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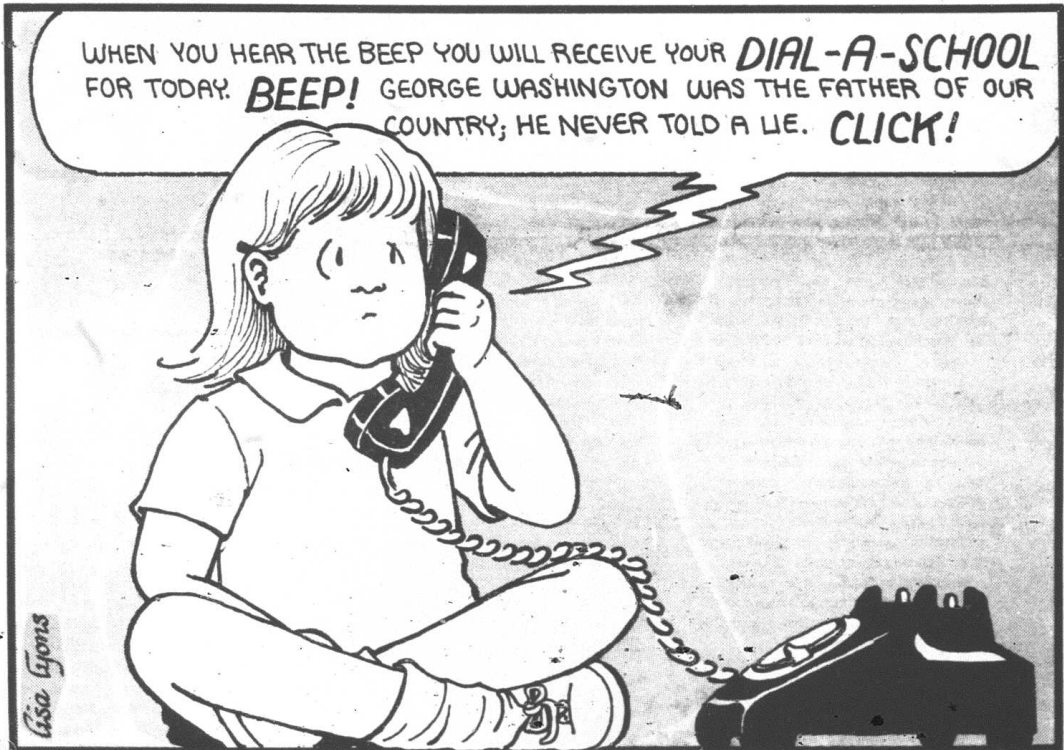


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National School Crisis



The Big Fight - L.A. Teamsters
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Who's He Kidding?

The Vietnam war has probably set a record for unkept Presidential promises. On March 9, in an interview with *New York Times* columnist C.L. Sulzberger, President Nixon, like Johnson and Kennedy before him, promised once again that the war would end soon. He also added a new, fascinating promise of his own — that the Vietnam war would be "the very last one" the United States would ever fight.

This interview offers a valuable glimpse into the President's furtive and devious mind. For example, Nixon described himself as a "deeply committed pacifist." As evidence he cited the fact that "my very hardest job is to give out post-humous medals of honor."

But the main significance of the interview is to be found in Nixon's justification of his Vietnam policy in terms of America's world interests. Though he made the usual obligatory references to "our commitments in Vietnam," Nixon's mind was really elsewhere.

In part it was on the home front. Nixon pictured himself — as every President must, no matter how extreme his policy — as a moderate standing between the extreme positions of the "superhawks" and "superdoves." He was most worried about the latter. Nixon admitted that "the great majority of the people would want to pull out of Vietnam" — and to reduce our forces in Europe, and to cut the defense budget.

In a stinging rebuke to those who still think the U.S. government is responsive to public opinion, Nixon dismissed all this, saying that "polls are not the answer. You must look at the facts." Only the President, he implied, and not the people, is capable of doing this. Echoing the theories of lower-class stupidity developed by academic social scientists, Nixon explained that the people are too "idealistic" and "impatient" to be realistic.

Nixon's major domestic worry, however, was not the people but the anti-war elements in what he called "the Establishment" (which we call the ruling class). "These are the people," Nixon lamented, "who, after World War II, supported the Greek-Turkish aid program, the Marshall Plan, NATO. But today they are in disarray," afflicted by "a basic, strange sickness" — wanting to get out of Vietnam. This was disturbing, he said, because these people — he was referring to the Eastern liberals, the international bankers, the money-connected foreign policy elite which survives unchallenged from administration to administration — "can usually be expected to see clearly ahead."

Thus Nixon illustrated the thesis advanced previously in our columns (*Workers' Power*, no. 30) — that he is contin-

uing the war because he is convinced that he is right, and the anti-war liberals wrong, about the long-term interests of American capitalism.

Why? In Nixon's view the reason the U.S. must not be defeated in Vietnam lies in the need to "maintain a U.S. policy role in the world rather than a withdrawal from the world." He sees the anti-war liberals as representing a "new isolationism" — ironically, since those liberals, when they still supported the war, hurled that very charge at the anti-war left, which is not for "isolationism" but for *Vietnamese self-determination*.

In Nixon's mind, the danger is that if the United States can be defeated in Vietnam, liberals will oppose the United States playing "a responsible role" elsewhere in the world. "If America winds up the war in Vietnam in failure," the reluctance to get involved again "would embrace the U.S. role everywhere — including the Middle East" (not to mention South America, India and Pakistan, Africa, Japan, and the rest of Southeast Asia — "after all," Nixon said, "we are a Pacific power;" the list of "our alliances and our interests," to use Nixon's terms, is endless).

Despite his claim that the U.S. has "no desire for conquest," what Nixon calls "our interests" is the U.S. imperialist hegemony — commercial-diplomatic domination of dozens of countries, backed by military intervention when necessary to maintain control. The "responsible policy role" he refers to is the U.S. role as the world cop of capitalism.

How then can Nixon make his flashy promise that "I seriously doubt if we will ever have another war. This is probably the very last one"?

The interview reveals that his mind is

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William Jackson

No More Teachers, No More Books

The nation's schools are facing a profound crisis. It was all neatly summed up in a long headline in the *Wall Street Journal* (3/8/71): "School Squeeze; Many U.S. Cities Begin Laying Off Teachers Due to Money Pinch; Quality of Education is Likely to Decline; More Cutbacks Are Expected in the Fall; A Blow to the Kindergarteners."

In large measure, it is the war in In-

dochina which underlies the present crisis. The rapidly rising prices and rising taxes necessary to pay for the war have become an enormous burden to poor and working people. But we never get to vote down prices. We never get to vote on the military budget.

School taxes, on the other hand, are levied on the local level — and thus become the target of everyone's justified

resentment against the decline in living standards caused by the war.

When people get fed up with inflation or fear for their jobs, they vote against school bond issues and school taxes. According to the Investment Bankers Association, voters approved only 48 per cent of school bond issues in 1970; in 1965 they had approved 77 per cent; in 1960, 89 per cent.

First the school boards cut back construction and maintenance. Overcrowded buildings are allowed to crumble. After construction has been cut to nothing, the boards get rid of so-called "non-essential" subjects, like art, music, and sports.

Finally, the boards turn on the staff. Salaries are cut, or the number of people getting salaries is reduced, or both.

Salaries are "cut" mainly by not increasing them; the price of everything is skyrocketing, except the price of a teacher's work. The most dramatic effect of the school money crisis has been the cutback of teacher jobs. All across the country, in systems small and large, teachers are being fired by the tens, the hundreds, the thousands.

Teachers who retire or quit are not being replaced. New teachers are not hired when the number of pupils gets larger. Wages stay the same and working conditions get worse; there is a "speed-up." Children have to suffer through larger classes. They get less attention and help.

Crisis Centers

Here is a rundown of some of the main crisis centers:

DETROIT: 257 out of 11,000 teachers were laid off. No substitutes are to be hired unless the teacher is out more than one day; instead children without a teacher are to be sent to other classes. According to Aubrey McCutcheon, deputy school superintendent, the average class size will increase from 34 to 35, "But that's only an average; where a teacher has been laid off, other classes in his school are absorbing as many as half a dozen more children (*Wall Street Journal*, 3/8/71)." (See also "Detroit Teachers Up Against the Budget,"

Workers' Power, no. 31.)

CALIFORNIA: The California Teachers' Association (NEA) says that half of the thousand California school districts have already warned their teachers of possible lay-offs in September.

CINCINNATI: A tax boost was defeated, so 375 teachers will be dropped next September. Kindergarten will only run for ten weeks instead of 20. Elementary school libraries will be shut down.

CHICAGO: 4,000 of 24,000 teachers and administrators will not be rehired unless the board gets \$58 million by the summer.

NEW YORK CITY: The board suddenly discovered that it was short \$45 million. It declared that it would drop all substitutes — 10 thousand — and 6,500 other teachers, cut headquarters' staff by 20 per cent, and slice several other "inessentials."

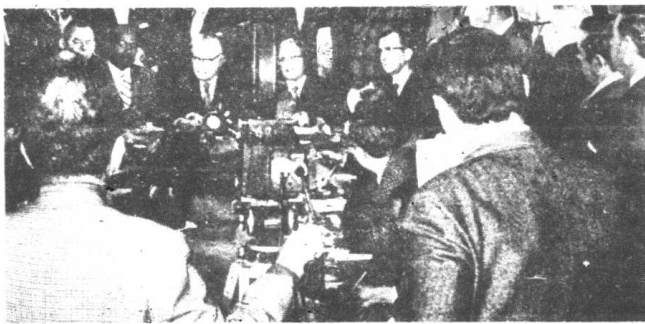
A coalition of parents' groups, the teachers' union, the supervisors' union, and other groups was formed. All the 31 Community School Boards refused to implement the board directives. Finally the situation was "solved" when New York City Comptroller A. Beame got the idea of "borrowing" \$25 million from next year's budget. This puts the crisis off for less than a year, but UFT President Shanker called Beame a "hero!"

NEWARK: The current strike was forced by the board. It had spent three times its money in the last six months, and was \$40 million in the red. If it was to "stay in business," it had to force the teachers to accept less than the previous contract, plus larger classes, that is, fewer teachers per kids.

Who Should Pay?

The whole problem is made worse because there were already said to be too many teachers, even before the present crisis broke out. Not too many for the children, but too many for the money. The number of teacher college graduates is now three times the number of new jobs created by retirement and resignation.

(continued on page 4)



Presidents of five postal unions sign merger agreement

POSTAL UNIONS MERGE

Louise Mitchell

Postal workers have taken a great step forward toward the formation of "one big union for all postal workers," with the agreement this month of five union negotiating teams to merge into the American Postal Workers' Union, AFL-CIO. The agreement now goes to

the ranks where ratification looks likely.

This necessary step toward unity, long pushed by the industrial union, the National Postal Union, comes in the face of increased attacks on the working conditions and job security of pos-

tal workers, under the so-called "postal reform."

In New York City, for example, substitutes are frequently sent home with only 2 hours work, the required minimum, if they are called at all. Yet mail service continues to deteriorate. The installations themselves are frequently filthy, and speed-up is the order of the day.

Two major roadblocks stand in the way of real unity. First of all, the National Association of Letter Carriers are holding back, hinting they may join the Teamsters instead.

If the NALC refuses to participate in the merger, they will be in a minority, with the new APWU representing about 320,000, the NALC 200,000. Their failure to unite would perpetuate the old "craft" distinctions which made it so easy for postal management to play different groups of workers and unions off against each other.

The other roadblock is the refusal of the National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees to merge. The predominantly black Alliance has about half of its 45,000 members in the post office.

We support continued organization to fight racism in the post office and unions, generally. But we believe that the Alliance should join the APWU as an autonomous caucus, with its own

program. Last year the Alliance did not participate as a union in the historic national postal strike, as the Alliance leaders later boasted. The fact that most black postal workers are not in the Alliance now reflects their understanding that this is not the best path for militant black postal workers, who were in the forefront in last year's strike.

Women workers too will need to organize within the union to fight sex discrimination in the Post Office. Indeed, in the face of management's escalating offensive against working conditions and job security in the Post Office, all rank-and-file militants in the united union must organize themselves.

Otherwise, the merger will leave them little better off than before. The watchword is SLOW DOWN and ORGANIZE. ■



Schools

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Long before the cutbacks began, the inflation squeeze had made teachers even more militant than before. But teachers and their union are stuck with a brand new problem, a problem that cannot be solved by the old union methods. The problem is this: What response is appropriate when the school boards are really broke?

Unless the union fights to get more money for education and all social services, it must battle for a larger share of a shrinking pie — and necessarily come into conflict with the black and brown communities, other public employees, welfare recipients, tax-paying workers, etc. The alternative to such a suicidal struggle is to build an *alliance* with these groups for more money for all services.

The question is, where is the money to come from? The most obvious source of the massive aid that our schools need is the \$20 billion being wasted annually on the Vietnam War. The government would like us to believe that we can have both guns and butter, both guns and good schools. Today that myth has been exploded by the chronic economic

problems of the cities.

People must realize that they have to choose: shall the money be spent on America's imperialist adventures abroad, or on our schools and cities at home? The choice should be clear. The AFT convention must adopt an anti-Vietnam war policy, fight for this policy, and carry this fight forcefully into the labor movement — the only movement that has the potential power to end the war.

Where more money is needed, and certainly more will be needed if we are to overcome the urban decay which is afflicting all parts of the country, this money should be raised by taxing the corporations, not working people.

Winning Strategy

How can we begin struggling now not only to win better schools but to defend those we have? Three facts point the way to a winning strategy:

(1) In Newark, the AFL-CIO threat of a general strike helped break the Board of Education's attempts to bust the teacher union.

(2) In New York City this month, the local community governing Boards simply refused to obey the central Board's orders to cut staff. The result was a decision to pay teachers out of next year's funds. While this solves nothing, it does reveal the potential power of alliances with the community on an aggressive and progressive basis.

(3) Last January, the President of

the 150,000 member affiliate of the NEA called upon the NEA to organize a nation-wide job action for Federal aid.

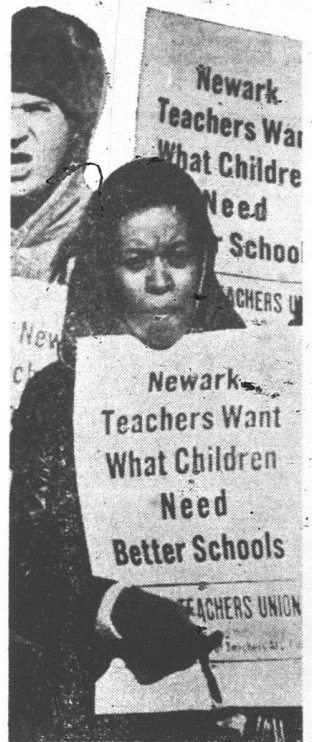
All of these actions are in the real spirit and tradition of both the labor movement and the civil rights movement. Both movement long ago discovered that their main strength is in unity, and IN THE STREETS. Massive, dynamic, forceful actions by the membership are the key.

Last year, in San Francisco, a city-wide strike of public employees (supported by the teachers union) forced an adamant city to come to terms. In France just last year, a two-day national strike by high school teachers union forced the government to restore cuts in the education budget. U.S. teachers can do this too, on a national level. The AFT must organize a *nation-wide one-day job action for Federal aid*.

Only pressure of this magnitude and intensity can compel Congress to act. The union must fight for public endorsement from community organizations and civil rights groups, and the NEA or parts of it — not to speak of the AFL-CIO.

Without such powerful pressure, all talk about educational reform must remain just that — talk — and the schools will continue to deteriorate. ■

[William Jackson is a New York City school teacher, and a member of the International Socialists.]



The Detroit Federation of Teachers took a turn toward the right on March 9 in its continuing struggle against the Board of Education's budget cuts. With student-community support for the fight growing in the form of sit-in demonstrations at several high schools, the DFT leadership repudiated an agreement reached with the demonstrators at one school and joined the Board in seeking an injunction to end all the sit-ins.

The injunction was granted, but its immediate effect was not clear, as the first wave of sit-ins had virtually ended before it was obtained.

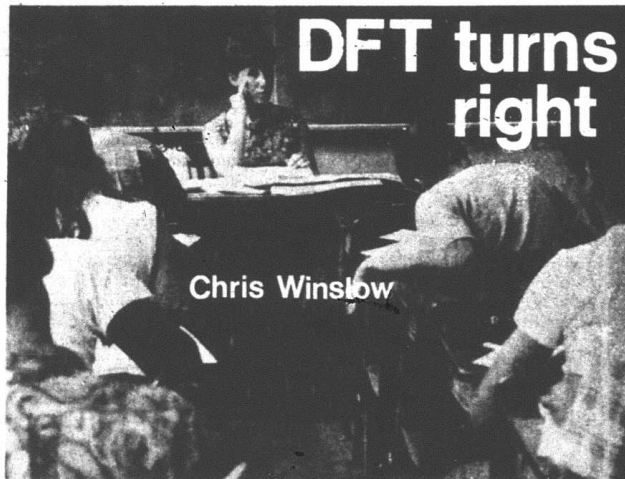
The first demonstration was at Mumford High School, around demands for no lay-offs of teachers, a reduction in class size, and a teacher-student-parent board to hear all disciplinary cases involving the suspension or expulsion of a student. Several supporting sit-ins were started in the next few days.

These sit-ins were fairly orderly, and the Superintendents of the affected schools found it expedient not to provoke trouble by opposing them. Besides, the sit-ins provided a useful lever against the budget cuts.

Community support for the sit-ins was instantaneous. Teachers, too, were generally favorable, but the DFT leadership avoided taking a clear stand in favor of the demonstrations. The demands for smaller classes and no lay-offs were, of course, the union's own demands. The demand for the disciplinary board, however, raised fears of "unprofessional operating conditions."

Teachers and Students

Teachers in Detroit's schools — as in all big-city and particularly inner-city schools at the present time — are caught between the deteriorating educational and physical condition of the schools (caused by School Board budget cuts and the lack of funds) and the resentment of the students, who see school more and more as a jail training them for dead-



end assembly-line jobs.

The violence of ghetto life, produced by the social deterioration of the entire inner city, does not stop at the school doors. Fights, and occasional attacks on teachers, are common.

Much of the hostility is provoked by time-serving teachers who care little for education. Substitute teachers are also the target for student resentment about the lack of regular teachers — a problem which of course is not the fault of the substitutes but of the Board.

The best teachers — whether black or white — are accepted by the students. But the concern of teachers for personal comfort and safety in performing their jobs is justified. The problem is that in the past, and today in the present crisis, the teachers have tended to respond by relying on the disciplinary powers of the administration, backed up by the police and courts.

Thus, the demand for teacher-student-parent discipline boards, with no administration veto — an entirely just

demand — was perceived by some teachers as a threat.

Events seemed to confirm their fears. When a week of sit-ins had gone by with no results, a different kind of sit-in began at Mackenzie High School — a full-fledged take-over of the school, with physical obstruction of the building and one or two attacks on teachers. The demands were similar, but with the demand for the discipline board elevated to first priority.

After several days, an apparent settlement was reached in a long meeting at the school. All major demands were accepted. But the school board and the DFT immediately repudiated the agreement, saying that it had been reached under "threats."

The facts aren't clear. Several community spokesmen who attended the meeting have denied that there were any threats — probably there were no direct ones. On the other hand, the students at the meeting carried chains and

generally acted provocatively.

Although the union leaders' response did not attack all the student protests, and although the teachers at Mackenzie had reason to want an end to the possibility of physical attacks, the critical fact about the situation is that if the Mackenzie teachers had declared, when the sit-in began, that they accepted the demands of the students and would fight for them, the "threats" would never have occurred.

If the DFT as a whole had immediately declared its support for these demands, it would have gained a powerful ally for its own demands and, at the same time, it would have ensured safe operating conditions for teachers — by joining with the students and community in their justified protests against the deterioration of education and the oppression of ghetto life. But at the union meeting March 9, no alternative proposals were allowed on the floor — a motion which would have simply supported all the student protests was ruled out of order.

United Action

In the meantime, the union has done little to continue the fight against the budget cuts. AFL-CIO and UAW support has been promised, but the union's only move has been to make vague plans for protests in Lansing, the Michigan capital, to ask for more funds. This is not enough.

As stressed in our earlier report (*Workers' Power*, no. 31), the key to resolving the funding crisis is the demand for A SCHOOL TAX ON CORPORATIONS and for no cutbacks, but QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL. These demands can be the basis for unity with the student and community forces who have now become active, as well as with the rest of the trade-union movement. Teacher-student-community-trade union demonstrations for these demands can begin a fight to end the deterioration of Detroit's schools. ■

L.A. TEAMSTERS:

Aftermath Of A Wildcat

David Byrne

In the wake of last spring's Teamster wildcat, Frank Fitzsimmons, acting President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, has placed local 208 (Los Angeles short-haul drivers) in trusteeship. The officers and business agents elected by the local have been fired, and replaced — at 20-33 per cent higher salaries — by men appointed by the International and the Administrator, James C. Easley.

The Local leadership was fired because they were unable to keep the rank and file in line — that is, to sell them a contract with no sick leave (although it's been promised for nine years) and substantially less than the wage increase Chicago Teamsters won. The new contract also dropped the 24-hour walkout provision that had been an important weapon in local disputes.

The International had been unhappy with 208 long before the strike. Forty-eight 24-hour walkouts over a three year period, based on grievances, firings, and other local issues, had brought warnings to 208. Eight months before the wildcat the local secretary-treasurer was told that more walkouts would result in trusteeship.

The very structure of 208 was a threat to the International leadership. Unlike most trade unions in the U.S., its stewards and business agents were elected. This made 208 a relatively responsive and militant local, and thus an embarrassment to appointed Teamster bureaucrats, local and international, who all are having trouble "controlling the membership."

The takeover of local 208 by the International is meant as a warning to all Teamsters. Last spring, Fitzsimmons lost face and power as a result of the poor national contract. Widespread wildcats and growing opposition to the "sweetheart" policy in agriculture, coupled with the failure of the Alliance for Labor Action, leave him vulnerable to contending factions at the top. To keep his position he must show the employers and the local bureaucrats that he can control the ranks.

Los Angeles was picked for trusteeship because conditions here make the Teamsters weak. All workers in one shop do not belong to the same local as they do elsewhere. Instead, they are organized along job lines, so that long

haul, short haul, line drivers, and dock and office employees all have different locals. Local 357, dock and office employees, even has separate general meetings for day and night workers. Communications in the same shop can be slow and fragmented.

Teamsters have already learned what this trusteeship means. Since October, when 208 was put in trusteeship and the local officers were suspended pending the decision of Fitzsimmons, no membership meetings have been held. Stewards have not met to discuss the terms of the contract. Gangsterism has returned and few grievances get filed. Those that are do not get acted upon by the new administration — in fact, one member who tried to file a grievance had a gun pulled on him by a union appointee.

Company Offensive

Naturally, the trucking companies have not been idle during the confusion following the wildcat and the trusteeship. A wide range of events has demonstrated the determination and the ability of the trucking lines to capitalize on 208's troubles.

Unlike most locals that wildcatted, 208 did not win amnesty for its members — there were several hundred "troublemakers" whom the trucking firms refused to rehire. The local leadership, in a disastrous move, agreed to the establishment of a "blue-ribbon panel" made up of three International and three corporation representatives which would adjudicate the reprisals.

The panel fired all but ten of the workers, many of them on charges so unspecific as "violence." Prevented by an unofficial but effective blacklist from getting other jobs in the industry, these men hang out at the hiring hall or move to another industry if they can. Many companies have made deals to violate seniority systems in laying off workers. For example, one corporation, Western Gillette, split itself into Western Gillette and Desert Express, a company it acquired several years previously. A large amount of Western Gillette's traffic has been moved to the Desert Express terminal at Guasti, some 30 miles away, and with it many of the Western Gillette jobs. Bids were put out and workers had the choice of mov-

ing, driving an extra 60 miles a day, or risking losing their jobs.

Of those who stayed, many have been laid off. With two terminals to play with, management can direct traffic wherever it wants and "prove" at any given time that the traffic level at one terminal or the other is low enough to justify cutting someone's job.

During the trusteeship, companies can get away with hiring off the streets rather than from the hiring hall. Moreover, since militancy is concentrated among young workers, and they are the first to get laid off, these deals cut the militants from the ranks.

Meanwhile, 208's jurisdiction has twice been cut down. In one case, a gigantic chunk of territory was given to a "safer" local, while the second change involved establishing an enclave within 208's jurisdiction.

Both incorporation sales and jurisdictional changes must be approved by the Joint Western Action Council, a Union-Management body dedicated to smooth running. Since the wildcat, the JWAC has rubber-stamped all the management's proposals, where before it only rubberstamped most of them. Several recent decisions have involved obvious contract violations.

The local union leadership has not lead, mobilized, or defended the ranks in the confrontations with the trucking companies outlined above. Before the trusteeship was actually invoked, they justified their failure to take action on the firing of workers who were refused amnesty and on other disputes on the grounds that they were preparing a defense against the trusteeship. Now they claim they can't act until the trusteeship is ended.

Their logic that, in the long run, control of the union will provide a surer base for a defense of the ranks would have more credibility were it not for the fact that by the time the long run gets here management will have fired most of the people it wanted to get rid of in the first place. Sentiment against the local's failure to move while it still had power is high, and the ousted leadership's concentration on the judicial approach and its failure to mobilize the ranks has left morale and organization low.

Since the wildcat many workers have

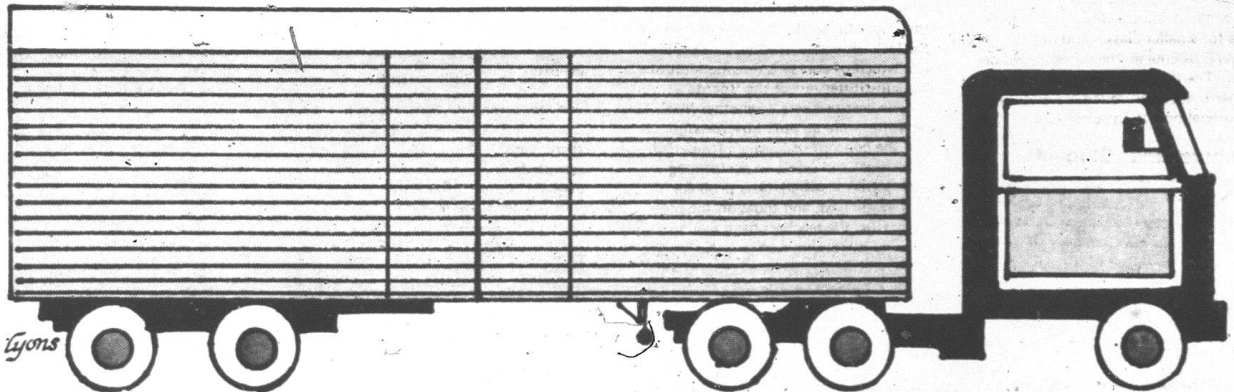
been fired or laid off. Many more fear for their jobs. Unemployment here of seven per cent is a clear deterrent to rank-and-file action. Job security has disappeared. Continued assaults by the California Trucking Association are certain and a rumor of a 33 per cent layoff is widespread.

At the same time, discontent among the ranks is high. Although several causes have sprung up, as well as defense committees for various causes, no unified organizational means for the expression of rank and file discontent has developed to date. The wildcat and its aftermath have exposed to everyone concerned the nature and number of the enemy — the unholy coalition between the corporations, the government, and the bureaucratized International — all of whom stand to lose from a strong rank and file.

The deposed leadership was a comparatively good one, but they stood somewhere in the middle. Their choice now is clear: they can make peace with the International or they can reenter the ranks and begin to build an unofficial, but genuine, Local 208 organization — capable of mobilizing the ranks to back up good stewards, put pressure on bad ones, defending militants, and building support for 208's case within the Teamsters and the labor movement nationally.

The wildcat demonstrated the potential power of an organized rank and file. Subsequent events have shown the danger of relying entirely on official leadership or official organizations and tactics. The return of democracy to 208 is the immediate task. National support is necessary in this fight. Pressure must be brought to bear on the International to the point that to continue the trusteeship becomes embarrassing and costly.

Teamsters must fight on a program that includes not only union democracy, but also an attack on the conditions that caused the wildcat in the first place — inflation caused by war production, high unemployment, and the social crisis striking the cities. We look to the formation of a national caucus within the Teamsters that will place the demand, "Free 208," in the context of the growing discontent of the working class — discontent in which the Teamster wildcat of 1970 played an important part.





Of all the examples throughout history of people fighting for democracy and social justice, none stands out like that of the working men and women of Paris in the period 1870-1871. The Communards lost their struggle, but they showed a courage and vision unsurpassed for the time and perhaps for all time.

The last days of the Second Empire of Louis Bonaparte (1851-1870) were a period of increasing working class militancy. A strike wave spread in what was the first modern police state. Bonaparte was unable to grant the reforms labor demanded, the State was crumbling; war was declared with Prussia in part in the hopes of stimulating and unifying the country.

On September 2, 1870, the Emperor and his army were captured in the battle of Sedan. On the 4th a republic was proclaimed, headed by the Republican opposition. The Government of National Defense wanted peace at any cost.

The Parisian workers and artisans knew that the cost of peace, like the cost of war, would be borne by them. There were abortive mass insurrections, popular arms seizures, the formation of a citizens militia — and a revolutionary government waiting in the streets.

With the signing of an armistice, a new national government was elected that was strongly Royalist, except for the delegates from Paris. The new government was assembled at Versailles, the historical seat of kings and far enough away from the restive Paris crowds. Anti-working class legislation

directed at Paris made clear the threat to republican democracy.

On the night of March 17-18, the Versailles attempted to disarm Paris and capture the cannon stored in the working class districts of the city. But working women sounded the alarm and the streets were soon filled with people. Versailles generals ordered their troops to fire, but instead they turned up the butts of their rifles and exchanged them for a friendly word, a mug of wine and a fraternal embrace. Two generals, recognized for their brutality, were seized and executed.

The Central Committee of the National Guard controlled Paris until elections to a municipal council were conducted on the 26th of March. On that day the Commune was elected, representing predominantly revolutionary socialists, radical republicans and, from the wealthy districts, moderate republicans. The Versailles denounced the Communards as "assassins" and "bandits," but they were Paris.

Among the first acts proclaimed by the Commune, after a magnificent installation at the Hotel de Ville draped in red flags, were measures aimed at dismantling the repressive apparatus of the State. The standing army and police were abolished, to be replaced by a citizen militia with democratic control. The church, almost universally recognized as despotic and reactionary, was separated from the state.

Next came laws dealing with debts incurred during the chaos of the Prussian siege; a moratorium on rent pay-

PARIS COMMUNE CENTENNIAL:

First Workers' Republic

Rick Sortun

ments was proclaimed, with provisions for long-term interest-free repayment of all debts.

Since much of the city's industry had been disrupted and was shut down, jobs for all became an immediate concern. It was declared that all factories abandoned by their owners be occupied by workers and reorganized on a co-operative basis. Studies were conducted into reforms dealing with the relations of workers, both men and women, with their employers. The practice of factory owners levying fines to discipline their workforce was abolished.

The bakeries were re-organized under workers' control, setting the conditions of work and of the production of the basic foodstuff of the population. Unions were encouraged to organize and affiliate with a city-wide federation of labor, which exercised considerable influence on the Commune's policies. Minimum wages were set and employers required to honor contracted wages.

The 8-hour day was established as the pressures of the war demanded more. In the Commune's State workshops, the directors, managers and foremen were selected by the workers and could be recalled by them if not satisfactory. Factory councils met regularly to discuss their work and set wages.

The Commune also made great strides in the area of education and cultural activities. During the siege most schools except the private bourgeois ones were closed. The Commune reopened the schools, increased the enrollment of both males and females, paid for sup-

plies and kicked out the priests and nuns, establishing a curricula based on science and rationality. Libraries, the theatre and museums were opened up for all people to enjoy, instead of just the rich, as before.

As many things as the Commune accomplished, it was limited by time and the necessity of self defense. On top of having to assume all the municipal responsibilities of a great city, the Commune had enemies within and surrounding Paris — the Prussians on one side and its class enemies, the Versailles, on the other.

If the accomplishments of the Commune and the remarkable examples of the indomitable spirit of its citizens were not enough to win them a place in history, the barbarism of the Versailles ruling class would. The Versailles army entered Paris during the night of May 21, 64 days after the proclamation of the Commune. The week following, until the 28th, is known as Bloody Week.

Over 20,000 Communards were killed at the barricades, summarily massacred and defiled after being disarmed, transported or imprisoned. Over 40,000 arrests resulted in executions, banishments and deportations which often resulted in death. In all, Paris lost well over 100,000 of its best people — most of its most fervent democrats, skilled workers and artisans, sensitive and socially conscious intellectuals. Those that did not die in the streets with "Vive la Commune" on their lips or were imprisoned, fled the city.

Worker's Republic

The Paris Commune was the first workers' republic. The old state machinery with its standing army over the people and its privileged bureaucracy was dismantled. In its place, the workers were armed, all officials were elected, with the right of immediate recall, and no official was paid more than a skilled worker.

These principles, first established by the Commune, were described by Lenin as the minimal, immediate measures which any workers' government must take as its starting point. They are a reflection on the Communist countries, which try to masquerade as "workers' states" while the bureaucratic ruling class denies these, and all other, rights to the working class.

In every working class revolution or gains of more direct democracy, similar in many respects to the Commune, have arisen to do away with the old class state and to supercede parliaments by a higher form of democracy in which the masses of workers govern themselves.

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ENGELS ON THE COMMUNE

The state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy; and at best an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the proletariat, just like the Commune, cannot avoid having to lop off at the earliest possible moment, until such time as a new generation, reared in new and free social conditions, will be able to throw the entire lumber of the state on the scrap-heap.

Of late, the Social-Democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. ■



Parisian Militia on the Barricades

Celia Emerson

THE WOMEN COMMUNARDS

Louise Michel

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Paris Commune. The Commune was the first attempt by working women and men to take power in their own hands — to build a socialist society. The working women of Paris played a leading role in the establishment of the commune. In Paris in 1871, the women were fighting side by side with the men. But they were also fighting with women as women for their own emancipation.

Poverty and Degradation

The position of the working class woman during the second empire was one of poverty and degradation. She lived in rat and filth-infested housing and watched her children die slowly from tuberculosis or other diseases, while she died slowly from overwork. Most women could not live off their incomes alone. Prostitution was a common means for supplementing one's income.

The working class family was very different from what the upper classes would have liked to impose. Marriage before God and the Law was not the rule. Women and men simply chose to live together. It was cheaper, easier and more natural.

In 1870, war was declared between France and Prussia. Like all wars, it was declared by the ruling class, but fought and died for by the working class.

By the fall of 1870, it was clear that France had lost. The empire fell and a republic was proclaimed. Two weeks later, the Prussians began the siege of Paris.

For the women of Paris, it didn't much matter whether there was an empire or a republic. Very little was done to alleviate their conditions. The women had to get up at four in the morning to wait in long lines in front of the bakers or insolent butchers (who usually reserved the best pieces of meat for the rich).

During the siege, the women served their battle apprenticeship for the commune. Some demanded that women's battalions be formed. But when 1500 women showed up to form one, they were turned down by a General Trochu. It seems that Joan of Arcs are only acceptable as past history.

The women also served as nurses, ambulance and canteen workers, as well as on the barricades. Angered at the government's inertia, the women began to demand that given the lack of food, something be done about the food

merchants — men getting rich off the war. Women led demonstrations demanding that the government give the people more bread. (It was women in France in 1789 and women in Petrograd in 1917 demanding more bread that led to two great revolutions.)

The French government attempted to smash dissent in Paris by arresting well-known agitators, suppressing newspapers and the clubs. Then the government signed an armistice with the Prussians. But they didn't sign an armistice with the armed women and men of Paris.

On March 18th, Adolf Thiers, the new leader of the French government, sent in his troops early in the morning to recapture the cannon and put down the growing working class movement. But he had forgotten that women were up early in the morning, getting their bread and milk. Soon the women spread the news that the troops had entered Paris.

By 7:00 a.m., women had surrounded the troops and were asking them, "Will you fire on us? On your brothers? Your fathers? Our husbands?" Faced with this unexpected intervention, the troops hesitated. A general shouted for them to act. The women spoke again. The soldiers arrested their general. They had joined with the commune. (In Petrograd, 1917, it was women who mingled with the troops and convinced them to join the Russian revolution.)

On March 26th, the commune was elected — by man-hood suffrage. Women were not allowed to vote, nor were there any women on any of the committees of the commune.

However, measures were granted which gave women reason to support the commune: rent payments were discontinued; a 600 franc pension was granted to a wife or companion of a national guardsman; each child, legitimate or not, received a 365 franc allotment. These acts of the commune were an explicit recognition of the working class family as it really existed outside of bourgeois morality and the law.

The Women's Union

Despite the fact that women were inexcusably excluded from the machinery of the commune's government, they continued fighting for its survival. The women knew that the defeat of the commune would also mean a defeat for working women.

There were many women's organizations which were particularly active in

mobilizing women. One was the Women's Union, organized by Elizabeth Dmitrieff, a close friend of Eleanor and Karl Marx. Its ranks were composed of working women who served as ambulance workers, nurses and on the barricades.

The Union also set up workshops under workers' control, and called for a shorter work week and the elimination of the division of labor which created competition between the sexes. The Union also collected to buy kerosene; incendiarism would be their final weapon when the ruling class came in for the kill.

The Union, the clubs and committees were the few places where prostitutes could join with the commune. When the prostitutes showed up at the hotel de ville (city hall) to help, they were turned away by the men. Louise Michel, one of the greatest communards, noted that these men only wanted "pure" hands touching the wounded. The prostitutes said time and again, "We will never bring shame upon the commune," and they fought as bravely as anyone.

Andre Leo

The women of the commune fought with bravery and courage that has not yet found its equal. But two women, in particular, stand out as leaders.

The first, Andre Leo, became involved in the women's rights movement as a result of her experience as a novelist. By March 18th she became the leading journalist of the commune. Leo was one of the first who stressed the need

for carrying the commune to other cities and to the French countryside. She was one of the first to see that socialism could not be built in one city.

Leo's second major contribution was her insistence upon democracy at all times, and especially during revolutionary upheavals. When communards suppressed newspapers, she wrote, "... to deny these principles is to deny our mission. If we act as our enemies, how will the world choose between them and us." This principle, the importance of democracy, was later taken up by another revolutionary giant — Rosa Luxemburg.

Leo passionately took up the emancipation of women. The commune newspaper, *La Sociale* published hundreds of articles by her about women. She was responsible for organizing the many women's clubs and committees. The commune suffered when women like Leo were denied the right to sit on the central committee.

Louise Michel

Another woman, Louise Michel, became the symbol of the commune. She was the illegitimate child of a nobleman and his servant, Marianne Michel. Louise Michel was raised working with the French peasantry and reading the writings of the 1789 French revolution. In the late 1860's she joined the First International. By the time the commune broke out she was known as a subversive.

During the siege, Michel moved to Paris and joined with the struggles of working women. During the fighting she was everywhere — soldier, nurse, ambulance runner, organizer, orator. She was found in the clubs and vigilance committees and in the workshops and ambulance stations she helped organize. No wonder the reactionaries called her "the breath of the commune."

The Versailles government could not allow the commune to continue and on May 21, Thiers sent in his troops to crush the insurrection. The week beginning May 21st is called bloody week because at least 25,000 were butchered by the Versailles government.

It is estimated that at least 1200 women were raped — before they were murdered. Dying women were stripped and raped. Women prisoners were subjected to the insults of the Versailles crowd. Society women beat upon their working class sisters; some were allowed to take target practise on communist women.

Some women fought back by throwing bombs. The incidence of firebombing by women was greatly exaggerated

(continued on page 11)



LEON TROTSKY ON THE PARIS COMMUNE

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Abortion and the Women's Movement

Sasha Elkin

The upcoming abortion demonstration on March 27th in Albany, New York, will be the culmination of months of work. The emphasis has been on building a massive action to block the state legislature's attempt to restrict women's right to abortions. Over twenty bills have been proposed in which control of a woman's body would be placed in the hands of a doctor, husband, or bureaucrat, rather than the woman herself.

In 1970, New York State "liberalized" its abortion laws. Abortions became legal if performed within the first twenty-four weeks of pregnancy. The bills proposed in the legislature now would serve only to undermine the gains made last year.

One proposed bill would consider an abortion illegal if the woman's husband lodged an objection with the doctor. Another would allow a doctor to perform an abortion only when "necessary to preserve life of female," with or without her consent. Some of the other proposed bills would set residency requirements, allow abortions only during the first twelve weeks of pregnancy, and exclude poor women from medical assistance for all abortions performed except those to save her life.

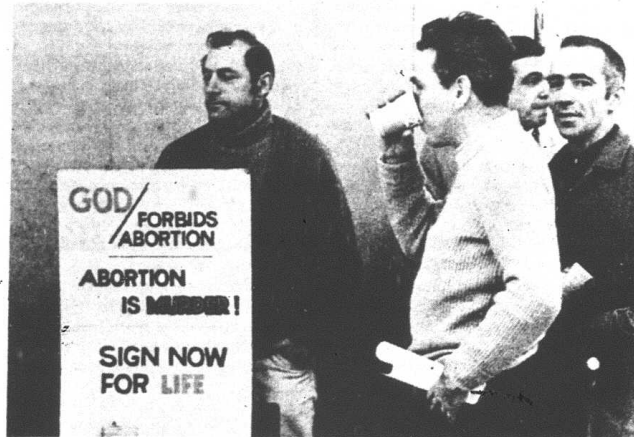
The 1970 abortion law itself was only a beginning. Abortions now cost anywhere from one hundred sixty to several hundred dollars. This makes it almost as difficult for working and poor women to get an abortion as before. Thus, these women are doubly penalized by a system which at the same time allows forced abortions and sterilizations.

For this reason, the purpose of the March 27th demonstration is not only to block further restrictive legislation, but also to demand, "Free abortion on demand; No Forced Sterilization; Repeal of all Abortion and Contraception

Laws."

The demands are important to all women, but particularly to working and welfare women. Unfortunately, the abortion movement has made no attempt to link up the problem of abortion with other problems that these women face in society. There can be no way of creating a strong, on-going women's movement unless the manifold issues that are important to women are linked up, and the problems of women who previously were not reached by the movement are addressed.

The Women's Strike Coalition, which has called the upcoming demonstration, has made every effort to restrict it to a single issue. Though there are welfare bills and a minimum wage bill on the floor of the Legislature this session, these have not been accepted as another focus for the demonstration. This tactic must be rejected.



Letting women know what He wants

LNS

school admissions; and the formation of rank-and-file women's caucuses in the unions.

2) Free 24-hour child care centers on the job is a demand that can be made on both the employer and the state (to be paid for with taxes on the corporations). In this connection we should demand paid maternity leaves with loss of seniority. These demands are of equal importance to welfare mothers, who now have no access to adequate child care.

3) Free abortions on demand is an important demand but it can never be fully realized so long as there are only shoddy medical facilities available. We must also demand, therefore, free and adequate health care, including abortion clinics which can also disseminate free, safe contraception assistance and information. We must emphasize the demand for an end to forced sterilizations, which are being performed on poor and welfare women.

The women's liberation movement cannot afford to sit back and wait for working women to come to us. We must initiate noon-time rallies where women work — in the garment district, the Wall Street area, telephone buildings, insurance company offices, etc. These rallies should have been held to build for the March 27th demonstration. Leafletting campaigns could also be planned for these areas.

The women's movement should also give strike support, even if the strikers are predominantly male. In these cases, issues of importance to women should be discussed. For example, during the recent New York Telephone strike, the operators, who are all women, are in a company union, and could not support the strike without jeopardizing their jobs. The CWA, the craftsmen's union, would not promise to protect any operators who supported the strike. The operators, who are the lowest paid telephone company employees, had an important stake in the strike. But the craftsmen's union wouldn't challenge the sexual job divisions that Pa Bell exploits.

The demand for the repeal of all abortion laws is important to all women. But if working women are to become involved the movement must specifically start talking to them and to the issues that affect their lives.

Only Yesterday

Remember back a few months ago, when the fashion industry was still trying to bring back the fifties and ram the midi down our throats? One highlight of that campaign was the appearance of the editor of *Women's Wear Daily* — a man, of course — on the NBC *Today* show.

Women's Wear Daily is to fashion as the *Wall Street Journal* is to capitalism in general; it's the most-influential fashion industry trade paper, and the recognized voice of the fashion power structure. Last fall it threw its weight behind the midi, confident that it could beat down the resistance that had been growing among American women.

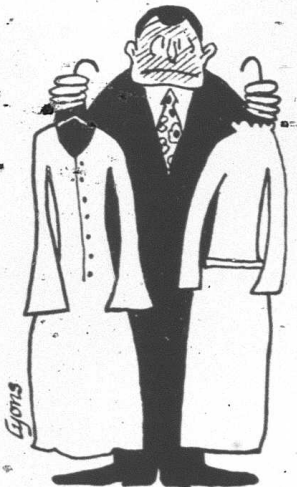
Not long after *Women's Wear Daily* came out for the "longuette," the *Today* show scheduled what was billed as a debate about the midi — with equal time to be offered to the *Daily's* male editor, on the one hand, and to women leading the fight against the midi, on the other. The *Today Show's* Barbara Walters, one of the few nationally-known women television reporters, had up until then been rather cool to the

midi.

As it turned out, the whole thing was rigged: the editor of *Women's Wear Daily* was given much more time than the opponents of the midi, and he used it to inform them that, like it or not, they would damn well wear what he pleased. Barbara Walters came forward displaying her newly-acquired Longuette.

Unfortunately for the sort of people that *Women's Wear Daily* and the *Today* show do their best to represent, U.S. women refused to be intimidated and the midi became the biggest bomb since the Edsel. Facing financial catastrophe, the fashion industry at length caved in, and went over to shorts as a face-saving transition back to the mini (which *Women's Wear Daily* is coyly calling the "hot skirt").

We are eagerly awaiting the reappearance of the *Daily's* editor on the *Today* show. No doubt he will tell us that, what do you know, the erogenous zones haven't shifted after all — and anyway, he was only kidding about American women being sheep. Maybe Barbara Walters will come on wearing Hot Pants.



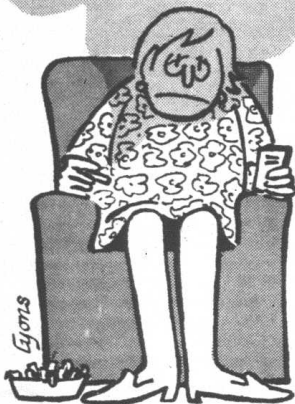
Women and Cigarettes

Jo March

We've come a long way, baby — now we women have two cigarettes of our very-own: *Virginia Slims* for the liberated type, and *Eve*, decorated with little flowers, for the really feminine woman.

The cigarette people have a reason for their recent sales push at the feminine market. More and more men are deserting Marlboro Country, but, according to a recently-concluded study by a government-sponsored anti-smoking project, far fewer women are quitting. "The use of cigarettes by women [in the last 15 years] has doubled, in contrast to a steady drop in usage by men" (*The New York Times*, Jan. 10, 1971).

In the last four years, during the big cancer scare, the number of adult smokers dropped about 4.5 million. Only 300,000 of these were women, and of the 300,000, nearly half were over 65. Of the women who do try to stop, one in nine fails, versus one in twelve for



men.

The anti-smoking people are concerned. They have found it difficult even to find women willing to listen. Most women's groups decline speakers, and many women interviewed had convinced themselves that cigarettes were dangerous for men but not for themselves.

Why are so many women unwilling or unable to quit? According to the study, "Women rely on cigarettes to a greater extent than men for 'image identification' much as adolescents who take up cigarette smoking to advertise their passage from childhood to adulthood." In other words, many women are still smoking because unlike the — presumably male — adolescents, they never arrived at adulthood in terms of success and independence. All they managed to achieve was the image.

"Women use cigarettes, far more than men," the researchers continue, "as a means of controlling anger and frustration." Women are trained to be "more masochistic than men — society has conditioned them to convert unpleasant things into pleasure, and therefore

it is more difficult for them to give up cigarettes."

The results of this study come as no surprise to women involved in women's liberation. What it boils down to is that the greater reluctance of women to quit smoking is directly related to their oppression. Ironically, many older women began smoking as a gesture of emancipation.

To tell women smoking will kill them is not enough. For many women, the small pleasure and comfort involved in lighting up that cigarette looms so large that life without cigarettes is hardly worth living. Significantly, the anti-smoking researchers admitted that they hadn't made much headway in deterring "lower socio-economic groups and the minorities" either.

Perhaps the anti-smoking people are going at the problem in the wrong way. When women are able to lead meaningful and exciting lives, we won't need cigarettes as crutches to get through the day. When we are genuinely liberated, we won't need cigarettes as symbols of an imaginary emancipation. ■

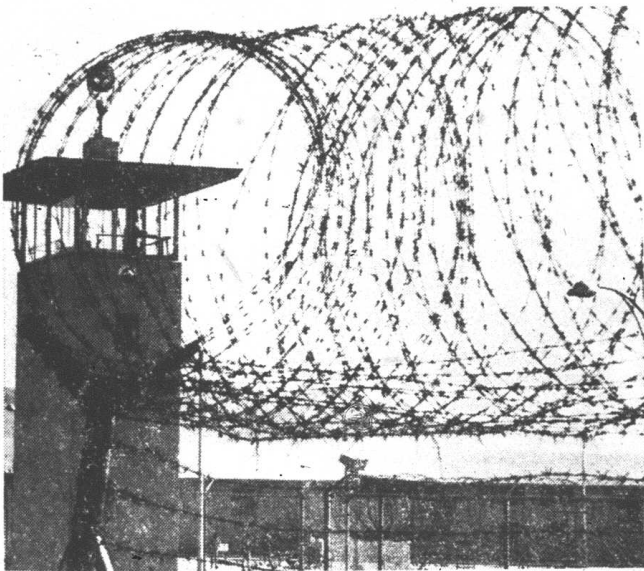
New York Women's Conference

Nancy Brewster

Over the weekend of March 6, a conference on women's liberation was held at Barnard College in New York City, under the sponsorship of the Women's Strike Coalition and the Columbia-Barnard Women's Liberation Group. It attracted 1500 women from New York City and other east coast cities.

Unfortunately, the conference consisted only of workshops and addresses by well-known women's liberationists. The steering committee twice voted against having any plenary sessions at which resolutions for future activities could be discussed.

One positive development was the formation of a Working Women's Organizing Committee. Several women, including members of the I.S. Women's Caucus, spoke at the workshops about the need for such a committee and for the women's liberation movement to orient toward working women. We asked that all women who wanted to work in that direction meet during the Sunday afternoon workshop period to discuss the formation of a committee. The meeting was attended by about forty women who voted to form such a committee and to begin to meet regularly. ■



McNeil: The Fight Goes On

Tom Maguire

The strike which began last month at McNeil Island Federal Penitentiary is now all but over. For 11 solid days it was 100 per cent effective, but now nearly all the men have resumed work — all, that is, except the 80 or so who are locked in the hole.

None of the issues of the strike, however, have been resolved, and so far neither side has claimed victory. The prisoners maintain that their fight for the 13 "proposals" which they gave the warden is far from over.

The 13 proposals are a list of grievances and reforms which the warden has so far ignored. They include such things as the lifting of "childish mail restrictions." At present, for example, no letters in Spanish may be received without the warden's special permission. The prisoners also want the right to wear hair and beards of any length.

Another demand is for a 35 per cent wage increase. (This may sound like a lot until you learn that the current wages vary from 19 cents to 46 cents

an hour, while federal penitentiaries make a profit of from \$4 to \$6 million annually on convict labor.)

At the present time, the main fear of the strikers and their supporters is that the warden will be able to maintain his news blackout. So far, outside of the Seattle area, there has been virtually no coverage of the strike — this in spite of the fact that it has been one of the most successful strikes in the history of prison revolts.

Court rulings to the contrary, thus far no representatives of the press have been allowed to speak to the prisoners or their leaders. Right now there are two law suits pending against the warden — one brought by the American Civil Liberties Union, the other by a reporter for the *Tacoma News Tribune*.

In the absence of news coverage and support from the outside, the prisoners are afraid that the warden will have a free hand in dealing out harsh reprisals. As mentioned above, already over 80 of the strikers are in the hole — where they have been for over a month.

A lawyer who represents some of

the prisoners, Lee Holly, says that overcrowding is now so severe that the men "can't even urinate without hitting each other." Some men have no mattresses and are forced to sleep on the concrete floor. In addition to the hole, the warden has even stronger weapons — mass transfers to remote prisons, far from families and friends, and the loss of "good time," that is, additional years of confinement.

In spite of all this, the spirit of the strikers remains high. Both the prisoners themselves and outside observers (their lawyers) sense a new atmosphere and a higher feeling of commitment. Racism, for instance, seems at least on the surface to have disappeared. The prisoners' own educational programs are designed to see that it disappears for good.

For now it is the responsibility of the movement on the outside to see that the nation's jailers are not allowed to take unchecked vengeance on their hostages. In the long run, it is a certainty that the revolt in the prisons will continue. ■

Devlin On Socialism

Adapted from a speech presented to a Bay Area International Socialists Forum in Berkeley, California, February 20, 1971.



Bernadette Devlin at a press conference at the Bay Area International Socialists office

Most people who have learned about the Irish problem through the international press or through their Irish-American ancestors have a pretty messed up idea of what is happening in Ireland. There are two erroneous schools of thought.

King Billy and the Pope

The first is the one carried by the press. Their attitude seems to be that we have some sort of medieval religious problem: there are a million protestants and half a million Catholics, and the million protestants keep standing on the throats of the half a million Catholics.

Now that is okay, if you want to look at it that way, because you can find things to support that theory. But there are also facts which disprove that theory, the main one being that all 1 million protestants are not fighting with the one-half million Catholics — thankfully, because outnumbered 2 to 1 the Catholics would never survive.

We have a healthy, wealthy middle class suburbia, where they don't fight. There are Catholics and Protestants and Jews all living up the better end of the Antrum Road, all up the Malone Road, and there's never been any riot there. They all go to the same golf clubs, they all own property, or business or land, they're all quite happy. So all the Catholics and all the Protestants quite definitely aren't fighting. That's problem No. 1.

Then you get to the Catholics and the Protestants who are fighting. Apart from a few insults being hurled at King Billy and the Pope, depending on which side you're on, nobody ever seems to be defending papal infallibility, the virgin birth, the 39 articles of the Presbyterian church — those things have never been a point of conflict in these Catholic-Protestant problems. So I doubt very much if they're really fighting over

religion.

Then you've got the other school of thought: The Catholics and the Protestants are fighting, not because of the difference in their religion, but because the Protestants are not native Irish. But they've been in Ireland for 300-400 years. They've been working there, living there, planting the soil, working in the factories. Over 400 years they've put their bit into the country and are therefore entitled to stay where they are. So that school of thought begins to fall down.

So then you come to a possible realization of what is actually happening in Ireland. You've got a million and a half people in the north. Ten percent of them are unemployed. If you move away from the industrial east towards the more rural agricultural west of Northern Ireland, unemployment rises to 28 per cent. In cities the size of Derry it rises to 40, maybe 50 per cent in some places.

We think that that's got something more to do with why people are dissatisfied. Maybe that's why you've got rioting in Northern Ireland. Maybe you've got a population whose workers

are badly paid, the majority of whom either work in unskilled jobs or don't work at all. Maybe they think that's not quite a dignified way for them to have to live. Maybe when they look around and see a few wealthy people, a few factory owners getting very fat, very wealthy, that they think there's something very wrong with their democratic society.

If you consider that the six counties every year take 150 million pounds from the British working man in taxes to pay our national deficit, you might think that there is something to the rumor that we are a lazy, good-for-nothing people, that we can't even make ends meet. But if you counterbalance that with the fact that we export every year about 500 million pounds worth of private profit, you come to a situation where we've got a right to be dissatisfied.

We're not asking for anything we haven't got a right to. But we've got some very great, high romantic ideas — that you can end poverty, you can end unemployment, you can end the slums and the ghettos, you can end racism, religious prejudice, hatred, fear, insecurity — which are very noble goals.

The question is, are there enough resources in the world to solve our problem? Some people tell us there aren't. But we have a weird sort of notion, being the ignorant masses of the working class, that somebody's telling us a great big lie. It's not our leftist propaganda — we take our information from our good, democratically elected conservative government.

They tell us that 5 per cent of the population of Britain own and control 85 per cent of the private wealth of Britain. We have a notion, therefore, that this parliamentary game of democracy is simply a means whereby the 95 per cent who don't own it can share out the remaining 15 per cent of the wealth as well as possible. We don't think that that's very fair, because if 95 per cent of us are living on 15 per cent, it's a contradiction of all we've been taught in our good democratic schools about democracy.

The 5 Per Cent

We don't think that 95 per cent of the population can survive on 15 per cent of the wealth. But we believe in fine, upstanding ideas. If it wasn't ours, we wouldn't ask for it. But we're not as ignorant as people think we are; this sort of rumor that goes about that the working class is an ignorant class of people who couldn't control the world is wishful thinking on the part of the 5 per cent who already do control the world.

We produce all the wealth that there is in Ireland. There is nothing produced that is not made by our work — either by our hands or by our brains. That was a simple thing for us to find out. And having been bred in the democratic system, we thought, "We do all the work; then all the wealth should be ours. All the power that is produced by the work we do should be ours."

But it isn't. It belongs to this 5 per cent who claim they own everything. So we ask ourselves, "How do they claim that they own it?" They own it by virtue of the fact that they believe in private property and the right to inherit wealth. So then we went back through our written history and discovered where they inherited all this wealth. And if it didn't come out of the blood and sweat of this generation, it certainly came out of the blood and sweat and massacre of the generation before us. So what they've got is our property.

Now, we're not selfish, mean people. We don't just want it back for the sake of having it back. It's a matter that we've got these peculiar, high-flown ideas, which means that we, the working class of Ireland, cannot survive, cannot solve our problems unless we get back what is rightfully ours.

And what's rightfully ours is not just a pat on the head — equal minority rights for Catholics, a fair share of the houses, a fair share of the jobs and there-



the trouble with human society is that some of the lilies have got the notion that they own the whole field and they are charging the rest of the flowers rent

(the other flowers are forming a coalition with the intention I hear of purchasing a lawn mower)

LILIES OF THE FIELD

Maxine Valdés

fore a fair share of the unemployment. We don't want that. It's very nice of them to share things like that but we're not interested. What we want is a fair share of the 85 per cent.

In order to get it, in order to carry out our noble ideas which everybody, even the 5 per cent claim to support — like ending unemployment and poverty — we need real power, the real power we cannot have until we, as a working class, control and own the means of production of wealth and power. It seems to us that that's quite simple, and so we come, without throwing Molotov cocktails, without frightening President Nixon out of his bed, we come to a situation where there seems to be no logical argument against the working class of Ireland owning and controlling the means of production of wealth in Ireland.

World Struggle

Now if that holds true for Ireland, it certainly holds true for everywhere else. You come down to the same fact: the working classes of the world produce all the wealth and are entitled to the means of production, since they are the only people who are interested in their own survival. The 5 per cent aren't interested in our survival. It quite honestly doesn't really worry them that kids die in the slums of America or Northern Ireland.

It only worries them the way a riot worries the press. Rioting has to reach a certain level before they begin to notice it, before the public is informed that it's happening. It's the same with poverty. The level of poverty in this country or in Ireland is perfectly acceptable until it reaches a level that stirs enough people to complain, because if enough people start complaining, then it might catch on and more people might start complaining.

Nobody ever really denies our right — and you'll notice this about the 5 per cent — to control the means of production. They simply produce arguments about why it is neither feasible nor acceptable that we should do so. Their main argument, of course, is that it is theirs, and that they have it at the moment and that they're not prepared to part with it.

Their second argument is that they have it by virtue of their being better able to use it; we wouldn't know what to do with it. They invariably produce the argument "Show us the working

class that knows what to do with it. Show us the socialist country that's working. You're all too far out on the left, you're all talking about things that the working class is too ignorant to understand."

But the working class is not too ignorant to starve; it's not too ignorant to die; it's not too ignorant to be war fodder. It doesn't matter which war it is — whether it's marching kids of the British working class into Northern Ireland to get killed and to kill the working class of Northern Ireland or whether it's American kids getting marched into Vietnam to kill the struggling people of Vietnam. It's always the working class that's used as war fodder.

We're not too ignorant for that. We're not too ignorant to do all the work in the factories. We're not too ignorant to do all the work in the farms. So whether it's America or whether it's Ireland, or whether it's Vietnam, there comes a time when we've got to stop playing around, when we've got to stop saying, "Please, Mr. President, be nice to us. Please, Mr. 5 per cent, can we have more wages?"

We've got auto workers in England, a fine body of people, some good International Socialists among the shop stewards — people call them professional agitators — they're not, they're just good shop stewards. And the car workers are out on strike. The government, you see, imposed an unofficial wage freeze that said that the car workers, who were about to negotiate a pay claim, could only ask for 2 pounds a week. The car workers took it as an insult and they came out for 15 pounds a week.

The government nearly fainted. It said, "You can't do that sort of thing. The way you play the game is that we say you can have two pounds and you come out for three. Then your trade union leader settles with us for 2 pounds 10, which we'd all agreed on beforehand anyway."

When one of the workers was asked if he would be satisfied with this audacious pay raise, he said "No." They said, "Well, when will you be satisfied?" He said, "I'll be satisfied the day I demand a penny more than Henry Ford can pay. That's when I'll be satisfied with the money, because I don't want Henry Ford's money — I want Henry Ford's power." And that's what it's all about.

In Northern Ireland, we don't want British justice for British citizens. Some

people used to think we did. We've seen British justice work against the British working class and the rest of Britain, and we're not particularly interested in having it.

We don't want to join Jack Lynch's Irish republic in the south, either. We see our fellow working class down there — their unemployment level is the same; their emigration level is higher. Of course they have kicked the British out, imperialism is dead and gone. They're Britain's second biggest customer. Their whole economic system is dependent on the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement, but for every British exploiter they've kicked out they find a native, good, conservative Irish Catholic go-to-Mass-on-Sundays-and-rob-the-poor-every-other-day-of-the-week exploiter.

So they've sort of thrown out all the imperialists and took in the native capitalists. We're not interested in joining that, either. We've suffered one kind of exploitation. Another one just won't make any difference.

We're not fighting the Protestants. We're not fighting the British; most of our allies are in the British working class. We're not engaged in any narrow national struggle. We are engaged in the same struggle that the black people, that the Puerto Ricans, that your so-called "ethnic minorities" in this country are engaged in, that the people of Vietnam, and the people of Poland are engaged in — it's our right as the working class of the world to control the world.

Now we don't believe that we can

do that very effectively on our own. We don't believe you can establish socialism in one country and then sit back and put your feet up. Because we know that if we were successful in taking control in Ireland, we wouldn't be happy, because we wouldn't be able to survive in our Socialist Republic of Ireland; not within a capitalist world.

We don't identify as Irish first off. We're Irish because that's where we find ourselves. We're not against unemployment because we're Irish. We're not against oppression because it's in Ireland. We are part of a class movement which says that we're against oppression, because it's oppression.

Our job is not just to see to our own survival in Ireland, but by starting (and if there are any members of the press about, I'll say it slowly so they can get it all down) by starting the revolution in Ireland (that frightens them — it really does), attempting to create our workers' republic and so by doing that to assist in the world struggle of all people to establish their right to control their destinies — to solve their own problems by having control of the means of production of wealth and of power — not just in Ireland, not just in America, not just in a number of isolated groups of struggling people, but on the only basis that will work, on the basis of starting wherever we find ourselves and fighting the revolution and the struggle there and building the international movement and creating international peace, international justice, which is international socialism. ■



LNS

Commune

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Such organs of more direct democracy, usually based on the workplace, represent the form of working class rule, of a workers' state.

The working class owns, and can own, no property in the means of production. It can "own" property, and rule, only through its democratic, collectivist control over the economy and state. That is why the working class is the only class which can introduce socialism, and why its struggles for greater democracy and greater control tend to move in a socialist direction, and to the creation of organs of working class self-rule like the Commune, or workers'

councils.

These institutions were not invented by a socialist theoretician, but arose spontaneously first in Paris, and again in all workers' revolutions — in the soviets of Russia in 1905 and 1917, in the Arbeiterrat of the German Revolution of 1918, in the Barcelona commune during the Spanish civil war, in the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, and in other genuine working class revolutions.

What the Commune best shows is the ability of people, men and women, artisan and worker, to take power, reorganize society in their own interest and free themselves from exploitation and oppression. The Communards were led to socialist solutions to their problems. The Paris Commune of 1871 was the embryo from which a truly socialist society with workers' control could develop. This is the importance and the lesson of the Commune — which we can not forget and which the ruling classes of the world fear most. ■

Women

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

by the French state, and used as another excuse for the continued slaughter of the communards; the French government, like the American government today, had to hide its own naked brutality against ordinary people by focusing upon a few acts of self-defense, in this case by women.

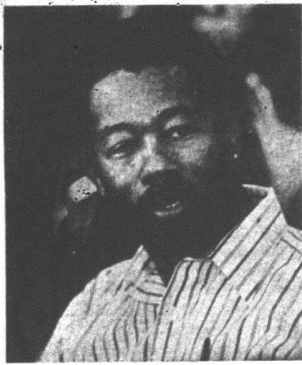
The commune was eventually crushed. Those women who weren't killed, such as Andre Leo, either fled Paris, or were deported. Louise Michel was sent to a prison in New Caledonia. But in a South Sea prison camp, Louise Michel continued her fight. In 1878 a revolt

broke out among the Polynesians, and Michel was one of the few communards who supported and encouraged that revolt.

In the late 1880's, Michel returned to Europe where she was arrested three more times for her revolutionary activity. She died in 1905, exultant at the news of the first Russian Revolution.

Past Reclaimed

Although the commune was crushed, and savage repression followed in its wake, the working people of Europe have never forgotten the heroism of the communards. However, until recently little was known about the role played by women. It was the women's liberation movement, in rediscovering its own past, who rediscovered Louise Michel, Andre Leo, and the other equally courageous, but unknown seamstresses, laundresses, prostitutes, and cleaning women who fought for their liberation and a new society. ■



Cleaver



Hilliard



Newton

Panther Split

David Katz

In recent weeks, the Black Panther Party has exploded with charges and countercharges, expulsions and counter-expulsions, in an internal battle so furious that it has already led to at least one death.

The split came suddenly, although it was not entirely unexpected. In a series of events including a transatlantic telephone call (broadcast on a TV show), a video tape from Algiers (played at a news conference), and articles in the Panther paper, the following occurred:

Eldridge Cleaver, the Party's exiled minister of information, criticized Huey Newton for expelling some of the New York Panther 21 who had fled the country, and asked him to expel David-Hilliard, chief of staff, instead; Newton accused Cleaver of beating his wife and holding her prisoner; Kathleen Cleaver denied this; Connie Matthews, Newton's former personal secretary, now in Algiers, criticized Newton for wasting the Party's money, including living in a \$650 per month penthouse; Newton expelled Cleaver; Cleaver expelled Newton; and a Panther loyal to the New York branch was shot dead in Harlem after having an argument with members loyal to the national headquarters, who were distributing the Panther Party paper.

How the party is divided geographically is more apparent than the way it is divided politically: the New York branch and the international section in Algiers are aligned against the party's national headquarters in Oakland, California.

To the extent that the dispute is a

political one, it seems to be a question of the general tactics that the party should adopt. The Newton faction says it favors continuing open organizing in the black community. Cleaver feels that the party should have gone underground and set up an illegal apparatus. He criticizes the Oakland Panthers for neglecting the "military struggle."

If, as seems quite possible, the rift in the Black Panther Party becomes permanent and leads to the complete disintegration of the party, it will be a setback for the entire black liberation movement. What are the underlying causes of the split?

The primary reason for the weakening of the party is clearly the brutal government repression its members have been subjected to: harassment, arrests, beatings, trials, and murders inflicted by the state, seemingly without end. Inevitably, this has taken its toll — the party has been decimated, its money tied up in legal battles, and its leadership jailed or exiled.

But the Black Panther Party left itself vulnerable to repression in some very important ways. It legitimately insisted on its right to armed self-defense, but was not able to organize its supporters (actual or potential) in such a way as to ensure a political defense. When it came to a showdown, the cops had more and bigger guns than the Panthers did.

As long as the state holds the balance of military power, revolutionists must rely basically on the power of organized workers. If the Panthers had seriously

organized among black workers, they would have been in a much better position to survive repression: strikes of black workers in support of the Panthers (such as happened when Martin Luther King was shot) would have had much more weight than a few Panthers bravely fighting off police in a barricaded office.

A Black Panther Caucus was formed in the UAW at the General Motors plant in Fremont, California. But it was never made a major focus of the organization's activity, either locally or nationally. Instead of organizing workers, the Panthers limited themselves to organizing among street people — the unemployed and "unemployable" — a group that is certainly as oppressed as any other, but one which does not have the social power necessary to defend itself.

Another factor which tragically weakened the Panthers was their lack of internal democracy. There was very little possibility for open debate, discussion, or disagreement with the leadership inside the Party. The top party leaders were used to giving orders rather than arguing their positions and trying to win over the ranks; anyone who raised criticism was summarily expelled. This tended to demoralize the rank and file and made it impossible to develop new leaders.

No organization with an authoritarian structure is going to be able to mobilize the black community for the struggle for their self-emancipation. Moreover, this anti-democratic attitude car-

ried over into their relations with other movement groups. Anyone who raised criticisms was denounced for being counter-revolutionary.

This lack of democracy was consistent with their adoption of a stalinist ideology. The Panthers had always been sympathetic to revolutionary movements in the Third World. However, as they, and new left groups like the SDS, failed to develop an orientation towards organizing the mass of American workers, they exhibited more and more of an affinity with stalinist regimes — first China, more recently North Korea.

These countries were used as models for building the organization in this country. If a totalitarian organization was fine for China, then it was fine for the Panthers. If the regimes in China and North Korea exalted the "wisdom" of a single, supreme, infallible leader, then so could the Panthers. This development of a stalinist ideology, and with it a monolithic organization, not only accelerated the decline of the Panthers, but also was a main cause of the disintegration of SDS.

Panther Legacy

Despite these difficulties, the Panthers have made a number of positive contributions to the radical movement. First and foremost, was their advocacy of the right of armed self-defense.

Their coalition with the Peace and Freedom Party in 1967-68 also marked a turning point, in that it was the first time a militant black organization was willing to work with whites. Their rejection of "cultural nationalism" as reactionary helped to separate the black revolutionaries from those who didn't want to change the structure of society — only its color.

Further, the Panthers emphasized the need to break with the Democratic and Republican parties and to build an alternative force. (And finally, they have popularized many revolutionary and anti-capitalist ideas in the black liberation and radical movements.) Through its existence, the Black Panther Party has raised the level of consciousness and the level of struggle among both blacks and whites.

We imagine that in Washington and in the back rooms of police stations all over the country, the split in the Panthers has produced a lot of happy and amused bureaucrats and police agents. But we advise them not to spend too much money celebrating just yet.

The reasons behind the formation and growth of the Black Panther Party are still here — racism, exploitation, poverty, bad housing; lack of medical care, rats, police brutality, unemployment. Even if the Black Panther Party does not survive its present crisis, the black liberation movement is not dead. The struggle to create a just, humane society will continue. ■

Lettuce Rotten In Denmark

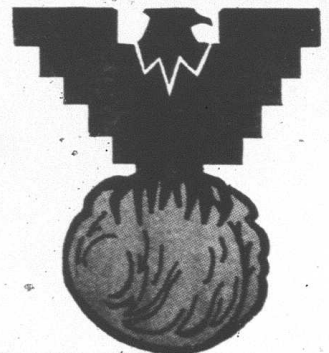
In February, a Danish volunteer with the United Farm Workers' Organizing Committee reported back to Cesar Chavez that non-union lettuce was sold in several shops and one large food market chain: IRMA, the "A&P" of Denmark. The answer was: Go ahead, boycott; maybe you can deal anti-farmworker growers the final blow that will win our struggle.

Now an intensive press campaign, launched by the new UFWOC representative in Denmark, has resulted in pledges of support from many individuals and the Black Panther Party Solidarity Committee in Copenhagen. DASF, the

largest workers union in Denmark, has been the first to make a small donation and distribute information about the lettuce struggle to its members.

On the biggest shopping days, Friday and Saturday, massive leafletting will take place in front of food stores and at other strategic points. Through the consumer boycott, Danish people will show their solidarity. VIVA LA HUELGA!

— UFWOC in Denmark,
Gunna Hojgaard, c/o BPPSC, Gran-
negade 37, 1107 Copenhagen, Den-
mark.



A Separate Peace

R.F. Kampfer



You didn't see us and we didn't see you, okay?

The surprising thing about the above cartoon is that it was originally published in 1969 in the *Army Times*, the lifer paper. It might have been a joke then, but it may be turning into reality now.

Few GIs were ever eager to dig for glory in Nam. Back in 1967 the instructors at Fort Jackson, mostly combat returnees, emphasized the importance of staying alive by not playing John Wayne. "Nobody wants to go to Nam," they'd say, "but everybody wants to get back."

The war dragged on and more and more soldiers decided that the government was using them as poker chips in its own game. Some decided that the best way to be sure of getting back was to stay out of the woods where the *punji* sticks grow.

Lately the national media has been full of stories about grunts refusing to leave their base-camp for patrol action. Other patrols are going just as far as the first secluded clearing, to roll a few numbers and wait for morning.

The next logical step is a mutual hands-off arrangement between U.S. units and NLF forces in the area. The

VC have made local armistices with ARVN and RPF garrisons many times in the past. There are rumors going around among GIs that they are now making the same deals with US troops.

So far these are only unproven rumors. Since "communication with the enemy" carries a death penalty, those involved would naturally be shy of publicity.

But even if there hasn't yet been any real fraternization, there is no reason why there can't be. The military histories won't mention it, but there have been many incidents where draftees from opposing sides decided that they had more in common with each other than with their own officers and governments.

One of the most impressive cases, because it was completely spontaneous, was the Christmas truce of 1914. Encouraged by the holiday spirit, thousands of British and German troops decided to call the war off for a while. While their officers fretted and fumed the rankers got together in no-man's-

land to swap drinks, rations, photographs and christmas carols. Games of soccer were improvised amid the shell-holes and barbed wire. The First World War almost came to an end right there. Afterwards many units had to be transferred since they refused to fight against their friends.

A longer truce occurred on the Eastern Front after the Russian Revolution. Both the Russians and the Germans had made a practice of sending strikers and radicals to the front lines. As a result of this inspired policy there was an ample supply of agitators to suggest that

the real enemy was at home. The Germans couldn't renew their aggression until they brought in Bavarian regiments, specially chosen for political backwardness and fanatical catholicism.

During the Russian invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, there were many reports of Russian troops refusing to fire on freedom fighters. Often this was due to propaganda efforts by students, since the Russian language was a compulsory subject in Hungarian and Czech schools. In Hungary the Russians had to use Mongolian troops, who could not speak Russian, to crush the workers' rebellion.

Even during the American Civil War, one of the bloodiest and bitterest wars in history, opposing platoons would get together to trade Union coffee for Confederate tobacco.

Much as we applaud the idea of enlisted men refusing to slaughter each other for the benefit of the ruling classes at home, it must be recognized that this isn't enough to bring peace by itself. The infantry, the only branch that really comes in contact with the "enemy," plays a comparatively minor role in Nam. The Air Force and the artillery do most of the damage. Pilots and gunners rarely see their targets so they are unable to deliberately miss.

The bloodletting in Nam, and the potential bloodletting in other parts of the world, will cease only when we have a government that is the servant of the people rather than the corporations. Soldiers who don't want to fight for Nixon and his crooked crew will have to fight against them, politically. Only a party of the working class and all the oppressed can carry out this fight. Until they help to build such a party, soldiers will remain: "the unwilling, led by the incompetent, sent by the uncaring to do the unnecessary for the ungrateful." ■

WAR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

focused on the oldest, and most elusive imperialist dream — the dream of an imperialist peace between rivals. "I hope that we can further develop our negotiations with the Soviet Union," Nixon says. "Their ideology is expansionist... [but] their interest in survival requires that they avoid a conflict with the United States. This means that we must find a way of cooperating." Nixon speaks in the same terms, although more cautiously, of China.

At first glance this may look like a noble hope. But the truth is that the conflicts of modern states — and the conflict between the two world imperialist systems, capitalism and bureaucratic collectivism ("Communism") —

do not spring from ambition or miscalculation, but from the real need of the states of both systems to dominate foreign economies — which means to dominate foreign peoples and their governments.

Although for a time there may be a peaceful division of influence based on the strength of each power at the time, changes in their economic strength brings demands for greater international influence. Thus an imperialist peace between rivals does not end the rivalry — continuing in peace, the rivalry eventually leads to new conflicts.

Although in our time the danger of world destruction by nuclear weapons may be enough to prevent World Wars as in the past — or may not — a new spectre has come to haunt the dreams of imperialist peace. The world's peoples, fighting for national self-determination and social justice, are challenging the imperialist domination of their states.

This movement is worldwide, from Czechoslovakia to Vietnam and South America. And while revolutionary soc-

G.I.'s vs. Lettuce

Pressure from G.I.s at three California military bases has forced officials to stop buying Bud Antle lettuce. Bud Antle is the main target of the United Farmworkers' lettuce strike and boycott.

G.I.s at Fort Lewis in Washington, where purchases of non-union lettuce continue, have collected over 500 signatures on a petition urging the Pentagon to stop forcing G.I.s to act as involuntary strikebreakers.

The direct purchase of Bud Antle lettuce by the Defense Department increased 350 per cent during the first quarter of fiscal year 1971. Second quarter figures reveal that the trend has accelerated. 13.5 per cent of all lettuce purchases were from Bud Antle as compared to two per cent during the second fiscal quarter of 1970. Moreover, the total amount of all lettuce purchases is up 30 to 40 per cent from last year, while Antle's sales are up 600 per cent.

— LNS

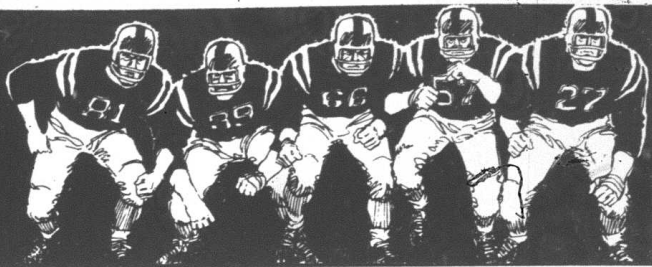
ialists refuse to support any side in an imperialist conflict — which is part of the conflict between rival ruling classes — we side with these movements for self-determination and justice.

We are in a century of wars and revolutions. They will not go away even if Nixon withdraws from Vietnam, even if he reaches limited agreements with the USSR or China. At most the locale of the conflicts may shift. But Nixon's commitment to continuing "a U.S. policy role in the world — which is the unanimous consent of the U.S. capital-

ist class, in spite of Nixon's demagoguery about "new isolationists" — guarantees that Vietnam will be far from "the very last war."

So long as capitalism survives and its imperialism bleeds the world for corporate profit, the world's people will resist and there will be — and should be — no peace. Only the continuation of the movements for self-determination and justice, and their deepening into a world movement of socialist revolution, can destroy the two imperialist systems and lay the foundations for peace. ■

Bread and Circuses



It was billed as the fight of the century, or alternatively, the greatest fight since Cain and Abel. If the fight didn't quite measure up to such heroic proportions, it certainly was the biggest rip-off I've ever witnessed.

The tickets were set at the outrageously high price of \$12 to \$15 for closed circuit TV, and ringside seats at the fight were being scalped for up to \$750. But that wasn't all, for the promoters were milking it for every penny they could get. There were reports that they were trying to sell commercial time during the fight at \$400,000 a minute, and the fighters even appeared in promotional TV ads for Vitalis. As one fan put it, they would have sold the boxers' trunks before the fight, if they could have found a way.

As the fight date grew nearer, the promotional build-up got to me. After all, who would want to miss the greatest fight of the century. Just think of being able to tell your grandchildren, "Yes sir, I was at that fight." So off I went to the local theater in Detroit to get my ticket.

Many others had also succumbed, and there was a long line. Discussion initially was on the fight (Ali was the favorite). But as time wore on, talk focused more on the money (for \$15 this had better be the fight of the century), and from there went on to the state of the economy.

After all, given the present state of the economy, \$15 was a lot of money to be spending on a fight. Who knows when it will be your turn to be laid off or fired? The price of admission might one day be the difference in whether you eat or not.

Most agreed that Nixon had to be

the greatest idiot alive, and several wished that John F. Kennedy were still alive. But no one quite knew what Kennedy would do differently from Nixon; the general attitude seemed to be that if he were President, they wouldn't mind being laid off so much. The discussion was just getting to the war when I got to the ticket window, bought my ticket and had to leave.

The fight itself was more than a fight. By that I don't just mean that it was also a theatrical production: it was that too. But in this fight each boxer was trying to do more than win; he was also trying to show that he could take the best that the other could throw and by doing that prove that his opponent didn't even belong in the ring with him.

Thus at different times the fighters would take turns dropping their gloves and letting the other fighter hit them. It's a dangerous thing to do, and both fighters got their lumps for it. It also detracted from the fight, and along with his clowning, may have cost Ali the fight.

Jack Johnson

As soon as Ali entered the ring, the crowd in the theater went wild. When Ali would shake his head after being hit by Frazier, wave his gloves in disgust, or play with Frazier on the ropes, the fans roared their approval. Only one other boxer got the cheers Ali received — a boxer who appeared in a film shown before the fight: Jack Johnson.

There are many parallels between the careers of the two boxers. Both were more than heavyweight champions. They were black champions, and folk heroes. Because of this, both were forced from the ring, Johnson having to

flee the country. Johnson too got a chance to regain his stolen championship, and lost.

Though there is some dispute among experts, it seems most likely that Johnson's last fight, in Havana, Cuba, was fixed, part of a deal to allow him to return to the U.S. And although the Ali-Frazier fight was not fixed, the three judges who gave the decision to Frazier, as Ali pointed out, work for the same organization which banned Ali from boxing for three years, the New York State Boxing Commission.

"Good Business Sense"

When the decision was announced, there were a few scattered cheers from Frazier fans, but in general the theater was very quiet as Ali fans realized that the "greatest" had finally lost a fight. Still, most people felt that it had, indeed, been a terrific fight.

This pleased the promoters, who almost immediately announced that they were releasing films of the fight to movie theaters throughout the country. In this way they hoped to rip-off several million more dollars. But nice as this was for them, it was only gravy. Their main profit was already in the bank long before the fighters even arrived in New York.

After acquiring the promotional rights, the two main promoters, Cooke and Perenchio, sold those rights to local promoters, the price being two-thirds of the expected receipts in advance. Depending on the size of the local area, that could run to several hundred thousand dollars. Thus, even before a ticket was sold, they were assured of almost all their profit. This unique system had

two unfortunate consequences.

In the first place, given the amounts of money involved, promoters weren't going to gamble on having empty seats and unsold tickets. Thus, distribution outlets were kept low. In Detroit, only 30,000 seats were available, allowing less people to see this fight than normally go to a Detroit football game. Even at the price of \$15, many more people wanted to go, and who can estimate how many thousands would have gone if the tickets had been reasonably priced.

Secondly, the amount of money involved limited the promotional rights to only the very rich, thus confirming the old adage that the rich get richer and the poor... well, they pay \$15 for a ticket. More than this, the promotional setup discriminated against the very people without whom this fight could never have taken place, the black people of this country.

There were reports that several black organizations had tried to get the local promotional rights. The idea of course, was to try to route some of the profits to be made off these fine black athletes towards programs to help the black community, to the fight against racism, for black liberation. Unfortunately, very few, if any, black groups in this country have the kind of money to enable them to put up the two-thirds in advance.

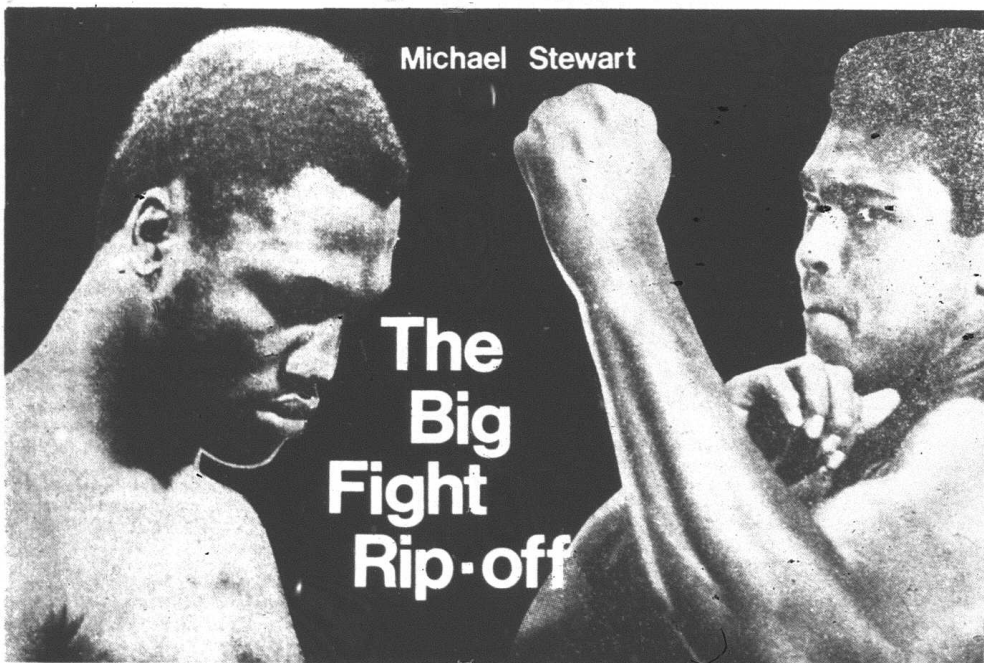
Of course, the two promoters, Cooke and Perenchio, claimed that they weren't discriminating, they were just using "good business sense." The fact is, however, that here, as elsewhere, this kind of "good business sense" discriminates against blacks and other oppressed minorities. It is no mistake that black groups, and blacks in general, do not have the kind of money or connections necessary to promote these fights.

The poverty that blacks face is a direct result of the racism and discrimination that they face in all sections of society, in the community, on the job, in the schools, etc. Any policy which ignores that fact only reinforces the unequal status of blacks and supports the discrimination against them.

Needless to say, the high price of admission prevented many black and other poor people from even seeing the fight.

There is talk now of a rematch, and there is probably too much money involved for it not to take place. The fans also want a rematch, since the decision didn't really satisfy anyone. Hopefully, the promotional arrangements will be different next time. After all, who wants to get ripped off again?

Here Ali and Frazier could have a great effect and do something to really help black people. Without them, no one makes a dime. They should demand that black organizations be given the distribution rights, at least for their local areas, and that the tickets be priced low enough so that everyone who wants to, can attend. That would really make the next fight the "fight of the century."



Michael Stewart

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Women Workers: The Forgotten Third of the Working Class, Ilene Winkler - 25c

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A Revolutionary Socialist Manifesto, written in a Polish Prison [An Open Letter to the Party], Jacek Kuron & Karol Modzelewski - 75c

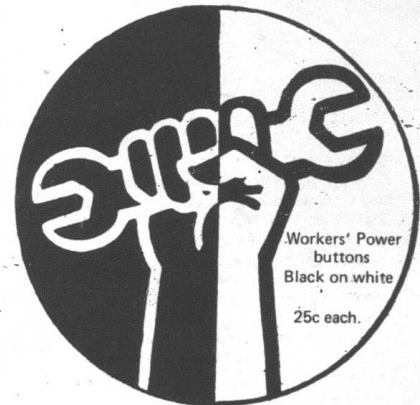
Two Souls of Socialism, Hal Draper - 25c

Women in the Chinese Revolution, Laurie Landy - 40c

Introduction to Independent Socialism [Independent Socialist Clippingbook, no. 1], ed. Hal Draper - \$2

The Permanent War Economy [Independent Socialist Clippingbook, no. 7], T. N. Vance - \$2.50

Socialist Songbook - 50c



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 Native Americans; 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 for 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.**

Jack Trautman

Thumbs Down

The construction unions have been quick to respond to President Nixon's attack on construction workers. They have done so by negotiating a sell-out — a disgraceful agreement with the National Contractor's Association, a group of 34 companies that do much of the nation's industrial construction, including factories, refineries, atomic reactors and power plants.

The unions agreed to eliminate "excessive" overtime pay, and prohibit "featherbedding," standby crews and work slowdowns. They also agreed to hire nonunion labor when union workers are "unavailable."

Charles Pillard, president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and chairman of the unions' negotiating committee, said the agreement set a precedent and would help to improve efficiency in their industry. More to the point: the agreement will permit speed-up, make working conditions more unsafe, drive down wages and weaken the unions.

Getting rid of overtime pay should mean hiring more workers. But the agreement specifies an end to "featherbedding" (the unions accepted the use of the term) and standby crews, which means there will be a decrease in the number of workers employed. Since the contractors will still be under pressure to finish their jobs rapidly, the agreement will in fact mean a speed-up and increasingly unsafe working conditions. Since the unions also agreed to give up having any say over the selection of foremen, contractors will have a free hand to wring every last drop of sweat out of construction workers.

Overtime pay is currently twice normal pay. That has not been high enough to force employers to hire new workers instead of regularly forcing overtime work out of their present employees. The way to prevent overtime is to make it prohibitively expensive; it should cost employers four to five times the straight-time rate.

Moreover, workers are often willing

to work overtime, not of course because they like to work, but because they need the money. The same is true of construction workers. Despite the talk about outrageous wage increases, they still average \$2500 less a year than the \$11,000 the government says is necessary for a family of four to live decently. What construction workers need is not wage decreases, but increases.

Finally, the union is also allowing contractors to hire nonunion labor when union workers are "unavailable." Pillard claimed that this agreement would help to organize the unorganized by making union shop contractors more competitive. That's a lot of double-talk.

In the first place, it is nonsense to speak of the unavailability of union workers: the unemployment rate in construction is 11.1 per cent. It is hardly the case that union workers are fully employed. The agreement will not organize the unorganized. Rather, it will tend to drive down wages and weaken the union. It will bring in non-union labor where unionized workers would otherwise work, or it will force union workers to work at non-union wages because they will be unable to get jobs any other way.

Pillard made a point of stating that the agreement showed that the industry could solve its own problems "without outside interference." This was supposed to be a rebuke to Nixon. Yes, they solved the problem — by selling the construction workers down the river.

Nixon's Helpers

Nixon and his advisor on his Construction Industry Collective Bargaining Commission, Carl Harlvorson (a past president of the Associated General Contractors) are finding that their plan is working as they hoped and expected. Few people had illusions about

Nixon. What may be more surprising is the fact that the unions are not fighting to defend their members. Their program of "defense" is to carry out Nixon's program for him.

The Hutcheson Dynasty

Why are these unions failing to defend their members? The United Brotherhood of Carpenters (UB) is a typical case. It has been ruled by what many call the Hutcheson Dynasty since 1915. General President M.A. Hutcheson runs the union with virtually no check from below.

At the convention in 1966 he was voted a \$13,900 raise, bringing his salary to \$51,600 per year. In addition, all General Officers were voted a \$3,900 per year raise. The combined salaries of the top 15 officials cost the union \$389,000 per year. This doesn't count the fringe benefits of plush cars, offices, airplane trips, etc.

The overwhelming bulk of the convention delegates were paid union officials. While they were at it, they voted a special pension for themselves (for paid union officials). One delegate said in its defense: "I have been a paid official for 31 years. . . . I have got a pension, but you know why I want this one? There is not enough in mine for stability when I retire. . . . give us people who built the Brotherhood of Carpenters what we are entitled to." He didn't say a word about how the members back home would survive on a pension that wouldn't give him stability.

Top Down

The union is run from the top down. The workers have little or no control over the leadership, which in turn is not responsible, nor particularly interested in the rank and file. Opposition is ignored, if possible. If it is not possible the bureaucracy attempts to eliminate it.

The union has failed to do any serious organizing in decades. As a result, only a small part of its jurisdiction is organized — ranging from 2 per cent in North Carolina to 85 per cent in California. Only three states besides California — New York, Illinois, and Washington — have even 50 per cent of their jurisdiction organized. This is important because an increase in organized workers would tend to force wages up generally.

When organizing has been done it has often been in the worst way: by getting the contractor to sign a "bargain contract" for a cheap deal in return for workers' dues.

It is Hutcheson and other officials in a similar situation who have, with the stroke of a pen, signed an agreement that is a basic attack on the living and working conditions of their members. Their action should come as no surprise. What do they have to lose, after all?

Ranks Must Organize

Carpenters and all construction workers must organize rank and file groups independent of the union bureaucracy. These groups should fight to take over the unions. In the meantime, they can fight to break the agreement. Just because it exists on paper does not mean it can be put into practice.

An organized effort of on-the-job actions can nullify the agreement. If construction workers refuse to allow these measures to be implemented, contractors will be forced to yield. It is a simple matter of self-defense. Unfortunately, the unions appear not even to be willing to fill that function. ■