe they can make a contribution towards raising the consciousness of their fellow workers beyond strictly trade union lines a la Comperism. They are not in any sense a sectarian group, for they seek to work with New Left Students, black and brown Panthers, Black Revolutionary Union Movements, striking Grape Workers, Progressive Union Caucuses, etc.

They formulate resolutions on union matters (Re-opening the Contract on the Cost-of-Living Clause and the Annual Improvement Factor) and on domestic issues (War, Inflation and Taxation) and then send copies of their resolutions to union locals, pass them out at union conferences and conventions and on picket lines. They put out a mimeographed four-page paper as often as their scanty resources permit. They have contacts in other industrial centers -- Flint, Pontiac, Chicago -- and receive requests for bundles of their paper. Though small in numbers, they are convinced their membership will increase because their perspective ranges beyond the limits of the traditional union caucus.

Take the problem of automation as an example. The typical union caucus would oppose the union bureaucracy for its lack of militancy in pushing for contract attrition clauses, such as transfer rights, dismissal pay, re-training, and the like. The Concerned Unionists also advocate such job protection, but in addition, they point out to workers that the new technology's impact on working people goes far beyond the scope of collective bargaining in a given industry. For automation cuts across not only industry lines but even national lines. Countries like Germany, Italy, Japan, where wage scales are considerably below those in the United States, are matching and in many cases, even out-matching technological advances in the United States. To compete on the world's market, including the domestic market, American corporations will be forced to cut costs -- especially labor costs. And under our State-regulated economy, the Government will not hesitate to use its influence to "make America competitive," by instituting discriminatory wage-price controls and by passing strike-crippling labor legislation. And in this endeavor the labor bureaucracy "in the best public interest" can be counted on to cooperate with the government bureaucracy. As one Concerned Unionist put it: "We want workers to see how the union bureaucracy and the corporate bureaucracy work hand-in-hand to turn the union into a disciplinary agency over the membership, and how the government bureaucracy serves as the third party in this unholy alliance."

And so the Concerned Unionists are: CONCERNED over unions today becoming part of the Establishment and not facing up to the basic social and economic issues of the day; namely, the Vietnam War, inflation, ever-increasing taxes, and the problems of the ghettos, the poor, and the Black community.

CONCERNED about a growing number of people in our society who need help and are becoming industrially unemployable, and the shifting of the economic burden of taking care of these people on the working class, who can least afford it.

CONCERNED over the failure of the unions to educate the Black and white worker that their fight is not against one another, but against the Power Structure which breeds hate, discrimination, and violence and that is not a question of Black Power or White Power, but of Union Power.

CONCERNED about the gap between policy and performance by our union, especially in the area of advancing and enforcing overtime while thousands of young people in the inner cities go unemployed.

CONCERNED about the problem of the young workers not being able to acquire enough seniority to establish full job rights, contractual rights and fringe benefits.

CONCERNED over the wide gap between controlled democracy which exists in our union and a true rank and file democracy.

CONCERNED about the unions' failure to see the significance of, and support, the student struggle against the draft, the Vietnam War, against the Establishment, and for a greater voice in the conduct of the Universities and colleges and of the whole educational system.

CONCERNED about our unions' indifference towards the drift to the Right, toward reaction in this country, and finally, the unions' incapacity -- because they themselves are part of the Establishment -- to work for a new society, democratic in the economic form and in the political form.

CONCERNED finally, that the real producers of wealth -- the worker, the farmer, the technician and the intellectual -- instead of getting an ever decreasing share of the wealth as at present, should under a new system of distribution receive their rightful share and thus secure for themselves and their families greater social, political and economic freedom.

Signed: A Detroit Unionist.

KEEP DAVIS, FIRE THE REGENTS

On June 30th this summer, the Regents appropriated from the University of California faculties the right to make tenure decisions. As a sop to the professors, the Regents added standing order 102.1 to their rules: "No political tests shall ever be considered in the appointment or promotion of any faculty member or employee." But the Regental rules, which students can be expelled for disobeying, proved no obstacle to the Regents themselves, as they met in San Francisco September 19, and voted overwhelmingly to fire Angela Davis, a black faculty member at UCLA, on the sole grounds of her admitted membership in the Communist Party.

As social turmoil caused by the Vietnam War, racial oppression, inflation, and the increasing militarism and bureaucracy in American life avalanches into social crisis, the response of the rulers of this society has been increasing repression against those sectors of society already fighting for social change. The Regents, who overwhelmingly represent the business, agribusiness, financial and political power structure of California, in attempting to preserve the university as a defender and servant of the status quo, must participate in the society-wide wave of repression.

Thus the LA Times of September 22 reported that a majority of Regents believe, "The taxpayers in a capitalistic, democratic society should not pay the salaries of professors, or the bills of students who want to change that system." According to the same report a veteran Regent pointed out, "We have sacrificed 25,000 lives in Vietnam to defeat communism, so why should we let them indoctrinate our students?"

When the people who run this society are willing to police the world to protect their interests, it should not surprise us that they are willing to break their own rules, attack such principles as academic freedom and free speech (which they hypocritically claim to support), and force a confrontation with the faculty and students, in order to attack social protest and to maintain the hegemony of their ideas and interests.

It is not that Reagan is (as he claims) worried only about the Communist Party, whose conservative and undemocratic politics have been thoroughly discredited among the left and the American people. The previously cited LA Times of September 22 reported that "most Regents interviewed were certain that, as one said, 'this is just the beginning of a wave of these political cases.'" One Regent was quoted in the same article as forthrightly saying that a majority of the Regents would support broadening the policy against the Communist Party to include "Progressive Labor Party, the Vietnamese National Liberation Front, campus Students for a Democratic Society, the Black Panthers and other organizations that advocate change, sometimes violent change in American life."

In fact, the article further reveals that in mid-September, "the tenure appointments of two University of California Berkeley professors were challenged be-

cause they had signed a petition opposing the Vietnam war and for other anti-war actions and statements." Times reporter William Trombley concluded that "conservative Regents might begin a general purge of faculty and student dissidents and demonstrators."

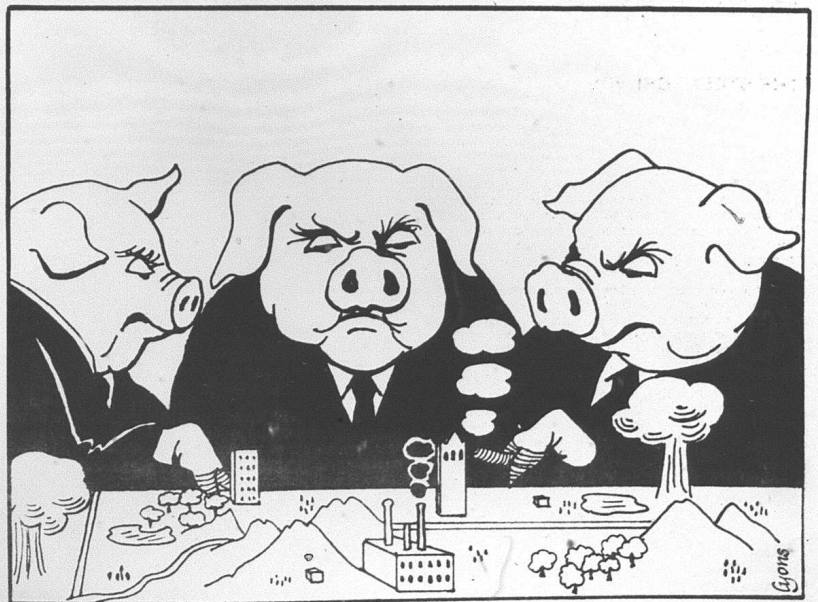
Black spokesmen have attacked the Regents' action as racist. Reagan has claimed that this is not so because they would have fired Angela Davis even if she had been white. To many, this appears to be an adequate refutation of the charge of racism. But Miss Davis was hired as part of a black recruiting program resulting from the militant struggles of blacks in society, and her firing is an infringement of the right of blacks to control their own affairs at the University. The attack of the Regents on black radicals is an attack on the right of the black community to choose its own leaders, the more so when the militant consciousness of their struggles is turning them toward radical black leadership.

A policy which maintains the University as a partisan defender of capitalism is not a new one for the Regents. Past attempts of the Regents to crack down on student participation in the anti-war and civil rights movements are only the most flagrant of their actions. The University's research services to agribusiness as it attacks the efforts of farm workers to unionize and win decent living and working conditions (see IS pamphlet *The Dirt on California* by Hal and Anne Draper) is but another aspect of a general university policy of service to the power structure and defense of the status quo against popular movements.

We must not merely fight against the purging of radicals from the university, we must demand more radicals here. To the Regents' concept of the university, as a bulwark of an unjust and oppressive society, we must counterpose the university as a source of new ideas and an ally of social change.

The Regents have made the Angela Davis case a test of their ability to clear out radicals from the university. But the outcome will not, as the Regents claim, be decided in the courts. The only defense against the new wave of repression on campus is mass, militant action by the students and faculty. We must not let Angela Davis be fired.

Signed: UCLA, Berkeley and Davis International Socialists.



The French Railway Strike

From Lutte Ouvriere

Viewed strictly in terms of its goals and methods, the recent strike of the SNCF (Societe Nationale des Chemins de Fer) would appear to be a labor dispute like any other. But coming as it does at the beginning of a fall which promises a great deal of working-class agitation, it takes on a special importance.

The work stoppage by 30,000 "roulants" (all railway workers who actually ride the trains: engineers, firemen, conductors, etc.) by itself has been enough to revive in France some of the atmosphere of May, 1968. The government, well aware that the working class has scarcely been bought off, awaits the reaction to its austerity plan with a great deal of apprehension.

In this context, the vocabulary used by the press and the ministries is quite significant. Everyone speaks of "the outflanking of the unions by the rank and file" and "wildcat strike (*greve sauvage*)" and evokes the spectre of sinister radical leftists corrupting the honest workers and keeping the CGT from doing its job. The Minister of Transports himself, M. Mondon, has made the puzzling statement: "I don't want to throw oil on the fire, but

this is nevertheless a question of a limited sector [of railway workers]. In that sense, we are not far from a wildcat." Even if the eminent M. Mondon were the only one to misuse this word, with its very precise meaning, it would still be the case that since May of 1968, there have been no social conflicts in which the press has not spoken of "outflanking (*debordement*)."

While the bourgeois press sees leftwing militants everywhere, the latter seem to share their illusions, since they hold, too often, that the traditional trade union organizations are incapable of leading a movement anywhere except to a sellout and back to the shop. The fact is that to the extent that the reformist trade unions have been able to hold the confidence of the workers for fifty years, it is because, while stopping short of open opposi-

tion to the bourgeois order, they have been able to present themselves in the eyes of the workers as the defenders of working class interests. To preserve that image, they have had to develop a political approach infinitely more sophisticated than that of simple strike-breakers. Not to understand that is to understand nothing at all.

In particular, in the case of the roulants' strike, it is obvious that the trade union organizations of SNCF control the movement completely, and are in fact its originators.

In the context of the power struggle which has set it in opposition to the CGT, the autonomous Federation of Railroad Workers saw the problem of working conditions and hours as an issue around which it could launch a unified action, which, because of its specific, concrete objectives, ran no risk of generalizing to other sections of the working class, and yet, in the current context, could force the government to make concessions in order to suppress a possible base of social strife.

At the same time, the CGT did not want to find itself on the short end in its fight with the autonomous trade unions. Since May, 1968, it has been especially sensitive to the possibility of being outflanked and has not wanted to risk appearing as a non-combative organization. Thus it has thrown its full weight into the balance, while also being careful to do nothing that could extend the strike even to the rest of the railroad workers.



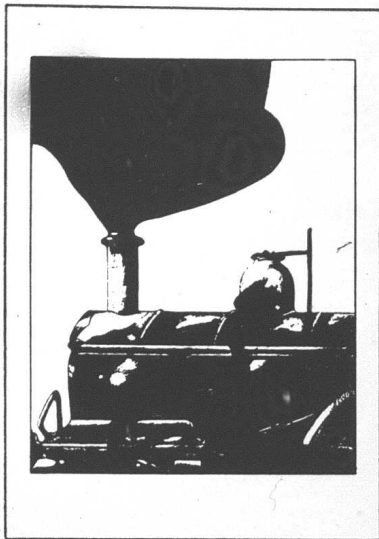
Reprinted from
Lutte Ouvriere,
Sept. 17, 1969.

Working Conditions

This method of operation is built into the logic of the situation in which the PCF (Parti Communiste Français) and its union, the CGT, have found themselves since May, 1968, and is an example of the role that one can expect the CGT to play in the coming months.

The CGT cannot afford to run the risk of being outflanked on the left. In May, 1968, the organizations linked to the Communist Party went through, in the Latin Quarter, an experience that they will remember for a long time to come. They are ready to do almost anything in their power to avoid a similar trauma.

The fear of really being outflanked from below led them, in May, 1968, to set into motion the largest general strike since World War II. They are hardly about to refuse to put themselves at the head of more limited struggles. We can be sure that in the coming months, the CGT will place itself systematically at the head of every movement that breaks out.



But the strike of railway workers is not only significant in terms of the attitudes of the trade unions. It is also important in terms of what it demonstrates about the government, which has revealed how afraid it really is of the reactions of the working class. The date chosen for the devaluation of the franc was more a reflection of this fear than of any Machiavellianism of the government, since August, behind a governmental facade of assurance, a real apprehension has been obvious. Chaban-Delmas permitted himself a timid declaration on "respecting the right to strike," and both the government and the SNCF management are pushing to continue negotiations. In itself, this is no victory, but it clearly shows that the government has no effective means of opposing the struggles of workers.

Frustrated by its "victory" of May, 1968, the French working class is nonetheless neither broken nor demoralized. On the contrary, even if it was launched by the official trade union organizations, the roulants' strike proves by its force and unanimity that the working class is not resigned to anything.

The strike, despite its complex and ambiguous aspects, is the first response of the working class to the reactionary plans of Pompidou and Chaban. The first response will surely not be the last.

—Translated by Loren Goldner from *Lutte Ouvriere*, a French revolutionary socialist weekly, Sept. 17, 1969.

Began without warning in two depots, Avignon and Acheres (Yvelines), the strike of roulants (railroad workers who ride the trains) spread with extraordinary rapidity. By Wednesday night at 8 p.m. in certain stations, at 10 p.m. in others, the work stoppage was complete, paralyzing all the railway networks.

Since then, all the newspapers have rediscovered the profession of roulants. Some, certainly not lacking in imagination, have referred to them as the "Saint Exuperys of the rail." But the romantic image of their work evaporates when confronted by a blunt description of their appalling working conditions.

The roulants make up about 10% of the total railway work force (about 320,000 men). If they are sometimes referred to as part of the "labor aristocracy," it is only by comparison with the very low wages paid to other railway workers. The engineer with ten years seniority, riding a suburban route, earns about 1,500F (\$300) a month, while a railway worker at the bottom of the ladder earns barely 800F (\$160).

For this munificent salary, the work of the roulant never ends. He is constantly at the beck and call of the administration which employs him.

The runs are regulated by the PAR, a set of regulations specific to this corporation, which the roulants are trying to change at the present time. Two of its components are very important: the "amplitude," that is, the number of hours when the worker is at the disposal of the SNCF, 14 hours at present, and the layovers, that is, the time he must wait between runs.

A work day may be structured in the following way: start work at 11:47 a.m., break from 3:05 to 7:19 p.m., then work again until 10:57 p.m. The worker is on call for more than 11 hours, but he only earns the equivalent of seven hours of work. (Roulants are paid for layover time at only 1/4 scale, while overtime pay does not exist, which is really disgraceful.) These breaks leave the agent waiting in some depot. Sometimes it is possible to sleep or rest (although given the noise, this isn't easy). But in general, the waste of time is enormous.

Since the strike of May, 1968, layovers during the night have been abolished from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. But the night shift is still too long and exhausting; thus the demand for night shifts of seven hours or less, or even six hours or less (the latter raised by the depot of Achères).

The runs scheduled in theory are announced a month in advance. But there are numerous exceptions to this rule. First, there is an entire category of roulants, the "banal," who are shuffled around by the SNCF from one day to the next, throughout the entire year. It is not possible for them to predict their days off in advance, beyond the fact that each day off must be scheduled within a week following the previous one.

The promotion from "banal" to normal runs, that is, runs scheduled in advance, is an envied privilege, which

comes about through seniority (and occasionally through connections).

Furthermore, it often happens that the trips are modified on the spur of the moment according to the sacrosanct needs of the department—or even that a worker may arrive at his station to learn that he doesn't start work until two hours later, and therefore must wait, without pay, of course.

One aspect of the working conditions of the roulants was emphasized by the press, that of engineers on long distance runs. With modernization the SNCF progressively did away with the assistant conductor, who had backed up the engineer, and replaced him with an automatic system: the V.A. (Veille Automatique), the Automatic Watch or "the dead man." Several systems exist, but the principle remains the same: the roulant must respond to the mechanism every 30 seconds either by pressure from the ruck knee or from the hand. If the movement is not made, the train stops.

Nervous tension on the job has considerably increased, since the introduction of this more demanding system has not been accompanied by a decrease in traveling time; on the contrary, it has meant increased speed and therefore even greater difficulties.

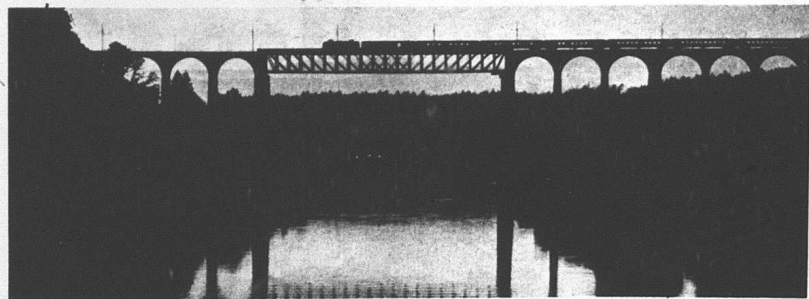
The engineers are subjected to numerous harassments; a supervisor getting on without warning can abruptly interrogate the roulant. One form of harassment very prized by administrators consists of making men take "psychotechnical" exams more often than necessary. Normally they are given only once a year to verify driving abilities.

Some of the basic strike demands revolve around the question of crew size and work weeks. In May, 1968, the work week of the SNCF was reduced from 46 hours to 44 1/2 hours. But the roulants soon realized their working conditions were getting worse. Thanks to the layover system, the SNCF has gotten by without expanding the work force, keeping the same workers doing the same amount of work in fewer hours. To hire new personnel or appoint workers who have already passed the exam, but are without the certificate, would have been against the present policy of the government.

For as in all the departments, it is a question precisely of stopping hiring and decreasing the workforce. The most recent reports predict a decrease of 60,000 railway workers between now and 1973. Those who retire are not replaced. The yards function with insufficient personnel doing overtime work.

So far as the roulants specifically are concerned, the unions estimate that at least five thousand men would have to be added to the work force to normalize the work loads. In fact, a real improvement in working conditions would be effected by reducing the work week to forty hours. That is one of the essential demands formulated in the depots.

—Translated by Marianne Gerson from *Lutte Ouvriere*.



The Strike Wave in Europe

Even as the railway workers of France—ignoring the whimpering of the French government about economic difficulties—were prosecuting their struggles, other major strikes were breaking out in all the principal countries of Western Europe.

In the Federal Republic of West Germany, where the daily *Die Welt* termed Friday the 12th "The End of a Dream," hundreds of thousands of metalworkers (soon followed by the miners of the Rheinland, the Saar, Bavaria, and North-Westphalia) began a struggle for better working conditions, a raise in pay and a paid holiday of a minimum of 20 days.

In Italy, where the social situation has been tense for months, fall has come on even colder than predicted. The recent strike of Italian metalworkers, which won wide support, testifies to the fact that the fighting spirit of the Italian working class is intact.

Finally, in England, the Labour government is confronted with numerous workers' struggles. The position taken at the last Trades Union Congress, which refused to take responsibility for Harold Wilson's anti-strike legislation, reflects the inability of the unions to subdue the workers, and promises a continuation of the struggle.

The Establishment press has been asking itself about the importance of the strike movements which in different ways have affected every country in Western Europe. The press is worried about the growing difficulties that the bureaucratized union organizations have encountered in trying to keep a rein on both their own members and the working class as a whole.

The European working class, as its present struggles are demonstrating, is far from demoralized.

Nowhere is it willing to acquiesce to negligence on the part of the owners. Ignoring economic appeals whose only function is to maintain or increase the level of profits, the workers fight to maintain their buying power and increase their standard of living.

In search of the inevitable outside agitators who must always be found at the root of conflicts, some see, from Liverpool to Dusseldorf, the mysterious hand of the radical leftists—certainly a much simpler method of explanation than looking for the real causes of the discontent in the working class.

In reality, left wing militants played no role in the launching or building of the strike of French railway workers, and they are certainly no more involved in the struggles in other countries, at least not in a decisive way.

But it is no accident that there is a tendency to blame the radicals for the present struggles, even as there is a tendency to find them at the source of everything that troubles the sacrosanct "social peace."

Radicals are the declared enemies of the present social order. Despite the inertia of the traditional organizations which only go into motion when they can't avoid it, the radicals call for action.

To be sure, the radicals are playing no decisive role in the present struggles, and the unions continue, in spite of certain difficulties, to keep the lid on the workers' movement. But the ideas of which the radicals are the vectors are those of the workers in struggle, and therein lies their power.

—Translated by Marianne Gerson from *Lutte Ouvriere*, a French revolutionary weekly, Sept. 16, 1969.

The Roots of Repression

David Friedman

The radical movement in America is increasingly preoccupied with the repressive campaign being waged by the agencies of the state, under the leadership of the national Administration and with the support of both major parties and the mass media. This question is literally a matter of life and death, freedom or suppression, for individual revolutionaries and radicals, and for leading movement organizations.

In one sense, the repression can be seen as a measure of the growth of the movement. If there were nothing to repress, there would be no repression; no one can dispute this elementary conclusion. However, this does not end the matter. The need of the establishment for repression is obvious; the question is, will they be able to get away with it? How can we best resist?

What we are experiencing is a shift in the political nature of the period, a stiffening of ruling class attitudes, with the acquiescence of the working class. On top of that, the movement in recent months has, through its own actions, become unnecessarily vulnerable and isolated from its own base. Setbacks which result from the character of society in this period we must simply learn to live with. But blows dealt to the movement because of its own misdirection and blunders are those we must learn to avoid.

The ruling class always seeks to divide the people, the better to deal with the separate parts. Its aim today is to divide blacks from whites, workers from the jobless, students from the general population, radicals and revolutionaries from the mass of students and black people. The severity of the repression will depend on how successfully our rulers can exploit these divisions, thus gaining popular support for the whole-scale use of police power and legal atrocities.

One response to this threat on the left has been to cry "fascism." This approach confuses the business-as-usual repression of the capitalist state (which is bad enough; of course) with totalitarian fascist terror. It is the flip side of the idea that the revolution is just around the corner. Such misestimates are extremely misleading and therefore dangerous.

The left is under attack through the normal channels of the capitalist state. The ruling class is not yet in such dire straits as to encourage a right-wing demagogic mass movement -- the social crisis may be deepening, but the society is by no means in danger of imminent collapse. The Wallace campaign, despite its appeal to racism and its demagogic critique of inflation, taxation, war policies, big business and big government, had only a limited impact; the ruling class backed Nixon and Humphrey.

The purpose of the current repression is to destroy or hamstring the more militant and radical organizations, those that will not compromise. This is quite different from fascism: a full-fledged attack on an entire section of the population and all its organizations. German fascism waged unrelenting civil war against the working class -- such a development is not at all impossible in the United States, beginning with an attack on the black community, but it is not on the agenda at this time.

The overall strategy of the ruling class still aims at winning the acquiescence of the majority of black people. The carrot and stick approach is not a feature of fascism, which suppresses all opposition and struggle, including the reformist and moderate variety. Such severe measures are not undertaken lightly by the capitalist class; a fascist regime is not pleasant or safe for the capitalists, even though it preserves their social rule as a class. Fascism is not a selective tool, to be turned on and off. Playing demagogically on mass unrest might only serve to arouse the working class. Vigilante-type repression might step on too many toes. Better to rely on a beefed up police force -- highly trained and disciplined.

No one should deny the possibility of a race-war development in a situation of increasing economic austerity. However, current Establishment policies are designed to avoid cataclysmic civil conflict, if possible, and to keep the black people down with minimal disruption. Independent action or organization of any kind on the part of whites is not encouraged.

be rejected. Our struggle must be guided by critical intelligence, not mindless ravings such as emanate from the SDS leadership. To come to grips with the repression, we must analyse the crisis in US society: the basic causes of unrest and rebellion, the main divisions among sectors of the population, and the movements that have mobilized that unrest.

One of the accepted myths of the Fifties was the theory that capitalism had solved its basic economic problems (at least in America), and that as a result mass struggle and radicalism had no relevance for the vast majority of people.

1. THE END OF STABILITY

The "stability of the Fifties" was based on a sustained period of prosperity apparently free from the economic crises which had plagued capitalism. World War II resulted in immense advantages for America. Western European capitalism was in ruins, threatened by Stalinist expansionism, and, until they were betrayed and crushed, by revolutionary working class movements.

America invested heavily in the reconstruction of the European industrial powers, as a strategic necessity for the preservation of capitalism. From this position, the United States gained domination of markets and raw material sources in the Third World, strategic military bases, and advantages on the world market (not the least of which was acceptance of the dollar as the medium for international transactions).

The post World War II prosperity affected the nation as a whole, through a "trickle-down" process which reached at least as far as the organized workers. Due to the conversion from war-production, there was an unprecedented availability of consumer goods. The union bureaucracy contributed to the decline of working class militancy, leaving whole sectors of the working class unorganized, and hence unable to share in the prosperity. For blacks, unorganized workers and the unemployed this was a false prosperity, but they were in no position to make that point.

Out of the period of war production came a new stabilizing mechanism, the Permanent Arms Economy. Increasingly, government purchases of arms have provided an internal market which absorbs surplus capital, turning it into waste and thus regulating the "overproduction problem" which used to cause recessions and depressions. The "advantage" of this mechanism is that the state need not compete with profitable private enterprise, and that arms do not reenter the productive cycle.

Other countries are forced (up to a point) to compete in arms production, so as not to lose their standing in the international pecking-order. (If the U.S. engages heavily in waste production, it must force other countries to do likewise, or else they would gain a competitive advantage on the world market.) The working class foots the bill, since state revenues are raised through taxes which heavily favor corporations over individual wage-earners, and the fat profits go to the private arms industry.

The Arms Economy has become a major economic stabilizer in Western capitalism in the past two decades. But this method of solving the overproduction problem has its own contradictions, which are now beginning to be felt. As arms become an ever-larger part of total production, a growing percentage of the nation's productive capacity is devoted to waste. This leads to economic stagnation (a decline of the capital growth rate) and to inflation (Generally, inflation results from more money competing for less goods).

Insofar as Western Europe has let the U.S. lead in the arms race and "defense of the Free World," their economies have been a competitive head on the

Times, not to mention trying to run a household on a budget. American capitalism has slowly used up its post-war advantages, giving rise to increasing economic difficulties and simmering discontent spreading throughout major sectors of the society.

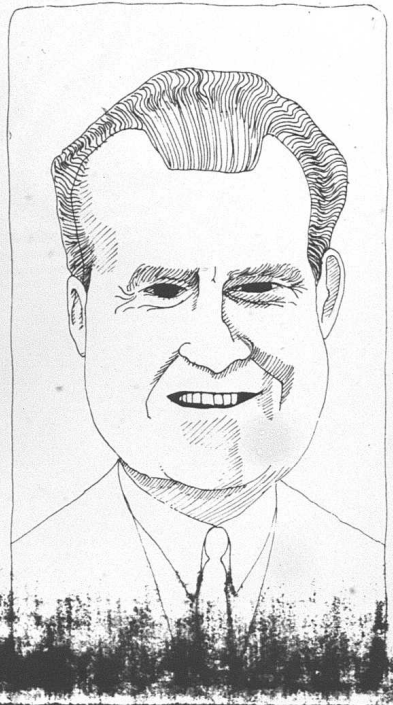
The cost of the war in Vietnam has been transferred to the working class, and within the working class to its least organized components and to racial minorities. A general austerity exists in both public and private sectors of the economy. Inflation and taxation run rampant, squeezing students and many professionals as well as both blue and white collar workers.

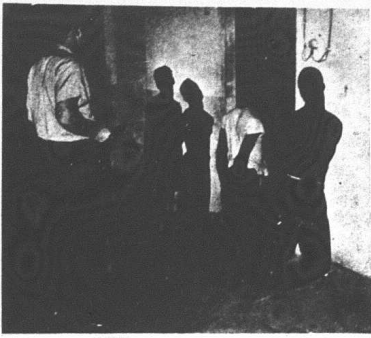
Loss of income and worsening working conditions (exacerbating a long-range trend toward "proletarianization" of many traditionally middle-class occupations, like teaching) have revived and stimulated efforts at union organization in many areas, and triggered a nationwide rash of wildcat strikes and contract rejections by the rank and file. These in turn have led to widespread use of court injunctions against union activities, new anti-strike, anti-labor legislation, etc.

The economic stability of the Fifties was reflected in public conservatism and general satisfaction with the functioning of the system. The majority believed that their aspirations would be satisfied. At the same time, a mass of people existed in a state of poverty and apathy, especially black people in the rural South and urban ghettos. This included the unorganized section of the workforce, in unskilled and marginal occupations, which had been abandoned by the trade union leadership. They had few organizations and no audible voice on the national scene. The official myth -- that poverty was disappearing in America -- went unchallenged, except for the weak appeals of nobleless oblige liberals.

Forces for social unrest gathered very slowly in the Fifties and early Sixties, as working class expectations and illusions were only gradually dispelled. Struggle still went on at the shop level, but it was weak, uncoordinated, and purely economic. It took a particularly sharp issue, the conflict between a rising Negro middle class and the obsolescent Southern segregation code, to set the stage for the first real breakthrough -- the shift in the period which distinguished the political Sixties from the silent Fifties.

The civil rights movement emerged out of a modernizing South, with a "progressive" new business sector, and a professional layer of middle class Negroes desiring upward mobility but tied to their poorer brothers by indiscriminate racism. The movement was moralistic, led by ministers, based on the black middle class, claiming to speak for all black people but making demands of little benefit to working class and poor blacks.





This movement forged a nationwide coalition, with progressive businessmen in the urban South, and with the forces of Northern liberalism: the Reuther wing of the trade union bureaucracy, the Democratic Party leadership, and a vast base of white middle class liberals motivated by vague ideals and the desire to Do Good.

Despite its origins, the movement rapidly turned toward economic issues, as the militant youth sought a base among their own people. The bankruptcy of the Negro-liberal coalition soon became increasingly apparent: the liberal leaders were unwilling to split the Democratic Party by breaking with its Southern wing, and they were cool to the economic demands. Unwilling to break with its liberal "allies," unable to provide leadership for the awakening mass of blacks, the civil rights movement subsided, splitting into a number of distinct political tendencies.

2. THE BLACK MOVEMENT

But the years of struggle and agitation had left their impact. Out of the civil rights experience came a new level of social and political consciousness among the mass of black people, a sense of solidarity as an oppressed minority, and a new movement whose rallying cry was Black Power.

At the same time, in part as a sympathetic response to the black struggle, a militant student movement has emerged, highlighted by mass demonstrations against the war in Vietnam and a series of explosions on campuses (and increasingly in high schools) all across the country.

However, the growth of a new militant and radical consciousness in the United States in the Sixties has been an uneven process. Unlike the black community and most students, the vast majority of the white working class, despite the emerging current of rank and file militancy, remains imprisoned by racist attitudes and political passivity.

Given this dissatisfied but unpolitical and racist working class, the prevalent mood of anxiety over war, inflation, smog, riots -- the general deterioration of the standard of living and the quality of life -- leads to a confusion of causes and effects. Student radicalism and black militancy are seen not as symptoms but as problems.

The white worker sees no solution to his troubles; certainly his bureaucratized union offers no answers. More and more, he sees blacks as a threat to his job and the prospects for his son. He receives exaggerated reports in the mass media of welfare expenditures, and concludes that "the blacks are getting everything." He rarely hears from the radicals, who do not have access to the mass media, but when he occasionally does, they speak a strange language, and mainly seem to be attacking his hopes for a better life.

As a result, instead of alliances among the discontented and oppressed, we see masses of white workers turning to racist "solutions," blaming black demands and radical agitation for their malaise, voting for "law and order." We have seen strikes degenerate into racial conflict, as in the case of the reactionary New York City teachers' strike against community control of the schools.

It is for this reason that the establishment feels confident about embarking upon a course of repression, without fear of mass resistance. Indeed, it feels compelled to do so, before sectors of the working class become sufficiently politicized to enter coalitions with black people and radical students, toward a movement which no state power could readily suppress. We face conscious decisions, made in the proverbial Upper Reaches (and attested to by the near-unanimity of the mass media on these questions), that a hard line is needed for this period, that radicalism must be stopped before it becomes successful in winning popular support.

The various liberal alternatives to the crisis in American society have only served as a spur to the repression. As ruling class attitudes harden, the liberal wing of the establishment quickly falls into line, wringing their hands as they follow the shift of politics to the right. Most McCarthy supporters ended up voting for "law and order" with Hubert Humphrey, thus signing a blank check for repression no matter who won the election.

Since its basic loyalties lie with the system that has caused the present crisis, liberalism is incapable of offering any real solutions to it. With nothing to offer in the way of answers, it encourages people to opt for what seem to be the next best thing: elimination of one of the most visible symptoms, the vociferous protests and demonstrations. The right-wing electoral victories in several cities this summer led the liberal "New Republic" only to the conclu-

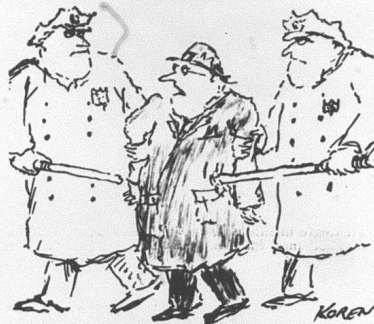
sion that "liberal disavowal of violence must be made more emphatic." The "John Lindsays of both parties," it went on, "... are and will be the country's best hope." (The New Republic, 6/28/69).

What the fact of repression today points to is an overriding need for black and white radicals to carry on campaigns aimed at raising the consciousness of all workers and providing bridges between the black struggle (which need not and should not be muted or subordinated) and the unrest throughout the population. This consideration should influence the nature of movement propaganda, the rhetoric, the choice of issues when such choice is possible; in short, the whole approach to politics in this period.

For the most part, however, nothing of the sort has occurred and the activities of the most active, most organized, most conscious radicals have done little to bridge the gap in consciousness and often have widened it. Indeed, radicals on the campuses and in black liberation organizations have tended to become estranged even from the bulk of their own people. Just when new constituencies are opening up, when masses of people are fed up with the status quo -- the organized left in American seems incapable of relating to them, and remains isolated, an easy prey to repression.

Police repression has been particularly intense in the ghettos; students, until recently, have gotten off relatively easy. It is not only that blacks pose a larger threat, although this is certainly a major factor. The state has been free to use its massive police power in the ghettos because of the relative isolation of black people, whereas students are linked up with large elements of the middle classes, whose support is valued by the political parties. As the student movement have grown more massive and threatening, it has been necessary for the politicians and the mass media to wage a campaign aimed at making students, or at least student "dissidents," unpopular in the public mind.

Spontaneous, unorganized struggles are relatively easily defeated; they cannot carry out a sustained campaign addressed to other constituencies. While the power structure engages in all kinds of politi-



"There surely must be some mistake—I'm middle-class!"

cal propaganda aimed at isolating and defaming the rebels (not to whip up fascist lynch mobs, but to gain support for beefed-up police and a free hand to use them), the unorganized movement is incapable of waging "political warfare", of winning allies, of undermining the state by popularizing the movement's demands and struggles.

This has been the experience of the giant ghetto uprisings, from Watts (1965) to Detroit (1967). These heroic uprisings marked a watershed in the transition from civil rights to Black Power, and posed a disruptive threat so great as to significantly change the character of the political period in America (especially when taken together with the effects of the Vietnam war). But as a method of struggle, the rebellions were inadequate -- they merely raised the level of repression to the point where such outbreaks and the resulting police retaliation became devastating to the black communities. They won no concrete gains, left no organization and little in the way of crystallized radical consciousness, in their wake.

In most cases, the coercive War on Poverty organizations were able to move into the vacuum. In the 1968 elections, those same black communities, at the urging of their "leaders" on the government payroll, voted overwhelmingly for the "lesser evil," Hubert Humphrey.

Organized, highly political struggle is the only long-range defense against repression. Within the ghettos there is a powerful black consciousness, full of rage and alienation from the society and its institutions, but with little programmatic expression or direction for struggle.

This is why movement activities are so often co-opted, led into dead ends, or simply defeated. This is why the reformists, War on Poverty types, black politicians and black bourgeoisie continue to take the lead in so many community struggles -- despite their repeated displays of bankruptcy and untrustworthiness (The community control movement in New York City exhibits all these problems, although it still should be supported for its potential.) There have been few attempts, and no notable success, at building mass radical organizations within the ghettos. The atomization and desperate conditions of ghetto life make organizing difficult, and we must face the reality that there is a considerable gap between the black population and the few black organizations with truly radical or revolutionary politics.

The "liberal-Negro coalition" had an impact on millions of middle class liberals, who for the first

time in their lives found a cause that seemed really meaningful -- however shallow their understanding and commitment turned out to be. For thousands of students, less committed to liberalism and status quo institutions, this was a major step toward radicalism.

The civil rights coalition provided a degree of protection against the brutal, almost fascist repression of the South. The "non-violent strategy" was considered crucial by the civil rights leaders, because they depended for defense on the potential of federal intervention and the force of public opinion.

This dependency explains why the movement was defeated when its senior partners proved unwilling to support a meaningful struggle, aiming for more than "legal equality." (Even the limited fight against segregation was supported by the "progressive" capitalists and their liberal politicians, not out of "good will," but because this helped their campaign to modernize the South and relocate regional political power in the modern urban sector. All those Negro voter registration drives were registering people into the Democratic Party, at the service of its liberal wing.)

We should be clear on how the "protective umbrella" tended to work. The mass confrontations set up in front of nationwide television by Dr. King aimed at forcing his powerful liberal allies, like President Kennedy, to carry out their end of the social bargain. If the federal government had failed to intervene in the various "staged massacres," this would have had a radicalizing or at least disillusioning effect on the millions of liberals who believed in the rhetoric. The involvement of young people in mass demonstrations and sit-ins across the country underscored this threat.

The civil rights leadership sought middle class support on a moral basis, and did so by restricting the activities and political development of their black base. The fault was not in seeking allies, but rather in sacrificing black demands and methods of struggle, and further, in seeking allies in High Places rather than among the oppressed whites.

The middle class Negro leadership saw only the racism of white workers. All sectors of the white population shared this racism, but the middle class white liberals were free from some of the brutality of daily life that brings out the worst prejudices of workers, and it was this flimsy difference that determined the orientation of the civil rights leaders. In order to put pressure on the Big Democrats, they needed immediate expressions of sympathy, and this was not to be found in the working class.

The movement was already in decline by 1964; the "moratorium" on demonstrations, so as not to embarrass Lyndon Johnson in the presidential election, broke the momentum permanently. The Johnson Administration's escalation of the Vietnam war, with its moral repugnance for civil rights workers and its exacerbation of economic problems, created a further break in the coalition. This was expressed by Dr. King's public opposition to the war (on liberal grounds, to be sure), and his subsequent loss of "the ear of the President."

In a relatively short period of time, the militant wing of the civil rights movement, organizing among the Southern rural poor, was wiped out by police repression and economic reprisals. That repression did not signify "the strength of the movement," SNCC became increasingly unviable as an organization, while the mass movement subsided throughout the South, even though the rotten conditions and discontent remained. Today there is a resurgence, among a different base, the Southern black workers. It is too early to gauge the strength/breadth of that awakening movement.

With the decline of the civil rights movement came a period of political and ideological turmoil in the black population and its organizations. Before fading into oblivion, SNCC popularized the Black Power slogan, which symbolized both the assertion of ghetto demands, ghetto rhetoric, ghetto militancy, and the rejection of nonviolence, subordination to liberalism, and white-dominated organizations. The rise of independent black organizations reflected a new self-confidence in the black community, and in turn provided vehicles for the development of new black leadership.

One of the shortcomings of the Black Power slogan was its unpolitical character; it was not enough simply to reject the stifling features of the old movement, although this was necessary. The old liberal ideas began to creep back into the movement, carried by



Richard Avolon

the black politicians and rising bureaucrats of the War on Poverty. The rhetoric was super-radical, but the content was often the same old crap: reliance on the Democratic Party (or its black machines), hostility to radicalism as "white" and "exploitative," acceptance of coercive government programs, etc.

Rarely did the new breed of "Black Power bureaucrats" aim for real organization in the ghettos, except for political machines to deliver the vote on election day. Their conservative programs and strategies tended to increase the isolation of black people. By demanding more money for welfare programs, without at the same time demanding jobs for all, they played into the hands of the ruling class campaign to pit white workers against the blacks.

Their failure to generalize issues which hit all working people, like taxation and inflation, made it look like the black movement was purely "self-serving," whereas in fact the liberation of black people is integrally tied to the liberation of all people. Since these leaders did not clarify the oppressive character of the two-party system, they repeatedly led their followers into cooptation; by accepting the basic framework of capitalist society, they fed into the racism of white workers who thought that they were competing with the blacks within a fixed system.

The ghetto uprisings did not expose the bankruptcy of these leaders. They simply adapted their rhetoric, speaking in threatening tones as if they had led tens of thousands into the streets against the police and merchants. The Black Power rhetoric-mongers retained their influence because the uprisings cast forth no alternative strategies, no organizations, no recognized leaders.

Some of the tendencies that emerged from that period of ideological turmoil in the black movement -- the nihilistic racism of LeRoi Jones, who saw in the ghetto uprisings a vision of apocalyptic race war in which "revenge" would be attained (the "liberation" of a graveyard) -- the CORE leadership, who saw their personal pot of gold at the end of the rainbow of black capitalism -- the Karenga group in Los

Angeles, who have taken to murdering their opponents in the black community -- these tendencies cover for conservative strategies, including deals with the power structure. They lead only to further isolation and disaster.

The analysis of black people as an "internal colony" is often used as a starting point for analyzing the situation of black people in America. However, the colonial analogy, while true to reality in some respects, is misleading in others.

The colonial analogy misses the actual relationship of most black people to American capitalism, the nature of black exploitation, and consequently the viable roads to revolution. Eldridge Cleaver stressed the "community imperialism" imposed on the ghettos, and in his orientation toward "lumpen" elements placed primary emphasis on the oppression of the ghettos as communities. Those forms of oppression are very real, and distinguish the life condition of black people from that of whites with comparable economic status. But the dominant mode of exploitation occurs not in the community, but at the workplace: measured in low wage-rates, poor working conditions, unemployment and insecurity. This is the root cause of poverty and degradation within the ghetto communities.

Unemployment in the mainstream capitalist economy, exacerbated for blacks by racist hiring practices, creates the large stratum of "lumpen" in the ghettos, and the social phenomenon of black women on welfare and families without a father. One can trace the failure of ghetto education, its financial starvation by the state, to the role black people are expected to fill in the economy; so too can most of the specific forms and institutions of oppression be traced to this source. Among other conclusions, this analysis points to the black workers as the basic potential agency of struggle and revolution, not by themselves but in their potential role as leader of the black community and key section of the working class as a whole.

The colonial analogy obscures the fact that there is not and cannot be a black or ghetto economy in the United States. The colonial nations have functioning economies, pre-industrial in most cases, but capable of supporting their population at some level; this is an absolute pre-condition for colonial independence. The black ghettos in America are "com-

munities" in the sense that people live there, but they contain little or no productive machinery, nor agricultural potential. National liberation in the form of "secession from the Mother Country" (suggested in an SDS convention resolution), is ruled out by physical-economic reality.

This is not to say that black liberation is impossible, but it can only come about through a socialist revolution in the entire society, not in a separatist manner or without a mass working class movement. This position has been articulated by black leaders like Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton, but for many white radicals, the colonial analogy continues to be "the last word" in empty rhetoric. One might even be expelled from SDS for voicing agreement with Bobby Seale in this matter.

Cleaver's guerrilla warfare perspective hinged largely on the analogy with Third World wars of national liberation, and to that degree has proved bankrupt. Black people, as much as whites, are dependent on the highly integrated mainstream economic structure. In such a context, a liberating guerrilla army could not possibly succeed. If necessary, the entire black community could be "starved out" in the event of a mythical guerrilla war.

We do not mean to imply that black people are simply oppressed workers. While the most fundamental exploitation of black people occurs at the workplace, through the "normal" capitalist methods, the degree of exploitation is not only more severe, but also takes oppressive forms not experienced by most white workers. The black workers are relegated to marginal employment and less desirable jobs; they are unorganized or belong to unions which are not concerned with their needs.

Racism plays a key role in keeping the blacks at the bottom: the leadership of the unions, supported by the white rank-and-file, ignore or oppose the black workers, cooperating with the bosses in maintaining the stratification and internal divisions of the workforce. Conservatism and racism mutually reinforced each other. Since the whites are not struggling in a politically conscious way for full

employment, decent working conditions, etc., they see the blacks as competitors for what little benefits can be won, rather than as potential allies. This increases their inherited racist attitudes and practices. The racism, in turn, hinders the normal tendency toward working class solidarity.

Only through intense struggles, when the commonality of economic interests and joint opposition to the employers becomes decisive, will this vicious cycle be broken. That is one of the reasons why all expressions of militancy by white workers should be actively encouraged, so long as they are not primarily directed against blacks or other workers.

White workers express their racism not only on the job, but also on political questions like "law and order," welfare expenditures, etc. Moralistic arguments have little impact because, unlike the middle class liberals, these people feel oppressed themselves and lack that noblesse oblige. Only by including them, winning them over to the struggle, can their racism be overcome.

Ironically, only an organization with conscious, revolutionary politics is likely to urge such a course in the black movement, because of the tremendous pressure of pure anti-white sentiment in the ghettos. Insofar as black working class organizations arise (this is just beginning), we can expect a greater understanding of the need to broaden the struggle beyond race issues. So far, the main black organization to recognize this need, and to seek alliances with white organizations sharing common goals, is the Black Panther Party.

The Black Panther Party has earned the respect of the entire left. The Panthers demonstrated the necessity of armed self-defense to protect the black community. Their ten-point program deals not only with the surface and legal manifestations of racism, but also with the basic roots of the oppression and super-exploitation of black people.

The Panthers projected on a national scale the idea that, even in the fight for black liberation, politics rather than skin color is primary. This approach provided the basis for Third World people to work together and with white people in coalitions based on mutual respect and struggle against the common enemy. They rejected any subordination of one people to another, whether in the manner of the old civil rights and trade union movements

(i.e., whites dominating blacks) or in that of the early black power movement (i.e., whites tailending blacks).

Because they measured people by their relationship to oppression rather than by their skin color or rhetoric, the Panthers openly opposed Negroes who served the ruling class, even if they were natural or used the language of nationalism. They opposed Black capitalism, and Negro Democratic Party politicians, just as they opposed the white servants of the ruling class.

The Panthers have led the way in pointing out that ultimately the black liberation struggle is inseparable from that of all people. Without subordinating their politics to the conservative consciousness of the white working class, they have worked toward alliances with whites for the destruction of capitalism and the building of a new, non-exploitative society.

From the first, the Panthers have faced the problem that the ghetto is inherently very difficult to organize. Ghetto life is atomizing -- neighbor is turned against neighbor, organizers are sometimes hard to distinguish from the ever-present hustlers. When Huey Newton and Bobby Seale set out to build a serious radical organization in the ghetto, there was little in the way of a precedent for them to follow. Their original orientation toward what the Panthers have called the "lumpenproletariat," toward the young black "brothers on the block," was a response to the difficulties of organization in the ghetto.

The wholesale, systematic campaign of repression directed against the Panthers, a coordinated national effort, testifies to their success in building a national black revolutionary organization, which the power structure sees as a serious threat. No one at this point could deny the vanguard role they have played.

The problems they now face, however, flow out of the very factors which contributed to their previous success. The Panthers' orientation toward black youth in the streets, and their semi-military style, was a key to their ability to build an organization in the ghetto. But it also imposed limits on their ability to relate to the black community as a whole.

In recent months, the Panthers have directed increasing attention toward the organization of black workers. The development of militant black caucuses in the factories represents a very hopeful development, for the black working class has the potential to play a central role in both the struggle for black liberation and the struggle for socialism itself. But the heavy infusions of sectarian and Stalinist rhetoric which have too often been characteristic of Panther public statements in the past, will very likely prove a major obstacle to attempts by the Panthers to link up with the new unrest among black workers.

Moreover, in trying to break out of the isolation which has facilitated the brutal ruling class attack upon them, the Panthers have made a tragic turn to the right. The United Front Against Fascism Conference which was organized by the Panthers this summer represented an extremely dangerous and misleading development for the left, both in terms of its structure and in terms of the political approach it advanced.

The so-called "United Front" seems in fact to be based on conservative alliances with the corrupt and discredited Communist Party and its liberal allies.

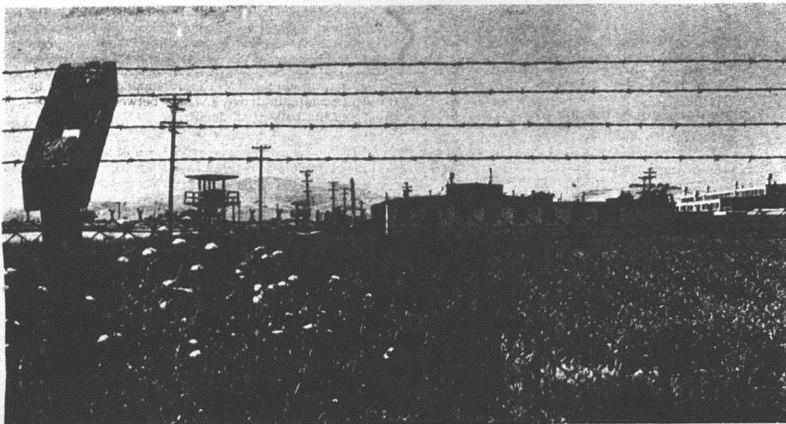
Under the impetus of their recent turn to the right, the Panthers have attempted to assert an hegemony over the radical movement -- intervening time and again in the factional struggles inside the SDS, threatening to terrorize any group on the left that does not uncritically accept everything they do or say. The unity they propose was not built out of common political struggle, but was artificially constructed by top-down control and the exclusion of all unpopular "trouble-making" left-wing organizations.

In fact, far from mitigating the isolation of the Panthers, the "United Front" has merely served to exacerbate it. In the long run, the only way to end repression is to end the social system whose periodic crises produce that repression. But a left which lacks respect for its own ideas and programs, and cannot stand internal debate, cannot possibly hope to win the respect and support of the mass of the people. Already, the posture of subordination adopted by many SDS leaders toward the Panthers has accelerated the disintegration of sections of the white radical movement.

3. THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

The magnitude and vigor of independent, radical student movements throughout the world, in both capitalist and Stalinist societies, industrialized and Third World countries, reflects a deep historical process: the technological competition and transformation of all countries, advanced and backward, in the manner of combined and uneven development. As technological levels rise, higher education becomes more and more essential to the functioning of the system. Although they cannot play the key revolutionary role of the industrial working class, students have come to form a substantial sector of the population which cannot be dismissed as marginal or inconsequential.

The life conditions of the student, isolated with his peers from the social milieu of his class origin, permit greater freedom of thought and criticism than the brainwashed society outside. Unlike the factories, the universities concentrate young people together, and the young are always the quickest to throw off old, restrictive ideas and loyalties. This accounts for the volatility of students, but by itself does not explain why students in ever greater numbers choose radicalism.



employment, decent working conditions, etc., they see the blacks as competitors for what little benefits can be won, rather than as potential allies. This increases their inherited racist attitudes and practices. The racism, in turn, hinders the normal tendency toward working class solidarity.

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One of the chief characteristics of students as a social group is that they are in a transitional state, and highly conscious of it. The high school graduate enters college with idealistic illusions, only to discover that he is being "processed," for an eventual niche in a large corporation or the machinery of the state. Moreover, his likely choices boil down to proletarianized jobs (like teaching), alienating anonymity, or morally repugnant occupations (advertising, public relations).

Students perceive that a college education no longer guarantees status and privilege, a comfortable position in a satisfying social milieu where all seems right with the world. Unhappy with his goal, intellectualized and aware of national and international events, the student begins to chafe under the yoke of work-discipline and a host of restrictions. He develops massive resentments which are highly political in character, rooted not simply in immediate grievances, but tied to a general perception of society.

The majority of students identify with the forces and movements which are striving to change society. The most powerful student struggles are those which feel a link to popular movements outside the campus. Even when students rise up around specific campus grievances there is the immediate potential for generalizing the struggle toward a radical attack on the social roots of the particular issues.

This is why virtually any incident, over almost any issue, can trigger off a campus uprising, form the basis for a dynamic ad hoc organization, or even produce a multi-issue radical group in its wake. This is why SDS has spread like wildfire from campus to campus despite its leadership. By the same token, student struggles tend not to produce large permanent radical organizations, for the simple reason that no organization can satisfy the all-pervasive discontent, or even appear as a viable long-range vehicle to that end.

When the only acceptable goal is total change in the society, only a revolutionary organization could provide a satisfactory program. But the mass of students have no clear idea of an alternative society, they are not that politically conscious, and so revolutionary organizations have a sharply limited appeal. Indeed, when one's lifespan in the social milieu is so temporary, it is difficult to work seriously toward revolution.

The long-range movement among black people has often filled the political and psychological needs that a student movement or organization cannot meet by itself. The intense identification of radical students with the black movement, and more recently with Third World struggles generally, arises in part out of a realization that students do not constitute a force capable of changing the society.

When the civil rights coalition began to disintegrate, students who had taken part in sit-ins and militant demonstrations found themselves in sympathy with the new Black Power tendency, and its angry break from liberalism. The adult armchair liberals, on the other hand, held to their comfortable assumptions about the society. They were not to find another "cause" until students led the way in an attack on the Vietnam war.

An independent student movement crystallized out of the struggles with university administrations over the right to organize, propagandize, and participate in disruptive demonstrations for civil rights and against the war. The Free Speech Movement at Berkeley signaled the emergence of a new generation of student radicalism, fighting on and off the campus, but always with an eye to the larger social issues. The off-campus focus of the civil rights movement provided a sense of direction and purpose, giving students a strong sense of moral justification, and experience with organization and concrete struggles, as well as contact with black militants and the hard arm of the state.

This was a period when most acts of state repression served to strengthen the movement and radicalize more people. College administrations soon learned to make concessions and avoid the use of police. Cooptive, rather than coercive tactics were the order of the day, for those above. The movement had deep roots and sympathy among the non-radical students. Its demands and activities seemed reasonable to them. Therefore, the exposure of

state force as the ultimate "argument" of supposedly democratic institutions had the effect of breaking more and more people from their past political allegiances and faith in "normal channels" as a means of social change.

The movement was marked by its outspoken concern for democratic rights, freedom of speech and organizing, and the goal of an open society, although the precise nature of that society and the question of revolution was hardly ever considered. This was the period of anti-ideology, of the "moral movement," and to the extent that it meant the rejection of rotten old ideologies and manipulatory concepts of organization, it was a healthy development.

Within the broad anti-war movement, students constituted an action-oriented militant wing. Student organizations were the first to call for immediate withdrawal, and were the most uncompromising in confrontations with Administration spokesmen. The students for the first time had a movement all their own, unlike the civil rights situation where the "real movement" was among the blacks and students were merely supportive. Radical activists had the leeway to chart a course of their own and build organizations and self-confidence.

It was in this context that SDS became the national organization of student radicals. Here too, state repression of the militant students tended to step on too many toes, threatened to radicalize too many adult liberals and uninvolved students. Repressive measures had to be weighed carefully and kept to a minimum.

The broad anti-war movement of mass mobilizations and respectable politics, proved to be ephemeral. The base was unprepared for the negotiations, and fell prey to the cooptive McCarthy campaign. Into the abyss of that campaign, the movement vanished with hardly a trace, in much the

THE WIRE-TAPPER GETS OFF WORK

Richard Lyons

It is good to get off this line,
to put aside these ear phones
for his relief, the day shift.
The phone, he says,
did not ring all night.

It is the boredom of the job
that gets you in the end.

Outside the sun came up
behind a cloud.
The air was shilly.
He decided to walk the long way to
his car.

But the air was so heavy
it felt like he had to push.

same way that the civil rights movement was coopted by Johnson in 1964.

But after the peach was eaten, the pit was left: the relatively undigestible kernel of student radicals, numbering in the thousands. The demise of the anti-war movement left student radicals out on a limb, with anti-imperialist politics but no base in the society-- isolated, and thus vulnerable to the campaign of repression which the power structure was only too happy to unleash.

As the struggle intensified the quest for ideology began. Radicals sought to work out an alternate world-view, a counter to the engrained assumptions that are drilled into us from childhood. It was necessary to challenge the elitist and paternalistic Establishment ideology of liberalism, which supermeates the atmosphere that most people do not recognize it as ideology at all.

The problem was how to develop a consistent revolutionary analysis without losing the concern for democracy, without succumbing by way of lesser-evilism to one of the rival elitist ideologies proclaimed by the Stalinist states. The movement's failure to solve this problem, its turn toward Maoism and other anti-democratic, anti-working class ideas, has become a major factor in its lack of appeal to the American people and even to the bulk of college students.

It would be wrong to impute the present isolation of the student movement entirely to objective factors. The McCarthy campaign could have been opposed more effectively, through radical electoral action instead of the anti-electoral approach that prevailed nationally. McCarthy's heavy inroads among students (including many SDS members) could have been cut had the left presented a meaningful alternative.

A growing failure of the already-organized radicals to provide program and organization for their vast student base is characteristic of the present period. Truly massive struggles have broken out at such schools as Berkeley, S.F. State, Columbia, Harvard, Wisconsin -- but only a tiny fraction of the students involved were members of or attracted to the SDS. Student unrest and struggle will continue regardless of the bankruptcy of the current leadership and organizations, but a movement must take organized form if it is to be successful.

1968 presented a flood of radicalizing experiences to an already politicized student movement. The May uprising in France demonstrated the power and potential of the modern industrial working class, and the catalytic potential of students. The Rus-

sian invasion of Czechoslovakia (with Castro's endorsement) discredited the bureaucratic Communist Party (as did its role in France) and provoked some hard political thinking. The capitulation of the anti-war movement showed that single-issue, semi-political efforts could accomplish little, even by simple moral standards. The rise of the Black Panther Party and its turn toward ideology, the struggle for community control of the schools, the increase of mass strikes (often in defiance of the courts), all gave the student movement a new sense of radical possibilities.

People began to read a history, some Marxist literature, and also the pseudo-Marxist elitism emanating from the Stalinist and Maoist press. It became clear that the world was entering a period of upheaval, with the forces for change coming from many directions. Radicals began calling themselves revolutionary. Even people new to the movement, with no experience in action, no knowledge of the past, and no long range commitment, adopted the revolutionary rhetoric. The movement began to think of itself as "Marxist-Leninist," and beneath the escalation of rhetoric was a real if ambiguous deepening of consciousness.

In a sense, the student movement was "set free" by the disintegration of the anti-war movement; free to develop politically -- and also free to become isolated from the population. Radical students come under heavy attack in the mass media, as the most militant section of the anti-war movement. The McCarthy campaign sought to "bring the kids home," but when campus struggles broke out bigger than ever after the election, the ruling class drew together in its determination to stamp out this threat. National leaders like Nixon and Reagan took the lead utilizing hatchetmen like Hayakawa.

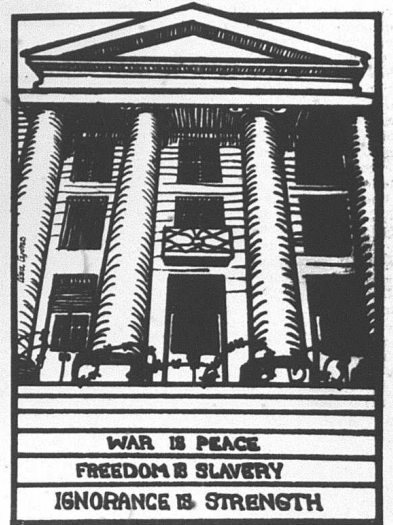
The post-election struggles were mostly initiated by black and Third World students. They were militant but not always radical, often elitist but at the same time rooted in the needs of the black community. These struggles were all defeated, incapable of mounting sufficient forces to deal with the new policy of repression. In part they failed because of an unnecessarily narrow appeal, manipulative tactics, and the consequent failure to win the involvement of the mass of students. Even where thousands participated, many more thousands did not, unconvinced that the struggles were relevant to their needs and alienation. Often a combination of anti-white statements and mindless, uncritical "support" actions by the white radicals drove a wedge between the movement and the bulk of students.

The swift Stalinization and disintegration of the SDS, formerly the national political expression of the New Left as a whole, has further isolated the radical movement and encouraged the on-going repression.

At the same time, it must be emphasized that to focus on the current shape of radical organizations in this country, and to analyze the climate of repression solely in that context, would be to over-emphasize the gravity of the present situation. A deep well of oppositional sentiment and unrest has developed-- among students, among black people, and, increasingly, in the working class. The radical movement is isolated in part simply because it has failed to reach, and sometimes even to try to reach, out to that sentiment and organize it.

The task before the left is to overcome the infantile and elitist currents that have developed, and build a genuinely revolutionary-democratic movement-- to grow up and get itself together. It is up to the radical left to wage a political war (not a street fight) against racism and conservatism in the working class. To undermine the isolation of the left is to undermine the repression.

There is no cause for fatalism, even in this difficult situation. Rebelliousness is spreading to the high schools. Black struggle has been contained but not crushed. College administrators are fearful of the repressive legislation coming down in so many states. Closer to the scene than the politicians, they sense that police state measures may one day touch off conflagrations that the Nixons and Reagans cannot put out.



Read any history of the American labor movement, including those written by Marxists, one might easily get the impression that the working class is almost exclusively male-- occasionally aided in struggle by the heroic sacrifices of their wives and mothers. But the fact is that women have, since the development of modern industry, been a significant part of the working class.

The condition of women workers and their position in the working class cannot be understood without a comprehension of the fundamental nature of woman's role in society, for it is this which accounts for the neglect of woman's role as worker.

Although women throughout history have borne more than their share of work, they have for thousands of years been the victims of a discriminatory division of labor. Before the development of contraceptive methods women's frequent pregnancies left her unsuited for many tasks; in primitive societies, for example, men hunt, not women.

As society grew more complex, the development of private property by the efforts of man's labor resulted in the placing of women in a position of economic dependence on men; with the development of monogamy and patriarchal forms of inheritance, woman's subordination was complete. She was excluded from decision making and political power and from economic independence, and relegated to the home and family; within the family as well, presumably because of man's economic role, man was the dominant figure.

This exploitative division of labor has been perpetuated throughout history, reinforced by the development of classes and an ideological superstructure of male chauvinism -- the belief that women are passive, dependent beings whose proper "feminine" role is the maintenance of the family and the ministrations of their husbands' needs, and who are unsuited for the socially important tasks of production and decision-making. In most countries, women did not even win the vote or elementary legal rights until the late 19th or 20th centuries, if then. Man is defined by his relationship to production -- woman, by her physiology, by her relationship to reproduction. Man's sphere is work, woman's is the family -- and within the family she is in a subordinate position.

Consequently, when women work in productive labor, as they have to varying extents throughout history, they are still considered wives and mothers first, and workers only secondarily, whose first responsibility is to their husband and children. In spite of the (theoretical) economic independence they may gain, women workers are still considered subordinate to their husbands, and are still saddled with the full burden of their traditional role in the home; this has placed serious strains on the traditional family structure, but has not served to destroy it, and has left women workers in a position of being doubly exploited -- at the work place and in the home.

Further more, because of the primary identification of women with the home and family, women have almost always been used as a reserve labor pool: women (and children) were used from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to displace more highly skilled, higher-paid male workers in industry. Women are encouraged to enter production in times of labor shortage, are sent back to the home in times of labor surplus, are normally relegated to the most marginal, lowest-paying jobs, and, as low-paid workers, are used to drive down the wages and living standards of the working class as a whole.

The blatant contradictions between woman's role as a worker and her role in the family, and the fact that women at the work place have the potential for greater cohesiveness and social weight, imply that women workers could become the key force in a movement for the liberation of women.

In the past, women workers have often played a militant role in working class struggles, often sparking significant trade union organizing attempts (not to mention precipitating the February revolution in Russia). In the United States today, women comprise a large and essential element of the working class, and it is important for us to understand the particular nature of their position in the class in order to develop a perspective for the building of a working-class women's movement. Unfortunately, the literature on the subject is scanty, and much basic research remains to be done. The following is a preliminary discussion of the position of women workers in the United States today.

THE NEW WORKERS

In the last twenty years, millions of American women have entered the working class. At the end of World War II, women were systematically forced out of the highly-paid industrial jobs they had worked in during the war and were "encouraged" to return to the home: in "Labor's Giant Step," Art Preis states that four million women lost their jobs in the 8-months after V-J Day. But since 1950, women have been returning to work in steadily increasing numbers, so that the percentage of women workers is now higher than it was at the peak production year of World War II (37% in 1966, as compared with 35% in 1945), and is now the highest of any time in the 20th century. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, this trend is expected to continue, and it is anticipated that women workers will comprise 40% of the work force by 1980; in New York City, this figure will probably be reached by 1970.

The source of this tremendous rise in the number

of women workers is quite different from the traditional reasons for women entering the labor force; women are not being used mainly to displace male workers or to compensate for a shortage of labor, but are working to provide additional income for their families. As pressure on working class living standards has worsened because of recessions in the 1950s and inflation in the 1960s, because of rising taxes and the squeeze caused by credit buying, millions of married women have gone to work.

This fact has provided the necessary differential to enable the working class to avoid decreases in its standard of living, and it thus has functioned as a buffer against the threat of rising working class militancy. This phenomenon has been grossly underrated by most analysts of recent trends in the labor movement, and must be considered as important in explaining its lack of militancy as the gains achieved in collective bargaining or the bureaucratization of the trade unions.

Until the last twenty years, married women comprised a minority of working women. But now, the vast majority -- 62% in 1965 -- of all women workers are married with husbands present and working; these women make up 34% of all married women in the United States, as compared with 14% in 1940. The increase in the total number of women workers is almost entirely due to married women.

Although many middle-class, college educated women work after marriage -- the likelihood of a woman's working after marriage tends to rise according to her level of education -- it is clear that economic necessity, not career considerations or individual choice, is responsible for the tremendous acceleration in the number of working married women. 75% of all married women workers come from families where their husbands are earning less than \$7,000 per year; in New York City, it is close to \$7,000.

Well before the recent inflation caused by the Vietnam War, millions of families were finding it impossible to live on a single income and were discovering that the income earned by a working wife could make the necessary difference; in 1965, for example, the median income for families with only the man working was \$6,592; in families where both the man and woman were working, it was \$8,597.

WORKING MOTHERS

Even more illustrative of the change in women's employment is the number of mothers with young children who are working. Between 1940 and 1965 there was a 600% increase in the number of women workers with children under 18, and working mothers are now a far higher percentage of the work force than they have been at any time in the 20th century in the U.S. Black women, who because of low family incomes and the high unemployment rate of black men have always needed to work more than white women (45% of all black women are working now), are even more likely to work when they have young children: over half of all black women with husbands and children under 6 were working in 1966, as compared with 37% of white women.

Mothers with young children find severe problems in working, for the United States is the only industrialized country in the world which does not have a system of publicly supported day care centers for children of working mothers: in 1966, only 2% of all children of working mothers were in any kind of public day care center.

Paid child care can cost the working mother as much as half of her income -- in New York City, for example, a charge of \$30 per week is not uncommon in ghetto neighborhoods -- and many women can scarcely afford this care; over one-third of all working mothers with children under six are earning less than \$3,000 per year. Consequently, most working mothers are forced to arrange makeshift care for their young children, and this often necessitates their taking part-time jobs.

One result of the vast increase in the number of married women workers is that the median age of women workers has risen dramatically from 25 in 1900 to 41 in the mid-1960s; the largest group of women workers, in fact, is now over 45, for the first time in the U.S. This fact has contradictory implications for the possibilities of organizing women workers: on the one hand, it means that many women workers have far fewer illusions about their work, but on the other, it means that there is a larger concentration than ever before of women who have home responsibilities in addition to work. Such women, as Anne Draper has pointed out, may well be easier to unionize because of their age and concern with pensions, seniority, and other defensive actions, but harder to organize politically.

The recent trends in employment of women seem to indicate that an end to the Vietnam War will not have a similar effect as the end of World War II in forcing women out of the work force; after the end of the Korean War, in fact, there was no drop in the number of women workers. Furthermore, as will be seen below, the vast majority of women work in quite different jobs than men, and thus would not be especially prone to layoffs because of an end to the war;

THE HIDDEN PROLETARIAT

Ilene Winkler

demobilization will probably have its largest impact on young men, especially blacks.

Although women always have a higher unemployment rate than men, even a recession and higher general unemployment would not necessarily force women out of work in favor of men: in the 1950s, the number of women workers grew steadily during the recession of the mid-50s. If present trends continue and real wages continue to decline, more and more women will re-enter the labor force after marriage and child-bearing in order to maintain their families' living standards.

It is very likely, then, that the number of women in the working class will continue to increase in the foreseeable future. This inevitably will provoke further strains on the traditional family structure and could well mean the possibility of a resurgence of militancy among women workers.

With a few exceptions, the escalation in the number of women workers has not been reflected in industrial jobs but in the rapidly growing white collar and service categories. This is not unusual, really, for women have traditionally been segregated in employment and excluded from many industrial jobs; their presence in basic industry during World War II was an exception which has not been repeated thus far.

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, women factory workers have generally been concentrated in the textile industries -- far more basic industries in the 19th and early 20th centuries, of course, but still related to the traditional "woman's work" of providing clothing for her family. In general, women work either in jobs which are related to their "proper" domestic role or in jobs which are new and thus have not been sex-classified (the only notable exception to the segregation of women workers is the middle levels of civil service).

Typing is probably the best example of the latter phenomenon: before the invention of the typewriter, clerical jobs were generally held by men, but typing from the first was classified as a "female" job; it attracted women because it was easy and women were used to advertise the new product; since then, clerical work has become more and more a woman's job, so that now 98% of all typists and secretaries are women.

In the United States today, women are found almost entirely in jobs which can be described as the work-place counterpart to their traditional family role: women secretaries work as assistants to men, while most other women work in jobs involving the socialization of children (teaching), the caring for human needs (nurses and social workers), or the provision of consumer goods and services (sewing machine operators and waitresses). For the most part, such jobs tend to be insecure and non-union, and in general pay far less than jobs held by men with similar education or skill levels.

The increases in white collar employment of women have been concentrated in the lower-paid areas of clerical work and sales. Nearly all the new clerical workers since 1950 have been women; the tremendous growth of clerical jobs in recent years, combined with the rapid increase of women workers, have resulted in making clerical work the largest single occupational category for women; about 23% of all women workers are in clerical work. The overwhelming majority -- 87% -- of clerical workers are white, because of a combination of inferior education of black women and overt discrimination: one of the major uses of the high school diploma requirement for clerical work is to exclude black and Latin high school drop-outs.

Although clerical work does require a high school diploma and usually some kind of acquired skills, it is one of the lowest paid of all occupations. However, although many women find the work boring and far below their ability, the working conditions are objectively better than those in any other occupations and clerical work is seen by most working class women as an improvement in status: the job

conditions are often proletarianized but the speedup is less intense, the job environment cleaner, the benefits better. The introduction of automation, while vastly increasing productivity, also results in making clerical work significantly easier and less physically tiring -- as did the electric typewriter, for example. This factor has traditionally been blamed for the difficulty in unionizing clerical employees.

Another obstacle is the comparatively high number of young single women in these jobs who are working -- they think -- only until they are married, and consequently have little consciousness of themselves as workers, and tend to have a very high turnover rate and little interest in job protection.

However, it is not clear that unionization is impossible for clerical employees; with the exception of government employees, not much serious effort has gone into organizing clerical employees in recent years. Telephone operators, who are also often young, single, etc., have been unionized successfully.

Along with clerical work, there has also been a great increase in the number of women employed in sales work; since 1950, there has been a 30% increase in the number of women employed in this field, and they now constitute 42% of all sales workers, 58% of all retail sales workers. Women in sales work tend to be concentrated in salaried jobs, often at minimum wage or below, while the high-commission sales jobs, such as in appliances or autos, are reserved for men. Women also make up the vast bulk of cashiers -- again, at minimum wage or below with no commissions. Furthermore, over 50% of all women in sales are part-time or temporary workers, a percentage exceeded only by household workers.

Other types of white collar work have not seen a corresponding increase in the proportion of women workers. In professional jobs, there has actually been a decrease in the proportion of women in recent years; women were 40% of all professional workers in 1950, 37% in 1966. Professional and college-educated women are concentrated in a very small number of jobs, being excluded from the majority of executive and managerial positions and often channeled into clerical jobs in spite of their education level.

Nearly half -- 46% -- of all women professionals are teachers, making up 2/3 of all teachers below the college level, although many more men are now entering this field and there is now a majority of men teaching in secondary schools. In college teaching, the situation is far different, where women comprise only 22% of college faculty and administration, a fact caused both by discrimination in hiring and by discrimination in admission to graduate schools. In most professions, the presence of a woman is a rarity: women are only 8% of all scientists, 7% of all physicians, 3% of lawyers, 1% of engineers.

Although almost as many women as men graduate from high school, women constitute only 35% of the present college enrollment; throughout their education, women are funneled into courses which leave them "unprepared" for most professional jobs. This discrimination in education and employment has provided much of the impetus for the beginnings of the present women's liberation movement; NOW, the National Organization of Women -- the oldest and largest of the current group of women's organizations, is a primarily middle-class, white, liberal group, which fights discrimination against women on a variety of issues, but has little orientation towards the problems of working class or poor women.

The only job category besides clerical work in which women are a majority is service work, which is almost entirely unskilled, very low paying, non-unionized work. Nearly half of these women are found in food trades: 72% of all waiters/waitresses, cooks, bartenders are women. Overall, women constitute 55% of all service workers, 98% of all private household workers. This represents a sizeable increase in the proportion of women service workers -- in 1940 the proportion was only 40% -- reflecting an increase in the number of unskilled women entering



the work force, as well as a decline in the number of factory jobs available to women.

Black women are found in service jobs to a greater proportion than in any other work; they constitute 45% of all private household workers (this job category employs 10% of all women workers), and 20% of all other service jobs, a fact which does much to explain their low incomes. Most service jobs are not covered by Federal minimum wage law; New York is one of very few states to include these workers under a separate, state minimum wage law.

Only a small proportion of women work in factories -- only 20% of total factory employment. Two-thirds of women factory workers are found in non-durable manufacturing, primarily in jobs which have long-term layoffs, such as the apparel industry, and which are declining industries, such as textiles and tobacco (these two industries have had a 25% reduction in their work force in recent years). Overall, non-durable goods manufacturing is less stable, lower wage employment than durable goods (steel, for example).

One fourth of the women employed in non-durable goods manufacturing work in the apparel industry -- over one million women -- where job conditions and wages have hardly improved relative to the rest of the economy since the unions were first organized in the early 20th century; there are months-long layoffs, intense speedup caused by the retention of the piece-work system, and generally very poor working conditions. Within the apparel industry, women are still concentrated almost entirely in low paying jobs, while they are excluded from the higher-wage jobs, such as cutters, which still are reserved for (white) men.

The only notable recent growth in the employment of women factory workers has been in the electrical industry, where there has been an 82% increase in the number of women employed since 1950; women now make up 48% of all workers in the industry. This is often attributed to the fact that employers discovered that women were well suited to the intricate, delicate work involved and thus hired women to displace more highly paid male workers; the electrical industry, in fact, has the lowest average wage of any durable goods industry, probably due to the presence of large numbers of women, as much as the fact that three separate unions represent electrical workers.

The relative decline in overall factory employment has particularly affected women, because of their exclusion from many industrial jobs. Consequently, a much lower proportion of young women are entering factory work than any other occupation: only 9% of all single women are factory workers, compared with 17% of married women.

Partly as a consequence of the channelling of women into low-paying jobs, partly as a result of unequal pay for the same work, the median income of women is far less than that of men workers. In 1955, the median income of full-time women workers was 64% of men; by 1965, their median income had dropped in relation to men, being slightly under 60%. Black women tend to fare slightly better in relation to black men, but make only two-thirds as much as white women.

This discrepancy in income has its worst effects on families headed by women, about 10% of all families. Women who are heads of families bear the greatest burden of the dual role of mother and wage-earner, and families headed by women are the poorest in the population, 30% of the families headed by white women are below the "official poverty line," and 58% of families headed by black women (22% of all families headed by women), as compared with 8% of families headed by white men and 29% of families headed by black men. The median income of families headed by women in 1965 was \$3,532 -- for those headed by men, it was \$6,592.

EQUAL PAY NOW

The major reasons for the enormous differences between the median incomes of male and female workers -- apart from the larger number of women with part-time jobs -- is the fact that women are systematically excluded from the higher-paying jobs, industrial as well as professional and managerial. Many of the industries employing women are unionized but are among the lowest paying of all industrial jobs, so the mere existence of unions does not explain the differentials. Regardless of unionization, there is a direct correlation between the number of women workers and low wages.

Although women workers, because of their low wages, serve as a drag on the entire working class, the issue of equal pay for equal work for women has rarely if ever been an issue which the working class as a whole has fought for. Just as white workers -- because of racism -- do not recognize that it is in their interests for blacks to be equal members of the working class, so male chauvinism -- the belief that women's proper role is in the home and that women are "unequal" to men by nature -- has often served to split the working class; women workers have often had to fight their male contemporaries as well as the bosses.

The discrimination against women workers manifests itself in a number of ways. In general, the most blatant forms of discrimination are the refusal to hire women for certain jobs because they are women, or the payment of unequal wages for the same work.

Both of these are supposedly illegal. In 1963, an Equal Pay Law was passed by Congress, thus eliminating the blatant advertising of unequal wages still prevalent in Britain. Through an accident, women were covered under the equal employment section of the 1964 Civil Rights Law, when the word "sex" was included in the bill by Southern Senators in a last ditch effort to defeat the bill through ridicule; although few Senators supported it, and most opposed it (including the liberals) "sex" was left in the law.

The enforcement agency set up by the law was soon flooded with complaints by women, but the only noticeable effect of the law so far has been the desegregation of want ads and a few sex-blind rulings which have done little to change reality.

Such laws, even if they were enforced, would obviously not change the fundamental assumptions which result in discrimination against women in a variety of ways. Male chauvinist attitudes exclude women from nearly all jobs where they would be in competition with men and, especially, where they might be supervising men. The attitude that women are inferior to men, and that men are properly heads of their households carries over to employment: only one out of every twelve supervisors is a woman, and women executives and bosses are stereotyped as ruthless unfeminine bitches, who get ahead mainly through manipulation of men.

A college educated woman, for example, generally cannot get a job in business unless she can type, for which she is paid far less than her male contemporary who cannot type and is trained for an executive position. In industry, women are excluded from highly paid skilled jobs through many mechanisms: in school, they are excluded from training programs which would prepare them for such jobs, and are instead channeled into clerical and service training. On the job, artificial barriers are often set up by utilizing protective legislation: in many states, women are prevented/protected from taking jobs which require overtime or the lifting of heavy objects, and as a result, many jobs are described as having these characteristics when in fact they do not.

MALE STANDARDS

More fundamental, however, is the fact that standards for promotion and work in general are based on the life patterns of men, not women. Consequently, the woman who is married and has children -- or the single girl who is expected to marry -- is discriminated against in a number of ways because she has children and is assigned the sole responsibility of caring for them. Children are considered the responsibility of the individual woman not of society as a whole, and the raising of children is not compatible with the profit making of the individual capitalist.

Because women leave work, often for many years, when they have young children, they accumulate less seniority than men, and thus are more subject to layoffs and less eligible for promotions in jobs where they are working alongside men. Young women are almost never accepted into business training programs or professional schools for this reason. On the job, women accumulate far less seniority than men: in 1963, the median number of years seniority for women was 3, for men, 5.7; for workers over 45, the comparable figures were 7 and 13 years.

And, of course, many industries still retain the "illegal" practice of keeping separate seniority lists for women. Discrimination on the basis of seniority might seem logical, except for the fact that men who leave their jobs because they are drafted into the Army are legally guaranteed their jobs back when they return, plus any salary increases and promotions that they would have received in the interim.

A woman with children who attempts to find a job discovers a number of barriers: employers assume that a woman will have a greater rate of absenteeism because of her children, and thus often will hire men instead of women for this reason. In addition, a woman who has been prepared for life as a housewife is often unskilled by an employer's definition, and her experience maintaining a family is not considered "work experience" when she looks for a job; hence, older married women are often relegated to unskilled jobs or jobs far below those held by men with similar educational levels, and thus provide a ready market for exploitation.

In addition, many women with young children tend to work only part-time because of home responsibilities and lack of child-care facilities: 32% of all women workers have part-time jobs as compared with 13% of men. The number of women seeking part-time work has decreased in the 1960's in comparison with the 1950's presumably because of the increasing pressure on working class living standards. Women with part-time jobs encounter many forms of exploitation: part-time and temporary jobs are not covered by any social legislation -- they almost never have paid sick leave or vacations, are usually not covered by unemployment insurance, and often, not by minimum wage. Again, part-time work does not qualify as "work experience" by the standards of most personnel departments.

There has been a rapid growth in the number of temporary clerical agencies, which orient their advertising almost exclusively to housewives ("earn extra money for the things you want"). Women working in these jobs receive far less pay than workers permanently employed by the same company, although their jobs may last for months at a time, and in addition to receiving no benefits at all, their wages are reduced by as much as \$1 an hour by the commission taken by the temporary agency.

Many women working part-time, however, are not doing so by choice. The kinds of jobs available to unskilled women workers are even more likely to be part-time or steady than are jobs open to unskilled men; private household workers, for example -- 98% women -- rarely work a full eight-hour day; much the same is true for other service workers such as waitresses, cooks, etc.

Women, consequently, have a much higher unemployment rate than men. While unemployment statistics are notoriously inaccurate and generally not worth quoting, all the figures indicate that the unemployment rate for women is approximately twice as high as for men. For teenage women, especially

blacks, figures have been published as high as 50% unemployment.

The long historical definition of women as subordinate to men has resulted, generally, in acceptance by women as well as men of the socially defined "place" of women. Women workers today, along with men, tend to see themselves as "extra" workers, providing additional income for their families, rather than as independent wage earners; as a result, many women view their job as far less important in their definition of themselves than their role in the home. E.P. Thompson alludes to this in "The Making of the English Working Class" when he describes the tensions caused in working class families in the early 19th century when women became wage earners; he says that women, as much as men, objected to this and felt they were being torn from their rightful place in the home. Much the same thing is still true today.

Because women have, for so long, accepted the primary definition of themselves as housewives, their values, naturally, have been shaped by their self-image as consumer, wife, and mother. Furthermore, women have been molded by society to an entirely different mode of behavior than men; aggressiveness in young girls is discouraged, and little girls are taught to be docile, neat, and "well behaved."

In times of struggle, women have often fought as militantly as men. But too often, trade union organizers have encountered great problems with women's lack of consciousness of themselves as workers, and with timidity, often caused and reinforced by the attitudes of the husbands. Even attendance at evening meetings can be a problem if the husband refuses to take care of the children.

Consequently, one of the major thrusts of any attempts to form a working-class women's movement in this period will have to be the development of the consciousness of the women involved, especially those women in jobs which have no tradition of organized struggle.

The potential for the development of a movement of working-class women depends on many factors; in the past, working women's struggles have gained strength from the impetus of various movements, such as women's suffrage and the fight for legal rights, the movement for the abolition of slavery, and early trade union organizing drives.

The resurgence of interest in women's liberation at this time can probably be attributed not only to the discrimination against women within the radical movement, but to the example of the black power struggle. Within the working class, black women, stirred by the civil rights movement, have played a strong militant role in the struggles for unionization of hospital employees, most recently in Charleston, South Carolina.

In general, probably the most important elements in the development of a working class women's movement will be a cross-class movement for women's liberation and the growth of militancy among the working class as a whole. Just as the civil rights movement was begun by middle class blacks in struggle against legal cross-class forms of discrimination and later was taken up by black workers, so the movement for women's liberation among working class women could well be sparked by a strong movement of middle class women.

Socialist women, and men, should thus work to build the women's movement not only on the job, but also among radicals and middle class women, and try to turn these groups in the direction of working class women. Radical women's organizations-- fighting on issues such as abortion law repeal, sexual freedom, legal equality for women, and equal education, as well as lending support and assistance to struggles of working women as they develop-- could have a great effect on the struggles of working class women.

A recent example illustrated many of the dangers of a middle-class movement without a working class orientation: NOW, supported by the UAW Women's Bureau, has recently begun a campaign to repeal the protective legislation limiting the number of hours women can work. The repeal of this law benefits professional women, but will leave women workers in general further open to exploitation by removing one of the few laws which protects them.

A better demand, which was raised by Edie Fox in Detroit, would have been the extension of the protective legislation to men as well. This would have eliminated the discriminatory application of the law against women, but also raised a demand which chal-

lenged the ability of capitalism to exploit the whole working class.

In job situations, there are two priorities for the development of a movement of working class women: 1) the development of women's caucuses within unions; and 2) the unionization of the millions of unorganized women, especially the vast number of clerical workers, so that women workers in these jobs learn to struggle collectively, begin to identify with the interests of the working class, and begin to assert their particular needs within the class struggle. Radical women in the shops can also play a tremendously beneficial role on attempting to link up and politicize struggles of the women's movement with struggles of the class as a whole, working towards the development of a movement of women workers which will fight for the interests of women, joining in the struggle of the entire class.

There are a number of specific issues which offer potential for reaching and politicizing women workers, including the following:

1. Job related issues: there are a number of job related issues which can be raised or supported by socialists which could serve to organize women in collective struggle and serve as agitational demands to increase the consciousness of women workers. Among them are the following: day care centers at the work place controlled by the workers (not the current idea advanced by the Nixon administration of providing day care centers to force mothers off welfare), paid maternity leave with no loss of seniority, equal pay for equal work, equal work itself-- an end to discrimination against women in hiring and promotions, and struggles for greater representation of women in union positions such as shop steward.

2. Education: the tracking, segregation, and channeling of women at all levels of education socializes them into playing a sex-determined role and discourages and prevents them from entering many occupations. In New York City, for example, all vocational and most other high schools are segregated by sex, thus drastically limiting the range of courses open to women. A recent suit against the Board of Education has opened Stuyvesant High School to the first girl. The issue of segregating and channeling of girls at the secondary school level may provide a way to reach working class girls. On the college level, as well as high school, the demand for preferential admissions for women as well as blacks can be made part of a universal higher education program, and provide a way to organize college women around their own struggle as well as the struggle of others.

3. Abortions and birth control: the abortion law repeal movement to date has been middle-class, often anti-working class in tone, but the abortion law, as everyone recognizes abstractly, is in fact a law which discriminates against poor and working-class women who do not have the knowledge and money to finance a safe abortion. Abortion and birth control are essential to women if they are to control their own bodies, which is fundamental to their ability to control their own lives. The demand should be raised for free, easily obtainable safe abortions and birth control devices (the latter for men as well as women), regardless of age or marital status.

As mentioned earlier, the struggle for women's liberation must be fought on two fronts: against the capitalist nature of production, and against male chauvinism and the private family structure, which objectifies women as sexual beings, and limits their lives by placing the entire burden of bearing and raising children on them. As Juliet Mitchell points out in "Women: the Longest Revolution," success, were it possible, on any one level, would not in itself bring about the liberation of women. The struggle for equality of women must be fought on all levels, not just the workplace.

Socialists should work actively in struggles against the overall oppression of women, as well as participating in and supporting the specific struggles of women on the job. Because the struggle is against male chauvinism as well as against capitalism, the women's movement will necessarily have to be organized separately; our role in that movement should be to link up the struggles of women with those of the whole working class, and to aid in the development of a class conscious revolutionary movement of working class women.

Ultimately, the liberation of women will only come about through a socialist revolution in which women play an active role in ensuring that their own particular needs, as well as those of the entire working class, are met.

James Oppenheim's poem, "Bread and Roses," was inspired by one of the 1912 Lawrence strike parades in which the young mill girls carried a banner, "We want bread and roses too."

REBEL VOICES

Bread and Roses

As we come marching, marching in the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray,
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing: "Bread and roses!
Bread and roses!"

As we come marching, marching, we battle too for men,
For they are women's children, and we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes,
Hearts starve as well as bodies, give us bread, but give us roses!

As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient cry for bread,
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew,
Yes, it is bread we fight for--but we fight for roses, too!

As we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days,
The rising of the women means the rising of the race,
No more the drudge and idler--ten that toil where one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories: Bread and roses!
Bread and roses!

The tone of the first book on Cuba by Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy-- "Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution," published in 1960-- was frankly enthusiastic about the revolution, the new regime, its character and its prospects.

The revolt itself, they wrote, was the product of a massive conscious alliance of disaffected intellectuals, workers and especially peasants ("by far the most important class that joined the rebels.") At first limited to hiding the guerrillas, peasant involvement escalated until, "before many months had passed, the campesinos, as a class, were backing the rebels. They changed from passive onlookers to active participants. They became one with the revolutionary army, became "the backbone of the revolutionary army" -- joining it "in large numbers" and in other ways giving it their unserving support.

Although in the vanguard, the peasants were certainly not alone. "The working class, too, saw in the program of the revolutionary army an opportunity for a better life. Men in the factories and mines, and women in offices, led double lives -- they worked at their jobs and they worked for the underground army." No figures are given, but workers are depicted carrying out massive programs of demolition, underground publishing, counterfeiting, and combat.

From such widespread popular involvement in the revolutionary movement, we learn, the new revolutionary regime arose. Consolidating its power, the Fidelista regime embarked on a program of agrarian reform, industrial centralization, and social reorganization. In view of the mass participation involved in all this, Huberman and Sweezy concluded, elections are superfluous. "... the Revolution itself gives the government a far more democratic mandate than the freest of free elections ever could..."

In response to charges that "fighting the counter-revolution" was turning Cuba into a police state, Huberman and Sweezy were firm: "Among honest revolutionaries there is absolutely no fear, no suppression of full and free discussion, no demand for conformity to a dogmatically defined and interpreted line or ideology. For them, and that means for the vast majority of the people of the island, Cuba is indeed a land that 'positively reeks of freedom.'"

With this book Huberman and Sweezy established themselves as champions of the Fidelista revolution, and the book itself has become a sourcebook for the regime's protagonists.

SOCIALISM IN CUBA

It is for this reason that Huberman and Sweezy's second book on Cuba -- "Socialism in Cuba" (Monthly Review Press, 1969) -- is all the more remarkable. For this book, coming as it does from well-known advocates of the regime, has done almost as much to undermine apologists for Cuban "socialism" as "Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution" did to prop them up.

"Socialism in Cuba," the product of subsequent visits in 1961, 1965, and 1968, is for two hundred pages little more than an extended appendix to "Cuba: Anatomy." We read here of the successes in health and education, of the difficulties in industry and agriculture, faced in the last eight years. Then, in the last chapter, Huberman and Sweezy drop their bombshell. Cuba, they tell us, has reached a near-catastrophic impasse, socially-politically as well as industrially.

The authors' problem is that this impasse is inexplicable in the context of the revolution and regime which their first book described. This last chapter, therefore, begins with some delicate "re-working" of recent Cuban history.

The first idol to topple is the one they had dedicated to the Revolution's mass base. Huberman and Sweezy now concede that Che's own version is the correct one, that "only a very small percentage of the Cuban people had the opportunity to learn the invaluable lessons of initiative, innovation, and self-reliance which come with participation in a people's war of liberation."

Historically, revolutions involving "only a very small percentage" of populations have rarely given birth to regimes involving a much larger percentage; Cuba has proved no exception. Thus: "The revolutionary government which came to power in the early days of January, 1959 . . . found itself in a paternalistic relation to the Cuban people -- not through choice but because of the very nature of the situation." The paternalism has proved durable, has "continued to exist to this day . . ."

PATERNALISM

What has been the secret of this paternalism's longevity? Bluntly -- consumption: "Either the Revolution would quickly bring tangible benefits to the masses, or their tremendous enthusiasm at the prospect of a 'new deal' would wear off and give way to the old cynicism." Without involving the masses in the power wielding itself, the leadership could count on mass support only so long as they brought home the bacon.

Fortunately for that leadership, Huberman and Sweezy add, the situation permitted them to be good providers: "... the neglect and exploitation to which Cuba had been subjected in the past now came to the aid of the Revolution. Everywhere there were unused resources -- unemployed men, uncultivated land, accumulated stocks of raw materials and finished products -- which now turned into precious reserves which could be drawn upon to increase out-

put and raise living standards. . . . The result was the inculcation in the masses of overwhelming feelings of devotion, of loyalty to the new government and its supreme leader Fidel Castro."

But those precious reserves are exhausted now, and expectations go unfulfilled. The authors of this book wonder aloud how much longer Castro's "paternalistic relation" to the people can stand up in the face of the resulting "disillusionment and cynicism."

During their last visit, for example, the authors of "Socialism in Cuba" sensed "a sort of malaise" which "went well beyond the usual complaints about shortages of consumer goods. . . . There seemed to be more of a tendency to blame the government and less disposition to believe that things would be soon improving." And more: "People are not only getting tired; they are also tending to lose their faith in the leadership's ability to keep its word. The ties that bind the masses to their paternalistic government are beginning to erode."

THE MICROFACTION

The Cuban government is responding to the new popular unease with increased sensitivity to criticism. In early 1968, for example, the Castro regime staged what the authors describe as a "show trial" of a microfaction in the Cuban Communist Party which was charged, among other things, with "distribution of clandestine propaganda against the line of the Party; . . . and the proselytizing and furthering of ideological divergences among certain militants who came from the ranks of the People's Socialist Party (the pre-revolutionary Cuban CP)." (Quoted from the statement of the present CP's Central Committee).

Throughout the indictment, the very small size and unimportance of the microfaction being indicted is time and time again emphasized, and Huberman and Sweezy pose the obvious question: why was so unimportant a group "picked out for a show trial and severe punishment?" The only answer that makes sense is that they were used as a warning to others. But to whom? To the USSR? No; the same indictment is scrupulously careful to absolve the Soviet Union for any involvement whatsoever. To the pre-Revolutionary CP? No; it, too, receives applause from the present Central Committee still. Thus:

"We are left with only one possible conclusion (Huberman and Sweezy continue), that the warning was addressed to any Cubans who might feel disposed to take positions or express views which could, rightly or wrongly, be construed as aligning themselves with the microfaction. And even a cursory reading of the documents leaves little doubt that this could, potentially, include anyone critical of government policies or leaders."

In fact, such an attitude is not new to Cuba. The authors' first Cuba book described the way in which, responding to early charges of pro-Communism, "the leadership has responded by treating any public raising of the issue as prima facie evidence of counter-revolution to be dealt with accordingly." What Huberman and Sweezy seem to find remarkable is not merely the attitude, but the scope of this newer campaign:

PATTERN OF REPRESSION

"If the suppression of the microfaction had been an isolated act, one would perhaps not be justified in ascribing any great political importance to it. But in reality it was part of a pattern which has been unfolding for some time. A few years ago it was possible for a debate to take place over fundamental policy issues. The tones were muted and the arguments tended to be allusive rather than direct; but there could be no mistaking the existence of genuine differences within the government itself, and at least the general nature of these differences could be understood.

"Nothing like this is possible today. The periodicals through which the debate was conducted have been discontinued. Even the Party's main theoretical source of information and analysis, was dropped without being replaced. While we were in Cuba the Party schools -- educational institutions especially designed for the needs of Party cadres -- were closed along with their unofficial organ "Teoria y Practica" which had published valuable material on Cuban and foreign affairs. One by one the channels through which other than official views could read the public have been cut off."

In other words, the honeymoon is over. "Cuban socialism" is becoming (if it has not already become) as authoritarian as the capitalism it replaced. But, authoritarian or not, it is still socialism to Huberman and Sweezy, and as good socialists they therefore feel obliged to embrace it -- even if with tear-filled eyes.

It might be relevant for us, however, to inquire just exactly what in the portrait of Cuba painted here, justifies titling it "socialism" at all? Nor is this just quibbling: one purpose of labeling systems is to give some idea which problems they have solved and which remain.

Socialism's crisis today lies precisely in its definition: the word is used to indiscriminately as to be useless to someone trying to analyze the systems sporting that title. We have thus far taken at face value the phrase "Cuban socialism." Let's stop, now.

Bruce Levine

CUBA: THE NEW ANATOMY

and re-examine it. First, what do Huberman and Sweezy mean by socialism?

"... countries which have undergone a socialist revolution (are those) where the state power of the bourgeoisie and its domestic and foreign allies has been overthrown, a new government and army representing the interests of the exploited classes have been established, and all or most of the means of production have been transferred from the private to the public sector."

All right, let's examine this definition. First: why does a socialist revolution have to overthrow the state power of the bourgeoisie and its allies? Because, in the last analysis, the nature of a society is determined by the nature of the class which controls it. Capitalism is the name of societies ruled by the capitalists through their control of the productive facilities. That control gives them at least indirect control of the state, as well. To socialize the society -- i.e., to work toward elimination of all class rule, -- power must be placed in the hands of the people at large. That is the heart of the last part of the definition above: you must remove the factories from the hands of the capitalists and place it in the hands of the public.

So much, then, for the first and last parts of this definition; now what of the middle? The capitalists have been expropriated, their former property placed in the hands of the state. Who runs the state? Well, the logical answer is "the people." That, after all, is the purpose of "state-lying" the property in the first place -- to organize it in a way most easily directed by the people at large. How can the people claim to control the economy unless they control, directly, the state in whose hands that economy has been placed? So, as we say, the new "owners" of

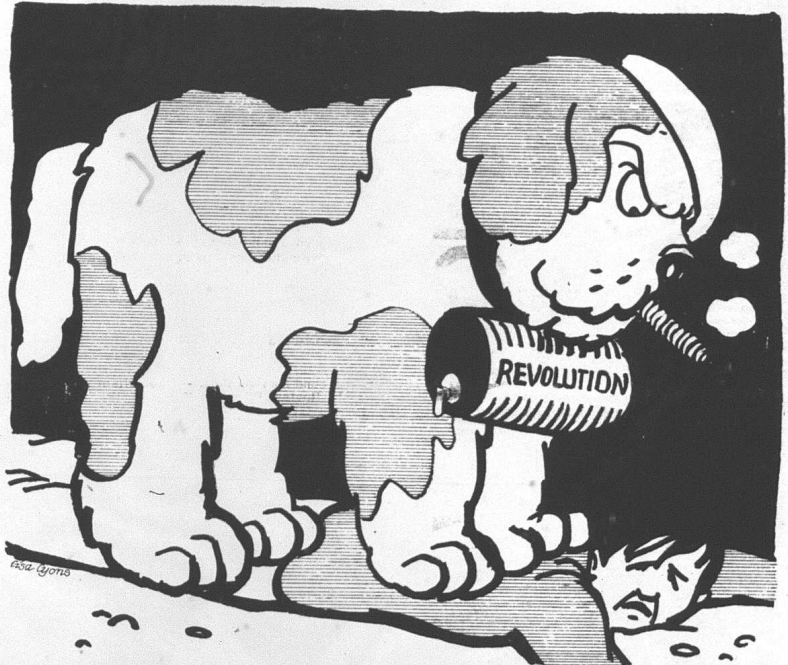
claims to do that: it is a good way to pacify those classes, for one thing. Socialists have never before been satisfied with allowing rulers to appraise themselves; why start now? In 1960 Huberman and Sweezy themselves set down a rule of thumb as useful now as then:

"The question we must ask about Cuba, therefore, concerns not the motives of those who made, and are making the Revolution, but rather the objective characteristics of the social order which is emerging from their labors."

We learn the class nature of Cuban society -- or any other society -- not by guessing what goes on in the rulers' heads, but by analyzing, objectively, the relationship between the rulers and the people; by identifying who rules and how.

Which brings us back to our book review. For Huberman and Sweezy do, in fact, provide us with a very careful description of the Cuban governing apparatus, its nature, its dimensions, and its relationship to the exploited classes. This they do when they discuss the social nature of Castro's "paternalism": they call it "bureaucratic rule."

But wait! That's ridiculous! Isn't opposition to creeping bureaucracy one of Castro's own watchwords? How can so vigilant an opponent of bureaucracy as Castro be himself a bureaucratic ruler? Answer: "Up to now, campaigns against bureaucracy in Cuba have been concerned for the most part with reducing swollen and largely unproductive office staffs inherited from capitalism." Such campaigns are fine, of course, (except to the extent that they simply represent speed-ups of already overworked clerical workers) but the problem we're discussing right now isn't bureaucratic waste but bureaucratic power.



THANKS A LOT FOR THE RESCUE, BUT COULD YOU GET OFF MY BACK NOW?

the state must be the working class.

Not according to Huberman and Sweezy, however. The new rulers are not the workers or the peasants themselves. The bourgeoisie will be replaced by "a new government and army representing the interests of the exploited classes..." Well, what does that really mean? One way to find out is to match up this part of the definition alongside a society which (according to the definition's authors) it describes. So, judging from the Cuban example:

Does the phrase mean that the state will be controlled by those representatives of the exploited classes which express their interests by virtue of being constantly subject to election and recall? If the definition applies to Cuba, the answer is no. Cuba has neither election or recall.

All right, then: does it mean that the state is controlled by those who mirror the desires of the exploited classes even though they aren't elected by them? No: "socialist" Cuba, according to Huberman and Sweezy, faces the precise problem of having exploited classes who disagree with their "representatives" as to what their "interests" are.

Or does the phrase mean, starkly, that socialist countries will be ruled by those who represent the interests of the exploited classes according to Huberman and Sweezy? No, not even this: it is clear from the entire last chapter that the Cuban government -- i.e., the "socialist" Cuban government -- is acting contrary to what Huberman and Sweezy believe are the exploited classes' interests.

Well, what is left? Only this: Socialist societies are those which replace capitalism with a system of economic centralism ruled by those who claim to represent the interests of the exploited class. Which tells us nothing at all, since any and every regime

"But bureaucratic rule can exist irrespective of the size of the bureaucracy; its essence is the monopolization of power by officials appointed by and answerable to those above them in the chain of command." And, they continue, "In this sense Cuba's governing system is clearly one of bureaucratic rule." We think the authors explain themselves the best:

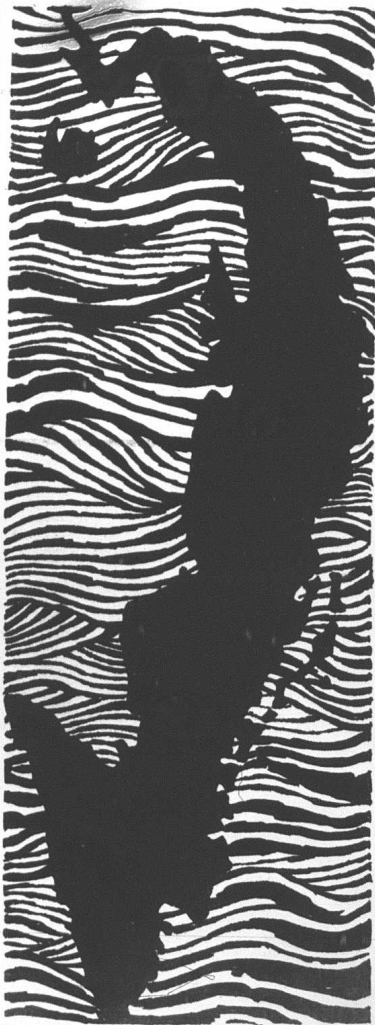
"Power is concentrated in the Communist Party, within the Party in the Central Committee, and within the Central Committee in the Maximum Leader. The structure was built from the top down: first came the leader, then the Central Committee, then the regional and local organizers, and finally the membership.

"Cubans sometimes argue that the method of selecting the members gives the system a democratic character. In effect, assemblies of workers in factories, offices, and farms select the hardest working, politically purest, and best behaved of their number for membership in the enterprise's Party branch. This, it is argued, ensures that the Party directly represents the people and wields power in their behalf. Actually, it doesn't work that way. Candidates for membership proposed by the worker assemblies can be vetoed by higher Party authorities who retain all the levers of power in their hands."

We said before that the names of systems ought to tell us something about who rules them, and we noted that our system is called capitalism because, when we locate the "levers of power" in our society, we find them controlled by the capitalists. The capitalists compose the ruling class. Under socialism, if only by definition, all the levers of power will be in the hands of the people, or at least, in the hands of those whom the people directly control.

And in Cuba? There are no capitalists: it is not capitalism. The people? They go about their business. Who holds "all the levers of power in their hands?" The government and Party bureaucrats. Instead of being controlled by the people, the people are controlled by them. To call this system socialism is about as justifiable as calling capitalism "socialism". (How about "corporate socialism?" Maybe Hitler ruled "fascist socialism?" and then there was "feudal socialism.") Bureaucratic rule is nothing more and nothing less than the establishment of rule by a new class of bureaucrats. If we are going to call this socialism, we will simply have to come up with a new name to describe the fight of the people to rule themselves.

As for the Huberman-Sweezy solution to Cuba's problem-- that there "be an attempt to change the character of the relationship between the leader and the people to the sharing of power and responsibility, in other words a turn to the left" -- it is clearer, now, why they themselves conclude that "this would certainly not be easy. Historically conditioned habits on both sides would have to be broken."



"Both sides" of course, refers to the bureaucrats and the working class. The habits to be broken are two: (1) The people's habit of allowing themselves to be ruled, and (2) the bureaucratic regime's habit of ruling. We already know that the Cuban people are breaking their habit. That, we recall, is what is making Castro so uneasy.

What about habit number two? That is, what about the regime? Are the bureaucrats ready to give up "all the levers of power"? Are they preparing to "share power and responsibility" with the people? Judging by everything we have read in "Socialism in Cuba," the answer is no. Rather, the regime's response to popular "malaise" is to tighten its grip on the society and to lash out more often and more savagely at those who suggest any other course. In short, the bureaucrats are solidifying their class rule.

So what is to be the fate of the suggested "turn to the left"? One thing seems certain: it will not be initiated from above. If it comes at all, it will come at the initiative of the Cuban workers. Whether the Cuban people will choose to resume their old "habit" or "assist" their rulers in breaking theirs -- that is a question we can't answer. It is the same as asking whether Cuba will have a socialist revolution . . . and only the Cuban people can decide.

FAR OUT

Bill Gerchow

Just for the hell of it read Hoffman's lively Revolution for the Hell of It (The Dial Press, 1968).

Hoffman doesn't understand that you don't celebrate the victory dinner before you've won the victory. Thus, while in the process of peddling his image as the incomprehensible and ambivalent one to the bored and alienated middle class, Hoffman cancels out both Joy & Seriousness by trying to project both simultaneously. After pushing Marx away (he prefers the Marx Brothers), Hoffman hugs his true preceptors, that dynamic duo, McLuhan and Marcuse: while one makes big (electric, vertical) capital (cool cash) out of a novel "probe" into media style, the other reveals the caliginous trick to the cognoscenti of how to bring blood back to Hegel's feet without adding any to Marx's head.

Hoffman's is a split-level game, and one all too comprehensible.

(1) The surreal as the really real. Last century in Europe tiny enclaves of anti-bourgeois artists experimented with drugs and sensations to see if their art would become if not ethereal and magical at least precious and exquisite. The adventure seemed excitingly evil. The price was none too great for Art's sake. And to the au courant it all seemed to out-aristocratize the aristocrats. Now in so-called affluent America and its European suburbs a generational movement of non-art-producing artists trip out en masse from upper-middle-class towns and affluent ghettos to get their equal share on a ready market of the once-esoteric action. Everyman an artist. Everyman a bohemian aristocrat. And now folks, Yippies!, brought to you direct from the underground factory, Hoffman declares: Follow me! Everyman a revolutionary! After all, this is a democracy, isn't it?

But it all has to be done his way, the really real, surreal way. Follow the recipe: First, accomplish blown mind. Then proceed to the blowing of the minds of others. Finally, if and whenever possible, perform said mind-blowing on large audiences reachable via mass media. Always do the unexpected. Say the opposite of what you mean; for instance, tell them you're a revolutionary. Nevermind bad trips when you get hundreds of followers hurt and jailed, and others in the Movement spied upon and smashed. After all, it gives those bored folks back in suburbia something to talk about. And, aren't they the real audience anyhow?

(2) Existential revolutionism, post-beatnik model. This persistent theme can be unscrambled as follows: I am what I do. I must doubt, then to escape the nothingness, I must do. I mustn't think, consider, now. If I acted in a manner interpreted by my clique as revolutionary last week, that doesn't mean that I can consider myself a revolutionary this week. Therefore I must do something. Then I will, at least momentarily, be something. And this has to be something bigger than what I did last week, because others are doing that, and what I am is something different from what they are according to their ac-

tions. Thus the request: "Dear Abbie, can I be considered a revolutionary for a whole month if I do what you say in Chicago?"

But, of course, Hoffman even finds existential revolutionism too clear a procedure. He doesn't want to do anything that's too definable. Moreover, he must be inconsistent. He likes Clyde of the Hell's Angels not because of what he does, but because of what he represents. All this, however, contradicts and negates the entire existential venture. What is clear is that Hoffman and his pale haven't learned that ironists and ambivalence-makers really can't have it both ways. Opposites cancel each other out and leave a big nothing.

To please the author, let's ask, what's Yippie? "So what the hell are we doing, you ask? We are dynamiting brain cells. We are putting people through changes." (p. 27)

But then we find that "people" also includes our brothers and sisters in the Movement.

"In one week, on fifteen dollars cash, we had attracted five to eight thousand people to a party at midnight, for no reason, in Grand Central Station. It is debatable whether or not the Grand Central Massacre helped or hurt our chances in Chicago. I maintain it helped tremendously. It put Yippie! on the map. I know that sounds cold-blooded. Revolutionists are cold-blooded bastards. . . ." (p. 91)

And so apparently are Yippies. For then the non-leaders led thousands to Chicago where there occurred an even more spectacular Massacre. And what does Hoffman have to say to his "props," i.e., his non-followers?

"There never were any Yippies and there never will be. . . . If you believe Yippies existed, you are nothing but sheep." (p. 12)

In other words, tough shit, suckers! But the unfortunate part -- the part Hoffman of course washes his hands of since he can grin, change colors, and claim he is or never has been a leader -- is the consequences for the entire Movement. That is where it's at.

(3) Do your own thing but do mine first. Hoffman equates fucking "their" minds with fucking the system. But whose minds? Movement people's minds? And what system? The broadcasting system?

Yet Hoffman points, like Polonius to the clouds, to alternative institutions and counter-cultures. What? The Free Store's, the Pentagon? Does he have anything to offer his "sheep" who are directed to fight the pigs? Pray tell, where are those real footholds from which a real struggle could be fought? Does anyone remember why Marx rejected the attempt "to overcome alienation with the framework of alienation"? Well, certainly not Hoffman.

Hoffman's is 1950ish celluloid charisma braced with a dash of acid to induce animation and set to a funny tune. The main rub is "Free" is Trapped. And I hope to god he doesn't box-in a sizeable chunk of the Movement with him.

Aside from all that, I thought Hoffman's book was a gas.



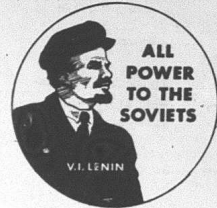
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is program in brief

We stand for socialism: collective ownership and democratic control of the economy through workers' organizations, established by a revolution from below and aimed toward building a classless society. We stand for an internationalist policy, completely opposed to all forms of class exploitation and in solidarity with the struggles of all oppressed peoples.

We believe in socialism from below, not dispensation from above. Our orientation has nothing in common with the various attempts to permeate or reform the ruling classes of the world, or with the idea that socialism will be brought to the masses by an elite. Socialism can only be won and built by the working class and all other oppressed people, in revolutionary struggle.

We oppose capitalism as a system of class exploitation and as a source of racial and imperialist oppression. In the interests of private profit and corporate power, it presents itself in the United States as a liberal/conservative "welfare state," based on a permanent war economy. It promotes unemployment, poverty, and racism; it violently suppresses militant opposition. As an international system of imperialism, U.S. capitalism struggles to contain and absorb the colonial revolution, and continually deepens the underdevelopment of satellite economies.

I.S. is an activist organization which seeks to build a mass revolutionary movement in the United States, to train revolutionary socialists, and to develop socialist theory to advance that movement. We see ourselves, not as the revolutionary leadership, but as part of the process of developing it; we work toward the building of an American revolutionary socialist party—a party, based on the working class, which can provide the leadership necessary for the revolutionary seizure of state power by the working class.

We regard the working class, female and male, black and white, blue collar and white collar, as potentially the leading revolutionary force in society. We see great promise in the new militancy of the labor movement, including the emergence of black workers' organizations.

We support uncompromising struggles by rank and file forces against racism and bureaucratism in the labor movement, and against the subordination of the workers' interests to the demands of the state. In places of work, we fight to build workers' political consciousness, and to link their movement with the struggles of oppressed peoples in this society and internationally. We regard the development of a new radical party based on rank and file workers' organizations as a giant step in the political independence of the working class and in the coordination of all insurgent forces.

Workers, organized as a class, can stop bourgeois society dead in its tracks. More importantly, they can organize society on a new basis, that of revolu-

tionary socialism. In the course of doing so, they will create new instruments of democratic power, just as the workers of Paris created the Commune in 1871, the workers of Russia the Soviets in 1905 and 1917, and the workers of Hungary the Workers' Councils in 1956. Our conception of socialism is bound up with such organizations, which embody workers' control of industry and the state.

We stand together with the struggles of black people and other oppressed minorities for liberation. We support armed self-defense, independent self-organization of the ghetto, and the right of self-determination for the black community. We look to a future coalition of black and white workers; however, blacks cannot allow their struggle today to be subordinated to the present level of consciousness of white workers.

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

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

The struggles of students and young people against imperialist wars, and against education and training designed to make them the agents or passive victims of oppression, likewise are shaking society. We participate in these struggles not only for their own sake, but also because they will help bring other sections of the population, including young workers, into motion.

We are part of the international movement against imperialist exploitation and aggression. We support popular revolution against American domination, and fight for the withdrawal of American troops from all foreign lands. In Vietnam, we favor the victory of the NLF over the imperialists—but we believe that the new regime will establish bureaucratic class rule, not a socialist society.

We believe that no existing regime can be called socialist. On a world scale, the "socialist" countries constitute a system of regimes and movements in different stages of development, but with a common ideology and social origin. In place of capitalism,

this system has achieved, and now aims at, not the abolition of class society, but a new type of class system.

In some areas (e.g. France and Indonesia), the official Communist parties—both "Soviet" and "Chinese"—have held back mass energies, in a search for power through maneuvers at the top. Elsewhere, these movements have been able to organize immense popular energies in revolutionary opposition to the capitalist state; but the leadership of these movements does not organize the working class to seize power for itself, nor does it intend to establish a regime in which the masses themselves rule.

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

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

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

In all countries we advocate revolutionary struggles as sparks for the world revolution—it alone offers the solution to the problems of poverty and underdevelopment, which cannot be overcome in the framework of a single country. But this internationalist perspective itself depends on the mass struggles for liberation in individual countries, whether against capitalist or bureaucratic regimes. In the bureaucratic states as under capitalism, socialism means only a revolution in which the working class itself overthrows its exploiters and directly rules the state.

Based on its work on the ongoing worldwide struggles against oppression and the ideas of revolutionary Marxism, I.S. seeks to build a socialist movement which is both revolutionary and democratic, working class and internationalist: an international struggle in which the world's masses can fight for power and win a new world of peace, abundance, and freedom that will be the foundationstone of classless communist society.

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Ann Arbor Rent Strike

Peter H. Denton and Nancy Holstrom

The housing situation in Ann Arbor is one of the worst in the country. Rents are the third highest in the U.S.-- topped only by Washington, D.C., and Beverly hills. An average 2-bedroom apartment costs \$300, yet the rooms are small, construction is very shoddy, and maintenance has been practically non-existent in many cases.

This situation was engineered both by actual collusion among the big landlords who control the market, and more importantly, by the general policy of cooperation between University, business and political interests. The University's chief contribution has been its total abdication of its responsibility to build low and middle income housing for students and townspeople alike. Because of the high rents, only the children of the upper middle class can afford to go to the University of Michigan (a state institution), and the city has become a luxury ghetto.

Various attempts made through the years to change the situation met with little success. Several years ago the SDS chapter (in its sadder days) tried a rent strike but it didn't get off the ground. Some good research was left as its legacy. In 1967-68 a drive was organized for an eight-month lease. (The school year is only eight months long but students are forced in the vast majority of cases to sign a year's lease.) The effort was successful in a certain sense but its "success" only proved that it was an insignificant effort to begin with: Landlords granted eight-month leases and raised the rents as much as 25%—thereby presenting themselves with the possibility of getting 14 months rent a year. This campaign proved to those who might have doubted it before that a broader attack on the realtors was needed if there were to be any significant gains.

In the fall of 1968 Peter Denton, then in SDS, brought up the possibility of a new rent strike. It met with little support within SDS, being branded as a reformist program, but the report in the newspaper aroused a great deal of interest and enthusiasm among a whole spectrum of political groups on campus—Student Government Council and Graduate Assembly, Young Democrats and Young Republicans, Engineering Council, Radical Caucus and Citizens for New Politics. Out of the initial nucleus of interested workers a steering committee was formed.

TENANTS' UNION

The goal of the rent strike was to form a tenants' union made up originally of all those willing to strike, which would be the sole bargaining agent for tenants who were members of the union. Recognition of the union was a precondition to any negotiation. The strategy was to put economic pressure on the landlords by withholding the rents. Since the burden of legal initiative is on the landlords, all tenants have to do is stay where they are.

Landlords have to undertake the expense of taking their tenants through the courts, which are very clogged up so that it could take several months. Under Michigan law the worst that can happen to a tenant is that he be forced to pay his rent (plus minimal court costs) or leave. Meanwhile, the landlords would be withholding their money all this time, and since they are usually overextended, this would put them in a real bind. (As an unexpected bonus, most of the cases actually brought to court resulted in significant rent reductions.)

Over a hundred organizers were quickly recruited, and by January 1969, the organizing was ready to begin. Since the market is more or less controlled by 15 large landlords, it was felt to be essential to concentrate organizing efforts on them. (One unfortunate consequence of this was that the strike is almost exclusively based among students since they are the tenants of the major landlords.) Each organizer was assigned a couple of buildings within the same company, and was responsible for getting 20 pledges to strike when 2000 such pledges had been received. (Although setting a fixed number at which the strike would start was later decided to be a tactical mistake.)

The deadline for getting the 2000 was set for February 15; otherwise, too many tenants would have no more rent to pay. By Feb. 15, almost 2000 pledges had been collected and a mass meeting of organizers who had consulted with their tenants voted that the strike should start. By the end of April, it was calculated that at least 1200 people had joined the strike and over \$150,000 was in the escrow fund.

In mid-April, a few of the big landlords plus some cronies in the John Birch Society brought a conspiracy suit against 91 persons involved to one degree or another in the rent strike. It charged us with a conspiracy to get tenants to break contracts, and as having as our ultimate goal the bringing of all private property under public control. The heart of the matter was an injunction that it asked for immediately. But the injunction and trial were put off again and again.

As it stands now the trial is set for February, at which time the landlords have to produce their books, which they fought against very vehemently. Given a recent Supreme Court decision regarding a tenants' group in

Washington, the expectation is that the judge will be forced to decide against his and the landlords' will. The suit cost us a lot of money and manhours, but probably nothing more. In addition, the rent strike initiated an anti-trust suit against several of the major landlords who belonged to a certain realtors' association. The suit lost in its first test but is being appealed. Its value was conceived as being primarily propagandistic in any case.

The key to a successful rent strike is structure. In Ann Arbor, structure means (1) a well coordinated group of approximately 100 organizers headed by a steering committee and (2) a functioning tenants' union. Presently, the steering committee is composed of thirteen members who fill the following positions: general coordinator, press, publicity, newsletter, escrow fund, office coordinator, tenants' defense squad coordinator, research, community liaison, student organization liaison, political education, and legal coordinator. In addition all steering committee members are required to be rank-and-file organizers.

The organizers are divided into groups of ten, and each group elects a group leader, who cannot be the steering committee member assigned to that group. This provides a check against any incipient authoritarianism on the part of the steering committee. A detailed list of all the holdings of the 16 major landlords (each owning 50 to 450 units apiece) was compiled. The organizing groups work against either one large company of several small ones. Wherever possible, organizers work in buildings of the company which they rent from.

Before organizers hit the streets, they attend workshops where they learn details about the housing market, answers to typical questions, and the technical details of how to place rent in escrow. They are urged to point out the wider ramifications of the struggle; e.g. the fact that univerkit president Robben Fleming has said in meetings with members of the strike that the University will not support the strike in any way, and that this means that the University does not want to offend the business and political interests with which it is intimately linked. While not all organizers are radicals, those who are have complete freedom to incorporate their views in their discussions with tenants. The thrust of their remarks relates to the felt oppression of capitalist exploitation rather than to abstract ideology or moral outrage.

Any group or individual can print political material (related to the tenants' struggle) in the bi-weekly newsletter, or have position papers distributed to the organizers or to the tenants.

The job of the organizer is to build a tenants' union local. It is felt that several thousand people will strike this year, so that the organizers can concentrate on the more difficult task of building a union. Representatives of the partially organized union voted last year for a union which had the following features: (1) a local of 15-25 tenants (usually in one building), who elect representatives to a soviet of about 200 members, from which a central committee is elected (to replace the largely self-appointed current steering committee). From the soviet, negotiating teams will be set up to include tenants of that particular landlord and members-at-large of the union. In many ways this is analogous to trade unions except that the tenants control the organization.

It is obvious to many who are active in the rent strike that even if we do manage to get a tenants' union this will only be a start to fundamentally changing the housing situation. A tenants' union would be the bargaining agent for tenants in a market heavily weighted on the side of the landlords. Something else must be done to affect the balance of power within the market.

What is needed is several thousand units of low-cost housing and the source of these should be the University. This is so for practical reasons (they have land, more capital, ease in getting loans, etc.) and also for political reasons. The University (as a state institution, *should* provide housing, and it is important to push this idea of the role the University ought to be playing, of the interests it ought to serve in contrast to its present practices.

After a lot of careful research, the tenants' union in Ann Arbor has voted to undertake a campaign to get the University to accept its program for the construction of several thousand units of low cost housing to be run by the tenants and to be open to students and anyone else who needs the lower rents. These latter provisions make the issue an excellent one for radicals and open the possibility of links with non-campus groups.

Although Ann Arbor has almost no working class population, the neighboring town of Ypsilanti has a large working class population, both black and white. It also has Eastern Michigan University, which hopefully can supply some organizers. Since many of the same realty companies have holdings there and conditions are fairly similar, the expansion of the strike into Ypsilanti is both practically and politically desirable. Initial organizing efforts have been made in Ypsilanti and prospects are good.

The rent strike in Ann Arbor has attracted a lot of attention on campuses all over the country. There have been innumerable requests for information and there are incipient strikes in Madison, in Berkeley, at Ohio State, and at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Preliminary plans have been made for a meeting in November of all such groups and the formation of a national tenants' union.

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