

## NY School Boycott: Parents Fight Cutbacks

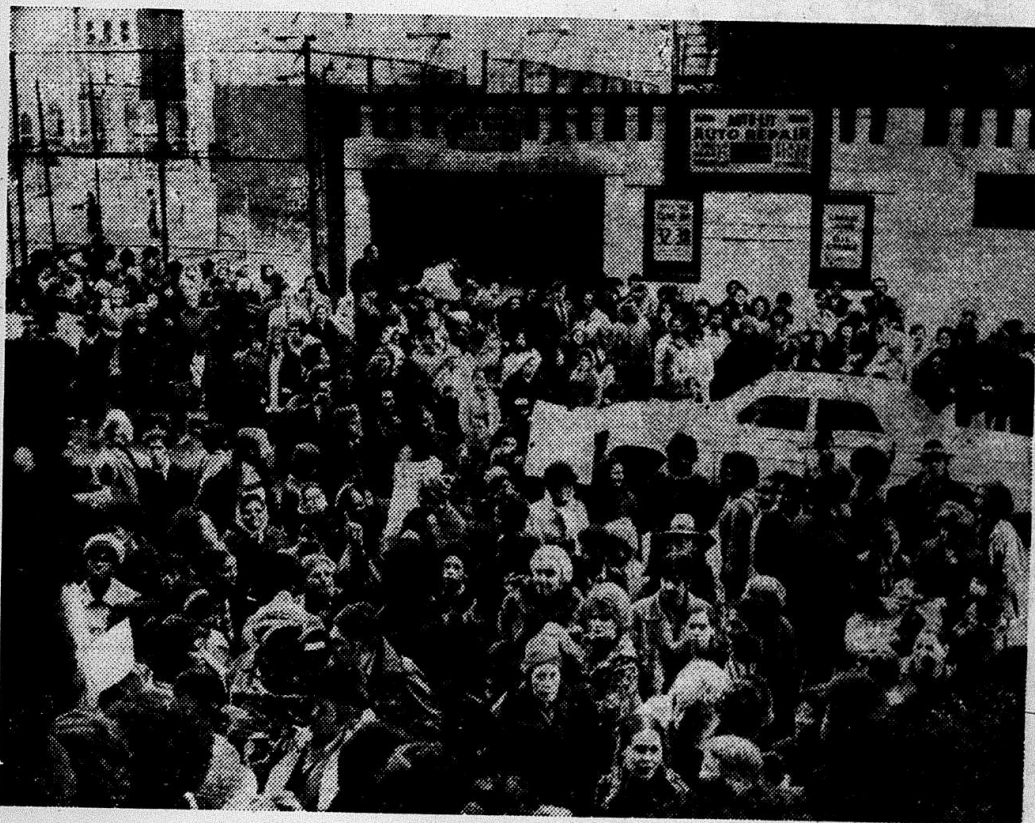
Parents in East Harlem, New York City, have launched a nearly 100 percent effective boycott of 14 elementary and junior high schools in Local School District 4. This struggle, now threatening to spread throughout the city, follows on the heels of the conflict between 31 black students and whites attempting to bar them from Canarsie's John Wilson Junior High School.

Black parents and students in Canarsie were able to win only a limited, although important, defensive victory by breaking a racist boycott. The racist fears of the white parents prevented a joint struggle against budget cuts forced through by the Lindsay administration and the central Board of Education.

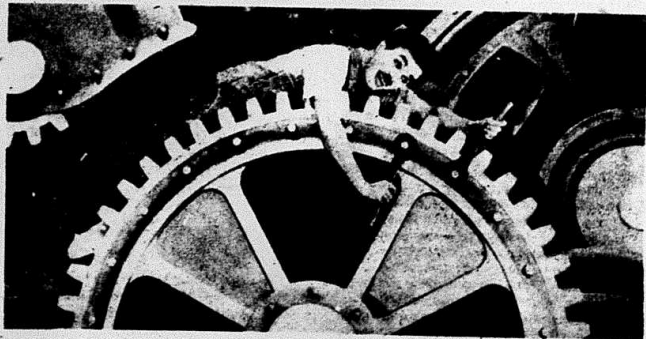
In East Harlem, on the other hand, black and Puerto Rican parents have taken the offensive, focusing on the need to restore the budget cuts that are threatening to destroy education all through the city.

The boycott started on Wednesday, November 22, as parents kept more than 3,500 children home in protest of staff reductions caused by cuts in the district's budget. The immedi-

*[Continued on page 13]*



## GMAD STRIKES AGAIN



Once again the leadership of the UAW has gone down to defeat at the hands of GMAD (the General Motors Assembly Division). This time their defeat comes in St. Louis at the massive GM assembly plant.

On October 1, 1971, GMAD took control of the management of the plant here and immediately began its process of speedup and work overload. The result was a buildup of almost 13,000 grievances and the laying-off of some 1,200 workers.

On October 13 of this year there was a four-day strike, and two weeks later another strike was averted by the signing of a settlement.

On November 3, the settlement was announced between Local 25 of the UAW and the GMAD management. According to newspaper reports and local union leadership the agreement was ratified by a 95 percent vote of the plant workers. To say that this is a distortion is to say the least.

*[Continued on page 11]*





# NEWS

# FUND DRIVE Tops 100%

The second annual International Socialists' fund drive went over the top on schedule as the drive officially ended over the Thanksgiving weekend. The goal of \$15,000 was surpassed by several hundred dollars, and the final total is expected to approach \$16,000 as late contributions continue to come in.

The success of this drive represents another modest but significant step forward for the IS toward our goal of building a revolutionary organization committed to the struggle for workers' democracy and revolutionary socialism.

To carry forward the fight for so-

cialism in the US requires socialists to participate in workers' struggles and to advance the self-organization and confidence of the working class around a political program and perspective; to strengthen their ties with revolutionary socialists internationally; and to build the strongest possible revolutionary democratic organization in the US with the goal of constructing a revolutionary socialist workers' party.

The International Socialists are active in all these areas. The success of the fund drive will enable us to carry our activities forward on all fronts, particularly to strengthen our national

## SCOREBOARD

Branch	Quota	Amount Raised	% of Quota
Austin-			
San Antonio	75	\$ 60	80
Ann Arbor	100	111	111
Boston	350	194	55
Champaign	60	85	142
Chapel Hill	60	0	0
Chicago	1,200	1,308	109
Cincinnati	60	30	50
East Bay	2,000	2,000	100
Detroit	2,500	3,229	129
Knoxville	40	40	100
Lansing	60	40	67
Los Angeles	1,500	1,500	100
Madison	500	500	100
New York	3,500	3,500	100
Pittsburgh	45	10	22
Portland	200	200	100
Rochester	60	120	200
Riverside	40	40	100
San Francisco	600	544	91
Seattle	850	880	104
Nat'l Office	1,650	894	54
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$15,285</b>	<b>102%</b>

## Detroit tops with 129%

### organization and publications.

The IS National Action Committee has extended congratulations to all IS branches, who contributed the bulk of the funds which made this success possible. Special notice must also be taken of the small branches and members-at-large, whose contributions to this year's drive marked a major advance over last year and played a large role in bringing us over the top.

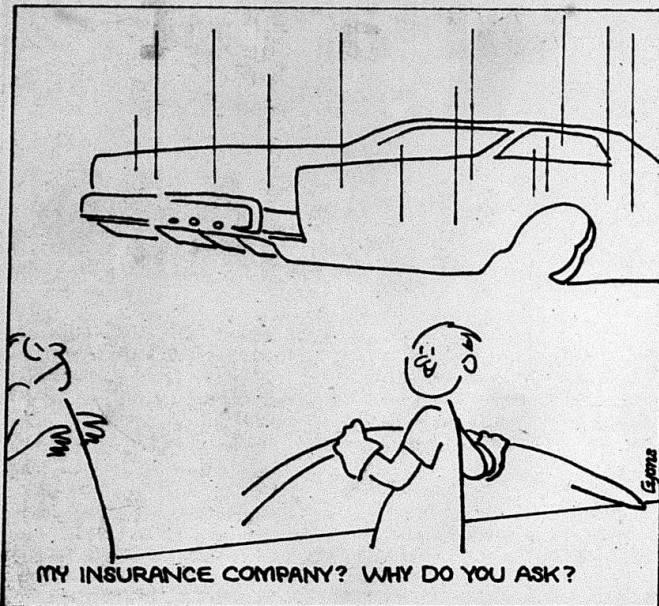
Special thanks are extended to all local fund drive coordinators and to national fund drive directors Jim Woodward and Karen Kaye, who enabled the drive to proceed smoothly and efficiently and supplied extra po-

litical and moral stimulation to the branches during the course of the drive.

Finally, readers of *Workers' Power* contributed substantially to the fund drive and deserve a vote of thanks in their own right. Your contributions will help us play a greater role in the period of sharpening class struggle that lies ahead. ■

[Late contributions will still be gratefully accepted. Make your check payable to "International Socialists" or "Joel Geier" and send it to IS, 14131 Woodward, Highland Park, MI 48203.]

### ON THE LINE



## Workers' Power 69

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# COLONIALISM SWEEPS PUERTO RICO ELECTIONS

Eric Langdon



As Nixon was sweeping to his landslide victory in the US, Rafael Hernandez Colon, 36-year-old President of the Puerto Rican Senate, and his Popular Democratic Party (Populares), were rolling to victory in Puerto Rico.

The Populares, Puerto Rico's liberal capitalist party, tied to the Democratic Party in the US, won in 87 of the 88 electoral districts.

For incumbent governor, Luis Ferre of the New Progressive Party -- statehood supporter, Nixon crony, and Puerto Rico's richest businessman -- the election provided an stunning defeat.

At the same time, the Independence Party (PIP) picked up only 3% percent of the vote -- a dismal and unexpectedly poor showing.

*What do the Puerto Rican elections mean for the US colony -- its future status, its economy, its workers and small farmers, its independence movement?*

## Unavoidable Issue

Throughout his campaign Governor Ferre tried to soft-pedal the question of Puerto Rico's political status, claiming that this was no issue. In a nation whose economy, culture, and life have been distorted and dominated by over 70 years of US colonial control, this is an obvious absurdity.

Ferre hoped that the electorate would forget that he and his party represent those sectors of the US monopoly and local capitalism which seek eventual US statehood.

However, the growing ability of the Independence movement to draw masses of Puerto Ricans into actions in the streets, and the publicity caused by a recent United Nations decision that Puerto Rico has the right to independence, helped keep the status issue in the fore.

The Populares promised more autonomy from the US within a Commonwealth framework -- in short, slightly more leverage in the colonial context. It was the Populares who in the 1950's were the architects for US colonialism's facade of the "Associated Free State" or "Commonwealth."

For many Puerto Ricans who actually favor independence, the vote for the Populares seemed to offer a viable "lesser evil" to statehood and a partial defense of Puerto Rican nationality against Yankee encroachment.

The continuing deterioration of the economy and the blatant corruption of the Ferre regime were also at issue. The US recession has battered the already desperate Puerto Rican economy.

Unemployment is close to 30 percent. US plants have been running away as their tax holidays expire. Poverty and slums are the gifts of US colonialism to Puerto Rico.

Ferre had no program when his "people's capitalism" gimmick of offering production workers a chance to buy a few stock shares collapsed last spring. He sounded like a hippie guru offering sermons on peace, love and brotherhood, as well as a few tons of bananas which he distributed to the poor.

Hernandez-Colon, on the other hand, promised a return to the relative prosperity of the 1950's. His program consisted of expanding tax-free status for US investors, a recipe for selling the rest of Puerto Rico to US corporations at bargain-basement prices.

In his electoral bid, Hernandez Colon was aided by the return from self-exile in Rome of Munoz Marin, Puerto Rico's leading liberal and long-time governor.

Munoz Marin helped re-unite the Popular Democrats, hauling out his old demagogic slogans, such as "Popular Fire."

It was Munoz Marin who presided over the Operation Bootstrap industrialization of the '40's and '50's, when US corporations ran roughshod over

the island in their hunt for profits -- at the expense of Puerto Rican labor, land and resources.

But the general situation of the economic decline of US capitalism makes the basis for reform in the colony much narrower. There will be no return to the "prosperous" '50's (when thousands of Puerto Ricans were still forced to migrate to the US to "escape" unemployment and poverty).

In response to working class militancy generated by the US-imposed wage freeze, low wages, and a cost of living that is higher than New York City's, Hernandez Colon has suggested a dose of Nixonomics.

He proposes compulsory arbitration imposed by a tri-partite board of big business, labor, and "public" representatives.

## Failure of the Left

Why, despite the colonial crisis did the Independence Party make such a poor showing? While PIP campaign slogans read "Independence, Socialism, Democracy -- Vote for the Party of Youth", and its rallies often drew over 50,000, in a fundamental sense it offered little political alternative to the Populares' liberalism.

The PIP program included some welfare measures, coupled to various protectionist and economic nationalist schemes to aid Puerto Rican business. Some "socialism" and "independence!"

The Puerto Rican Socialist Party

(PSP), after offering an electoral coalition with the PIP on an unclear programmatic basis last year, opted for the traditional anti-electoral abstentionist stand of Puerto Rican nationalism.

The PSP thus failed to put forward a propagandistic socialist alternative. It could have advocated a program of defense of the Puerto Rican working class against the repressive corporate-government onslaught, nationalization of US industry under workers' control, an independent workers' republic and Socialist Federation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a response to the vise of US economic and military imperialism.

Nevertheless, the election of the Popular Democrats in the context of a dying colonialism offers opportunities for the revolutionary *independista* left.

Puerto Rican liberalism has no progressive solutions to the colonial crisis -- only a repressive defense of US colonialism and the status quo. Exposing this reality to the masses of Puerto Ricans during the next few years can lay the basis for the decisive defeat of colonialism. ■

*[For a historical analysis of the struggle against US colonialism in Puerto Rico, see the International Socialists' pamphlet Puerto Rican Independence, by Lori Larkin and Eric Langdon. Order from IS Books, 14131 Woodward Ave., Highland Park, MI 48203. \$.75.]*

In a secret communique by the US Department of Defense, brought to light by the *New York Times*, the US Navy has announced that it expected to continue using the island of Culebra off the Puerto Rican coast indefinitely as a naval firing range.

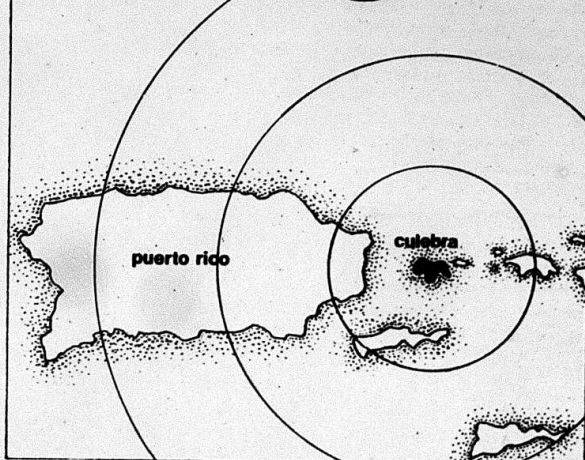
The Navy's use of the island brought protest from the local population, whose homes, fishing nets and boats (which constitutes the island's major industry) and lives have been damaged and threatened by constant US naval bombardment.

Mass support by the Puerto Rican independence movement of the islanders forced the US Defense Department to promise to phase out the Culebra firing range by 1973. The US Navy has now typically broken its promise.

The Defense Department was waiting until after the Puerto Rican elections to make its decision public. This was in order to protect Nixon's crony and Puerto Rico's governor Luis Ferre -- who has long tried to claim that Puerto Rico is not a colony.

Nixon and Ferre were afraid that public exposure of the Culebra decision would prove to many Puerto Ricans what independence supporters have long known -- that the US government and military calls the shots in Puerto Rico. ■

## On Target





# Editorial

## Murder In Baton Rouge

Investigations have shown beyond shadow of doubt that the killing of two black students (and the wounding of two others) at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was the result of shotgun blasts fired by deputy sheriffs.

A third student, Sabatu Taibika, a member of the group known as Students United which has led the struggle at SU, told a black investigating panel that the two dead students fell within three feet of him as he bent over to pick up a spent tear-gas canister.

Naturally, Louisiana Gov. Edwin W. Edwards responded to the mass of testimony and evidence gathered by the black commission of inquiry by calling it "as much of a blackwash as they say the state commission is a whitewash." The meaning of such a statement -- namely, that black demands for justice are to be ignored -- is open and unmistakable.

The murder of black students in the US is nothing new. In 1970 Mississippi troopers riddled dormitories at Jackson State with a massive volley of rifle fire (this occurred at the same time as the Kent State Massacre in Ohio).

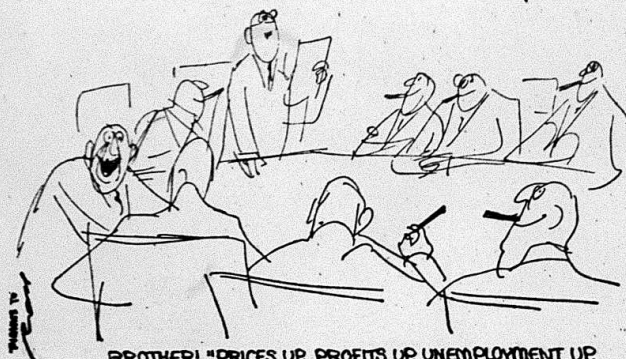
Orangeburg, South Carolina, was the scene of a similar massacre of black students a few years ago. The violent repression levelled against black people has occurred under "liberal" Democratic as well as "conservative" Republican administrations. Racism is deeply embedded in every level of the economic, social and political system of the United States.

It is not accidental, however, that the escalation of open violence against black people has occurred immediately after the re-election of Richard Nixon. Nixon's general appeal for "stability" and "an end to permissiveness" is a signal that reforms and concessions will be replaced by a policy of crack-down and repression.

As argued in our accompanying editorial (elsewhere on this page), the cutbacks imposed by Nixon on welfare spending, among other similar measures, are intended to be part of a broader attack against the entire working class and poor population. Such attacks will intensify. Armed violence against black students in Louisiana, the rash of police murders of blacks in Dallas, and the effort to create a racist hysterical reaction over the alleged "de Mau Mau" killings, are simply the tip of an iceberg.

To focus attention on the Southern University massacre, a national campaign should be waged to demand prosecution of the deputies responsible for these murders. The officers responsible for leading the attack must also be prosecuted, especially since it was probably at their instigation that the shotgun blasts were fired.

It is also critical that black students extend their struggle in the coming period, appealing to black workers for support and for direct action in solidarity with their protests. It is the black working class which has the power to play the leading role in the self-defense of the black community and the struggles of the entire working class in the coming period.



BROTHER! "PRICES UP, PROFITS UP, UNEMPLOYMENT UP, WAGES DOWN!" IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D THINK WE'D ALL DIED AND GONE TO HEAVEN!

## Fight Nixon's Welfare Cuts

Nixon's reported plans to cut health, education, and welfare spending are an attack on the entire working class. These plans must be fought by the poor, who are most directly affected, and by the leading section of the working class -- the organized labor movement.

The cuts are promised by Nixon's shifting of HEW Secretary Richardson to Secretary of Defense and the appointment of Caspar Weinberger to replace him. Richardson was in favor of proposals for guaranteed annual income, national health insurance, and other social-welfare programs. Weinberger and his assistants have promised cuts in all these areas.

These cuts, like every measure to prop up a faltering economy, will hit hardest at the poor and oppressed, especially blacks. Cuts in education spending will mean closing schools. Cuts in health spending will mean further decline in already overcrowded, understaffed hospitals for the poor.

Under the guise of welfare "reform," welfare clients will be forced to work at substandard wages for their miserable checks, while city employees are laid off by budget cuts. In short, forced labor for welfare clients -- at scab wages.

The cuts will also hit others -- hospital workers, teachers, and welfare workers who will be forced to take wage cuts, layoffs and increased work loads; city employees whose efforts to form unions will hit the brick wall of budget-cutting.

And these cuts are only Nixon's leading punch -- at the weakest sections of the working class. He will follow by hitting the stronger sections -- the powerful unions. In the round of contract talks beginning next spring, Nixon will rely on the Pay Board and whip up public opinion against the "greedy" workers.

Behind the appeals to hold the line on wages will be the waiting sword of unemployment. And as the present economic "boomlet" tapers off, the attacks on both unions and the poor will only increase.

Nixon's strategy is classic: divide and conquer. To the employed, he will put the blame on "welfare chisellers"; to the poor, he will blame "greedy unions." Meanwhile the corporations he serves will laugh up their sleeves.

The response to this attack on the entire working class must be united and must be led by the strongest sections of the class. Welfare clients, school parents, and other victims must organize against the cutbacks -- as parents are now doing in New York City. And workers in the major unions must recognize that Nixon's attack on the poor is really an attack on them too -- in fact, today even workers with five or ten years' seniority are only a step from unemployment and welfare.

These workers must demand a united response and make the organized labor movement fight for the interests of the whole working class.

# New York I.S. Holds Rank & File Conference

Jim Gregory

"Labor's Rank and File Revolt" was the topic of the first Workers' Power Educational Conference, held in New York City on November 11 and 12. Sponsored by the International Socialists, the conference attracted 166 people, including members of the United Auto Workers, the Communication Workers of America, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the United Steelworkers, and the American Federation of Teachers.

Panelists included leaders of rank and file opposition caucuses in the UAW, CWA, and AFT.

The keynote speech was delivered by Ron Taber, national industrial secretary of the International Socialists, speaking on the roots of the rank and file revolt. Taber argued that the era of post-war stability has ended, and that the capitalist class will increasingly take the offensive in attacking workers' standards of living.

The opening salvos of this offensive were fired in 1969-70. The bitter General Electric, Postal, Teamsters, and Auto strikes at that time reflected the refusal of corporations to meet wage and working conditions demands.

Taber focused attention on a rising layer of rank and file militants. This layer is composed of primarily four groups: young workers, many of whom identified with the anti-war movement; older militants, veterans of past struggles who are once more emerging openly in the plants; Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, and (in some areas) women workers; and Vietnam veterans.

The emergence of this layer, in the context of sharpening class struggles in the coming period, poses the task of building a revolutionary party.

Saturday afternoon featured a panel of rank and file leaders: Pete Kelly and Louis Smith from the United National Caucus of the UAW, Joe Naback from Local 1101 of the Communication Workers of America, and Steve Zeluck from the United Action Caucus of the American Federation of Teachers.

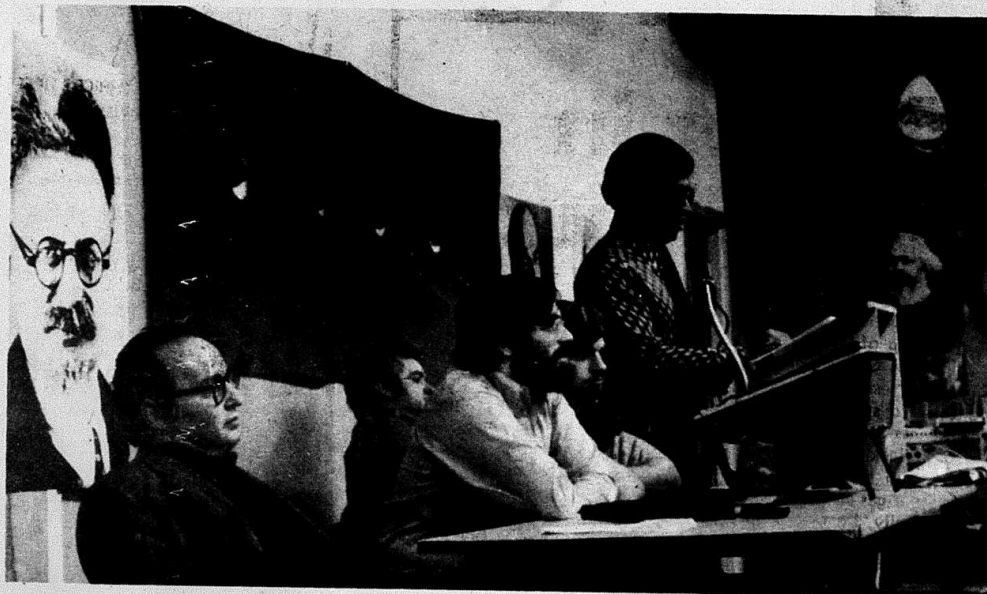
Speaking of their experiences, each substantiated Taber's assertion that the post-war period of labor-management harmony, along with the unchallenged leadership of the union bureaucracy, is a thing of the past.

On Sunday morning, Edie Fox of the United National Caucus (UAW) and Gay Semel, telephone operator, discussed organizing women workers. Among the problems encountered in organizing women workers, both agreed, is the vulnerability of their jobs.

In general, women are paid far less than men, and have a much higher unemployment rate. The surplus of labor in their fields makes it easy to fire women militants.

Secondly, very few women have been organized into unions, leaving them to deal as individuals against their employers.

Even where women workers have



Louis Smith speaking at I.S. Labor Conference

been organized, it has mostly been through sweetheart contracts. All in all, the labor movement has not fought for women.

Both Fox and Semel called for the development of a working women's movement fighting for equal pay for equal work.

The afternoon panel took up the question of Blacks, Latins, and the Unions. Louis Smith, chairman of Justice, Opportunity, and Betterment (JOB) in Cincinnati, stressed the need for united action of working people. The Justice, Opportunity, and Betterment caucus at the Uniondale, Ohio GE plant (UAW Local 647) began as an all-black group "because the union was not looking out for the interests of black people."

It didn't take long, however, for JOB to find out that to fight GE and the UAW bureaucracy, they had to overcome divisions in the plant caused by white racism.

Smith pointed out that black workers have important special demands, which must be made in the context of a common struggle of all workers. JOB is now a multi-racial organization, also including black and chicano workers.

Alfredo Pena, a Puerto Rican Teamster and Carpenter, discussed the need to break down divisions in the working class by fighting for a sliding scale of wages and hours (reducing the work week with no loss of pay) to insure well-paying jobs for all.

The third speaker on this panel was Don Collier, a black steel worker. Collier concentrated on historical aspects of the relation between black and white labor. He pointed out the difficulty of unifying black and white workers without projecting programs that can bridge the gulf that separates them.

Collier noted that unemployment

among blacks is roughly double that for whites, while the average black worker earns about half as much as his white counterpart.

He stressed the need to defend and build unified caucuses of black and white workers, but at the same time underlined the right of blacks to form independent black caucuses to fight for their needs.

The conference concluded with a speech on "Socialism and the Rank and File Revolt" by Kim Moody, member of the International Socialists and also in the United Action Caucus of the CWA.

In response to some socialists who say that the new layer of rank and file militants will only sell out just like the union bureaucracy, Moody asserted that this would only be expected if we thought that a period of economic harmony was coming.

In the past, prosperity has allowed capitalism to buy off militancy through moderate wage increases. This period is different.

There will be no long-term economic stabilization, and hence it cannot be assumed that the new rank and file leaders will be so easily co-opted.

However, Moody noted, it is true that more than militancy will be required if the working class is to successfully withstand the current capitalist attack.

A strategy for uniting different sections of the working class is needed, as well as means for combining the current economic militancy with a political fight.

Further, since the capitalists organize on an international basis, so must the workers.

Moody pointed to revolutionary socialist organizations such as the In-

ternational Socialists of Great Britain, the Socialist Workers Movement in Northern Ireland, Lutte Ouvriere in France, and the International Socialists in this country as political nuclei around which new revolutionary parties will be built.

Critical to the development of such a party in this country will be the ability of revolutionary socialists to help the emerging layer of militants to develop strategy and tactics that can win ever-greater numbers of workers and guide them to victories in their struggle against the capitalist class and its lieutenants in the labor bureaucracy.

To develop such strategy and tactics, socialists must have contact with these militants.

The International Socialists, Moody stated, are in the process of developing these ties, of sinking roots in various industries.

Moody concluded by urging all at the conference to seriously consider joining the International Socialists and helping to build a revolutionary party in the United States.

## Workers' Power Forum:

Ian Mackler, speaking on his newly published book, *Pattern for Profit in Southern Africa*

Friday, December 15, 7:30 p.m.

International Socialists Hall  
17 East 17 Street, 7th Floor  
New York City Phone: 989-1410

Contribution: \$1.00, Students and Unemployed, \$.50

# Struggle In the South



## Blacks Lead Atlanta Wildcats

A series of wildcat strikes, led by black workers, has been in progress in Atlanta since July.

The wildcats began with a strike at Sears Roebuck, initiated by black workers fighting the company's discriminatory practices. One of the strike leaders, for example, had trained five white supervisors during his 4½ years at Sears.

Although he knew how to train them, he was denied a promotion and they became his bosses. In addition to fighting such practices, the black strike leaders raised demands for the improvement of conditions for all workers, black and white. Some white workers joined the blacks on the picket lines.

The Sears strikers spread the walk-out to all Atlanta Sears stores and asked customers to boycott. After 11 days Sears agreed to most of the demands, including back pay for the period of the strike.

This victory set off a small wave of wildcats throughout the city. The strikes were led by blacks, but in many cases small numbers of whites participated. Significant strikes occurred at the Nabisco bakery and at the Mead Packaging Corp.

At Mead 700 workers conducted a seven-week wildcat, basing their demands on those of the Sears strikers. Their picket lines, under frequent police attack, were reinforced by workers from Nabisco and Sears. The Mead strikers reluctantly returned to work with only a few of their demands met.

Although these strikes were relatively small, they are by no means insignificant. The solidarity demonstrated by the strikers was impressive.

More importantly, the black strike leaders have laid the basis for unity of black and white workers by linking

black demands with demands that benefit all workers.

This method points to the possibility of ending racial divisions in the working class by demonstrating to whites that it is in their own interest, as well as in the interest of blacks, to fight discrimination against black workers. This is the way racism can be overcome.

## Poultry Workers Organize

Forest, Miss. -- Workers at Poultry Packers, Inc. of Forest, Mississippi, have voted 95 to 76 to designate the Mississippi Poultry Workers Union

(MPWU) as their bargaining agent.

Although the number of workers in this plant is small, the election was a major development in a new organizing drive that may reach plants throughout Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia.

It was also a further step in the growth of black-white unity among workers in this area, which started with organization of woodcutters into the Gulfcoast Pulpwood Association (GPA).

Poultry workers were inspired to organize by a strike of woodcutters in 1971. The MPWU was started and is led by black workers but is now supported by whites as well.

The gigantic chicken-processing industry employs thousands of workers in the Deep South. Most of the plants are small, pay low wages, and have oppressive working conditions.

The MPWU is an independent union formed last May when black workers struck at Poultry Packers [see *Workers' Power* No. 59]. After winning a 10-cent-an-hour raise, the workers voted to end their strike so they could strengthen their position in the plant. At the same time, they asked the

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to hold an election. The company began to harass union sympathizers, but this backfired when another walkout in mid-September was led by white workers.

Merle Barber, president of the union, said: "A lot of them didn't understand the first time, but now they realize that if you don't stick together, you can't make it." Both black and white workers voted for the union in the recent election.

The MPWU is already signing up workers in other plants. An election at Gaddis Packing Company, also in Forest, has been set for December 21.

[Contributions to support the MPWU's organizing drive may be sent to: Ms. Merle Barber, President MPWU, Route 2, Box 11, Forest, Miss. 39074.]

## Welfare Mothers Jailed

On November 10, a Charlotte, North Carolina judge threw eight mothers in jail for the weekend. The following Monday he gave them suspended sentences and ordered them to pay heavy fines.

This act was the opening shot in a new attack on poor people in North Carolina. Over the weekend of November 17 Clifton Craig, Social Services (?) Commissioner announced his office is extending the offensive to Durham, Forsyth, Guilford and Cumberland counties and soon to all 100 counties in North Carolina.

Supposedly the move is an attempt to curb "welfare fraud." The welfareocrats have been checking the records of the Employment Security Commission to see if people on welfare have been reporting all their income. The real intent is to push people into in-human jobs.

Recently the textile and furniture sweatshops have had trouble getting workers. In one instance, a furniture



Mead workers at a rally during the seven-week strike

company claimed that welfare was responsible for its inability to deliver an order to the University on time.

That is nonsense. The aid people get in North Carolina is among the lowest in the nation and does not provide them with even the minimum necessities of life.

These welfare victims could get more money working in the open shops, but working there is a hell even worse than welfare.

The ruling class is trying to use "work-fare" to break down this resistance. It is vital that trade unionists throughout the country understand that this offensive, which is really national in scope, is part of a growing attack on the labor movement.

The bosses are striking at the weakest link, hoping that organized workers won't see it as part of the chain.

## Gay Activists Meet in Georgia

Homosexuals from all over the South assembled November 10-12 in Athens, Georgia, in response to a call for a regional confederation of gay liberation activists. Represented were every Southern state except Texas, Louisiana, and South Carolina.

The participants in the conference included a number of gay women, including both those opposed to working with men and those in favor of doing so.

The conference presented an opportunity to form an organization to fight against the oppression of homosexuals throughout the South. Brutal treatment by police, discrimination in employment, and the necessity to live a secret existence are problems which vary from one locality to another but are present everywhere.

A Southern regional organization could mount local, statewide and regional campaigns against the denial of human rights to gay people, as well as taking part in national campaigns which may occur.

Unfortunately, while a Southern gay coalition was created, the conference failed to adopt a set of goals which could have led toward unified struggle. Originally only a discussion of the constitution of the proposed organization was planned.

On the second day this procedure was abandoned as participants expressed the desire to "get into each others' heads." The rest of the conference was a chaotic discussion of a dozen different social and political philosophies.

The result was a decision to have different "interest groups" represented in the structure of the organization. These "interest groups" included students, workers, feminists, "reformists," "capitalists," "Marxists," and several more. This revealed only the complete disunity of social and political outlook among those present.

Most gay activists today seek change through supporting liberal politicians. Others really have little interest in political action and care mainly for "consciousness-raising."

Others — including those in the International Socialists — see both these

roads as dead ends. We argue that the gay movement while fighting for its own just demands must support other movements for social change, especially the rank and file labor movement.

Behind these divisions lies the fact that the gay movement, necessarily a minority force, has no reliable allies in the liberal or conservative wings of the ruling class, while the issue of homosexual rights has almost never been raised among workers.

Thus gay activists see no way to wield political power. These problems have led to a disintegration of the gay movement nationally in the last year, while the few remaining large gay organizations have become more middle-class and politically moderate.

In the South, the gay movement is just beginning. But the Athens conference gave little reason for hope of avoiding a quick decline. Aside from being disunited, the conference was mainly middle-class in outlook, with those taking a pro-labor stand being in a distinct minority.

The conference ended by scheduling a future meeting to continue discussing goals and objectives. If the organization is to avoid demoralization and inevitable dissolution, it will have to realize that a common program of struggle, based on the demand for full civil rights for homosexuals, must be implemented.

## Indians Fight To Control Schools

A few years ago the Lumbee Indians of North Carolina received national attention when they raided and broke up a Klan meeting. They are currently fighting to win control of their schools.

Most of the Lumbees live in the rural sections of Robeson County outside the city of Lumberton, North Carolina. But the county board is elected under a scheme which gives the city five autonomous school districts.

The city school boards are elected by voters within each district. The mostly white urban districts can thus control both their own boards and the county board.

The country district is only 20 percent white. Robeson County's non-urban population is 60 percent Indian, 20 percent black, and 20 percent white. Nonetheless, five out of seven county school board members are white.

Repeated mass demonstrations have forced the school board to take notice of the Indians' demands. They are initiating a court suit to change the method by which the country board of education is elected.

In North Carolina, unlike most states, more than 70 percent of education money comes from the state rather than local property taxes.

The Lumbees and blacks have been gerrymandered out of control of these funds, and of Federal grants to oppressed districts like theirs.

Eastern North Carolina boards are notorious for spending Federal money on expensive buildings and furniture instead of the children for whom it is supposedly intended. ■

# The Chicago Train Crash—Who Is To Blame?

Fred Vincent

The recent Chicago commuter train crash, on the Illinois Central (I.C.) line, should have come as no real surprise. The United Transportation Union has been fighting the decline of safety standards for many years. Four years ago the UTU warned the I.C. and the Illinois Commerce Commission of the possibility of catastrophe because of disputes over crew sizes and the workers' duties.

Due to recent work rules changes, the UTU members have been warning the company again of an "impending disaster."

That disaster came on October 31. A new train, recently bought by the Federal government for the I.C., over-shot the 27th station on Chicago's near South Side.

In passing the station, the train crossed a set of signal lights which cleared the track behind it.

When it backed up, the lights were reversed to warn trains at those same stations. But the change came too late.

A second train, only three minutes behind, was travelling at 30 miles per hour when it came to the 27th Street Station.

The engineer was unable to see the train until he was on top of it, because the station itself blocks the view. Thus occurred the worst tragedy in Chicago's train history — nearly fifty deaths and hundreds of serious injuries.

This chain of events raises three questions about the cause of the crash: (1) Why did the first train overshoot the station? (2) Why was there no one from the first train signalling that it was backing up (as required by Federal regulation)? (3) Finally, what could have been done to lessen the extent of the accident?

The government can only tell us "human error" is the source of the problem. The workers say that faulty equipment and the lack of emergency procedures were the primary factors in the accident.

The engineer of the first train said that faulty brakes caused him to pass the station. He said that he has complained many times about the defective equipment on the new trains.

Another I.C. engineer claimed that he alone had overshoot stations 200 times this year due to trouble with his brakes. When the company was asked about these and other union charges an official said, "We don't want to go into that," (*Chicago Tribune*, November 1).

A similar union charge resulted in

a strike in 1969. The company attempted to cut the crew sizes. The union wanted a flagman added for safety reasons. The company called this "feather-bedding."

The union got the extra man, but he was assigned to make collections and not signal trains. Not only was there no position for a flagman to warn other trains of unusual procedures (like backing up, or extra long stops) but none of the men were supposed to do it regularly!

The company has also stopped carrying emergency signal equipment on the trains. In other words, even if one of the men decided to signal for safety reasons there would be no equipment.

This fact might have been instrumental in the crash. One I.C. employee was standing at the 27th station at the time of the accident.

He frantically jumped up and down to warn the second train. He wasn't seen.

As M.S. Stuckey, general chairman of the I.C. commission of the UTU, said, "What's he supposed to do? Get out and flag down a train with his hat?"

Under these conditions, the engineer of the second train, when he saw the train only a few feet in front of him, hit his brakes so hard he broke the lever!

Even with that the older train cut through the newer train like a hot knife through butter. The new cars, admitted John Reed, chairman of the government's National Transportation Safety Board, are "highly suspect in design."

### Human Error?

The same design was approved only months before by the government when they bought the cars! The older cars are better built, but lack of upkeep has caused frequent malfunctions of equipment.

This event occurred in the context of last March's 7 percent rate increase granted by the state of Illinois. The I.C. must, according to this agreement, "immediately" place their signal system in "safe and reliable condition" and "assure the maintenance of their older cars."

To say this tragedy was caused by "human error" is like saying the Titanic was sunk by a mischievous iceberg. It's nothing more than a cover for the failure of the government (not to mention the I.C.) to keep the trains safe.

The safety of the trains will only be assured when they are collectively and democratically owned and regulated by the people who work and travel on them — under a workers' government. ■



Joseph A. Beirne

# NY Bell, Beirne Launch Offensive Against CWA Ranks

Bill Hastings

The New York Telephone Company has launched a strong offensive against its employees since the defeat of the Communication Workers of America (CWA) strike 10 months ago.

The company recently announced plans to reduce the workforce by 10 percent. Many militants have already been fired.

"Quality control" and production checks have been instituted. Militant groups of maintenance workers are being broken up by transfers and harassment is intense.

Many of the company's moves could be stopped by a genuine fight by the CWA. But the New York locals are demoralized, and International President Joe Beirne is causing so much trouble in the locals that he has really opened up a second front for the company.

The Bell system already owes Beirne much thanks for destroying the New York strike last year. After refusing to call out other CWA locals in support of the New York state strike, he finally forced a settlement far worse than the original offer New Yorkers had rejected seven months before. It was also Beirne who destroyed the effort to organize the operators in-to the CWA.

Since the strike defeat, Beirne has worked to destroy the militancy remaining in New York CWA. His first move was to split up the New York local, formerly the biggest in the country, into two smaller Brooklyn and

Manhattan/Bronx locals.

Control of the Brooklyn local was handed over to Al Ruggiero, one of CWA's most corrupt do-nothing officials.

Now Beirne has intervened in the local union elections to try to wreck the opposition to him. In Brooklyn he backed Ruggiero against Tom Schaefer, one of the two New York Local 1101 Executive Board members who tried to mobilize the ranks to win last year's strike. Ruggiero, in control of the local's mailing list, money, and grievance committee, won easily.

## United Action

In Local 1101, covering Manhattan and the Bronx, Beirne backed John Smith, a former local official who went on television during the strike to call on CWA members to go back to work.

Unfortunately for Beirne, Smith came in a feeble third, losing to Ed Demsey, the other militant Executive Board member and Ricky Carnivale, the incumbent. Demsey and Carnivale now face each other in a runoff.

United Action, a local rank and file group that played a leading role in fighting the sellout strike policies last year, supported both Schaefer and Demsey in the elections.

Because both candidates called for building an alliance of the big-city locals against Beirne, United Action felt that their election would open up the possibility of a real fight by the ranks of the union.

An immediate step that would result from a Demsey-Schaefer victory

is dumping District One Vice-President Morty Bahr.

This would mean real opposition to Beirne on the International Executive Board for the first time -- which is a big reason Beirne opposed both men.

But United Action also pointed out rank and file CWA'ers that real problems existed in both Demsey and Schaefer's campaigns. In 1101, United Action issued leaflets with the slogan "Vote Demsey But Keep Your Eyes Open," pointing out that a real fight by the ranks would be needed to make sure that Demsey kept his campaign promises.

In Brooklyn, United Action members criticized Schaefer for his failure to mobilize the ranks against Ruggiero, calling for a democratic, rank and file controlled campaign committee.

UA'ers in Brooklyn feel that Schaefer would have had a good chance to win the election if he had done so.

The call for a big-city opposition to Beirne, which Demsey and Schaefer have adopted, was originally put forward by United Action. Demsey and Schaefer's approach, however, is very different from UA's.

Neither candidate had a real program for building an opposition, and neither talked very much about the need to build a rank and file opposition, not just a group of local presidents.

Simply replacing Beirne by other bureaucrats is not enough. UA calls for CWA rank and filers to organize around a program that will turn the CWA into a militant, fighting union

instead of a junior partner of the Bell system.

They demand full democracy in the union and a fight for a decent contract in 1974 that will provide job security and higher wages and better conditions.

UA also calls for the CWA to fight unemployment and the threat of automation by winning a shorter work week with no loss in pay, and they demand an end to all forms of racial, sexual and ethnic discrimination.

United Action opposed Beirne's support to McGovern, and argue that CWA should instead work with other unions to build a labor party that can protect workers from the combined political and economic force that defeated the CWA strike last year.

Demsey and Schaefer, however, try to pretend these problems don't exist and have no solution for them.

Although United Action believed it was important to support both men, in order to smash Beirne's attempt to destroy the opposition to him, UA believes it would be a mistake for the ranks in New York to rely on Schaefer or Demsey's promises alone.

Beirne can be defeated by a combination of big-city CWA locals, especially if New York takes up this fight. In the coming runoff, Demsey has a chance to win.

But Demsey has to decide what he stands for and make it clear to the ranks. He must organize the membership to fight if he is to defeat Carnivale and pose a real threat to Beirne. ■

[Bill Hastings is a member of United Action in New York CWA.]

# Union thugs attack East Bay caucus

Members of Communication Workers of America (CWA) Local 9415 (Oakland, California) have finally succeeded in passing a by-laws proposal to establish the principle that stewards be elected by their work group, rather than appointed from above.

The proposal, which overwhelmingly passed a meeting of the local on November 28, also included provisions for a stewards' council and stewards' education committees.

This proposal had been discussed and advocated for several months by the Bell Winger, a rank and file newsletter put out by members of 9415.

This is an important victory for members of the local. It should be seen, however, only as a first step.

This rank and file victory was followed by bureaucratic violence after the meeting was over. Right at the end of the meeting, the local officers pushed through a motion of censure against another rank and file group,

the Militant Action Caucus (MAC).

The MAC was not allowed to respond to the charges. Naturally, after the meeting was abruptly adjourned, union members got into arguments about the censure motion.

Suddenly friends of the local "leaders" began physically striking members of the MAC. The attackers had to be restrained by other members of the local.

The Militant Action Caucus, which is a very sectarian grouping in the local, often makes it very difficult for other rank and filers in the local to work with them.

Nevertheless, the right of the MAC to work in the local must be supported. An attack by the bureaucracy on the MAC is an attack on the entire rank and file movement and must be met with a united response.

As the Bell Winger stated in an article, "Defend the Right of Opposition." "While we disagree with many of the MAC's tactics, we defend un-

conditionally their right to raise opposition within the local . . .

"But it is clear that the bureaucracy is not interested in a strong militant union, because such a union could not be controlled by them.

"It follows that those who raise serious opposition to their policies and attempt to build a fighting union will be attacked and fought in any way possible including totally undemocratic means.

"We oppose unconditionally all of these tactics, whether they are directed at the MAC, us, or anyone else who disagrees with the direction of the union.

"We call upon all those in the union who want to build a real workers' organization, able and ready to fight for our rights, to join us in this condemnation of the leadership and their attempt to force the MAC out of the union.

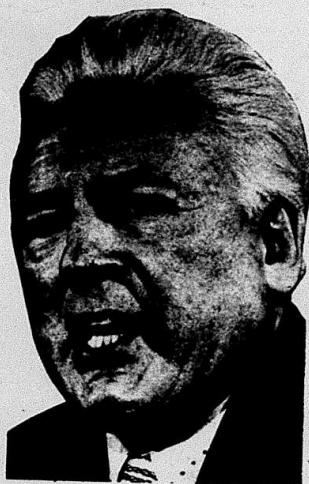
"This is everyone's fight. An injury to one is an injury to all." ■



# Labor In Brief

Jim Woodward

Hardhat leader becomes Nixon's labor cover



Peter J. Brennan, president of the New York Construction Trades Councils, has accepted the position of Secretary of Labor in President Nixon's cabinet.

The appointment indicates Nixon's desire to use Brennan as he has used Teamster President Fitzsimmons and other union bureaucrats -- as a cover for his blatantly anti-labor regime. Brennan's acceptance indicates his willingness to be so used.

Brennan is one of the most conservative and racist of all union leaders. In 1970 he organized a large pro-war demonstration in New York. He now indicates that he is quite concerned about any "concessions or show of weakness" in Vietnam.

He has also done more than his share to keep blacks and other minorities out of the construction trades. Referring to blacks who wanted construction jobs, he said in 1963: "We won't stand for blackmail. We had that from the Communists and the gangsters in the thirties."

In this attempt to get the collaboration of the labor bureaucracy against rank and file workers, Nixon faces some risks. Under certain conditions his plan could backfire.

In 1953, for example, Plumbers Union President Martin Durkin quit Eisenhower's cabinet in a dispute over anti-labor legislation. In picking Peter Brennan for Secretary of Labor, however, President Nixon has reduced this danger to the absolute minimum.

ILGWU demonstrates in favor of restrictive trade legislation

Approximately 150,000 members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) participated

in a nationwide demonstration November 24 demanding that Congress pass the Burke-Hartke Bill. Burke-Hartke, which has been endorsed by many prominent union leaders, would regulate foreign imports more tightly.

ILGWU members have lost 50,000 jobs in recent years under the pressure of less expensive imported clothing. The imported clothing is cheaper because it is made under sweatshop conditions by workers earning as little as 15 cents an hour.

In the past, the ILGWU leadership has cited this fact as an excuse for its unwillingness to fight for improvements of the miserable wages and working conditions of garment workers in this country.

Although the situation in which garment workers find themselves is a serious one, trade restrictions offer no real solution.

The most likely consequence of the Burke-Hartke Bill, if passed, will be to stir up national chauvinism and hatred of foreign workers -- both in this country and in Japan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, etc.

In this way, the ruling class intends to neatly divide the workers into separate, antagonistic national factions. This will enable them to keep wages low in all countries.

An international solution to the "import problem" would unite workers in different countries rather than dividing them. To this end, the "International" unions in various countries must become truly internationalist, fighting to raise wages and improve working conditions everywhere.

As long as any section of the working class is underpaid, the employing class will find a way to take advantage of it.

Solidarity ignores Norwood, boosts McGovern

With a major confrontation in progress between General Motors and the United Auto Workers over the issues of speedup, layoffs, and harassment in the General Motors Assembly Division (GMAD) plants, one would assume that the UAW would have something to say to its members on this subject.

It would be logical to expect articles -- maybe even a special supplement -- in the UAW's newspaper *Solidarity* with facts and figures and advice on how to fight GMAD.

But -- surprise -- out of twelve pages in the November issue of *Solidarity*, 7½ pages are taken up with ads and articles for McGovern. There are also 1½ pages on other election races, ½ page of patterns, and ¼ page of letters.

Finally, buried on page 9, we find a small article reporting the end of the Norwood strike. That's all.

For continuing coverage of the battle between GMAD and the auto workers, UAW members would do better to follow *Workers' Power*.

Rank-And-File Notes

IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) Local 11, representing Los Angeles construction electricians, is having some success fighting the Pay Board. Local 11 has forced the employers to put a pay increase rejected by the Pay Board into an escrow fund, payable to the workers if the Pay Board goes out of business. The Pay Board's attack on this arrangement has so far been unsuccessful...

Blind Puerto Rican workers picketed the government's Blind Industries Corporation in San Juan last month demanding an increase in their 80-cent an hour wage. Twenty workers were given summonses by police for blocking traffic.

Employers illegally cheated workers out of a record \$102 million last year through various wage law violations according to Labor Department investigators. Unfortunately, the Labor Department doesn't normally issue statistics on how much workers have been legally cheated out of...

Rank and file New York taxi drivers have failed to prevent binding arbitration in their two-year-old contract dispute. Union bosses finally agreed to it without allowing drivers a chance to vote on the plan...

Workers at the *Los Angeles Free Press*, a major "underground" newspaper, have unionized. At issue are wages, job security, management, and editorial control of the paper. They will be represented by the Newspaper Guild...

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has ruled that companies must allow their employees to distri-

bute literature pertaining to internal union affairs in non-working areas of the company's property at non-working times.

The case arose when an employee of United Parcel Service tried to sell the *Seattle Semi*, a Teamster rank and file publication, in the UPS parking lot...

Strike wave hits New York City

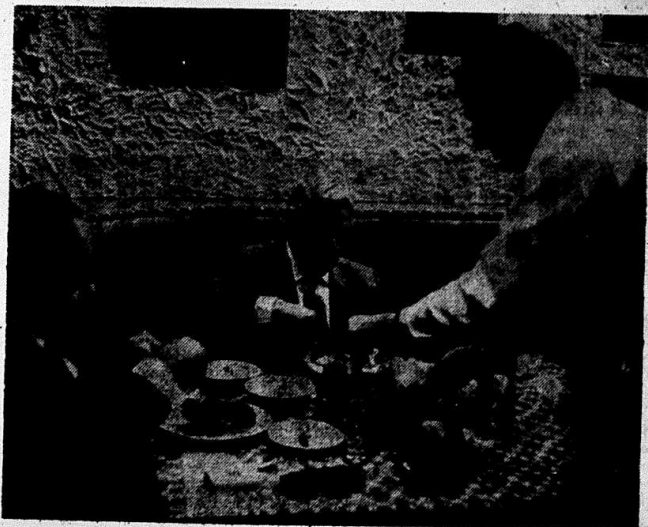
A wave of strikes has hit New York City in recent weeks. A coalition of 12 non-operating unions stopped all trains on the Long Island Railroad, demanding a 35 percent pay increase to match that given to trainmen earlier.

A construction workers strike is in its sixth month. Warehousemen and drivers for liquor wholesalers have thrilled the WCTU by waging a prolonged strike.

Bakery workers in New York are participating in a nationwide walk-out, and laundry workers and private trash collectors are preparing their own actions.

The December 3 telecast of the New York Jets-New Orleans Saints football game from Shea Stadium was prevented by pickets of IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) Local 1212, on strike against CBS. CBS had its announcers crying all afternoon about the "intimidation" of its supervisory personnel who have been breaking the strike.

Finally, chefs, cooks, waiters and waitresses have shut down or crippled operations at some of New York's finer restaurants. Below, Aristotle Onassis is served a \$10 scab hot dog by the owner of the "21 Club," a fancy ruling class hang-out. It's enough to cheer the heart of any working man or woman.



Aristotle Onassis savors \$10 scab hot dog

# ON THE FRONT LINE IN WAR AGAINST SPEEDUP

## an interview with Nate Mosley, rank and file leader at St. Louis GM

*[Editor's Introduction: Workers' Power is pleased to be able to present the following exclusive interview with Nate Mosley, the leader of the Local 25 Rank and File Caucus organized at the General Motors Assembly Division (GMAD) plant in St. Louis.*

*Auto workers at the GMAD plants at Lordstown, Norwood, St. Louis, and elsewhere, have been forced into the forefront of the struggle against the capitalist "productivity" offensive. The Local 25 Rank and File Caucus has been fighting for a militant strategy and a nationwide strike against GMAD.*

*The Caucus is trying to unite all Local 25 members - black and white, unskilled and skilled - in a common fight against the company and the local and International UAW leaders, who have allowed GMAD's rampage to go unchecked.*

*In the coming weeks the Caucus will continue its efforts to build nationwide links among auto workers, all of whom face the same deteriorating conditions and the threat of new attacks. The Caucus is also preparing to hold meetings to discuss a program of local and national demands to be raised when negotiations begin next year for the new auto contract.*

*In this interview Mosley discusses the ineffective strategy of brief local strikes at GMAD plants, which were begun by the UAW after long strikes at Lordstown and Norwood ended in isolation and defeat. He goes on to discuss the situation at St. Louis, and the need for a rank and file leadership to unite the working class in its own political party.]*

**WP:** Do you think GM has been hurt at all in terms of production by the UAW's local four-day "hit-and-run strike" strategy?

**NM:** Nationwide GM production has not been dented. By that I mean that its production of cars has not been damaged.

The UAW has been striking assembly plants. It is significant that Mr. Woodcock could bring about an immediate settlement of the entire GMAD crisis by closing the gear and axle plant in Saginaw, Michigan, alone.

You see, every car that moves moves on a gear and axle. This plant

is of such size that it not only services GM, but it also produces housings for Ford and Chrysler plants throughout this country.

If Mr. Woodcock would take it upon himself to shut down this one plant, then in a matter of weeks the entire GM circuit would be laid off and these workers could draw SUB pay.

**WP:** Do you see the strategy of local four-day weekend "hit-and-run

reached agreement whereby a huge majority of the "78's" (production standards grievances) were settled, an enormous number of all disciplinary cases were settled, and the majority of all the general penalties were settled.

Myself and several other leaders have successfully implemented a recall of a majority of the more than 1,000 workers who were laid off from the GMAD plant here in St. Louis.



Nate Mosley

strikes" against GMAD as being effective?

**NM:** I would like to say that from the leadership role that I am in it is very hard for me to see how this plan is working. When a plant goes on strike, or when two or three different plants go out for four or five days and come back - nothing is settled.

*In St. Louis the tremendous amount of militancy that exists in the ranks forced our local officials to tell the International leadership that the St. Louis plant does not want any more of this four-day apache-strike strategy. In other words, we want off this merry-go-round.*

**WP:** What was the role of the local union leadership in the recent struggle?

**NM:** The bureaucrats in our plant went out onto the floor of the plant and told the workers that they were going out on strike, and that was all that they were told.

There was a huge and tremendous amount of confusion among the workers, because the workers were demanding to know why they were going on strike. It wasn't until after the settlement that everything came to the light of what was going on.

**WP:** What kind of settlement did the members of Local 25 receive in the recent bargaining sessions?

**NM:** When our plant went on the "apache strike" cycle it had in excess of 12,000 grievances in all steps.

As a result of striking four days a week, the company and the union

More than two-thirds of these workers have been called back to work.

It is significant that through the militant call for a nationwide strike of GMAD we have forced the International to come down here, to pay particular attention to the situation here, and we have successfully broken through the GMAD nutshell.

**WP:** Then you would say that it was mobilization of the ranks that made gains possible?

**NM:** Yes! The workers outrightly told the bureaucrats that if we don't ascertain a settlement then we would shut the plant down.

Our leadership, seeing that the workers were on the point of rebellion, brought this to the attention of the International, who were scared of the workers anyway, who came down under pressure of the ranks.

It was only under the input of tremendous pressure of the workers that we were able to bring back approximately 800 workers. The workers themselves are beginning to wake up to the knowledge that our leaders cannot lead us.

This I say should lead into a nationwide struggle, and all workers should begin to move and mobilize around means of telling them to get out of office and making them do something. This should blossom into the immediate defeat, the death agony, of GMAD under the leadership of the workers.

**WP:** What demands is the Local 25 Rank and File Caucus currently

raising? *[Editor's note: For a report of developments following this settlement see the article elsewhere in this issue.]*

**NM:** Currently the people in my caucus are calling for a short work week. This means that overall we are getting ready for the 1973 negotiations by preparing a demand that the UAW take up a position and demand for a short week.

We see this as a significant means of alleviating the unemployment problem. What I mean by short week is that we are demanding a 35 hour work week at 40 hours' pay, with a guarantee of 7 hours production and a half hour for lunch, which means that they can put in three shifts.

The ranks are going to have to start right today mobilizing for a short work week.

**WP:** What do you feel is the importance of the rank and file workers building their own independent caucuses?

**NM:** I see this as the most significant movement that the workers can make. These caucuses are totally independent of the established leadership that are in the plants, or in the local halls, or in the shops today.

I believe that I, as a UAW worker, outrightly encourage all locals, all plants in this town and nation, to begin to form their independent caucuses to challenge the current leadership in order to build for our own labor party.

*We are going to have to start creating a means of communication from one local to another, whether it is GM, Ford, Chrysler, or American Motors, we are going to have to know what is going on from one local to another throughout this entire country.*

*This I believe must be started by forming independent caucuses in each local and eventually leading to a national organization of caucuses, such as the United National Caucus has organized in the past six years.*

I see this as a tremendous leaping bound, a gain for workers to present the necessary leadership to challenge the Woodcock regime.

We here in St. Louis have been struggling during the last three years in forming a caucus. During the last election we were successful in putting a member of the caucus in the elected office of the union.

**WP:** Do you think that if George McGovern had won the presidential election that would have been to the advantage of the American working man?

**NM:** Well, historically the Democratic Party and the Republican Party have been both the same party with two different names. What I mean by this is that when the working class in this country begins to wake up, they will begin to see that the Democratic Party is no different from the Republican Party.

It is just that when a Democrat is in office a few meager crumbs are tossed out to the workers to appease us.

To go back again to the Roosevelt regime, when everybody was hollering that Roosevelt was labor's friend, it is significant to note it was Mr. Roose-

wait, who was allegedly the friend of the working man, who put the bulldogs and head-crackers on the workers. It is significant to note that he was a Democrat.

George McGovern wouldn't have been any more lenient on the working class than Nixon will be, or Wallace would have been, it is just that under the Democrats a few gains would have been tossed out to the worker.

I would like to say that with the current crisis that is facing capitalism right now, Mr. McGovern wouldn't have been able to have tossed out any crumbs, because as you may know, the damned dollar is so unstable on the market that even McGovern himself would have put some kind of wage-price freeze or some other plan into action.

This plan would have been outright capitulation to the capitalist class, big G, Ford, Oldsmobile, DuPont, all the ruling class, within a matter of months. It would have been the same ruling class clique that Nixon is in.

WP: Nate, do you feel that a labor party is the correct strategy for the American working class? Who will provide the leadership for this?

NM: I believe that to successfully get anything going, we the rank and file workers of this country are going to have to come to the consciousness that we as workers can control input and output of production in this country.

We have to come to the conclusion that we do have workers who are capable of leading the CIO and the UAW. We are going to have to look at our leaders and see that historically our leaders Woodcock and Meany have fought to hold the militance of the workers back, because Woodcock and Meany are totally unable to take on the critical capitalist situation as it exists today.

We as workers are going to have to get our own candidates from the workers, run them on a platform of the workers.

We as workers are going to have to go out and seek guidance from all the revolutionary groups in this country so that we can adequately represent everybody. I say this because a worker going out there just as an individual worker would be cut down just like anybody else would.

All of these left groups are going to have to come together and take their expertise and spread this knowledge into the working class, and develop what we call our own independent labor party led by members of the ranks.

I would like to say that the reformist labor party proclaimed by the group that calls itself the Workers' League is no more than what we already have with the Republicans and Democrats. [Editor's note: This refers to the call by a group called the Workers' League for a party to be led by union officials like Meany, Abel and Woodcock.]

The Workers' League is going out and talking to all of these bureaucrats demanding that the bureaucrats call for a labor party.

It is significant that the labor bureaucrats are the same bastards that sit on the price-wage board along with Nixon and the other fat cats of this country.

Mr. Woodcock had to be virtually dragged off of the wage-price board. It is these bureaucrats that the Workers' League is going out and soliciting. The Workers' League is constantly dogging their tails seeking and demanding these type of reformist leaders who are misleading the workers of the country today, asking them would they lead a labor party. ■

# GMAD

Jimmie Higgins

[Continued from page 1]

At the night shift ratification meeting every union official was booted from the stage. The meeting ended with virtually all of the workers walking out of the union hall in protest. [For additional details of the settlement and ratification see *Workers' Power* No. 68.]

The union leadership and the International reps were happy to have survived what one worker described as a "near riot situation" at the ratification meeting. *What they didn't foresee was the trouble that was to develop on the floor of the plant when the agreement was "implemented."*

The official settlement claimed that almost all of the overloads had been cleared up. On paper, only 1,250 of the original 13,000 production standards grievances remained "unresolved."

However, since the workers have been back in the plant the GMAD management is refusing to implement many parts of the settlement.

In numerous instances the number of jobs has been reduced from one man's load only to be transferred to another man. Many of the 800 laid-off workers who have been rehired have been put on jobs that did not previously exist. Furthermore, these jobs are overloaded.

Throughout the plant the GMAD management is shifting the overload from those who had previously filed grievances to those workers who had not. The result is that overload grievances are again accumulating at a significant rate.

Another source of discontent is the fact that a new wage agreement was won for all workers in the plant except the assemblers, who make up the

vast majority of all workers.

Even for those who did receive a wage increase, they are finding that it is being applied unevenly and arbitrarily. Some worker have received only a 2 cent increase.

The negotiating sessions also proved to be a failure in that they did not achieve a single plant-wide seniority and pension agreement. GMAD's conscious policy of maintaining divisions among the workers through lack of uniform conditions and openly breaking the negotiated agreement are intended to create confusion and soften up the union for new and sharper attacks.

What was announced on November 3 as a major victory has, in the past three weeks, unfolded as exactly the opposite -- a massive defeat for the ranks. Why is it so?

From the very outset rank and file militants complained about the secret nature of the negotiations. The workers themselves were not even notified of the four-day strike until the day before it happened.

During the negotiating sessions no attempt was made to inform the workers about the demands being made or of any progress. This secrecy allowed GM to promise one thing behind closed doors and then do another back in the plant.

*GM knew full well that as long as the ranks did not know what was going on it was free to do as it liked.*

A second reason for the defeat of the strike "strategy" was the fact that the ranks of workers were never mobilized. They struck for only four days and even then were told to go home and have a long quiet weekend.

The only way to win a strike is to use the workers' power to economically hurt the company. Yet during this strike GM did not loose one cent!

In fact, prior to and after the strike the workers were being forced to work overtime so that GM could maintain its production. The only ones hurt by the strike were the workers, as they worked extra hours at overloaded jobs.

No wonder GM could appear as if they had yielded on many of the grievances. They weren't being hurt by the strike, and they knew that they would not have to abide by

what they agreed to. In many ways it was even good publicity for GMAD to settle on such "good terms."

A final reason for the failure of the agreement to hold up on the floor of the plant was the failure of the UAW International leadership to lead a nationwide shutdown of GMAD. The six-month Norwood strike showed that, as long as GMAD is still producing cars and trucks in other parts of the country, it can afford to sit out a local strike. Only a complete shutting of GMAD could win a final and lasting agreement on all grievances.

The struggle against GMAD is not over either here or at the other 17 GMAD plants. The workers here have already voted for another strike. (That was done back on November 2 when the union leaders, thinking the pressure was off them, thought it would look good if they called a strike vote for the purposes of supporting the other GMAD plants.)

Well, they still need help and St. Louis is still far from achieving its demands! At the moment another strike is very possible here.

Throughout the dispute the ranks have called for a nationwide shutdown of GMAD plants and a strike strategy led by rank and file workers.

Now, as a result of their recent betrayals the workers are advancing three additional demands: (1) No closed door negotiating sessions. All sessions must be open to all workers. (2) A rank and file strike coordinating committee elected directly from the ranks and responsible for every aspect of the strike. (3) Open and free discussion of all political ideas with the right to pass out literature both in the plant and in the union hall.

Every worker here is being hurt by overload, layoffs, forced overtime, and every other tactic of the company to squeeze production out of them. All of these are problems that happen on the line and in the shop, not in the union hall or negotiating room.

The only way the workers see for themselves to be insured a just wage and decent working conditions is to rely on their own rank and file organizations and economic power, not the inept leadership of any union bureaucrat. GM will only be defeated by a massive upsurge from below. ■

## UAW "Hit-and-run" Strikes Hit Ranks, Miss GMAD

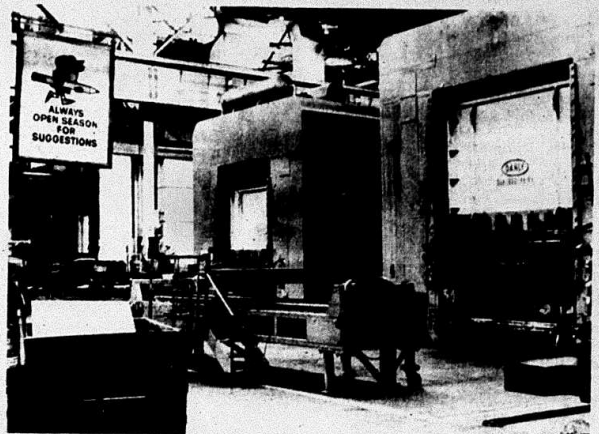
The continuing weekend strikes at GMAD plants appear to be hurting General Motors only minimally. New car dealers have slightly lower than normal inventories, which has slowed sales a bit.

However, production is not much off schedule. In October, GM fell only 11,000 cars short of its 497,000-car goal despite seven strikes.

Strikes have occurred almost every weekend except Thanksgiving, and seem likely to continue in the immediate future. As of December 1, there had been thirteen strikes at ten plants.

Results achieved have been less than spectacular. For example, strikes have been "settled" twice at the Lakewood, Georgia plant, and a third strike is now on the agenda there.

In the most recent development, the UAW has scheduled strikes for December 8-11 at five GMAD plants including a return engagement at St. Louis. If carried out, these strikes would involve a total of 25,000 workers.



Struck GM plant in Mansfield, Ohio

# Free Ruchell Magee!

*"To some degree, Slavery has always been outlawed and condemned on the outside by the hypocritical mockery of chattering lips, but on the inside of people and prisons, where slavery is embedded and proudly displayed as a Western Way of Life and a privilege of God himself, Slavery is condoned on all of its numerous levels."*

Thus wrote Ruchell Magee in early 1971, in the midst of preparing his defense against kidnapping, murder and conspiracy charges stemming from the August 7, 1970 "Courthouse Slave Rebellion" at the Marin County Courthouse.

Magee's trial finally began on Monday, November 27. The proceedings had barely begun when the defendant was ejected from the courtroom for trying to defend himself.

The same scene was repeated in the afternoon session, as Magee once again objected to the actions of his court-appointed "defense attorney."

In August, after Magee had waged a two year struggle for the right to present his defense equitably through a series of pre-trial motions, Judge Morton Colvin granted the prosecutor's demand to strip him of self-counsel status.

Magee is fighting for the same right of self-defense that was won by Angela Davis after a long struggle in her trial on the same charges.

On that day, Magee, a black prisoner and "jailhouse lawyer" at San Quentin, was assisting another prisoner, James McClain, in his defense against charges against him from within the prison.

In the midst of the proceedings, a heavily armed black man named Jonathan Jackson arose from the spectators' section and led Magee, McClain, another prisoner named William Christmas, the judge, the prosecutor, and



Ruchell Magee

three women jurors from the building to a waiting van.

Minutes later a tumult within the van and a hail of rifle fire from prison guards left Magee and the prosecutor wounded, the judge and the other blacks dead, and the jurors unharmed.

Public attention following the August 7 incident focused on whether or not it had been directed at exchanging the hostages for the freedom of the Soledad Brothers, three black revolutionaries held at San Quentin.

To Magee, though, the attempt was the last hope he felt he had to escape a judicial system which misuses the law to treat blacks as slaves, through the denial of elementary rights.

Magee delayed the escape for several minutes to explain to the jury why he felt he had no alternative but to escape. He says he hoped to reach a local radio station to explain the treatment that prisoners, especially blacks, receive from the courts and prisons.

*In addition to asserting that prison guards killed Judge Harold Haley, Magee's defense rests on a principle not often stated in political trials: that he had a right to rebel on that day because the legal system had in its own terms consistently denied him justice.*

Magee's right-to-rebel defense rests

on two major contentions: that he was illegally and falsely convicted in the first place, and that the prisons and courts have systematically prevented him from remedying that situation in a lawful fashion.

In 1963 Magee was arrested in Los Angeles on a robbery-kidnapping charge during a dispute over \$10 and the attentions of a woman. His court-appointed lawyer spent four and a half hours preparing the defense and failed in court to challenge major contradictions between the stories of Magee and the man bringing charges against him, and even within the story of Magee's accuser.

Over Magee's strenuous objections, the lawyer acquiesced while the prosecutor played a coerced taped confession by Magee's co-defendant and then attributed the confession to Magee as well. Maintaining his innocence, Magee was convicted and sentenced to life.

When the transcripts were made ready for appeal, the part of the record concerning the use of the taped confession was omitted. Also excluded were the portions wherein Magee attempted to explain that he had been beaten upon arrest and hospitalized for five days.

In the following year, Magee tried

every avenue he could find in order to have the transcripts corrected -- writing to his lawyer, the court reporter, and the judge -- but to no avail. Finally, he attempted to have the appeal dismissed.

The appeal was granted, however, on the basis of a technicality involving his co-defendant. Had the record been complete, the reversal would have been on grounds of insufficient evidence, Magee maintains, and the charges dropped. Instead, he was tried again, before the same judge as before.

At the 1965 retrial, Magee was represented by another court-appointed lawyer, whom he never saw before the day of the trial. This lawyer refused to raise the issue of the transcripts, and entered a plea of not-guilty by reason of insanity.

Magee was handcuffed and gagged through most of the trial for objecting loudly to the plea and for demanding that the lawyer be dismissed and he be allowed to defend himself. The lawyer offered no defense and Magee was sent back to San Quentin.

Writing recently in a piece entitled "Wake Up, Oppressed People," Magee summarized the matter: "Prior to the August 7, 1970 Slave Rebellion, I filed very meritorious documents (for 7 years) in Federal and State Courts up to and including the US Supreme Court, showing in facts under oath and law of my being secretly enslaved on known false evidence.

*"The judges (sick with prejudice) ignored racist slavery, refused to recognize the laws of Congress and California, and denied all my well-filed documents without hearing or reaching merits, only to keep me in a slave prison that destroys or steals all that is formative in life, and leaves innocent blacks with no alternative but to rebel or perish."*

Ruchell Magee is a conscious symbol of the growing revolutionary consciousness within the prison walls of capitalist America. His struggle to expose the truth about his own case and the nature of the prison system is helping to deepen this consciousness further. That is why the State of California is determined to crush him. ■

## Black Revolt Jolts Navy

"You can be Black and Navy too." So goes the new recruitment pitch as the US Navy campaigns to recruit blacks into the traditionally lily-white elite of the Armed Forces.

The "souful" facade of the "New Navy" has been shattered in recent weeks by a series of violent confrontations as black sailors defend themselves against discrimination, mistreatment and racist attacks initiated by white officers and sailors.

The rebellion, simmering for some time, broke into the open when 123 black sailors ordered off the carrier Constellation in San Diego refused to return aboard.

The black sailors had conducted peaceful demonstrations at sea against unfair job assignments, performance ratings and punishments. During one

such sitdown, the demonstrators were suddenly surrounded by white marines, in riot dress with loaded rifles and yelling "Where's the riot?"

Despite threats of serious disciplinary action, the black sailors remained firm in their refusal to return to the repressive conditions they had left behind. A small group of white sailors supported the blacks and joined their struggle for equality and dignity.

Another major "incident," covered up by the Navy for over a month, occurred on board the USS Kitty Hawk. Although the press attempts to portray the Kitty Hawk rebellion as a race riot initiated by black sailors, it is significant that the eruption came to a head when the ship, returning from Vietnam war duty, was ordered back to Vietnam to fight the North

Vietnamese offensive.

Club-wielding marines aboard the carrier were called out and "every black they saw, they started beating their heads." The blacks beaten by the marines included the executive officer of the ship, Benjamin Cloud.

The fighting, in which white and black sailors used "any kind of weapon that could be picked up on a ship" against each other, reportedly started the night of October 12 when a group of blacks were ordered off the mess deck while whites were allowed to remain.

The story that blacks began the fighting is contradicted by the fact that 40 of the 46 injured sailors were blacks.

Other clashes were reported at the Midway Island Naval Station and the

Navy Correctional Center in Norfolk, Virginia. At Norfolk, black sailors drove off Marine guards with coat hangers and shoe heels and defended themselves by barricading a dormitory. 32 blacks -- and one white -- are in custody following this rebellion.

*These rebellions have served notice that the Navy, like the rest of the military, is far from immune to the racism of American society and the determination of black people to fight back.*

The general disintegration of discipline and morale during the Vietnam war has also played an important role, as the military is no longer able to effectively suppress news of revolts and keep them isolated from each other. ■

# Boycott

Jim Gregory

[Continued from page 1]

spark was an order by the central Board of Education transferring out of the district five teachers and eleven assistant principals who were in "excess" of the new budget allocations.

The boycott resumed following the four-day Thanksgiving recess, completely shutting down nine and then fourteen of the eighteen elementary and junior high schools. Teachers in the district honored the parents' picket lines and expressed support for the parents' demands.

Mrs. Margarita Gonzalez, president of the Parents' Association of Public School 108, read the boycott's demands to an approving audience of more than 500 parents. Mrs. Gonzalez called for:

*"No more staff cuts; more guidance, reading and citizenship classes; reduction of the teacher-pupil ratio to 1 to 25; extension of school-aide hours; more paraprofessionals; more diagnostic services and bilingual programs; a full-time nurse, psychologist, school guard, and social worker; and restoration of the normal substitute-teacher service."*

In all, over \$235,000 has been cut from District 4's budget alone. A partial list shows that budget cuts have eliminated 14 teachers and 2 assistant principals from Public School 83 (including all of the school's music, art, and guidance teachers), and three teachers and two assistant principals from Public School 101.

Two reading classes, a guidance counselor, and four teachers have been cut from Public School 206 and Public School 112, and five teachers and an assistant principal from Public School 108.

The District 4 boycott is the first strong blow struck in response to the budget cuts in education. As is almost always the case, black and Puerto Rican areas like East Harlem have felt the fund shortage the most.

The cuts have, however, caused overcrowding and staff cutbacks in every district in the city.

The action of the East Harlem parents is perhaps most significant in that it points towards the possibility of a city-wide coalition of teachers and parents demanding restoration of the budget cuts.

The last time such joint action occurred was June, 1970, when the Board of Education threatened to cut the school year by two weeks and fire all substitute teachers. Teacher and community groups organized a protest rally that was expected to attract close to one million people.

Faced with the prospect of mass action, the city and the Board of Education quickly found the money needed to restore the budget cuts.

Once more, Mayor Lindsay and the Board of Education are attacking education. The power of mass protest is needed again to restore the budget cuts.

Albert Shanker, president of the United Federation of Teachers, has not only failed to support the parents' struggle but has even ordered the teachers to keep the schools open!

Teachers in District 4 have treated this scab directive with the contempt it deserves, and maintained solidarity with the boycott.

Shanker covers himself by a verbal display of sympathy, saying that he "wishes that the boycott would spread to every district in the city." He won't lift a finger, however, to help achieve this worthwhile goal.

The UFT should seize the initia-

tive through a work stoppage in protest of the budget cuts, and call on parents' associations and community groups across the city to join them in a mass rally at City Hall demanding more money for education.

Shanker won't do this. He is fearful of rank and file teacher action and fearful of community action.

The *New York Teacher*, the UFT publication, regularly carries articles whimpering over the budget cuts. Not once has it had a word about how to act to force the city to restore the needed funds.

Here is a golden opportunity for teachers to begin to repair community ties severed by the 1968 UFT strike against community control. But Shanker, who was responsible for that racist strike, will not build the badly needed teacher-community alliance.

Nearly as bankrupt as Shanker in this situation, but much less powerful, are the local school boards. The power of these boards was won by mass struggle of New York's black and Puerto Rican communities in 1968.

Since that time, the character of the "community control" movement has changed quite a bit.

By and large, the local school boards in New York are composed of aspiring politicians who counterpose their own narrow interests to the real interests of both teachers and parents.

For example, when the UFT negotiated its current contract three months ago the local boards blocked with the central Board of Education to fight for increased class size and fewer teachers. In a word, they unquestioningly accepted the budget cuts.

It's no wonder that East Harlem parents put no faith in their local school boards. Boycott leader Gonzalez charged that the District 4 board is misusing funds.

"They haven't showed us where the money is going," she said. "We want them to open their books so that we can see where all the money went."

The demand to open the books is excellent. It shows that the parents no longer trust the local board, no longer feel that it represents them and their real needs.

Some boycott leaders and activists have begun to broaden this demand. They want to open the books of the central Board of Education to determine the full extent of the cutbacks and how they are applied.

In fact, however, the Board's plea of bankruptcy unfortunately has a real basis. The depth of the education crisis, which is shown by the fact that the Board had to make such massive cuts as to provoke a mass protest movement, lies in the problem of funding.

While New York City spends tens of millions to pay interest on bonds to banks and wealthy investors and millions more to "renovate" Yankee Stadium -- another bonanza for speculators and contractors -- the City has no money left for vital services.

The only solution to the education funding crisis is to tax the corporations and the banks to pay for it. The first step to solve the current emergency would be to cancel payments on the bonds, many of which have been paid off many times over through exorbitant interest rates.

Until the working class and oppressed communities of New York gain the power to carry out these steps, they will be choked to death in capitalist wake and decay.

The immediate next step for rank and file teacher groups is to raise proposals at UFT chapter meetings advocating a city-wide teacher work stoppage. Parents' Associations could be called on to join with teachers in a mass rally (like the one planned in June, 1970) demanding restoration of the budget cuts.

East Harlem can be the first battle in a successful struggle for the survival of education in New York.

[Jim Gregory is a New York City teacher and a member of the International Socialists.]

## THE VIEW FROM EAST HARLEM: "The money will have to come"

Clara Mits

Every day the chairwoman of the East Harlem Parents' Association (EHPA) announces new schools joining the boycott.

The 14 schools now out include 2 high schools. Friday, we heard that parents and teachers from two other school districts, 3 and 5, would go out beginning Monday.

Mrs. Canty, a black para-professional who leads in the struggle, says she plans to contact parents in Districts 3 and 5 to help them develop a solid base for their boycott.

Now they act in support of District 4, but the struggle is theirs, too, because the budget cuts have hit every city school district.

The teachers in District 4 reject Al Shanker's instructions to go to work. Instead they join the parents in daily mass meetings in the auditorium of Public School 155.

There, children wriggle in and out in a forest of stanchions. Sitting or standing, packed together in the aisles and at the back, people discuss the events.

Beside the stage, small clusters of students and teachers sit together having reading lessons. Silence spreads when a woman from the EHPA executive board calls for it over the mike.

Two women from the EHPA executive board have been meeting for several days with the local school board. Thursday they brought Irving Anker from the City Board to tell the other parents what the Board has been telling them.

Anker arrived with a police escort. People cheered . . . partly for him, but more tangibly for themselves and the power they wield to make a city official come speak to them.

Patently and courteously, the audience listened to Anker's evasions: he understands the parents concern, but the local board has a budget.

Despite school conditions, the board is at least within its budget. The budget has legal limits, but Anker will do what he can.

Meanwhile, Anker complains, the whole city loses money for each child who stays out, cutting into the already inadequate allotment reaching the district.

Now he asks parents to send children back to school since they have "dramatized their point" and should now have faith that city officials will solve the problem.

The audience gave him a polite hand. Mrs. Canty, to tumultuous applause, then said the boycott would

continue the following week.

The parents aren't after what is already allocated, they are after what is needed for decent schools.

As Mr. Anker admitted, the boycott got the big-wigs to pay attention. That's why parents and teachers will continue it, spread it -- until enough attention is paid that they can see results.

Parents and teachers are in this fight together and know it. Many of the teachers are young, most are white.

But the race lines of Canarsie are overcome here. The whole crowd booed down an attempt to race-bait a white teacher.

When this incident occurred, the angry executive board asked for a public explanation. The woman who made the baiting remark gave it.

She wanted to know why the boycott had not begun two weeks before, over low reading scores of students in the district.

Now, she said, parents should send kids back to school so they don't miss the little bit of education the city grants.

Saying "commitment means sacrifice," she told teachers and other who "care" to donate their week's

pay to the school budget.

A brief negative response was given by the EHPA executive board -- scraps of learning in overcrowded, understaffed schools don't make an education . . . We can't settle for bits and pieces . . . We are trying to solve the whole problem.

Subsequently Mrs. Canty asked pointedly why a boycott two weeks ago was OK, but a boycott now was wrong, since the problem remained.

The parents grow in awareness of their strength and purpose everyday. The parents learned an important lesson from the performance of Irving Anker.

On December 1 a local school board official, Mr. Anazgasti, was not permitted to deliver a speech.

Instead parents and teachers asked him questions to which they needed the answers.

Asked where education money was, he replied, "There is no money for the education of your children."

That money will have to come, however. The parents' struggle has not stopped because the budget has a limit.

That limit was government-made, and human needs surge past it.

# BLOOD BROTHERHOOD

Dan Lawrence

[Blood Brotherhood, John Van Der Zee, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1970. \$5.95 hard-bound, no paperback available.]

**Blood Brotherhood**, John Van Der Zee's fictional account of one of the most important rank and file revolts in recent US labor history, is well worth reading for several reasons. First, simply because there is so little written on this subject; and second, because the book is cleverly written by an obviously talented author.

The book, however, has serious shortcomings both artistically and politically. Art and politics -- that is, literature and society -- are always related. That can probably be seen most clearly in this sort of book.

The story Van Der Zee tells is that of the revolt in the construction trade unions in the Bay Area, led by Dow Wilson. Dow Wilson had come from the Communist Party and the seamen's unions, where he'd been a militant for years.

Leaving both, Wilson went into construction work in San Francisco. There he met a few old friends from the maritime unions, asked a few others to join him, and worked conscientiously to help solve the day to day problems of the construction workers -- job security, speedup, safety, wages.

Wilson became the President of Painters' Local No. 7, the largest painters' local in the country. Having fought for the needs of the men in the most pressing shop floor issues, he and the other militants in the union were able to bring up in the local the more general problems of the workers' movement, and the political problems with which he and the other leaders were concerned.

Wilson's local took up the question of democratizing the union and fought for an elected District Secretary. Seeing the relation between the problems of their local and other construction locals to the International Brotherhood of Painters, they attempted to build a national rank and file opposition to the bureaucracy in the union.

The local rank and file made links with other unions, fighting for the jobs of some eighty members of the Longshore Jobs Defense Committee when "progressive labor leader" Harry Bridges wouldn't. Taking up the question of civil rights, they created apprenticeship programs for blacks and Chicanos. They also took a stand against the Vietnam war.

*In 1966, Dow Wilson and Lloyd Green, another leader of the rebellion by the union membership, were murdered within a month of each other by shotgun blasts. Both the employers and International union officials were implicated in the killings.*

They left behind at least a dozen men who were capable leaders -- not only trade union leaders, but leaders of the workers' movement, political leaders.

It is the story of this amazing transformation in a construction trades local, in one of the unions which many think of as conservative or even reactionary, which Van Der Zee attempts to depict.

[For further background information on the movement led by Dow Wilson, see S. Weir's USA: The Labor Revolt, available for \$5.25 from IS Books.]

The strengths and weaknesses of Van Der Zee's novel are both related to the point of view he adopts. The entire novel is told through the diaries of Joe Burke, a so-called "leader" of this movement who doesn't understand or completely participate in it.

The strength of this technique is that we see the movement from the inside, moving from the vantage point of observer to that of participant.

The failing is that Joe Burke is, as Baxter Bragg (the Dow Wilson of the story) calls him, a "fence-sitter." As Burke says himself: "I tried to do my work fairly, avoid lying, and approach each grievance with an open mind, but the job was becoming increasingly political, and as a politician I am a total loss."

The author never clearly disassociates himself from this point of view or presents any other. This is both a political and an artistic problem.

Artistically, the novel is really only a sketch: It fails to show us how men change, or what makes them

change. The men's real lives and their ideas are omitted.

Politically, the point of view of liberalism limits the artist. We don't see events in their real interrelations, as a totality. We see only parts. Nor do we see real human beings -- we see only flat types.

How does Dow Wilson look through the eyes of a Joe Burke, or a John Van Der Zee? First, this view fails to see human beings as they are, motivated by their social environment or by their commitment to ideas.

Instead people are seen as certain types with certain natural instincts: "As far back as anyone could remember, Bragg (Wilson) had been a rebel."

According to Burke: "In the union, I'm automatically a radical no matter what I say. You see? I could have fought it, but I didn't. I followed my natural inclinations, and now I have a function in life."

When Bragg made his move in the construction union Burke says: "It was as though Bragg had been preparing all his life for such a moment. He was acting instinctively, and his instincts had been bent to his will."

In political terms, liberals see capitalism as natural, and as in any natural environment there are certain types to be found: the rebel, the bureaucrat, the goon, the follower, the money grubber, etc.

Artistically it means that Van Der Zee cannot portray, because he does not see and understand, why people do what they do.

In reality Dow Wilson was once a member of the Communist Party and left it. This was part of his intellectual development and part of his political development.

He did not merely join or leave the CP because he was a "natural" rebel or outlaw, but in great measure because of his commitment to certain principles and ideas. Van Der Zee spends several pages of this short novel talking about Bragg's mustache, but passes over his political history -- the story of his membership in the Communist Party -- in two one-line references.

And how does the rank and file look to a Burke-Van Der Zee? To the liberal there are the leaders and the led, and they are the "natural" inhabitants of the "natural" world of capitalism.

In this view there really can't be any real-life rank and file, made up of different individuals, handling new ideas and attempting to organize themselves in a collective fashion to change their union. And so, in this novel, there isn't.

We see instead a series of flat types. We meet two large dumb goons, Grimes and Baxton. We meet the Safety Committee, a few maimed men who follow Bragg with devotion when he lives and search out Burke with desperation when he dies because they need a leader, an idol.

One of these, Eisan, a man whose

## Myth and Reality

A recent discussion by two columnists in the *San Francisco Chronicle* touched upon some of the problems facing women and the women's liberation movement.

One columnist pointed out that the National Organization of Women (NOW) is rating companies according to the image of women which is projected in their advertising. For example: Geritol, whose pitch is "My wife ... I think I'll keep her," is rightly attacked.

But American Telephone & Telegraph (despite being labelled by the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as the country's greatest

"oppressor of women"), received praise from NOW.

The praise came because AT&T was running national advertisements featuring a woman worker climbing a telephone pole.

The second columnist, however, pointed out that this woman is the only woman worker at AT&T working as an installer, and that she had quit recently because of too much pressure and publicity. Now, the columnists point out, AT&T will undoubtedly search "for another woman who'll go climb a pole for fame, fortune, *Time* and *Life*."

In short, the women's movement has had some effect on AT&T. They feel they must change their image. While some companies try to make profits by appealing to male chauvinism, AT&T -- with hundreds of thousands of women workers -- must appease them.

The point is that there is a great difference between appearance and reality. AT&T has successfully changed its public relations image. But for the majority of women working for AT&T, nothing has changed. ■



face was burned off by roofing tar, intimidates and embarrasses Burke, forcing him to fight the International after Bragg's death.

Eisan then pathetically tells Grimes and Buxton: "You take care of him now. We've got us a leader again."

We also see mass meetings and demonstrations -- but this isn't the rank and file, isn't individuals collectively solving their problems. It's just a crowd.

**Artistically it's a fake.** Van Der Zee can't see or understand collective activity, so he shows us bunches of people. Politically it's another example of liberalism, which doesn't believe in the possibility of collective democratic action by working people but has a whole "psychology" of crowds, of the mob, the rabble.

Because the novel sees through the eyes of a liberal it can't show the real life of the rank and file movement.

But the most important failing of the book is that through Van Der Zee's eyes we can't see the real sources of the action. He never depicts the construction industry, either the work of the men or the deals of the contractor.

This isn't because liberal authors can't show us how industry works -- many great authors of the 19th and 20th centuries did -- but because for them there is no necessary connection between the work men do, the social status they hold and the ideas they come to espouse.

Marxists, however, recognize that there is an essential connection: that in the last analysis men's ideas are tied to their social life and to their economic class.

### Ranks Invisible

*This was a rank and file movement of working men: of painters, roofers, electricians, carpenters. Not once do we see the day to day activity that drove them to revolt.*

We don't see the two painters, one rolling ceilings, while the other stoops and stands, reaches and crouches to do the trim, another outside doing the overhang.

We don't see a roofer walking the gable of a house a fifty-pound roll of felt on each shoulder, or bent double spreading stone, or smoothly and gracefully moving a nylon mop covered with tar that weighs maybe 40 pounds, while the smoke from the tar blows in his face. Nor do we see the men nailing up the forms or putting up the dry wall.

We don't see the foreman walking from building to building, pushing the men, cajoling, threatening, all the while the symbol of his authority -- the check book -- hanging out his back pocket.

We don't see that it's *this life*, physically exhausting and mentally fatiguing that drives men to become foremen and business agents and bureaucrats, that drives them to opportunism and conservatism -- or that drives them to become militant leaders of the rank and file, to radicalism and revolt.

The book is a book about a double assassination, and yet we don't see how violence becomes rife in construction. Van Der Zee doesn't reveal the essential links between racketeers and the construction industry.

The fact is that gangsters enter construction because relatively little capital is needed. Often winning a bid is enough to establish credit, and having credit is being in business.

All of this is omitted: the concrete situations men live in, the ideas with which they grapple, the ways in which they organize themselves to change those conditions. Thus this novel remains a sketch, a draft about the movement -- but still one of the few sketches that we have. ■

The school board of Detroit is threatening to give its employees and the Detroit community an unwanted Christmas gift -- the closing of schools for eight weeks beginning December 21.

This attack on an already standard education of students in the public schools, to say nothing of breaking the agreement with the Detroit Federation of Teachers (see *Workers' Power* No. 64), is the Board's method of "solving" the deepening funding crisis of schools in Detroit.

It is a way of making the employees of the schools, students in the classroom, and the community at large, pay for this society's inability to pay for what was once fought for as a guarantee -- free public education for all citizens.

The proposed closing of school will not only mean that the education of the students will be interrupted in a detrimental manner.

It also means that teachers, janitors, secretaries, and other school workers will go for eight weeks without pay. Many of these workers will be unable to sustain themselves in this period and seek other jobs.

Probably the Board welcomes this so they can staff the schools with more non-contract personnel whom they can pay considerably less and be able to discharge at will.

The community and youth will also suffer. During the summer months when schools are closed all types of programs are thrown out with the intention of keeping youth busy and "off the streets." These will not be offered, nor will there be any possibility of employment of youths during this time.

In addition, many working parents will suffer because they will be unable to find child care during the day when they are at work. This will probably result in more unemployment in Detroit.

It has been argued that the Board really doesn't intend to follow through with this threat at this time.

This argument has some merit -- the word is out that emergency state aid may be used to keep schools open this winter. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the agreement between the Board of Education and the Detroit Federation of Teachers opens the door for early closing -- in April.

*It is imperative that those forces that are most affected by this omnibus plan, namely the teachers and parents in the community, work for a solution of the crisis. This solution must not involve an attack on the very groups that free public education is supposed to benefit.*

### Who Should Pay?

Before a solution can be put forward, there must be an understanding of just how "free public education" gets paid for in Detroit and other cities.

Of course a solution must ask the question of who *should* pay with a plan of action which will meet that objective.

The schools are presently financed chiefly by a property tax. This archaic system is historically a holdover from the days when "real property" (i.e., land) was the basis of wealth in this country.

In the agrarian past of the United States the value of land was the determinant of how much wealth a man produced.

However, with the advent of modern industry and trade, wealth can no longer be measured on the "intrinsic" value of land and even building facilities on that land.

For example, on two acres of land

modern industry can produce millions of times the wealth that a farmer could produce on a similar parcel of the best land.

Property taxes have been the traditional means which corporations have used to evade paying their share of tax burdens.

In order to attract industry to an area, local areas have held assessments down on the properties possessed by large corporations. Any attempt by the local community to raise such taxes are met by threats of these corporations to leave that area.

The burden of property tax then is shifted from the large corporations directly to the homeowner and to those whose rent pays for the property tax.

For these people -- workers and the middle class -- property taxation has been high and unfair. It is a highly regressive tax, which even among home-

change the tax base of schools. Any proposal they might make to tax corporations would probably result in a flight of capital from their districts.

The legislator's role depends on his ability not to disturb corporate interests, even when those interests are counter to the interests of the vast majority of his constituency.

Thus there have been no proposals in the state legislature that would even solve the immediate crisis, let alone provide a permanent solution for the schools.

One legislator, for instance, proposed giving the Detroit Board of Education unlimited taxing power of property in Detroit. Even the Board resisted this proposal for they knew that this meant being given unlimited power to squeeze blood from a stone.

The Detroit teachers, who should be most concerned with the crisis, cannot expect a solution from the lo-

# FUNDING CRISIS SHARPENS IN DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

James Arthur



owners often taxes those with large families (since many of them have large houses) most heavily.

Schools are obviously not free public education but, on the contrary, are paid for by those groups who can least afford it.

Another dimension is added to the funding problem by the general deterioration of the cities. The flight of capital and high income groups from the cities has led to the collapse of any ability to pay property tax.

It comes as no surprise that taxpayers will resist any attempt to raise taxes of any kind. This is precisely what they did in the November elections.

Working people rightly see any taxation as falling primarily on them, as an attack on working people's salaries. It is no wonder that workers refuse to vote to exploit themselves further.

Proposals for a progressive income tax for the state as a means of supporting education are also rejected. Working people know that despite the word "progressive," they will pay the taxes and not those who have the wealth in this society.

It is obvious that the federal "progressive" income tax does anything but tax in a progressive manner.

The legislature in Michigan (and in most other states) have not tried to

cal or state governments that will allow the schools to function -- let alone lead to any improvement of education in the schools.

The teachers are an organized group, intimately aware of what the lack of funds has already meant for the education of students.

They are also workers with a conception of what quality education is and of the requirements needed to provide for quality education. The teachers must take the lead in proposing a solution to the school problem.

To do this, the teachers' union must carry a campaign to parents, workers and all others in the community who will be victimized by the collapse of the school system.

The entire working class and the black community have a fundamental stake in the continuation of public education and in demanding that any solution will not tax those who are over-taxed already.

*A demand that corporations be heavily taxed must be part of a national campaign to save the schools. A strong response from the teachers and community of Detroit will go far towards building such a movement. ■*

[James Arthur is a member of the Detroit Federation of Teachers and the International Socialists.]

# STRIKE WAVE HITS BOLIVIAN REGIME

Paul Benjamin

Bolivian workers have renewed their struggle against the shaky regime of General Hugo Banzer in a series of militant strikes and demonstrations. In forcing economic and political concessions from the government, they are resuming the road to working class revolution in Bolivia.

Only a year ago the Bolivian workers movement seemed crushed. Banzer's right-wing coup had overthrown a "revolutionary nationalist" government supported by the trade unions and the Popular Assembly of trade unions and leftist parties.

The Bolivian Workers Federation (the national trade union organization) and the militant miners' union were dissolved. Hundreds were imprisoned, thousands exiled.

The recovery of the working class movement in so short a time is proof enough of its strength and determination.

In July, workers in one of the most important mines voted against three government tickets by a vote of 1,688 to 600 in a union election. In another mine, the two main government slates came in last in a similar election.

Several unions -- elementary school teachers, railroad workers -- have won economic strikes. An especially important development is that peasants in the central provinces of Bolivia, traditionally hostile to the working class movement, have taken up arms against the government.

## State of Siege

The latest series of strikes were touched off by Banzer's devaluation of the peso, which caused an immediate and steep rise in prices. On October 30 factory workers in La Paz, Bolivia's capital, called for an eight-hour protest strike against the government.

The next day hundreds of workers fought with cops in the city's streets. At least one worker was killed; many were wounded. But the government was forced into making concessions.

Banzer promised a \$6 bonus to the workers, and a price freeze on essential goods. This carrot and stick technique didn't work. Workers responded with a twenty-four hour strike against the government's economic policy and repressive tactics.

Three weeks later the workers resumed the offensive. On November 23 they called for a twenty-four hour strike, demanding wage increases to offset higher prices and protesting government attacks on "extremists" in the labor movement.

Banzer declared a "state of siege" in the country, banned demonstrations and political meetings, and arrested several trade union leaders.

Textile workers in La Paz led the response to the government crackdown. They barricaded themselves in their factories and demanded the release of the arrested union leaders.

The workers' wives threatened to begin a hunger strike unless the government gave in. Banzer surrounded the textile factories and working class dis-



Armed miners arrive in La Paz during unsuccessful attempt to prevent Banzer's coup

tricts with troops and tanks.

The strike ended after two days when the government released eighteen trade union leaders and promised to begin wage negotiations.

*The Bolivian workers' movement has recovered from its defeat, is beginning to test its own strength against the government in a series of sharp but inconclusive struggles. These skirmishes could become major encounters at any moment.*

The workers' movement is on the offensive against a ruling class which is falling apart under the weight of its own greed. It is truly a thieves' alliance, united only in its fear of the working class and warring among itself for the spoils of power.

The present government is based on two political parties. One is the Falange Socialista Boliviana (FSB), the party of the old landholding aristocracy.

The FSB was formed in 1937 in conscious imitation of Franco's Falange in Spain. It has no program and no future, seeking only to main-

tain the aristocracy's power, privilege and wealth.

Allied with the Falange is the so-called National Revolutionary Movement (MNR). The MNR, the party of Bolivia's "progressive" middle class, was formed in 1941 after the aristocracy had led the country into a long and disastrous war with its neighbors.

The MNR appealed to the workers on the basis of an anti-aristocratic, anti-imperialist program. In 1952 the MNR was carried to power on the backs (and the guns) of an aroused working class, led by the miners.

In its early years in power the MNR tolerated a certain number of reforms: extending the vote and nationalizing the tin mines. But it remained a ruling class party. In the face of continuing working class militancy, the MNR was forced to give up its anti-imperialist rhetoric and seek support from American capital.

In doing so the MNR gave up its policy of tolerating economic and social reforms, and soon lost the sup-

port of the working class. The workers' militia decayed as the MNR built up the Army (which doubled in size) until the military developed into a political force in its own right.

By 1964 MNR leaders were calling on the Army to suppress the miners and other workers who had brought them to power. It was relatively simple for the military leaders to step in and replace the decaying party.

The corruption of the MNR was complete when, in 1971, they joined with their former enemies in the Falange to defeat the workers' movement.

The Falange and the MNR are both political corpses: they have nothing to contribute to the maintenance, let alone the development, of Bolivian society. Since coming to power their only concern has been to squabble over the division of spoils.

They have fought over everything from cabinet posts to minor jobs in the swollen state bureaucracy. They have divided the jobs (and the salaries) of the universities among themselves while the schools remain closed.

As a result of this rivalry, the Army has increased its influence in the government.

Here too, however, there are serious rivalries. Some generals are jealous of Banzer's leadership. Banzer has already exiled Colonel Andres Selich, who was the military architect of the coup which brought Banzer to the top, and Colonel Ayoroa, who suppressed the miners' resistance to the coup.

*This nest of thieves holds nothing but rotten eggs, and probably won't survive any real crisis. The question is what kind of bird will replace it.*

## Sham Revolutionaries

The Bolivian Army has its share of "revolutionary nationalist" officers eager to imitate the "anti-imperialist" dictatorship of the military in Peru.

There are also enough "left-wing" elements in the MNR and other bourgeois parties to front for the ruling class if such a front is necessary.

The revolutionary workers' movement in Bolivia must expose these sham revolutionaries, and develop its own party and program. The failure of the revolutionary left to do this in 1971 led to defeat.

In the period following Banzer's coup, the left was able to maintain its organization in the form of a broad alliance, the Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Front (FRA). This alliance, however, has no political cohesion; it includes Stalinists, Maoists, and elements of the "progressive bourgeoisie" after power for themselves as well as authentic revolutionaries.

So far the alliance has been carried along by the gut militancy and courage of the working class itself. If the collapse of the Banzer regime brings with it a renewal of the open political atmosphere which existed in 1971, this alliance will collapse.

The Bolivian working class must develop the political organizations and program to meet this crisis, if it is to defeat the threat of fast-talking "progressives" and their generals who are sure to follow in the wake of the Banzer government. ■

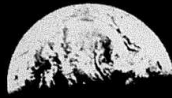


Popular Assembly meeting in 1971 before military takeover



# international report

Paul Benjamin



## Italy: Alliance formed between metalworkers and students

Italian metalworkers and students have formed an alliance to secure the support of the students for the claims of the metalworkers and vice-versa. Its partners are the metalworkers trade union, FIM, and an organization called the Student Movement.

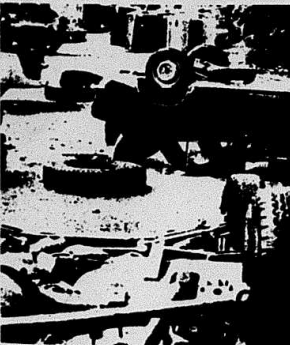
This could be the beginnings of a link between the working class and the student movement, the lack of which resulted in the defeat of the students in 1968 and 1969 during the wave of university unrest.

The Student Movement has undertaken to gather thousands of students from all over Italy to back a metalworkers' rally in Milan. In the meantime it is to start agitating again for major university and school reform.

The metalworkers' union had already included in its demands for the renewal of its three-year contract (its claims are not confined to pay and working conditions) a major school building program. The Student Movement is further demanding that the number of teachers should be increased so that no teacher should have more than 25 students.

In the autumn of 1969 metalworkers rejected student overtures for this kind of alliance. The new alliance promises to establish a common front and both sides will be strengthened as a result.

The Student Movement will be strengthened as a result of the bargaining power of the metalworkers, while the position of the metalworkers will be increased by the very militant attitude the students are usually willing to adopt.



Italy's "hot autumn" of 1969

## French West Africa: Neocolonialism triumphs

The former French and British colonies in Africa are independent in law, but in fact dependent on their former masters. This dependence was reinforced by a visit of French President Pompidou to two former colonies,

Togo and Upper Volta, in late November.

France controls all important business and trade in these two poverty-stricken countries. Yet none of this was mentioned by the "independent" presidents who welcomed Pompidou with loud praise.

The mask slipped only once, when Togo's President, General Eyadema, asked during a formal speech for a revaluation of the African franc. The value of the African franc is set by France.

*Pompidou, visibly angry, replied that only France could determine the value of this African money unit! It was "reliably reported" that General Eyadema apologized for bringing the matter up.*

France has preferred trade status with all her former colonies except Guinea. When Guinea's then-radical President Sekou Toure chose immediate independence from France in 1958, rather than "associate" status, France cut off all aid.

The departing French colonial officers even destroyed files, equipment, etc. Even this shock did not end Guinea's ties with France. Guinea's bauxite mines remained foreign-owned, and the government did not dare to nationalize them and lose this last source of revenue.

Elsewhere in former French Africa, trade conditions vary. Where a former colony is rich in minerals or a cash crop, a facade of prosperity in the capital city masks the unchanged poverty of the back country.

Where there is no valuable crop or mineral there is also no facade. In Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad, famine looms whenever the annual crop of sorghum or millet is poor.

These countries have no choice but to lean on France. They cannot even afford -- as the richer neo-colonies can -- to risk offending France by searching for other trading partners to diversify their dependence.

Since all of Africa gained political independence in 1957-1962, most African leaders have followed the course of least resistance -- dependence on the former master. At the same time, powerful forces have destroyed the once-militant nationalist regimes. The most destructive force has been the continued dependence of these countries on the world market for their crops or minerals.

Countries like Ghana, a former British colony, or Mali, a former French one, tried to escape from this dependence. To do this they tried various combinations of industrial development through foreign loans, and low wages or unpaid "volunteer" labor for their own workers.

But these measures produced only dependence on the loaning countries and discontent at home. Once they had lost popular support, these regimes were easily overthrown by "practical," pro-imperialist politicians.

Guinea and Tanzania (in East Africa) are about the only militantly anti-imperialist governments left, and each has lost much popular support.

Each of the militant nationalist regimes followed the same course -- ask-

ing the workers and farmers to sacrifice for future economic development. The development never took place.

In the meantime, the pro-imperialist regimes fattened a tiny group of African politicians, military officers, and technicians while their workers and farmers grew poorer.

The discredited militant regimes, even if they survive, can provide no leadership for the movement that must now grow -- against French and British neo-colonialism, the continuation of colonial oppression through economic means.

Such leadership can only come through the development of a revolutionary workers' movement throughout Africa. Although such a development will take a long time, African revolutionaries must adopt such a long-term strategy today.

*[Thanks to James Coleman for the above report.]*

## Socialist Workers' Action group organized in Australia



A new revolutionary organization has been formed in Melbourne, Australia: the Socialist Workers' Action group. The group has an orientation toward work in the Australian working class, a strong belief in internal democracy in the organization, and has affirmed its revolutionary opposition to capitalism and to the Stalinist bureaucracies.

Their "Statement of Principles" reads in part:

*"Capitalism has nothing to offer mankind but misery and exploitation. It is based on the exploitation of the working class, the oppression of women and minority groups, and the exploitation of Third World countries by imperialism.*

*"We stand for the overthrow of capitalism by a world revolution, and its replacement by socialism: the collective ownership and democratic control of the economy and the state by the working class . . .*

*"We look to the working class, male and female, blue-collar, white-collar and technological, as the most revolutionary group in society. Workers, organized as a class, have the pow-*

*er to stop capitalist production -- and therefore capitalist society -- dead in its tracks. More importantly, they can organize society on a new and democratic basis.*

*"Our conception of socialism is democratic. Therefore we stand in revolutionary opposition not only to capitalism, but also to the repressive bureaucracies ruling such societies as the USSR and China. While calling themselves 'socialist', these regimes crush all dissent, and deny democratic rights to the very workers they claim to represent."*

Socialist Workers' Action is active in several unions, the student movement, Women's Liberation and the Labor Party, and is publishing a newspaper, *The Battler*. Its members include Shayna Birstein and Ron Flaherty, members of the Berkeley International Socialists, now living in Melbourne.

Copies of *The Battler* and more information about Socialist Workers' Action are available from: *The Battler*, 75 Palmerston Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia.

## Striking electronics workers win concessions in Yugoslavia

Several thousand striking employees at Yugoslavia's largest electronics company returned to work last month after forcing 18 of its directors to resign over the company's inability to pay workers their full wages.

The workers pulled off one of the biggest labor strikes in Yugoslavia since World War II. Over 1,000 of them marched through the streets in an orderly demonstration when management claimed it could meet only about 70 percent of its monthly payroll.

They returned to work after receiving assurances that an "emergency stabilization program" would be introduced.

## Czechoslovakia: Stalinists uneasy about rising workers' discontent

The low morale of many Czechoslovak workers is causing acute concern in Prague. Communist Party and government leaders have now decided that what they call "mere appeals to workers' consciousness and morale" have little effect, and that better results will be achieved through a general tightening of discipline under the labor code.

It is now openly acknowledged that an increasing number of people on the shop floor are refusing to accept "responsibilities" expected of them, that the quality of goods produced is being seriously and adversely affected, that absenteeism is high.

The government also charges that free welfare facilities are being "too often flagrantly abused." Sound familiar?



## Vietnam

I oppose point four of the "Program for Vietnam" in *Workers' Power* No. 68.

Demanding "immediate expulsion of the US puppets from the coalition authority" implies political support of the only other presently viable force in the coalition -- that is, the Stalinists.

To the extent that Thieu is merely a puppet of the US, his government will fall when US aid is withdrawn.

However, to the extent that Thieu has any kind of popular support, his government becomes one faction in a civil war -- when he is no longer supported by US imperialism.

Therefore calling for the expulsion of Thieu from the coalition implies support of the other civil war faction, the Stalinists.

This contradicts point eight -- "no political support to the coalition authority of the PRG -- for a workers and peasants government." If we give no political support to the coalition -- why make demands as to its composition?

In a broader sense the role of US revolutionaries should be to fight against American imperialism here. Our other major role should be to encourage the Vietnamese people to develop an independent alternative to capitalists and Stalinists.

In this regard we should urge them to expel both capitalists and Stalinists from the government.

Who is point four addressed to? If it is aimed at the workers and peasants of Vietnam, we should encourage them only to set up their own government. If it is addressed to the Stalinists, it implies support of them in their struggle against the capitalists.

S.L. -- Seattle Branch

[The author is a member of the Seattle Branch of the International Socialists.]

## Rejoinder

S.L.'s letter almost answers itself. He argues that Thieu would be "one faction in a civil war -- when he is no longer supported by US imperialism." The question is -- when will that be?

The reality is that Thieu has no social base of support, other than the narrow group of generals, speculators, and go-betweeners who are completely dependent on US aid.

There is no civil war between Stalinists and capitalists in Vietnam -- South Vietnamese capitalism is dead and stuffed, propped up in the window by the United States.

This is the reasoning behind the demands to which S.L. objects. The International Socialists politically oppose Stalinism in Vietnam, but continue to support the victory of Vietnam over US imperialism despite the

Stalinist leadership of this struggle. [For a full discussion of self-determination and the NLF see *Workers' Power* Nos. 45 and 46.]

For that reason we call for the expulsion of tools of US imperialism from any coalition authority, interim or otherwise.

Does S.L. really imagine that the United States is about to withdraw support from Thieu or his successor? Open or hidden, massive or limited, aid will flow as long as the US has a cat's paw to use to pursue its aim of maintaining as much influence in Vietnam as possible, and if possible, keeping the Stalinists out of power.

If, as Thieu has done, the cat's paw occasionally makes a feeble twitch of its own, this should not blind us to the fact that Thieu remains now a tool of US imperialism as in the past, and will remain one even if not one US soldier is left in Vietnam.

Point four of the programmatic statement is addressed partly to Vietnamese workers and peasants, but even more to Americans. The task of socialists remains to expose the servants of US imperialism in Vietnam and to insist -- in contrast to the conservative and liberal pro-imperialists -- that they have no rights in Vietnam other than a quick escape or a decent burial.

If this were our only point of program, then our position would be limited to supporting Vietnamese self-determination against the US and its puppets. In addition, however, the approaching cease-fire and following period of political uncertainty and jockeying will open the possibility for the workers and peasants to intervene in Vietnamese history in their own right.

It is to this possibility that the remainder of the program statement is addressed, calling for the defense and extension of democratic rights and the struggle for a workers' and peasants' government.

James Coleman

## Letters From Prison

I read a couple of copies of your newspaper in this institution and found the contents extremely rewarding.

Because of my present condition, I am without funds to subscribe to your paper at this time, and I take the liberty to inquire as to whether or not it is your policy to provide the paper free of charge under certain conditions, such as this.

Because of the general contents of your paper, the prison population all over the country represents a potential field quite susceptible to it.

Most inmates of these places have had opportunities to adapt to ordinary life, and they have failed to do so.

However, it appears that now a flourishing political and social idea have succeeded in turning a good number of ex-criminals to a productive life; or at least to an awareness

of forces and factors which may have played a part in their life without the nature of such forces being known to them.

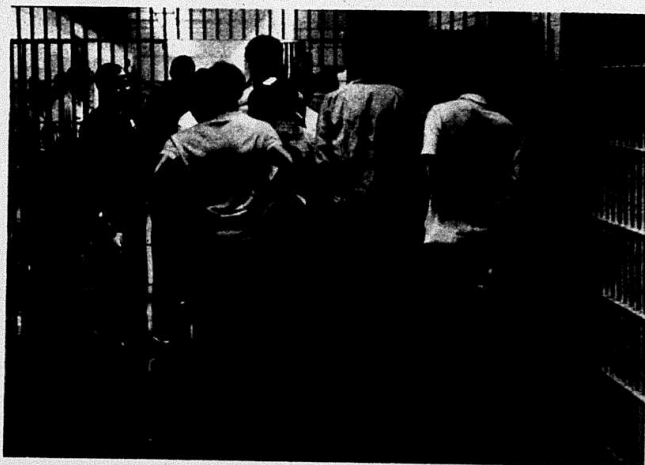
Personally, I find some of your basic tenets quite relevant, to use that word, and I can only admire and concur heartily with your firm and courageous stand on Vietnam and its causes.

Very truly yours,  
V. M.

Greetings! As you see by the heading on the paper, this is coming from Inside Hell. I am inside Hell, true, but I wish to use this time to raise my political, social and economic awareness.

I obtained a copy of your 1971-72 catalogue from a fellow inmate who informed me that you provided free literature to prisoners. This is a much needed thing.

Prison is a learning process but all that you can acquire is a knowledge of how not to come back to jail, and continue in the same deadly circle. A



man is not taught anything that will help him to lead a productive life once he is out.

You and others like you are making it possible for us to get a fuller understanding of our condition and how to go about changing them.

I sincerely hope that you will be in a position to supply me with the books I am requesting. Thank you.

In Struggle,  
L.M.

I would sincerely appreciate any and all information concerning International Socialism and the IS that you could possibly send.

This information will undoubtedly greatly enhance my ideological convictions.

Yours in Truth,  
C.W.

I am an economically poor political prisoner who is interested in your books, and your socially rich paper, *Workers' Power*. Books as follows:

*Anti-Duhring* -- Marx -- Engels;  
*Puerto Rican Independence* -- E. Langdon and L. Larkin; *Puerto Rico Libre* -- Albizu Campos.

I am writing this letter in hope of finding out if you have any special rate for prisoners.

It is needless to say where I'm at, as will be noted by the address. So I will await your reply in hope that I

may be given some kind of consideration.

Please send me your "catalog." Venceremos!

Comradely greetings,  
J.F.

I have occasion to currently write for information on your objectives. I am a student of Political Economics so I have a primary idea where perspective goes.

I would merely query about ideology; and if I could become the recipient of the paper, which a friend receives from "friends."

The editions I read were extremely well written. I trust I may become the recipient of a subscription.

My financial resources as one can readily perceive are limited. Thus I write; as I yet seek to digest a valuable perspective on what is occurring socially in spite of same.

Additionally, I may add we're getting ready to formulate Afro-American Society chapters throughout all

correctional facilities -- such a newspaper and/or literature would lend much to what I must class as socially relevant.

I am:  
Yours in the Struggle,  
K.O.

[The International Socialists maintain a special fund to furnish free *Workers' Power* subscriptions to prisoners on request. We support the struggles of all prisoners to free themselves from the brutality and oppression of the capitalist penal system. Readers who wish to help us continue our efforts to reach prisoners can be assured that any donations they send for that purpose will be set aside and used to send literature inside the prison walls.]

## Correction

The "Feedback" page in *Workers' Power* No. 68 included a letter from Ken Lawrence under the heading "Vote Stalinist in '72." This heading was an error on our part, for which we apologize. We did not intend to impute pro-Stalinist views to comrade Lawrence, although as our reply indicated we consider his position to be politically wrong.

Dave Finkel

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**Seattle:** P.O. Box 247, Seattle, WA 98105

# I.S. Greeting Cards



Four designs: 1. Snowflakes (See Issue No. 67). 2. Marx as Skating Santa (See Issue No. 66) with "Revolutionary Greetings." 3. Fist with Holly, with "Revolutionary Greetings." 4. The GMAD Reindeer with "Season's Greetings."

1: Black on heavy white paper. 2,3 and 4: Black on heavy red paper. Envelopes are included. \$10 each. Please include 10 percent for postage, \$10 minimum.

Order from: IS Book Service, 14131 Woodward Ave., Highland Park, MI 48203.



## INTERESTED?

**International Socialists**  
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14131 Woodward Avenue  
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I would like more information about International Socialism and the I.S.

Name .....

Address .....

Occupation .....



# Workers' Power

**WE STAND FOR SOCIALISM:** the collective ownership and democratic control of the economy and the state by the working class. We stand in opposition to all forms of class society, both capitalist and bureaucratic "Communist," and in solidarity with the struggles of all exploited and oppressed people.

America is faced with a growing crisis: war, racial strife, pollution, urban decay, and the deterioration of our standard of living and working conditions. This crisis is built into capitalism, an outlived system of private profit, exploitation, and oppression. The capitalist ruling class, a tiny minority that controls the economy and politics alike, perpetuates its rule by dividing the working people against each other — white against black, male against female, skilled against unskilled, etc. The result is ever greater social chaos.

Workers' power is the only alternative to this crisis. Neither the liberal

nor the conservative wings of the ruling class have any answers but greater exploitation. The struggle for workers' power is already being waged on the economic level, and the International Socialists stand in solidarity with these struggles over wages and working conditions. To further this struggle, we call for independent rank and file workers' committees to fight when and where the unions refuse to fight. But the struggles of the workers will remain defensive and open to defeat so long as they are restricted to economic or industrial action.

The struggle must become political. Because of its economic power, the ruling class also has a monopoly on political power. It controls the government and the political parties that administer the state. More and more, the problems we face, such as inflation and unemployment, are the result of political decisions made by that class. The struggle of the working people will be deadlocked until the ranks of labor build a workers' party and carry the struggle into the political arena.

The struggle for workers' power cannot be won until the working class as a whole, controls the government and the economy democratically. This requires a revolutionary socialist, working class party, at the head of a unified

working class. No elite can accomplish this for the workers.

Nor can any part of the working class free itself at the expense of another. We stand for the liberation of all oppressed peoples: mass organization, armed self-defense, and the right of self-determination for Blacks, Chicanos and all national minorities; the liberation of women from subordination in society and the home; the organization of homosexuals to fight their oppression. These struggles are in the interest of the working class as a whole: the bars of racism and male chauvinism can only prevent the establishment of workers' power. Oppressed groups cannot subordinate their struggle today to the present level of consciousness of white male workers: their independent organization is necessary to their fight for liberation. But we strive to unite these struggles in a common fight to end human exploitation and oppression.

The struggle for workers' power is world-wide. Class oppression and exploitation is the common condition of humanity. US corporations plunder the world's riches and drive the world's people nearer to starvation, while military intervention by the US government, serving these corporations, awaits

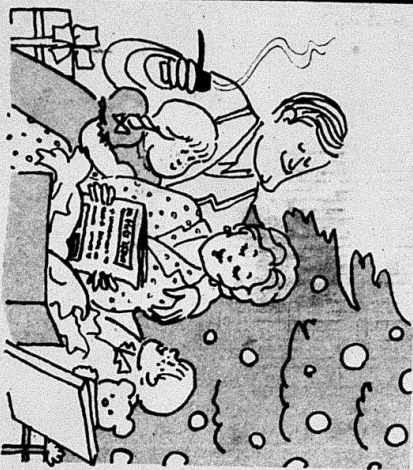
those who dare to rebel. The "Communist" revolutions in China, Cuba and North Vietnam, while driving out US imperialism, have not brought workers' power, but a new form of class society, ruled by a bureaucratic elite.

Whether capitalist or bureaucratic-collectivist ("Communist") in nature, the ruling classes of the world fight desperately to maintain their power, often against each other, always against the working class and the people. Through both domestic repression and imperialist intervention (the US in Vietnam, the USSR in Czechoslovakia), they perpetuate misery and poverty in a world of potential peace and plenty. Socialism — the direct rule of the working class itself — exists nowhere in the world today.

We fight for the withdrawal of US troops from all foreign countries, and support all struggles for national self-determination. In Vietnam, we support the victory of the NLF over the US and its puppets; at the same time, we stand for revolutionary opposition by the working class to the incipient bureaucratic ruling class. Only socialism, established through world-wide revolution, can free humanity from exploitation and oppression; and the only force capable of building socialism is **WORKERS' POWER.**

# in this issue

- Interview with Nate Mosley / 10
- Ruchell Magee Trial Begins / 12
- Strikers Rattle Bolivian Regime / 16
- NY Bell On the Attack / 8
- U.S. Wins In Puerto Rico / 3
- Unrest Shakes South / 6



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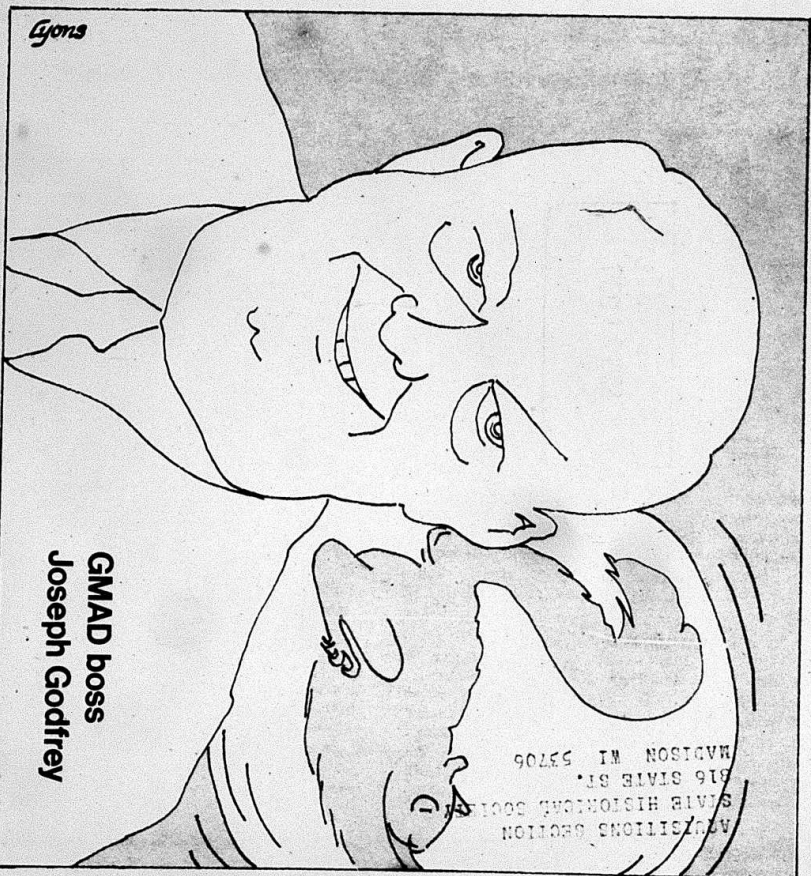
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international socialist biweekly 69



GMAD boss  
Joseph Godfrey

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