

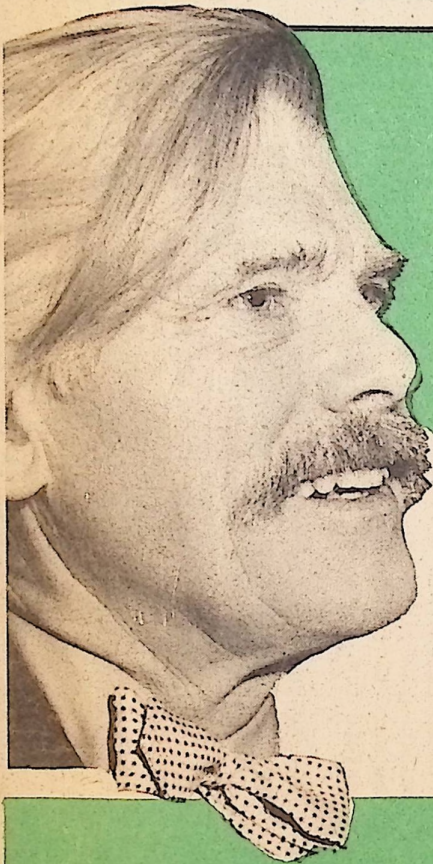
the rank and file in action

# Labor Today

25¢

412

June 1974 Volume 13, No. 6,



## Crisis in our schools

## Selden's battle for democracy in AFT

## R & F VICTORY AT AMC

## Debate on CLUW



WHAT EVER ELSE YOU CAN DREAM UP

# TORONTO CAN BE A TIME OF REBIRTH FOR AFT

# Selden urges fight for union democracy

**Labor Today**

by DAVID SELDEN, PRESIDENT  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Two months off from the AFT convention, Al Shanker's campaign for President of the AFT was a compound of bandwagon effect and red-baiting. In the mailing which reached delegates and others in June, Shanker paraded the endorsements of scores of AFT personages who have endorsed him. Along with the endorsements was a statement from Mr. Shanker, charging in part that the AFT was in danger of being taken over by Communists, and that only he could save the union from that fate.

The smear has become one of the hallmarks of the Shanker method. Shanker constantly talks about his "enemies," all of whom are scabs, strike-breakers, communists, or fuzzy-brained idealists. He did it with Bill Simons, and with Herrick Roth. He has done it with others. Every local campaign in which he has been involved since the Ocean Hill-Brownsville strike has carried this theme.

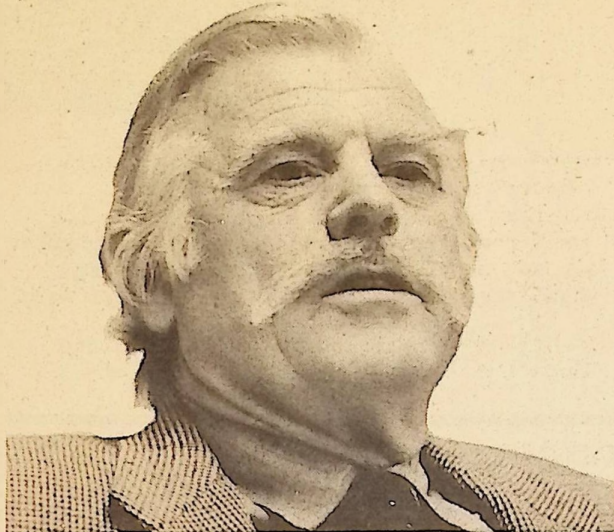
Did those 100 or more AFT leaders who have endorsed Shanker know that they were endorsing smear tactics when they endorsed him for AFT President? How many of them



now have the courage to disassociate themselves from those tactics?

## CALIFORNIA HOLDS FIRM

Over the Memorial Day weekend, Shanker and I addressed nearly 1,000 delegates to the California Federation of Teachers meeting in Fresno. Later, the delegates had a chance to express their opinion related to the contest for AFT President. The Oakland Federation of Teachers, Local 771, had submitted a resolution asking the AFT Executive Council to rescind its request that I resign. The resolution was passed by an overwhelming voice vote; the losers then called for a division, which came out about two to one. James Ballard, President of Local 61, San Francisco, then demanded a roll call, which has the effect of maximizing the votes of the large locals. In spite of some confusion in the voting, the roll call carried substantially. This was the first State Federation to censure the



DAVID SELDEN

action of the Executive Council taken last December 7th. Vice-presidents Sibelman and Ballard fought ferociously to stave off the Convention action.

## A LONG WAY TO TORONTO

The California action, however, illustrates the problem confronting those who are supporting me in my campaign for union democracy: big unions are always represented at AFT conventions because they pay delegates' expenses; little locals may or may not be represented, depending on all sorts of factors.

There are 100 or more locals in California which would support me if they could just get to the convention. But the air fare to Toronto is expensive, and driving is a three or four day effort. This makes plain why Shanker was so hysterically opposed to direct mail secret ballot election of the President in the referendum a year ago. Shanker fights the secret ballot the same

way that Boss Tweed fought introduction of the "Australian ballot" a hundred years ago in general elections.

Incidentally, many delegates object to holding the convention outside the country. I urged that it be held in Kansas City.

## DELEGATE BOLT?

As I have said repeatedly during this campaign, "You don't have to be a nuclear physicist to figure out who will get the most votes in Toronto. But I am running to establish a credible liberal opposition in the AFT. Despite Al Shanker's smear tactics, and despite the fact that he has a hundred times the money and staff that I do, all reform movements must start somewhere, and ours will start in Toronto."

In view of Shanker's newly emerging policies for the AFT, delegates who are opposed to those policies have an ethical right to exercise their own best judgment when they get to Toronto, regardless of promises made beforehand.

Although Shanker has used smear tactics and red-baiting in his other campaigns, he has not used it in this campaign before his May-June mailing. It is also clear that Shanker will not permit locals and state federations to act as freely and autonomously as they have in the past. Watch for a change in the Constitution, to permit trusteeships.

In several recent pronouncements, Shanker has raised racist questions in a way which is new. He hailed an article by a conservative writer, extolling the virtues of an all-Black elitist high school back in the days of segregation in Washington, D.C.

(continued on p. 2)

## SELDEN, SELF-DETERMINATION & SECRET BALLOT

# The UAC position

by RACHEL DUFFEY, CHAIRMAN  
UNITED ACTION CAUCUS, AFT

The United Action Caucus (UAC) of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) will be going to the American Federation of Teachers Convention in Toronto, Canada, August 19-23, 1974, with certain recommendations from the Steering Committee based on recent developments and committed to the basic platform as outlined in the 1973 Convention.

The Steering Committee, as a result of a meeting on April 28, 1974, has decided upon this course of action to best implement union democracy in the AFT.

"In view of the serious differences between President David Selden and Vice President Albert Shanker on union policy,

the Steering Committee of the UAC recommends to the caucus that the UAC endorse the candidacy of David Selden for the presidency of the AFT.

"The UAC will continue:

- to operate as an independent caucus, both during and after the 1974 Convention,
- to push issues which are basic to the caucus,
- to run candidates who will raise these issues."

Recently, issues have begun to focus and

(continued on page 6)

## Selden (continued from page 1)

He also has been talking about "finding a substitute for bussing."

Delegates who find these recent policy statements disturbing, and who feel that they did not know about them at the time they made commitments to Shanker, have a moral obligation to vote their consciences.

### TEACHER ISSUES

Shanker charges as a part of his red-baiting attack, that I have introduced extraneous issues, and that he, Shanker, stands for teacher issues. Yet it was Al Shanker who refused to back Mr. Nixon's opponent in 1972. There were certainly teacher issues involved there. McGovern favored more money for education, and the right of teachers to strike. Nixon was opposed to both.

Immediately following the election, Shanker was instrumental in forming the conservative Coalition for a Democratic Majority, which is committed totally to Senator Henry Jackson for President in 1976. Jackson

AFT President  
David Selden  
joins pickets  
in Newark



supported the war all the way, and still supports higher expenditures for the military establishment -- and how much would that leave for education? Yet Shanker accuses me of raising extraneous issues when I talk about the war in Southeast Asia.

It will be remembered that even the late Education Commissioner James E. Allen Jr.,

when asked at an Office of Education staff meeting if he thought the war in Southeast Asia was harmful to education, truthfully replied in the affirmative. For his candor Allen was fired by Nixon, a result which he may have anticipated. But Allen, unlike Shanker, could see that the war was having a ruinous effect on American school children.

The AFT convention in Toronto begins on August 18th. For many it will not be a pleasant time. For many others it may be a time to remember in shame. But nevertheless I say, Toronto can be a time of rebirth of liberalism in the AFT.

## MILITANT STRUGGLES OR POLITICAL DEALS...

# Which way college teachers unionism?

by WALTER GROSS, EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER, PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS, AFT-NEA, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Over the past few years college teachers have joined the labor union movement in growing numbers. As college education has become a mass phenomenon, rather than a grouping of finishing schools for the elite, college professors have lost their elite status and have more and more come to realize that an M.A. or Ph.D. is worthless when it comes to paying the landlord and the supermarket. Further, college teaching has lost, in large measure, its idyllic, rural, ivory tower status, and the nature of the job has more and more become one of training future technicians--both scientific and social--for a highly technological society.

The largest college union local in the country is the Professional Staff Congress (P.S.C.) of the City University of New York (CUNY), formed from a merger of the former AFT and NEA affiliates. As soon as the merged P.S.C. was formed, it had to battle for its very survival against an intransigent Board of Higher Education (BHE) which refused to accept the validity of the merger and demanded that a time-wasting and costly election for merger be held.



The CUNY faculty voted (overwhelmingly) for merger, but the BHE refused to bargain in good faith for a new contract. The faculty worked without a contract for 13 months until the fall of 1973, when a rather poor contract, with weakened grievance procedures, salary increases below the cost-of-living, and no real defenses against loss of tenure rights, was signed despite significant opposition.

### BACKROOM DEAL: ONLY HALF A VICTORY

Right after the signing of the contract, the BHE unilaterally voted in a policy of tenure quotas, aimed at severely limiting the number of new faculty (therefore including, one might add, most minority-group and women faculty members) who could receive tenure. The union leadership, not overly popular but as yet unchallenged by any viable opposition caucus, decided to "fight" this monstrous decision by attempting to make backroom deals with the most sleazy politicians. Having endorsed Abe Beame for mayor on the grounds he was going to win anyway(!), the leadership then hoped to get some benefits out of this endorsement.

The major gain made was the rescinding of the tenure quota policy by the new BHE. This shows what a unionized faculty can accomplish. Compare this, for example, to the total destruction of tenure at Bloomfield College in N.J. But the cure may turn

out to be worse than the disease, for the BHE decided that while rescinding the quotas, it reserved the right to "review" the entire CUNY tenure policy!

### WORKERS BEST ALLIES

The crux of the problem, both for the P.S.C. in particular--and to the entire teachers' movement, in fact--is how the battle will be fought, and who will be chosen as allies. For in the long run, the tremendous gains that the teachers have made through our unions can easily be wiped out if the union leadership continues, a la Albert Shanker, to play ball with Establishment and even right-wing politicians, rather than seeking unified, militant struggle along with fellow workers and their families, especially the students, for overall educational improvements. The truth of this statement is nowhere more apparent than in New York, where, because of the Open Admissions Program and free tuition, the overwhelming majority of the students are sons and daughters of working people if not actually workers themselves.

Yet the Open Admissions and free tuitions are being threatened, along with the entire City University budget. In addition, the Open Admissions Program, sabotaged by large classes and totally inadequate facilities, amounts to a cruel hoax for many thousands of our students. The current union leadership has shown a willingness--again, a la Shanker--to moderate its demands for making the program viable, in exchange for a relatively few crumbs in terms of salaries (and not enough!) and crumbling job "security."

So long as the present crew of political hacks can control the fate of our public colleges, the threats to teachers and students alike will not diminish. To sell out the interests of one for "gains" given to the other is only to fight over the division of an already shrinking pie. Only a massive, democratic rank-and-file movement, both in the college unions and in the entire AFT, can defeat the current anti-education and anti-teacher offensive.

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# NLRB decision hits AMC

by LABOR TODAY STAFF

In a precedent-setting decision, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has ruled definitively that workers have the right to organize and agitate on behalf of rank and file caucuses of their choice, free of company "interference, restraint or coercion."

In a sweeping statement issued last week, the NLRB held that an employer may not "threaten or discharge" its employees for engaging in activities against speed-up and for better working conditions, whether or not that activity is sponsored by the union itself.

Ted Silverstein, an activist in the National Auto Workers Rank and File Action Caucus (AWAC), hailed the NLRB decision as "a major victory for the rank and file." "This decision will help auto workers everywhere to stand up and fight for their rights," he said. "Freedom of speech is a keystone of American democracy, and it's time the auto manufacturers recognized that fact," he added. Silverstein is also active in UAW Local 75's "Black and White Getting It Together" Caucus.

The ruling came in response to a petition filed by Jon Melrod and Albert Guzman, both of Milwaukee, who were fired last year by the American Motors Company for distributing leaflets and wearing and selling T-shirts that read "Stop Speed-up."

## REINSTATEMENT & BACK PAY WITH INTEREST

The order, calling the AMC action "McCarthy-like tactics," instructs the company to 1) reinstate the two immediately; 2) pay full back wages from the date of firing with 6% interest, with no loss of seniority; and 3) post a legal document in the plant for 60 days announcing the reinstatement of Melrod and Guzman, and stating "We will not in any manner interfere with, restrain, or coerce our employees in the exercise of their rights to self-organization, to form, join or assist the UAW or any other labor organization of their choice...or to engage in concerted actions for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection."

The ruling is the first NLRB or other judicial decision that specifically protects the activities of rank and file groups and other organizations of workers under the provisions of the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947.

## THREE SETS OF SNOOPERS

Melrod and Guzman were members of the Fightback caucus at the Milwaukee body plant of AMC. After the caucus began a campaign against speed-up and other hazardous working conditions in the plant last year, the company hired three separate private detective agencies to investigate their backgrounds.

But NLRB Judge Thomas Wilson chastised AMC for using "hearsay" information as an excuse to fire the two, and went on to say, "...with its (AMC's) McCarthy-like belief that any university student was automatically a member of SDS, one is forced to the conclusion that there may well be some valid grounds that college educated applicants for employment should deliberately withhold information regarding educational achievement."



Wilson noted that Guzman quit Briggs & Stratton voluntarily and that he "may or may not" have deliberately withheld his employment there from the application.

## FIRED FOR "SCURRILOUS" ACTIVITY

The transcript of the NLRB proceedings, however, makes it clear that the firings were based on the political activities of the two and their caucus against speed-up and for better conditions, not their faulty applications.

Raymond A. Martin, director of Industrial Relations at the plant, was asked why he brought up the question of distribution

of anti-speed-up leaflets in his testimony in defense of the company. He replied, "Because I thought we had a stipulation which was much more serious than somebody just falsifying his application. We had a condition in the plant that could have deteriorated and gotten worse."

He went on to say that the two were really interested in "shutting down the whole plant."

The firings were preceded by weeks of harassment and intimidation. "Stop Speed-up" T-shirts were confiscated by guards, and the two were prohibited from speaking to each other and to other workers.

Copies of leaflets and other material distributed by the two were offered in evidence, and Wilson said he found nothing "scurrilous" about them. He said they related to "wages, hours and working conditions."

## RANK AND FILE ANGRY

Although Local 75 of the UAW took no official position in support of Melrod and Guzman, rank and file workers were angered by the firings, which they saw from the beginning as a form of anti-labor, political harassment. One member of the Executive Board of the local composed and distributed his own leaflet after the firing, saying that, "I do not believe the words 'Fight Speed-up' are objectionable to anyone except perhaps the company... if this is just cause for disciplinary action by the company then the company can start here."

## Right to Appeal Gained

# RANK & FILE ENTERS SUIT, OPPOSES CONSENT DECREE

by John Kailin, Co-Editor,  
LABOR TODAY

Rank and file steel workers challenging the recent consent decree allegedly ending race and sex discrimination in the steel industry have won the right to oppose the decree in court.

The consent decree was opposed by the rank and file, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Organization of Women (NOW) because it was vastly inferior to an earlier decision in Fairfield, Alabama. The Fairfield Decision was widely hailed for its detailed and thoroughgoing approach to ending racist, discriminatory employment practices.

The consent decree, which applies only to the rest of the steel industry, was arrived at in concert between the steel companies, the leadership of the United Steel Workers and the U.S. Government. It was widely condemned as a step backwards by rank and file groups when it appeared in April.

George Edwards, Chairman of the National Steelworkers Rank and File Committee (NSRFC), was the plaintiff in the case on behalf of rank and file steelworkers. The decision allowing individuals to intervene, was issued June 7 by Judge Pointer in the Northern District of Alabama.

Edwards said "Our main contention is that the decree violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, allowing the steel companies to minimize their responsibility and subvert the law. We agree with NAACP and NOW that the decree is illegal in that it forces Black, Spanish-surname and women steelworkers to waive their rights under the federal law in order to obtain back pay."

He added, "Our committee has a long list of other ways in which the decree hurts both minority and all other members of USWA. We plan to go ahead and fight these issues within the union. For example, a two step plantwide seniority system should be instituted that would allow anyone with plantwide seniority to bid on any job in his department. If no one bids on that job, it should be posted at the plant gate to be filled by plantwide seniority. Once the oldest man takes that job he should be able to bid for any job that opens up in his new department. He should receive his old wages, plus incentive, until he is able to reach that rate on his new job, with no time limitation.

"It is our information that all over the industry the company has begun a drive for new lines of promotion. These limit the use of plantwide seniority and this must be resisted."

ONLY UNITY OF TEACHERS, PARENTS AND LABOR CAN SAVE OUR SCHOOLS...

# Every union member has a stake

by CLAUDIA PURNELL, GERTRUDE BERGER  
and TOBEY PRINZ, MEMBERS AFT LOCAL 1,  
CHICAGO

As the two largest teachers' unions prepare for their annual conventions this summer, teachers and parents are witnessing--and millions of children are suffering under--the rapid deterioration of the nation's educational system.

In the industrial cities where most children are taught, parents are learning that Johnny can't read. Workers facing unemployment due to runaway shops, or lacking training to take new jobs when old jobs are cut out, see an even bleaker future for their children, unless some changes are made soon.

## "JOHNNY CAN'T READ": WHO PROFITS?

It is no accident that Johnny can't read: educational directions are planned by those who govern our industry, not by parents or teachers. The planners' main concern is to perpetuate their own position in society. To do that, they need to keep the lid on independent minds. If Johnny can read, then he might start to think...worse still, he might join a union. The two together are a boss' nightmare.

In addition, bombs have a higher priority than well educated children. American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President David Selden states that only a miserably inadequate slice of the nation's wealth is allocated to education. Yet fiscal 1975 has the largest military budget ever requested by the Defense Department for one year: \$92.9 billion, plus a supplementary \$6.2 billion for 1974. A "think tank" has estimated that the figure will leap to \$142 billion annually by 1980.

"The post-war defense budget is the first one in U.S. history to increase, rather than decrease after the 'conclusion' of a war," says the Chicago Sun-Times (Feb. 5, 1974). No wonder the U.S. is No. 1 in military power, but only No. 14 in literacy.

## Our tax money goes to business not for education

Now that Nixon and his corporate friends have run the economy into a ditch, they are seeking to place the burden of the crisis onto the backs of working people. Education as well as living standards is under attack.

The majority of the nation's public schools experienced a decline in real financial support during the past two school years, and the financial burden is falling primarily on those who pay personal property and real estate taxes. State and local governments pay more than 90% of costs, the federal government only about 7.8%. Mr. Nixon says he wants to get "big government off our backs" (i.e., "save the tax money for bailing out floundering corporations") while curtailing or abolishing 100 social service and educational programs, vetoing some as "inflationary."

At the same time, \$50 billion has been cut from federal taxes by methods boosting corporate profits. Dr. Helen D. Wise, president of the National Education Association, correctly feels we should be

*Education*



AFT members picketed White House protesting Nixon's Education policies

pushing for at least one-third of public education costs to be paid from the federal budget.

## NEEDED FUNDS AXED BY NIXON

Nixon-sponsored legislation is cutting off the flow of federal money to industrial areas by changing the guidelines that determine who is eligible for poverty money. Remember, its our money--parent, teacher or worker--that is involved.

For example, more than 50,000 Chicago children have enrolled in federally funded programs with small classes and intense individual instruction in reading and mathematics. They made considerable gains in both areas. Parents, teachers and community organizations fought to get those funds. Yet the racist Nixon laws will deprive these inner-city children, who have already been short-changed the most, the chance to continue their rapid improvement.

The House of Representatives recently passed a bill that will deprive Chicago schools of up to 20% of the money they received under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (more than \$8 million annually).

## From segregation to "push-out"

The Nixon budget proposes a slash from \$234 million to \$75 million in aid to school districts undergoing desegregation. Ostensibly, this is because the demand for money has declined as the southern districts have eliminated segregation. Rubbish! Qualified Black teachers in some southern cities are being replaced with inexperienced first-year white teachers recruited from out-of-state. The Black teachers are forced to work as substitutes for \$20 a day.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference is filing complaints with the U.S.

Office for Civil Rights, Health and Social Services in New Orleans on behalf of these teachers. Many Black students have also been "pushed-out" by segregationist-minded officials.

## ANTI-BUSING: "PANDERING TO RACISM"

Twenty years after the Supreme Court's historic banning of "separate but equal" schools, the House has passed Nixon's anti-busing legislation. The legislation pandering to racism in an effort to win support for the sinking Nixon, will "Seek to drive a wedge which could do more harm and is more dangerous than any wedge we have ever had before," said Massachusetts Senator Brooke, asking senators how they could teach school children respect for law when senators show contempt for it.

Another face of racism is seen in the increasing cost of higher education which is having a crippling impact on minority students. Even junior colleges are instituting tuition fees. All students of working class origin, as well as minority youth, are the ones who are hurting the most.

For example, tuition at the University of Illinois Chicago Circle campus jumped \$300 from 1971 to 1973. At Loyola University (private) it jumped from under \$1500 before 1969 to \$2100 during 1973-74. The Illinois Scholarship Commission predicts average yearly college costs of between \$6000 and \$7000 "in the not-too-distant future." These costs force the students onto the market of rapidly diminishing jobs. Part of Nixon's game plan, in fact.

## FIGHT BACK: TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Teachers within and without the labor movement have a serious responsibility to fight back, to stop the erosion of the 1954 victory against racism and to protect the public school system itself. All teachers are being caught in the racist dragnet.

"...a couple of years ago many (school) boards began frantically reducing teacher and supervisory staffs (resulting in increased class size), eliminating remedial and enrichment programs, and, in some cases, even closing elementary schools. As one school board hatchet man openly admitted, 'We can cut supplies and equip-



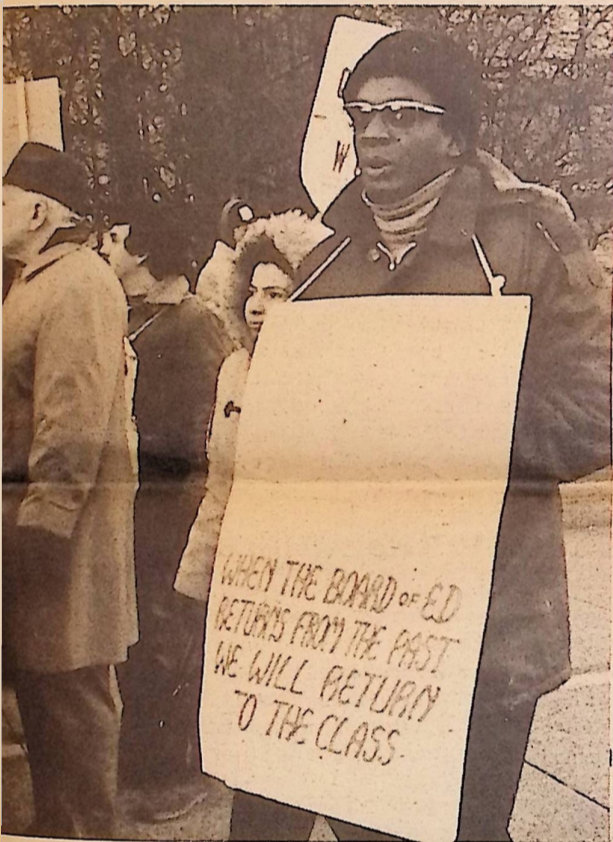
# in teachers' struggles

ment, but the only place to go for large sums of money is the teaching staff," reports the AFT's John Oliver (*American Teacher*, March, 1973).

Oliver, director of the Collective Bargaining Service Department of the AFT, says boards of education are insisting that teachers surrender benefits won in previous years. He calls this "provocation and, in some cases, tantamount to a 'lock-out.'"

## BACK TO THE 19th CENTURY?

"Some federation locals find themselves in the same position as American workers who joined together in the Nineteenth Century. The unions' primary reason for existence then was to fight wage cuts," Oliver says.



Teacher strikers in Philadelphia won fight to maintain union by building community-wide unity of parents and teachers



Chicago teachers held alternative schools to win parent support

In the face of this assault, teacher militancy has intensified. From 1960 to 1971 there were 631 teacher strikes. Recent years have seen large cities rocked by long strikes, such as in Philadelphia, San Francisco, Kansas City, St. Louis and Chicago. The National Education Association cites these primary issues in these often bitter struggles: 1) the wage freeze; 2) abolition of positions and specific teaching areas (budget trimming); 3) cut-backs in programs; 4) increased class loads; 5) blame for non-progress of pupils; 6) refusal of boards to negotiate; and 7) need for teacher control over curriculum.

Even small towns with NEA or AFT affiliations are threatened, as in Hortonville, Wisconsin (population 3,000) where 84 teachers were fired and replaced with scabs. There, too, was racism, harassment and mass arrests.

At the college level, teacher tenure is in jeopardy, as in Carbondale, Illinois, where 104 tenured teachers lost their jobs. Lower echelon positions in many universities and colleges are being abolished so that professors may get raises.

## UNITED FIGHT BRINGS VICTORY

The greatest unity of teachers, parents and students to effectively work for common aims is needed. Such unity occurred in the 1973 Chicago Teachers Union strike. Well over 90% of the teachers supported it, and the entire Black community knew

it had an ally in the teachers who set up alternative schools. That combination spelled victory for parents, teachers and students.

## SHANKERISM: RECIPE FOR DEFEAT

A different, losing, approach has been offered by Albert Shanker, presidential candidate for the American Federation of Teachers. Instead of mobilizing to defeat racist education cutbacks, Shanker spent time, effort and money to defeat the local minority-group candidates for school board in Manhattan District 1.

Shanker's "leadership" will not help teachers face loss of jobs and increased class size (speed-up). It will not build sound bi-lingual, bi-cultural programs. We believe that the program of the United Action Caucus, including its endorsement of David Selden for president of the American Federation of Teachers should be supported. We need enlightened leadership in both the AFT and the NEA for militant organization and fight-back.

We need the combined power of teachers, parents and the labor movement to turn our educational system around. Only the corporate interests profit from an inadequate educational system.

*(Editors' note: We invite our readers to join this discussion on the crisis in our schools. Please drop us a line sharing your opinions on this important issue.)*

## PARENT-TEACHER COALITION CAN BEAT HOLY ALLIANCE

# Shanker & the N.Y. politicians

by ROBERT GREENBERG, TEACHERS ACTION COMMITTEE, AFT LOCAL 2 and ISSAR SMITH, PARENT

Before 1968, minority parents in New York (largely Black and Puerto Rican) struggled for integrated schools as a means of getting better education for their children. While the *de facto* segregated New York City public school system was providing inferior education to all children, minority children were especially crippled. By the late '60's the struggle for integration had been defeated due to the outright opposition of the Board of Education and the city government, aided by the indifference of the leadership of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), Local 2, of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

By 1968, the parents of three communities in New York City had decided that since they couldn't obtain quality integrated education, they could get better schools for their children by fighting for community control. The Board of Education opposed this struggle as strongly as they had opposed the movement for integration. Albert Shanker, President of the UFT, this time actively opposed the parents; and he pulled 60,000 teachers out of the schools for over two months to defeat the parents' struggle.

TAC BORN

The UFT strike of 1968 alienated thous-

ands of teachers from the parents of the children they teach, divided minorities from whites, and has prevented a unified struggle for better education in the NYC schools since that time. A movement of rank and file teachers, Teachers for Community Control (TCC), opposed to the course that the Shanker leadership had taken, joined with parents in opening the schools and teaching the children during the strike. TCC was the forerunner of the present rank and file caucus within the UFT, the Teachers' Action Caucus (TAC).

## STRUGGLE FOR COMMUNITY CONTROL

The struggle for community control flared up again in 1970 during the elections for community school board in District #1, Lower East Side, Manhattan. The students of the district are 73% Puerto Rican, 14% Black, 6% Asian and 7% white. The UFT leadership poured thousands of dollars into a campaign against community candidates in which the UFT-backed slate won 7 of 9 positions. In the second school board election (1973), the UFT again defeated the parents' candidates with the use of members' funds, this time capturing 6 of 9 seats. But the UFT-dominated board was dismissed early this year because a federal court found that its election was the result of disenfranchisement of minority, especially parent, voters.

(continued on p. 7)

READER SAYS, "LT STORY NOT LIKE IT WAS."

# CLUW: "A Dream Come True"

by FLORENCE L. CRILEY, UE  
INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE  
CHICAGO

I feel compelled to write regarding your article on the first National Conference of Labor Union Women (LT, April 1974). It not only did not go into the CLUW program in depth, but this article could do much harm in picturing CLUW as an organization led by "staffers" and bureaucrats "who give their allegiance to Meany, Fitzsimmons and Woodcock."

This is not only extremely unfair but also simply not true. I was a member of the National Planning Committee (NPC) and had an opportunity to meet and work with the women who were its members. It is true, many have full-time jobs with their international unions, some were elected officers.

## UNIONS PUT UP "SEED MONEY"

This conference could not even have gotten off the ground without their hard work, zeal and complete devotion to the cause of women's equality. The rank and file didn't have the money or the time to go to the many exhausting meetings held in Detroit and Chicago--much less the equipment, money and facilities needed to get out the volume of work necessary.

The unions supplied "seed money" which could not have been obtained in any other way. Other union contributions paid for the mass printings, mailings, long-distance phone calls, signs, and all the rest of the expenses that are involved in a convention of over 3,000 people.

This conference was a giant undertaking and would have been complete chaos if it had not been run in a disciplined atmosphere by experienced trade unionists. At the Saturday evening plenary session, I marvelled at the patience and good sense displayed by the chairperson, Linda Tarr-Whelan, and her co-worker Elizabeth McPike, who was the elected parliamentarian for the session. There were absolutely no "offensive bureaucratic maneuverings," and the meeting was conducted in a most democratic manner.

In stark contrast was the behavior of some of the delegates at the microphones: pushing and shoving to scream into the mikes, calling for endless questions, points of order, points of personal privilege, etc., as stalling tactics, well into the late hours of the evening.

## GETTING OFF ANTI-MALE KICK

The National Planning Committee made no effort to avoid "alienating the most guilty among the national leadership of the AFL-CIO, the UAW and the Teamsters." It simply put to good use, time which would otherwise have been used to lambast the men in leadership of the unions. The NPC got straight to the business of making our weight felt in the unions to combat male supremacy.

It does no good to lament the point on the floor of a convention that there is male supremacy, if there is no program discussed which will combat male supremacy and form real working class unity in the shops and unions.

CLUW's statement of purpose very wisely stated that women members should work within their union structure to benefit

women workers. As union members, what other solution would you suggest? Maybe, as some of the delegates suggested, we should have a trade union of women only to solve our problems. What a hare-brained, divisive, disruptive scheme this would be. Why not an all-Black, or an all-Chicano union, or a union with no leadership at all?

What the leaders were trying to do was to get off the anti-male kick and get onto a constructive action program. Your surmised that this would result in weakening unity of men and women workers in unions is utter nonsense! It is the best way to build solid unity as equals with men in the fight to strengthen the unions.

Some male union members may not have been so enthusiastic about women beginning to play the kind of role outlined by CLUW, but they saw to it that women were elected in many locals and their expenses paid to go to the conference.

The women's fight in unions will probably parallel closely that which has broadened the participation of Blacks in policy-making and leadership. We must make our strength felt in the union and if it takes a fight with the leadership, male or female--so be it!

Your caption for the picture of the leaders stated these were National Coordinating Committee (NCC) members. They are not. They are the national officers of CLUW. The NCC is made up of members (up to four) elected by their own union delegates in caucus at the conference, hardly an undemocratic device engineered

to keep rank and file delegates from leadership.

The reporters made no mention of the National Steering Committee, which will have 17 at-large members besides the officers. They were nominated by members of the NCC at the conference. Nor was there any mention that each state delegation elected three State Conveners. When they get the completed report from CLUW officers, they will start the organization of state chapters and local groups where "the rank and file issues," as your writers put it, will become the base for national CLUW policies, a result which the NPC had in mind in the first place.

The tone of the article was much the same as that of publications which do not wish, or seek, a solution to the problems of working women but would rather split the unity that working women found in this conference. LABOR TODAY is too fine a labor paper to allow such negative, anti-union reporting.

I hope this new-found unity of women will give us all the inspiration and courage to organize and build this organization to make a long-overdue movement a smashing success.

As a former rank and filer who worked in shops, and as a "staffer" who helped plan the conference and who has waited for almost 40 years of her life for such an occasion, I salute these women who had a wonderful dream and then courageously stuck with it through many obstacles to see it come to fruition.

## United Action Caucus (continued from page 1)

the UAC will be taking definitive positions immediately preceding the Convention.

### MERGER & SELF-DETERMINATION

An example of this is a projection of the merger position and its relationship to developments since last August.

The cessation of merger talks between the American Federal of Teachers and the National Education Association has brought a new impetus toward the organization of the unorganized.

The reality of the merger situation is that the local option for merger will be recognized by the AFT, as well as state-wide or district mergers. This position on merger will find greater acceptance in many locals, whether they are the majority or minority locals. The position of no self-determination by locals has been an integral part of the objection to merger.

### RESTORE SECRET BALLOT

A resolution for the restoration of the secret ballot will be approved by the UAC. The reinstatement of the secret ballot would be a step toward restoring the climate necessary for the convention delegates to exercise completely the legislative capacity they hold in the union without fear of reprisal.

The move by the Executive Council for an increase in the number of Vice Presidents (from 20 to 30) will probably be opposed by the UAC, for the adopted platform of the 1973 convention reasserts the position on "top-heavy" leadership domination.

On the other hand, the Teacher's Cause proposal on Executive Council structure with 20 Vice Presidents (10 regionally elected and 10 at large) would institute modifications that would give fairer regional representation than now exists.

An increase in dues will meet with strong dissent, for it will be interpreted as support for the enlarged hierarchy and not as new money needed for organizational efforts.

The pursuit of collective bargaining for all public employees is long overdue. States have not furnished enough good legislation in this area. The Federation needs concentration in this field. There is no doubt that the public employee unions need the protective cover of the NLRB as described by U.S. Representative William Ford (D-Mich.)

A stronger stand on racism, impeachment, Vietnam-Cambodia military spending and easing of inflation are also paramount among the concerns of the UAC.

An example of the weakness of position on impeachment is described by Vice President Albert Shanker in his May 26 paid column in the New York Times. The AFL-CIO "restraint" position is incredible to justify no "improper pressures" on the impeachment inquiry. The "scandals known as Watergate" go on and on and we are relieved that V.P. Shanker and the AFL-CIO Council are beginning to notice them. The AFT needs a stronger commentary. It is hoped that our Convention will act rather than react to these issues.



SCIENTISTS AND PSYCHIATRISTS FUEL BIGOTRY

# Minority children suffer school racism

by DOROTHY BURNHAM, LOCAL 2334 AFT-NEA

The expression of racism in the public schools of the United States has taken many forms. Since the founding of the country, the pattern of segregated schools for minority students--Afro-American, Native American, Chicano, Puerto Rican--has persisted. In the 20 years since the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing formal segregation, desegregation of the schools both North and South has been half-hearted and for the most part ineffective.

Public officials from President Nixon who openly campaigned against busing to the state legislators to local city officials and boards of education, have given their support to those who seek to maintain and extend the system of segregation.

Segregated schools as part of the general pattern of segregation have thus become a major structural part of racist America. While some white parents have been diverted into the struggle to maintain segregated schools, school standards have plummeted in all schools and proportionately less of the national budget has been spent on education for all American children. The drive to continue a racist and divided society has been further bolstered up by the wide dissemination of the ideology of the intellectual inferiority of Afro-American and other minority children.

## STALE GARBAGE IN NEW BAG

New "scientific" literature appears or is resurrected which purports to show the genetic inferiority of Afro-American children. The views of Jensen, Shockley, Herrnstein have been widely publicized in the popular press and on TV. Jensen maintains that IQ tests show Afro-American children have lower learning capacities than white children; Shockley advocates the sterilization of these so-called low IQ parents; and Herrnstein says, "As technology advances, then the tendency to be unemployed may run in the genes of a family about as certainly as bad teeth do now."

The ideas of these men have been more than adequately challenged and refuted by geneticists, psychologists and other scientists in "Science", "Scientific American", the "Harvard Educational Review" and other journals. Yet we find these false and backward ideas being widely promoted and used as an ideological basis for the maintenance of segregation, racism and the unequal treatment of minorities in the school system. Cutbacks in school programs and compensatory programs for minority children have been excused on the basis that these reports show minority children cannot benefit from them because "low intellectual capacity is in the genes."

## PSYCHOLOGICAL DOUBLETALK

In addition to these attacks on the schooling of minority children, the psychologists

We also have seen what an increasingly united community--Black, Puerto Rican, Chinese and white, union teachers and parents--can do to Shankerism, a "social disease."

have come up with other excuses which purport to show why the schools have failed to educate minority children. We are told that they have learning disabilities which relate to their homes, family structure, early training and their neighborhoods.

Fortunately, those teachers who have critically examined and rejected the ideas which purport to show that the children who sit in front of them every day are somehow inferior and unable to be educated, have shown that minority children given the same opportunities for learning can succeed in school.

The curricula from grade school to college is designed to promote and extend ideas of racial inferiority. History texts are replete with misinformation and half truths about minority groups in America. The contributions of all groups to culture and civilization have been distorted and minimized or omitted.

In recent years the curricula in many of the public schools across the country have been watered down, especially in areas where there is a large proportion of working class and minority children. Students without proper guidance and unable to anticipate the consequences are allowed to graduate from high school without algebra and geometry or solid grounding in the sciences. Thousands of these children are thus effectively shut out of the scientific, medical and technological careers.

Omitted from many curricula are the English as a Second Language courses which are essential to the education of children who cannot speak English when they begin their schooling. The drop-out rate of Chicano, Native American and Puerto Rican students from the public schools is directly related to this crass neglect of their language needs.

Nowhere is racism more evident than in the hiring patterns of the public schools. At every level, minority peoples are either not represented or are sadly under-



represented. Recent affirmative action advances have made some changes but these have been minimal. A number of the teacher union locals have pressed for an end to discrimination in hiring. However, this issue must become a high priority national struggle in the union.

Racism adversely affects the entire school community. Parents and teachers who should be natural allies in the fight to upgrade the schools are split apart on issues of racism. Union teachers vitally interested in the improvement of working conditions in the schools--smaller classes, adequate space, special classes for those students who need it--look to the parents for support.

These necessary alliances with all parents can be made if the union teachers effectively join with parents in the struggle against racism in all its forms.

## Shanker & N.Y. politicians

(continued from p. 5)

In a special election held the 14th of May, the UFT leadership conducted a hate-filled campaign against the minority community and used even more money to pull out the white, largely Jewish and elderly, vote. The result was a nominal "victory" (5 to 4), leaving in its wake a community divided on racial, ethnic and religious grounds, with increased animosity between union teachers and parents.

## PARENT-TEACHER VICTORY

We who have worked in the community campaign feel that the May 14 election was a victory for the parents and the children and ultimately for the teachers. More parents were involved in this campaign and more parents voted than ever before. A campaign organization was built that involved Puerto Ricans, Blacks, Asians and whites in a coalition that will not easily be broken. TAC, the UFT rank and file caucus, was actively involved in the campaign and helped to bring progressive teachers and parents closer together.

The attempts of minority communities in New York City to defeat racism and its deadly effects in the schools have been thwarted by an unholy alliance of city government, the major political parties, the Board of Education and the leadership of the UFT. The struggle in District #1 and the other minority communities has national importance because Albert Shanker has become a national figure. He heads the 65,000-member UFT, controls the 200,000-member N.Y. State United Teachers, holds a seat on the powerful executive council of the AFL-CIO, and by August of this year will head the 400,000-member AFT.

Rank and file teachers know Shankerism first hand. We have seen how he deals with any opposition. He has closed the pages of the New York Teacher and the American Teacher to dissent. He has set up elections so that one must gain 51% of the vote to gain any representation. He has eliminated secret balloting so he can check on the voting of delegates.

We, a teacher and a parent of District #1, have seen what Shankerism can do to a community struggling against racism and for a better future for our children.



# Raleigh demonstration to protest repression

Rank and file activists will gather in Raleigh, North Carolina on July 4 in the first national civil rights demonstration in the south since the death of Dr. Martin Luther King.

The demonstration, called by the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, will focus on the political frame-ups and trials of several movement organizers over the last few years, including Rev. Ben Chavis. Many recall how Textile organizer Boyd Payton was framed on a dynamite charge in the late 1950's.

The Alliance has called upon labor and all concerned citizens to make plans for

busloads or car loads of people from every area to take part.

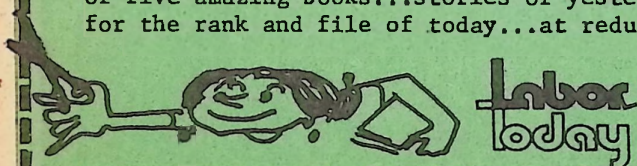
For more information contact the NAARPR, 150 Fifth Avenue, NYC 10011, (212) 243-8555 or Alliance director John Russell, State director, Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butcher Workmen, c/o Othow, 417 Hill St., Raleigh, N.C. 27610.

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