



Strike Rocks Quebec

The Canadian province of Quebec was rocked last month by a ten-day general strike, provoked by a government crackdown on the province's labor movement. The general strike was the second in as many months in Quebec, and ended on May 19 with at least partial victory for the workers.

This latest mass strike, which involved more than 150,000 workers, was sparked by the jailing of three Quebec union leaders on May 9. It led to the takeover of whole cities, the occupation of radio stations, and the mobilization of a huge proportion of the province's labor movement.

The three imprisoned leaders were Marcel Pepin, of the Confederation of National Trade Unions; Louis Labarge, of the Quebec Federation of Labor; and Yvon Charbonneau, of the Quebec Teachers Corporation.

The three had been sentenced to prison terms of one year for contempt of court. The charges stemmed from their roles in a general strike of 200,000 public employees in April, a strike provoked by government intransigence over negotiations for a new public employees contract,

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Editorial

Arms Control Shell Game

The strategic arms limitation agreement signed by the US and Russia during President Nixon's visit to Moscow has been hailed by "The New York Times" as a "light through the cloud of doom." In fact, the agreement is a fraud -- not a renunciation of power politics, but a reflection of them. Today, as in the past, the "great powers" have sought to use "disarmament" negotiations, not to guarantee peace, but rather to limit their arms expenses and gain advantages.

The terms of the agreement

are impressive on the surface. Each side agrees to limit its defensive anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system to covering only two locations -- instead of trying to protect each city and military site in an expensive arms race.

Moreover, each side agrees to freeze its offensive missiles at their present number for five years. This allows the US about 1,700 missiles, compared to about 2,200 for the Soviet Union. But because many of the US missiles are equipped with multiple warheads, allowing one missile

to deliver as many as 10 warheads, the US will have about 7,200 warheads compared to the Soviet Union's 2,200.

The ABM agreement is really a way of avoiding huge expenses for a weapons system that may not work. To protect a single location, as many as 200 ABM launchers are needed; the cost of protecting a whole population cannot be met by either the US or the Soviet Union. And if it could the chances are that new military knowledge would pro-

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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 outdated system of private profit, exploitation, and oppression. The capitalist ruling class, a tiny minority that controls the economy and politics alike, perpetuates its rule by dividing the working people against each other — white against black, male against female, skilled against unskilled, etc. The result is ever greater social chaos.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

New From IS Books

International Socialism No. 51

The latest issue of the theoretical magazine of the International Socialists of Great Britain. The current issue features a series of important articles on the crisis and revolutionary struggle in Ireland. Eamonn McCann analyzes the developments since 1968 and the failure of the Left, John Palmer discusses "The Gombeen Republic" in the South, Brian Trench attacks the "two nations" theory that claims separate nationhood for Catholics and Protestants. Also included is the program of the Socialist Workers Movement. **\$.50 per copy**

Puerto Rican Independence -- The Fight Against US Colonialism

An I.S. pamphlet on the struggle for independence and socialism in Puerto Rico. *Lori Larkin and Eric Langdon* discuss the history of colonialism in Puerto Rico, the mechanisms of US economic and political domina-

tion, and strategy for the Independence movement. **\$.75**

The Class Nature of Israeli Society

Haim Hanegbi, Moshe Machover, and Akiva Orr of the Israeli Socialist Organization (Matzpen) discuss Israel from a revolutionary anti-Zionist viewpoint. The pamphlet explains why Zionism is not a national liberation movement, and how Israel is ruled by a unique coalition of capitalists and labor bureaucrats held together by Zionist ideology. Also explained is Matzpen's position supporting the right of self-determination for both Israelis and Palestinians and the potential for revolutionary class struggle within Israel. **\$.35**

Imperialism and World Economy

N. Bukharin's classic study of imperialism and finance capital, written in 1915 and used by Lenin as a basis for his *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Long out of

print, this classic is now available in limited numbers. Discusses the growth and organization of world economy, nationalization and internationalization of capital, competition and war, and the struggle for socialism. **\$.25 (hard cover)**

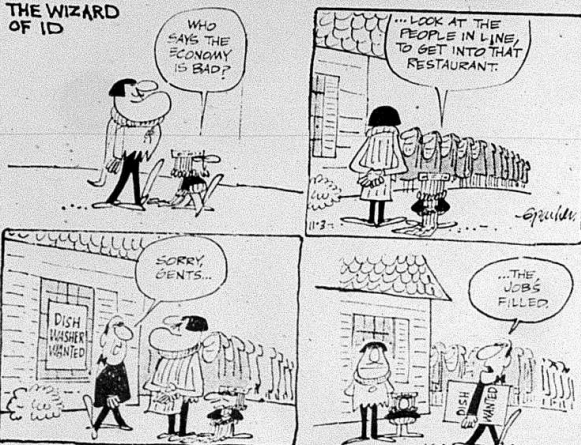
The Autobiography of Big Bill Hayward

Haywood's own story of the IWW and the struggle for "One Big Union." A classic text of working class and revolutionary history in the US. **\$.25**

The Price of My Soul

The autobiography of *Bernadette Devlin*, a leading participant in the Irish fight for freedom and the socialist movement both in Britain and Ireland. The author explains why her background, environment, and upbringing led her to revolutionary politics and why the struggle in Ireland is one of class, not religion. **\$.95**

THE WIZARD OF ID



Workers' Power 59

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Editor: Kit Lyons. Editorial Board: James Coleman, Joel Geier, Kit Lyons, Jack Trautman, Michael Stewart. Art Editor: Lisa Lyons.

14131 Woodward Ave., Highland Park, Michigan 48203. Subscriptions: \$3.50 per year. Supporting subscriptions: \$5. Foreign subscriptions: \$5. Bundles of 10 copies or more: 10c per copy. Introductory subscriptions: \$1 for 3 months. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of Workers' Power, which are expressed in editorials.

Published bi-weekly except semi-monthly in December and monthly in July and August by the International Socialist Publishing Co. at 14131 Woodward Ave., Highland Park, Mich. 48203. Second class postage paid at Detroit, Michigan. Send notice of undelivered copies or change of address to Workers' Power, 14131 Woodward Ave., Highland Park, Michigan 48203.

Workers' Power is a member of the Underground Press Syndicate (UPS) and a subscriber to Liberation News Service and G.I. Press Service.

Miners for Democracy Plan attack on Boyle

Lynn Jones

On the weekend of May 27-28, 500 delegates of the United Mine Workers rank and file opposition, the Miners for Democracy, met in Wheeling, West Virginia, to elect opposition candidates to run against Tony Boyle and his machine in the upcoming UMW election. Nearly all districts within the UMW were represented, with large delegations from Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

The group elected as their candidate for presidency of the UMW Arnold Miller of West Virginia, a long-time activist in the UMW and currently president of the Black Lung Association. Mike Turbovich and Harry Patrick are the candidates for the offices of vice-president and secretary-treasurer. Both are active in MFD. Turbovich was Jock Yablonski's campaign manager in 1969 and is currently chairman of MFD.

The delegates also decided the platform on which their candidates would run. Their platform includes such points as:

- (1) Move the International headquarters from Washington, D.C. back to the coalfields;
- (2) Reduce the salaries of International officers;
- (3) Retirement after 25 years of employment, regardless of age, with full benefits;
- (4) A minimum pension of \$200 per month for every miner;
- (5) Autonomy for UMW districts with election of district officers to replace appointment;
- (6) The formation of local safety committees with the right to shut down unsafe operations with no loss of pay for the miners on that shift;
- (7) Safety committees to be paid by the company and selected by the union;
- (8) A 6-hour day and 4-shift day with one full shift devoted to maintenance;
- (9) Equal retirement benefits for all miners, bituminous, anthracite, and Canadian. (Anthracite miners today receive only \$30 per month in pension benefits and have no medical coverage.)

The delegates also voted to support the program of the Black Lung Association and to support local anti-strip-mining groups. They passed a series of resolutions dealing with strip mining, including a call for the complete reclamation of all strip mined areas, to be carried out by UMW members only, and a call for the UMW to organize the unorganized miners, especially in the strip mines.

"You've always had rebels in the miners, but you've never had a rebel convention before." These were the

words of "Chip" Yablonski, youngest son of the murdered Jock Yablonski.

The convention was a high point in the rank and file upsurge taking place today in the American labor movement. No other rank and file opposition group has yet held such a large and impressive convention.

Still, in many ways the convention was a disappointment.

One of the most disturbing aspects of the convention was the red-baiting that ran through the convention. No literature could be sold or passed out on the convention site without the permission of the Rules Committee. Individuals were kicked out of the convention for selling their literature.

At several points, the leadership of the convention went into red-baiting sessions. One chairman stated, "Some people are trying to throw a little red paint on us. Well, you don't have anything to offer us. We know some of you are in attendance out there, but we'd just as soon you went home now."

Also disturbing was the continual use of the police. Police from Wheeling and local county sheriffs were in attendance as security forces, at the request of MFD leadership. In addition, the convention leadership stated that there were plainclothesmen circulating through the crowd to keep an eye on things, presumably listening to people's conversations and checking out the literature that people were reading and carrying around.

The continual police presence inhibited conversation and made many present nervous and tense. The feeling was that one was always being watched by someone.

In many ways the leadership of MFD ran the convention in a bureaucratic fashion. Speakers from the floor were cut off from the mikes on several occasions. In the session discussing platform, several speakers were cut off.

There was no vote taken on those suggestions on program that did come from the floor. Instead, the leadership referred the suggestions to the Plat-

form Committee, stating that a report would be made the following day.

However, no such report was ever made. Those who had made suggestions were told that the matters had been taken care of and that there could not possibly be any problem since everyone trusted everyone else.

Criticisms of such bureaucratic procedures came from the floor on the last day of the convention. Delegates from District 31 (Northern West Virginia) complained that the chair had taken nominations for vice-president while their district was in caucus.

Participation from the floor was limited, with many hours spent listening to speakers from the platform. Overall, such procedures had a dampening effect on the life of the convention.

The convention started with a friendly, enthusiastic atmosphere. After two days, enthusiasm had died out and many delegates were saying that they were glad the convention was over and that they hoped they didn't have to go to many more such conventions.

One young miner said that he was disappointed because the MFD convention so strongly resembled regular UMW conventions, with many of the speakers and motions coming from the platform.

The convention left many important questions un-discussed. There was no discussion of the current anti-labor legislation before Congress. There was no discussion of the group's attitude toward the wage freeze, even though it was the rank and file of the UMW that broke Nixon's wage freeze just a few months ago.

The MFD candidates, Miller, Turbovich, and Patrick, should be supported over the gangster crowd of Tony Boyle & Co. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that these men have no intention of building a real, mass rank and file movement inside the UMW. Their sights are aimed only at winning control of the International.

The entire discussion of platform

and candidates was carried on in terms of "How can we win." At no point did the leadership put forward a perspective for building a rank and file movement that can continue after this election and bring participation in union affairs to the rank and file of the union.

In order for real rank and file control of the UMW to be won, strong local groups must be built. In such groups discussions of questions of importance in the union could be held on an on-going basis and delegates could be elected to take their opinions to the national meetings of MFD. Unless such groups are built, MFD will remain a loose electoral movement -- a group that can be taken over and controlled by a bureaucratic clique.

The MFD leadership's continual praise of the government's role in putting UMW leaders in jail, in granting autonomy to District 2, and in taking trusteeship of union funds, at least raises the question that they see government intervention as an alternative to rank and file action. This question becomes especially critical given the lack of discussion in MFD about building a real rank and file movement based on local chapters and mass action.

Questions also have to be raised about the relationship of Chip Yablonski and other liberal Democratic Party politicians to MFD. The UMW has a history of relative independence from the Democratic Party and from politicians in general. If the leadership of MFD moves into an alliance with liberal elements of the Democratic Party now, the result can only be that the UMW will be firmly tied into the anti-labor policies of the Democratic Party as so many other unions have been.

A step from independence to dependence on liberal Democrats is not a step forward for miners.

Both the bureaucratic tendencies of the leadership of MFD and these steps toward alliances with various liberal politicians are steps that must be fought by the UMW rank and file.



Mike Turbovich (left), Arnold Miller (center), and Harry Patrick at Miners for Democracy Convention

The national convention of the United Auto Workers (UAW) in April did not arouse much interest among the rank and file of the union. Most auto workers were unconcerned with what took place there, and for good reason; unfortunately, little that was decided in Atlantic City will have much impact on their lives.

The convention did not even discuss the Wallace threat, despite the widespread pro-Wallace sentiment among UAW members -- support that led to a Wallace victory in Michigan a few weeks after the convention. The only viable response to Wallace would be to form an independent working class party. But the UAW leadership chose to stay in the center with the Democratic Party liberals.

It is the policies of these very liberals -- who have and can have no strategy for ending the social crisis -- that gave rise to Wallace in the first place. The American people are looking for a way out of the social crisis, but the Democratic Party has none to offer -- and neither does the UAW.

Moreover, there was no discussion of racism (except by Jordan Sims, United National Caucus candidate for President of the UAW), despite the fact that racism constitutes the greatest barrier to working class unity and despite the obvious racial inequities in auto (where less than 2 percent of the skilled trades are black). The UAW bureaucrats chose to ignore the obvious increase in anger and militancy among black workers.

It was only the United National Caucus (UNC), with its conference on racism held in February of this year [see *Workers' Power No. 52*], that began to confront this problem. It pointed the way that the UAW as a whole should go, but is not.

SPEEDUP IGNORED

The convention also failed to discuss Lordstown, Norwood, GMAD, and the whole speedup campaign and the revolt over working conditions that is taking place in the auto plants. (This despite the fact that the Norwood strikers leafleted the convention asking for help.) In fact, the only big-name speakers to even mention working conditions were politicians who came to the convention searching for votes.

Though the convention did discuss occupational health and safety, all it proposed was that the current national Occupational Health and Safety Law be beefed up. This law currently provides, according to Woodcock himself, for only one inspector per plant per 150 years, with minimal fines for violators. Even beefed up -- "with labor support" -- which is what the UAW calls for, it would still be inadequate.

What is needed at a minimum is:
 (1) *the right of locals to strike over working conditions;* (2) *the right of workers to refuse unsafe work;* and (3) *an election union safety inspector who has the right to shut down the line for safety violations -- all demands raised by the UNC in its daily news releases to the convention.*

But these proposals were not discussed. They couldn't be because they were "collective bargaining" reso-



Funny hats at the United Auto Workers convention in Atlantic City

Piecards Ignore UAW Ranks

Jack Trautman

lutions -- and all of those had been tabled to a special convention next year.

More important, they couldn't be discussed because to do so would have been to question the whole past 25 years of UAW history. It would have meant pointing out the degeneration and inadequacies of the UAW and beginning a different struggle. That struggle must place power on the shop floor, not with the international bureaucracy. It must be a struggle that begins to take on the power of the corporations. But the UAW leadership has no stomach for such a fight.

So instead, the rank and file face constantly deteriorating working conditions that the UAW does nothing about. Some workers like James Johnson -- who shot his foreman and two others -- are driven to desperate individual solutions. Secondary leaders who try to fight get axed by the corporations, with little resistance from the union.

Although the convention did discuss unemployment, all its proposals were once again *legislative*; the UAW as a union might as well not have existed. It didn't discuss fighting for a shorter work week and voluntary overtime, even though many workers are working 6-7 days per week, 9-10 hours per day, while layoffs and plant closures continue.

It didn't discuss workers occupying factories to prevent runaway plants, actions which workers in Britain have taken recently to protect their jobs. Such actions are, of course, illegal. But they were also illegal in the 30's

when the UAW was built by them and the government was incapable of stopping them.

Unemployment is one of the most explosive issues facing the union. Last year it lost 220,000 members, almost 15 percent of its membership. It has sustained comparable losses on only three other occasions: 1945 (16 percent), 1958 (22 percent), and 1960 (12 percent). But in each of these cases membership bounced right back the next year. This time the decline is continuing.

What lies behind the decline is the parallel decline in America's dominance of the world economy. To sustain high profits the corporations are forced to intensify exploitation. This is done by increasing the length of the working day and by speeding up production -- anything to get more work out of individual workers -- while cutting down the workforce. In this period of intensified attack, the UAW appears pitifully inadequate to defend its members.

Of course, the union wasn't always like that. It was once a fighting union. It had a shop-floor organization and real solidarity in the ranks. It followed the slogan "an injury to one is an injury to all." Today the word is "responsible unionism" or "good labor relations;" individuals are constantly being sacrificed, and all lose.

Workers used to have substantial control over line speeds: if there was a speedup there were direct job actions to counter it. Grievances were also frequently settled by direct action

and not by "writing them up" and suffering long periods until a ruling came down. Negotiations were conducted in public, not behind closed doors.

But all that was destroyed, largely during Reuther's leadership. When he came to power he set about to wipe out his opposition. He pushed through a resolution barring Communists from holding office in the UAW even before the McCarthy period. When the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Law was enacted, requiring unions to sign affidavits swearing they had no Communist leadership, John L. Lewis began a boycott of the affidavits. But Reuther signed and broke the boycott movement.

Militant locals under the leadership of oppositionists were not supported by the International. The union failed to process grievances of anti-Reutherites, and went out of its way to make militant stewards and committeemen who were rocking the boat look bad.

As soon as Reuther had consolidated his power, the 1948 negotiations with GM were held in private for the first time. Alfred Sloan, then head of GM, found the new procedure much to his liking:

"In previous years, our collective bargaining had come to resemble a public political forum in which the union fed a stream of provocative statements to the press, and we felt obliged to answer publicly. The privacy of the 1948 negotiations made their tone more realistic from the start."

"REALISM"

This "realism" has been the pattern ever since. For years the union has been granting concessions on working conditions in return for higher wages. Of course, those wages have been taken out of the hides of the workers in the form of speedup.

So, where is the union today? The UAW leadership claims to be carrying out a policy of social unionism which makes them different from other union bureaucrats. But what is this social unionism?

They have no program to deal with the social and economic crisis facing America today. They remain locked in a bankrupt capitalist political party which is incapable of offering any solutions but reactionary ones. They turn their heads in the other direction and refuse to look at the carnage and brutality in the plants, and they allow those who try to fight to be picked off by the corporations.

That is where the UAW is at today. ■

Correction

The article "The Louis Smith Case: Black Union Militant Framed" in *Workers' Power No. 57* incorrectly named Louis Smith as a delegate to the UAW Constitutional Convention and also incorrectly stated that the trial judge reversed himself in granting bail. Although Louis Smith was not a delegate, there were three delegates from his organization, JOB, at the Convention and it was a three judge appeals court which granted bail to Louis Smith.

[A Committee to Defend Louis Smith has been formed. Contributions and letters of support, etc. should be sent to: P.O. Box 20001, Burnet Woods Station, 3408 Telford, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220.]



labor in brief

Karl Fischer

Softdrink bottlers plan to hire scabs

Soft drink bottlers in Northern California, who have been struck by Teamster drivers for five months, broke off negotiations with the union on May 28.

The bottlers announced that they would begin attempts to break the strike by hiring scabs to replace union workers. Letters were sent to all strikers stating that their jobs would be assigned to "temporary workers" unless they returned to work immediately.

This new company offensive followed a move by Teamster officials -- who only weeks ago had been muttering about a general strike -- to submit the dispute to binding Federal arbitration. The bottlers rejected this proposal, despite the fact that the man the union wanted to mediate, Federal mediator Sam Kagel, had recently ruled against the longshoremen's union and in favor of the shipping companies on every question in their contract dispute.

The bottlers demanded that all workers return to their jobs immediately, and refused to guarantee that the many strikers who have already been dismissed would be reinstated.

When Teamsters officials rejected this arrogant demand, the companies broke off the talks and lodged their strike-breaking threat.



the executive dining room.

Nor are they excited by the plastic-bound "retirement diploma" given to them by GM. The document resembles a school diploma, has the worker's name hand-printed, and is given "in acknowledgement of service and contribution to General Motors Corporation."

"A diploma, they call it," retiree Angeline Oliva told a reporter. "Now what are you supposed to do with something like this? How about a \$25 bond? That would have been more like it."

There just isn't any gratitude left in people these days.

Dow Chemical forced to back down on scab threat

Chemical workers at Dow Chemical's plant in Bay City, Michigan, are resisting an attempt by Dow to break their four-month strike by recruiting scabs. They have been aided in their efforts by many unionists throughout the area.

The 170 workers, members of Local 14055, Allied and Technical Workers union, have been out since January 17. The strike was provoked by a series of contract proposals by Dow, involving changes in work rules, increased work loads, pension reductions, and a thinly-disguised attack on wage levels.

Dow lodged its strike-breaking threat on April 12, announcing that a complete new labor force would be hired for the Bay City plant unless workers returned to their jobs immediately. Throughout April, Dow circulated advertisements throughout Michigan and the whole Midwest trying to recruit scabs.

When this threat became known, strikers' wives began coming to the picket lines. Sympathetic workers from Dow plants in nearby Midland also began picketing.

At the Saran Pipe plant in Bay City, UAW workers on the afternoon and night shifts staged a one-day walkout in sympathy. Many of these workers

came out to the Dow picket line.

Dow at first filed suit for an injunction against picketing, but then backed down. They agreed to drop the injunction and pledged not to hire scabs, in return for a union promise to keep picket lines small.

Auto Workers face permanent "seasonal layoffs"

More than 400 skilled workers at General Motors' Fleetwood Fisher Body plant in Detroit are facing layoffs by the company. GM officials termed the layoffs a "seasonal adjustment," but added that "a substantial number" are not expected to be called back.

The affected employees are all toolroom workers. GM has informed union officials that "the tooling program for 1974 is being sharply curtailed" and that "the outlook for toolroom employment is bleak," according to a UAW statement.

73 of the 400 laid-off workers had been transferred to the Fleetwood plant after being laid off from GM's Fisher Body No. 23 plant in January. These men, with the least seniority, have the worst chance of being called back.

Given a general cutback of tooling workers throughout Detroit's auto industry, they have little chance of finding work elsewhere. The workers -- some of whom have up to 15 years seniority with GM -- will be eligible for one year of unemployment compensation and supplemental unemployment payments; then, nothing.

The UAW has proposed a special inverse-seniority layoffs system for toolroom workers. "This would help minimize the hardship which the Plant 23 employees would suffer," commented UAW Vice-President Irving Bluestone.



The prisoners' demands included: an end to all mail censorship and mail restrictions; improved work, commissary and medical conditions; equal rights to "church visit" privileges (permission to spend time in town with wives) and extension of the privilege to unmarried prisoners; and more books relating to Black and Chicano history and culture in the prison library.

During the strike, the prisoners elected an 8-man committee to negotiate with prison authorities. Seven of the eight have since been transferred to Leavenworth Federal Prison.

Collins is the only member of the committee still at Texarkana. He is being charged with "disorderly conduct which disrupted the orderly operations of the prison."

Collins, a veteran activist whose political activities date from the days of the civil rights movement in 1962, refused induction into the army after failing to win conscientious objector status.

Unemployment blamed on too many immigrants

Chicago alderman John Hoellen, a candidate for Congress in Illinois' Eleventh Congressional District, has proposed federal legislation "tying immigration quotas to rates of unemployment."

Hoellen, a Republican, favors a total suspension of immigration when the national unemployment rate exceeds 4 percent. The national average has been running at around 6 percent for over a year.

"Until our economy is in working order," Hoellen has stated, "such a drastic step is needed."

This anti-immigration proposal is hardly original. Similar proposals were raised throughout the Depression of the 1930's. The McCarran-Walters Act of the 1950's, which severely limited immigration, based its logic in part on domestic unemployment.

Like the recent calls for high tariffs against foreign products, this proposal simply misses the point, and misleads. Unemployment is caused, at root, not because of foreign immigration or competition; but rather by the need of a profit-run economy to continually rationalize its productive mechanism.

So long as the American economy is controlled by a small group of corporate chieftans, and run for profit rather than for human need, unemployment will persist. And emotional attacks on "straw men" will not change the situation. ■

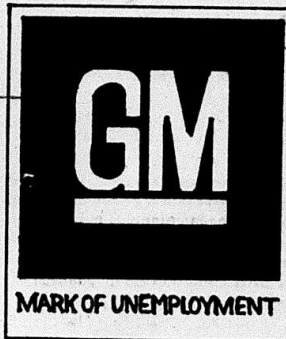
[Adapted from a report by Andres Bonifacio.]



General Motors: no Old Plant Ties

Retired workers at General Motors plants in Syracuse, N.Y., aren't about to spend one minute back inside the factory, even though they say they miss their friends from the shop.

Of a dozen recent retirees interviewed by a reporter, not one had been back to the plant since being pensioned. In fact, most left so quickly on their retirement day that they skipped a special luncheon for them in



black activists lead prison work stoppage

Walter Collins, a 26-year-old black activist serving a five-year sentence for draft refusal, has been held in solitary confinement since April 12 at the Texarkana (Texas) Federal Prison. Collins is being charged with inciting a work stoppage among the prison's inmates.

The strike began on April 9 with a food boycott of the prison's dining room. It spread throughout the prison, and came to include over 90 percent of the 550 inmates.

Quebec

Karl Fischer

[Continued from page 1]

ended after eleven days by the passage of repressive legislation ("Bill 19") which provided jail terms and fines for unionists continuing the strike.

The three union leaders were freed on May 19, as a direct result of the massive strike -- as were 31 other union officials who had been jailed under Bill 19.

The leaders of the three unions -- who earlier had formed a "Common Front" in negotiating the terms of the new contract -- are under the threat of a June 1 deadline in reaching an agreement. Bill 19 provides that the whole dispute will be submitted to binding and compulsory arbitration if no settlement is reached by that date.

But despite the existence of such repressive laws, the provincial government of Robert Bourassa may not have an easy road ahead in attempting to impose a settlement. The workers of Quebec have proven themselves capable of a degree of solidarity and militancy all but unparalleled in North America in recent years.

So, while the government continues to talk tough, the militancy of Quebec's rank and file workers is giving everyone -- politicians, corporate heads, and union officials alike -- very rest-less nights.

INTERNAL COLONY

The recent strike actions must be viewed in the context of what Quebec is -- a captive colony of English Canadian capital. The largest province in Canada, Quebec's population is in the majority of French-Canadian extraction. Yet the vast bulk of the province's industry is owned by English Canadians; either by the small upper class of "Anglos" in Montreal, or by absentee owners in Toronto.

For French-Canadians ("Quebecois"), this arrangement has left them, en-

masse, poor, powerless -- and, often enough, jobless. The unemployment rate for Quebecois is double the national average. Their wage levels average 25 percent to 30 percent less than English Canadians. And except for tokens who are willing to play the Anglos' game, they are excluded from political power in their own province.

As a result of these oppressive conditions, the 1960's witnessed the development of a strong nationalist movement among Quebecois. In the early 60's, this movement was largely a middle-class show; and after a brief period of flashy terrorism, quickly settled down into a predictable rut of reformist impotence.

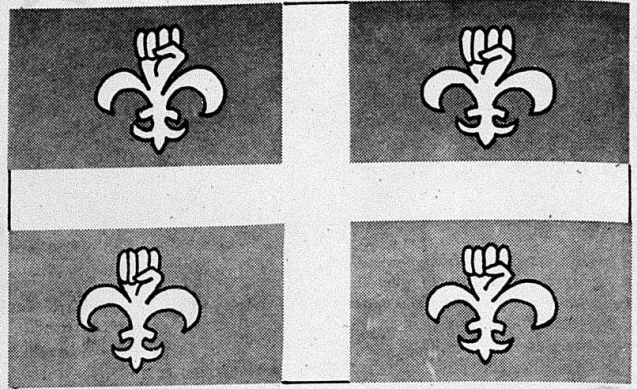
But in the late 60's, these nationalist sentiments fused with a growing militancy within Quebec's labor movement, and the direction of French-Canadian nationalism became more and more working-class in nature -- and more and more radical.

The situation exploded in the fall of 1970. A series of strikes in Montreal led to the jailing of some union leaders. In response, a small leftist group -- the *Front du Liberation Quebec (FLQ)* -- kidnapped a government minister and a British diplomat, and threatened to kill them unless the unionists were freed.

This incident provoked a national crisis when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau declared a nationwide state of emergency, and used the crisis as an excuse to imprison many Quebec radical and union leaders -- including Michel Chartrand, president of Montreal's central labor council. [See *Workers' Power No. 24*].

It was against this background of previous conflict that the current strikes developed. Throughout the winter, the union leaders of the "Common Front" coalition had engaged in largely fruitless negotiations with provincial government officials over terms of a new contract for Quebec's public service employees.

The crux of the dispute was money. The unions were demanding an 8.1 percent wage increase, spread over three years, and a \$100 a week minimum wage for all public employees. The government proposed a 4.5 percent increase, and responded to fur-



ther negotiations with "take it or leave it."

They left it on April 11. More than 200,000 public-service workers began a general strike that day, centered in Montreal and Quebec City. Teachers and hospital workers formed the core of the strike, although numerous other categories of workers became involved.

The government responded with Bill 19, "the most repressive labor legislation in Canada's history," in the words of one labor leader. Fines and arrests followed, and after eleven days the first general strike ended in uneasy stalemate.

In early May, believing the workers' movement to be played out, the government took the offensive by handing down indictments against Pepin, Labarge, and Charbonneau. But they had misjudged the situation badly.

On May 8, the three were convicted and sentenced. The following day, the men went to Orsainville prison in Quebec City to surrender themselves -- at the head of a march of three thousand workers. After addressing the crowd, they surrendered to jailers.

A problem was created by the leader of the jail guard's union, who urged his members not to accept the three men into prison ("It is the deputies who should be in their place," he said). But eventually, someone was found to take the men into custody.

The three leaders could have posted bond and remained free on appeal,

but they chose to begin serving their sentences to dramatize labor's case.

Within hours, 3,500 longshoremen in three different St. Lawrence River ports had walked out in protest. By day's end, teachers and hospital workers -- the core of the April strike -- had also begun to go out.

The following day, May 10, witnessed the key event. The mining town of Sept-Iles, a community of 18,000 on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, was completely taken over by striking workers. The workers seized control after a bitter pitched battle with provincial police that left one dead and 35 injured.

The Sept-Iles radio station was captured and held by strikers for 12 hours. Barricades were set up, with workers directing traffic.

"The unions control the city," stated Clement Godbout, a local steelworkers union official. "We can close or open all the bars, stores, businesses, and schools that we want."

This action caused everything in Quebec to blow. Within days, seven other Quebec towns were taken over by striking workers. 95 percent of the province's construction workers walked out. Hospitals, schools, and factories all across the province were hit by strikes. Numerous radio stations were taken over by workers, and put to excellent use.

In Montreal, by May 12, every newspaper in the city was shut down. More than 8,000 hourly city workers were on strike, and the largest supermarket chain in the city was out. Workers in the Canadian Broadcasting Company's English newsroom took a walk. A rally attracted 4,000 people at Paul Sauve Arena.

An executive arrived for work that day at the large General Motors plant in the Saint Therese district of Montreal. He was stopped by picketing workers.

"No one goes in. There's no work today," he was informed.

"By what authority?" he asked.

"By the authority of the workers of Quebec," came the reply.

On May 13, workers took over Thetford Mines, a city of 23,000. During the day, some 30 cops came to "eject" workers who had occupied the city's radio station. A union leader was waiting to greet them.

"The dynamiters are on our side, not yours," he told the out-numbered cops. "It would be best if you did not call for reinforcements." The police got the message, and left peacefully.

This massive -- and potentially rev-



Quebec labor leaders (from left) Louis Laberge, Marcel Pepin, and Yvon Charbonneau

olutionary -- general strike produced an immediate reaction throughout Canada. Newspapers throughout the country attempted to create an atmosphere of hysteria with articles about "small bands" of "revolutionary gangs."

The voice of Canada's English ruling class, the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, laid it on the line:

"We are witnessing a new surge of a third political force in Quebec . . . outside the normal political structure . . . in fact, dedicated to its destruction . . . The potential is extremely dangerous and will have to be contained and disarmed by legitimate authority."

In many areas of Quebec, vigilante gangs were organized by Liberal Party clubs and chambers of commerce.

REFORMISTS WORRIED

The strike also sent a tremor of fear through Canada's reformist labor leaders and labor politicians. David Lewis, leader of Canada's labor-based New Democratic Party, spoke uneasily in support of the jailed unionists at a steelworkers convention:

"They are acting, not against the interests of Quebec but for the interests of Quebec, in that they show militancy in order to avoid being replaced by others a good deal more irresponsible."

The Canadian Labor Congress (equivalent to the AFL-CIO) met in Ottawa at the height of the crisis, and while condemning the jailings, refused to support the general strike. CLC President Donald MacDonald stated that "General strikes are not strikes, they're revolutions" and that they "play into the hands of demagogues."

By May 18, the Common Front had called for a "truce" period and a temporary end to the strike. Many workers began returning to work in response. The following day, the release of the jailed unionists caused almost all strikers to return to work.

Some militants did attempt to keep the strike alive, but the highly spontaneous and ad hoc character of the movement made this all but impossible.

VOLATILE SITUATION

But the situation in Quebec remains highly volatile. The government, while releasing the officials, refused to budge on either its 4.5 percent wage proposal or its threat to impose a settlement through compulsory arbitration. What might happen if they follow through on this threat is anyone's guess.

Moreover, the nature of the strike by itself promises new developments. The overt demands of the strike -- freedom for the leaders, repeal of Bill 19, "just" negotiations -- were certainly not revolutionary. But the methods used to organize the general strike point beyond the limits of traditional trade unionism, even at its most militant level.

Quebecois workers are not likely to forget these experiences. Having witnessed the state, the courts, and the mass media form a solid front -- at the behest of capital -- to crush their movement, they must be rethinking the future direction of trade unionism among workers in Quebec.

In addition, many segments of the labor movement in Quebec are already calling for an independent workers' party as a result of the strike. This has resulted from the mass dissatisfaction

with the Parti Quebecois, the mouthpiece of "official" nationalism; which echoed the Liberals' calls to "defuse the crisis." ■

[Readers who would like further information on Quebec politics and the background of the current unrest are urged to write for a copy of Work-

ers' Power No. 26, November 27-December 10, 1970, which contains a special four-page supplement by Tom Condit on "The Canadian Crisis."]



Michel Chartrand



Pierre Trudeau



Robert Bourassa

BLACK POULTRY WORKERS STRIKE IN MISSISSIPPI

Seventy-two chicken processing workers have been arbitrarily fired by Poultry Packers, Inc. of Forest, Mississippi. Fighting for better working conditions and higher pay, these men and women went on strike on May 10, and formed the Mississippi Poultry Workers Union.

The new union has made three demands -- a twenty-five cent hourly raise, a paid vacation, and pay for breakdown time. At present, they are only paid the federal minimum wage of \$1.60 per hour. None get paid vacations, and workers do not get paid when the production line is being repaired, according to Ms. Merle Barber, president of the new union.

(Mechanical breakdowns in the production line operations often force

workers to wait around the plant for six to eight hours without being paid for the time. If they leave for home and don't return before the line is repaired, they may be fired.)

Company spokesmen have refused to meet with representatives of the union. (The management has stated that it would rather close the plant than bargain.) Instead, the company's response to the walkout was to fire the strikers.

Poultry Packers has also begun advertising for new employees on local radio as "an equal opportunity employer." One worker commented, "That's right. Men and women, black and white, they all get the same bad treatment."

Another picket reported that employees of Gaddis Packing Company,

across the street from Poultry Packers, received a raise on the day of the walkout. "That shows they're scared of us," said another picket, explaining that Forest's mayor, Fred L. Gaddis, is a major stockholder in both companies.

According to the workers, Poultry Packers normally employs about 200 workers who usually kill, dress, and pack about 48,000 chickens every day. "You can tell they're hurting from the number of trucks going in and coming out," the workers explained. "Production is down by more than half."

AGRIBUSINESS

Poultry Packers, Inc. is the second largest employer in Scott County, a county where labor unions have never existed. Owned and operated by Fred Moore, Morton, Miss., M. D. Reagan, of Carthage, Miss., and Fred Gaddis, the firm is part of the poultry agribusiness which employs one fifth of the town's population.

This is the first strike in the history of the firm, which has had previous labor difficulties concerning racial discrimination. The production work force is 80 percent black. The Forest news media have neither mentioned any of these events, nor given the union any opportunity to air its grievances.

The workers have asked for and received help from the NAACP, the Gulfcoast Pulpwood Association, and the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF). ■

[Support and requests for further information may be sent to: Merle Barber, president, Mississippi Poultry Workers Union, Route 2, Box 11, Forest, Mississippi 39074.]



Poultry workers picket line in Forest, Mississippi

THE MOSCOW SUMMIT: imperialists talk shop

David Finkel

On May 29, President Nixon completed the second round in his "historic" series of summit conferences with the leaders of the Communist countries. Having travelled to Peking in February, Nixon completed his trip to Moscow with a joint communique (so-signed by Communist Party chief Brezhnev) and an invitation to Russian leaders to visit the US in return. The capitalist press reported that "a new era of world peace" was being sought by the world's leading statesmen.

American war planes celebrated the "new era" by flying 280 air strikes over North and South Vietnam, aimed at pulverizing all industry and transport in the North and saving the Saigon regime from crushing defeats in the South. Students in Lithuania and Hungary remained in prison following demonstrations against their regimes, placed in power and supported by Russian military and political force. But in the Kremlin, Nixon and Brezhnev solemnly agreed that "the USA and USSR make no claims for themselves . . . to any special rights or advantages in world affairs. They recognize the sovereign equality of all states."

DUAL PURPOSE

Such declarations have a double purpose.

On the one hand, they signify that the representatives of capitalist and Stalinist imperialism -- dripping with blood from their worldwide crimes -- agree to let each other's repressive activities continue without undue interference by the other side. Faced with



Brezhnev, Kosygin and Nixon pledge to peacefully divide the world

growing economic instability, obstacles to growth, and internal class struggle, the interests of both lie in a period of "peaceful co-existence" rather than immediate preparations for a new war.

At the same time, declarations of peaceful intent and respect for the democratic rights of smaller nations -- which are trampled on every day by both Great Powers -- are aimed at winning support from the masses of both the US and Russia, who more than ever abhor the thought of new wars. The Russian leaders even gave Nixon a TV slot to speak directly to the Russian masses on the mutual desires for peace of the US and Russian governments.

In his speech Nixon referred to the diary of 12-year-old Tanya Savicheva, one of 470,000 people who died in Leningrad during the Nazi siege, and expressed his sincere hope "that no other children will have to endure what Tanya did." Russian TV viewers reportedly reacted with annoyance to Nixon's failure to mention Vietnam

even once, but felt that one could only respond hopefully to his peaceful promises.

It seems doubtful that the tens of thousands of children killed, orphaned, maimed, or horribly burned by the US in Vietnam find those promises very comforting.

Behind the hypocrisy of the sugar-coated declarations, and the fraud of arms limitation (see the editorial in this issue), lay more concrete negotiations on such matters as trade and the realities of big-power realignment in Europe and Asia. In this context, Vietnam was only a minor point on the agenda.

A preliminary assessment of the outcome of the Moscow summit indicates that:

(i) The economic difficulties of the Soviet bloc enabled Nixon to gain limited trade concessions from the Russians, but the fundamental rivalry between the capitalist and bureaucratic collectivist (Stalinist) blocs remains.

(ii) Russia's willingness to agree to "peaceful co-existence" and arms reduction in Europe at this time is dictated by increasingly hostile relations with China. While maintaining an estimated one million men on the Chinese frontier (facing a similar Chinese force), Russia cannot afford the drain of increasing military competition with the West at the same time.

(iii) By visiting Peking in February, Nixon set the stage for forcing Russia into a more "flexible" position. With China involved with the US in crawling new lines of power in Asia, Russia cannot remain isolated politically from China and the US at the same time.

(iv) There remain, however, fundamental differences between the interests of the US and USSR, which may be masked but cannot be overcome by limited trade agreements and tactical co-existence. Unable to arrive at a settlement (as opposed to an arm's length detente) of such questions as Vietnam and the Middle East, the two Great Powers have entered a period which will again lead to intensified inter-imperialist rivalry.

TRADE SECRETS

The trade negotiations offered a glimpse into the inner workings of the talks as a whole. The main snag appeared to be a difference over the shipping of goods. Russian ships carry freight at prevailing world rates -- which the Russians would like to pay -- while American ships, which the US wants to use, charge considerably more.

According to reporters, "The Russians say they do not wish to subsidize the high wages paid to American longshoremen and other maritime workers with their own hard currency."

US negotiators, on the other hand, are under heavy pressure from maritime unions not to negotiate a deal that would take away work from American

Unrest in the Prison House of Peoples

Joel Geier

On the eve of Nixon's summit trip to Moscow, rioting broke out in Lithuania. A young worker in Kaunas, the second largest Lithuanian city, set fire to himself to protest the lack of freedom. Thousands of young people clashed with police for days, and hundreds were arrested.

This is a familiar enough story in the West, but something new for Russia where heavier state repression has managed to keep the lid on tighter. Yet when the lid is raised, the situation is even more explosive than in the West.

Lithuania was forcibly incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1939, when Stalin formed his bandit alliance with Hitler and carved up Poland and the Baltic states. Lithuania previously had been a part of the Russian Empire under the Czars -- an empire which Lenin called "a prison house of peoples." Lithuania received its independence

during the Russian revolution which liberated all the subject nationalities of the Czar. It was reannexed by the new Russian empire. Stalin's bureaucracy became continuators of Czarist reaction, the wardens of a new "prison house of peoples."

Today Lithuanians and Jews are rising up in Russia. Hundreds of Jews were rounded up by the police, or sent to the army, for the duration of Nixon's visit -- so that they wouldn't create any embarrassing demonstrations during the visit of the leader of the "free world."

The demonstrations of the Lithuanians and the Jews are only the tip of the iceberg. Unrest is also growing among the dozens of other nationalities oppressed by the Russian bureaucracy. They will find their freedom as a part of an all-Russian workers revolution.

Moscow need not have been upset

about embarrassing Nixon with demonstrations. Nixon is used to them. As he left America, thousands of anti-war students were fighting the police at home, and in Vienna he was met with protestors being clubbed by the police of the so-called "socialist" Kreisky government. In both the US and Vienna, they were protesting US imperialism's war against Vietnam.

Nixon no doubt is very understanding of the Russian imperialists and their troubles in Lithuania -- so similar to his own. After all, what is the Moscow summit, but a meeting to settle some of their differences and to get on with the business of exploiting the world's workers?

But in Russia and America the people are stirring. Someday they will make their own summit alliances -- with each other, for international socialism, and against their rulers, capitalist and bureaucratic Communist. ■

longshorem. By publicizing this difficulty, the US government can try to gain broader public support for clamping down on "inflationary" wages in the name of America's foreign trade interests.

Other problems include the United States' attempt to get a settlement on Russia's World War II lend-lease debt (a fitting tribute to the memory of Leningrad's half million dead to whom Nixon referred). In return for such a deal, the US is offering Russia "favored nation" treatment which would mean lifting tariff barriers on Russian imports.

Russia is very anxious to increase its sale of exports to the US in order to pay for grain which it must import. (Attempts were made to negotiate a \$130 million sale of US grain to Russia.) Under Stalinism, forced industrialization and bureaucratic waste have created a serious agricultural crisis and shortages, despite the enormous resources available in Russia.

Thus, the issues raised in trade negotiations underline the nature of the crises facing the capitalist and Stalinist social systems and imperialist powers.

On the one hand, the relative decline of the United States in the capitalist world, its domestic economic problems, and its trade deficit, make it necessary to open new trade channels on favorable terms. On the other hand, Russia, facing more serious problems of isolation and the threat of increasing economic independence of its satellites (exemplified by the new treaties between East and West Germany, as well as continued tensions with such countries as Rumania), feels the need to strengthen its own national position through trade with leading Western nations.

BALANCE OF FORCES

Economic necessities, however, are reflected most sharply in the contradictions and conflicts of world politics. It is the international questions, the new balance of forces of the world's major powers, which has attracted the most attention during the summit talks both in February and May.

Nixon entered the talks with a huge advantage. By carrying out the mining of Vietnamese harbors just before the Summit Conference was scheduled to begin, he undercut any possible right-wing domestic political opposition and proved to the world that the Russians desperately wanted the conference -- that Brezhnev had to go ahead even at the expense of his allies.

Nixon's success with this maneuver reflects underlying realities. The ruling bureaucracy in Russia, always extremely sensitive to any developments affecting its international position, is clearly deeply concerned over the meaning of Nixon's Peking trip. Russia's rulers not only fear that the US-China detente in Asia will undermine Russian influence there, they probably are also worried that the US might consciously promote Chinese economic development to increase the military threat to Russia from the East.

While apologists for China's Maoist regime justified the Nixon-Mao talks on the grounds that "Russia is the main immediate threat to People's China," friends of the Russian government have advanced the idea that a full-fledged cabal has been hatched by the US and China aimed at destroying the Soviet Union. Both these arguments must be understood as apologies for the behav-

Editorial

[Continued from page 1]

vide ways of breaking through the defensive net.

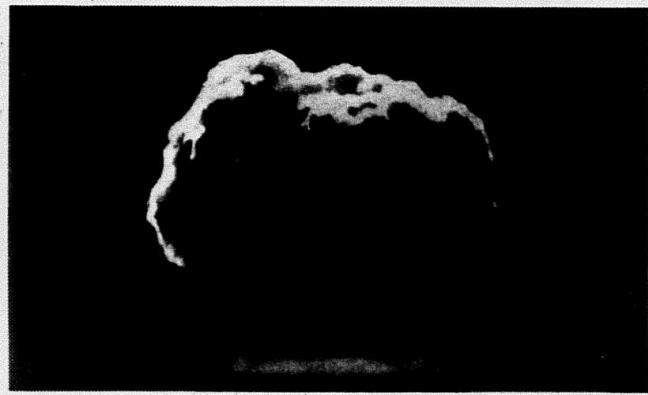
Both the US and the Soviet Union wished to avoid an expense of many billions for a system that probably wouldn't work. But the beginnings made by each side in developing ABM's forced the other side to keep up. A negotiated agreement was the only way out. But while the agreement spares each government a huge expense, it does not lessen the chances of war or reduce armaments.

At the same time, the agreement on offensive missiles, because the US has multi-warhead missiles and the Soviet Union does not, is in reality an attempt to freeze the present US superiority in deliverable warheads; that is, to freeze arms levels in a way advantageous to the US and disadvantageous to the Soviet Union. Behind Nixon's smooth words of peace was a cynical use of muscle to force an advantage over his imperialist rivals, the Russians.

The unpublicized loophole in the whole agreement is the fact that the offensive-weapons freeze lasts only five years. This is merely the time that present levels of strength and present technology could reasonably be expected to last.

After five years each side can begin a new round of weapons building. (And in the meantime, each is allowed to replace existing missiles with more powerful ones.) In short, the agreement limits nothing. It merely reflects the present relationship in arms levels of the two powers.

In addition, if either side makes a real breakthrough in research which would upset the relationship of strength, it will not hesitate to go around the agreement or break it to gain this ad-



vantage. The other side will not hesitate to go around the agreement or break it to avoid this.

In sum, the agreement is a bag without a bottom.

In this, it is no different from any previous "arms limitation agreement."

Since the modern era of imperialist rivalry began in earnest around 1900, well-meaning reformers have come forward with countless arms limitation and disarmament proposals. All were based on a common fallacy: they assumed a harmony of interests between the powers. The reformers argued that wars were caused by miscalculation, or by the existence of weapons themselves.

In reality, the interests of the "great powers" are opposed. They jockey for control of markets and for diplomatic influence; they require military muscle to back up their demands.

As the economy of one or another "great power" grows stronger in relation to others, it takes over markets, and demands "respect" from smaller nations. Its influence grows, its rival's declines. The rivals naturally try to hold on to the influence they are losing. Under capitalism, the ultimate solution to such contests of strength is and always will be violence.

The atomic age and the existence of the so-called "Socialist" nations makes no basic difference. The threat of nuclear war makes total war a far

greater disaster -- it does not rule it out, and it does not end lesser wars. And the "Socialist" nations -- which are actually class societies -- form a world system with its own internal rivalries, an overall conflict of interest with the capitalist states, and the risk of war from both causes.

When the "great powers" negotiate about arms limitation, they have motives very different from those of the reformers.

In part they play a well-rehearsed comedy, seeming to make concessions but actually conceding nothing, in order to satisfy the desire of the world's people for some hope of peace. In part, backstage, they use the negotiations as part of their jockeying for advantage.

So long as contending "great powers" and the world systems of capitalism and bureaucratic collectivism jockey to divide and redivide the world in line with their changing strength, "arms limitation" will limit nothing, last only as long as the power relationships it reflects, and lead only to new conflicts.

Only by ending the rival systems of class exploitation and the shifting power blocs among them -- through working class revolution in the advanced countries -- can the fraud be changed to reality. ■

ior of one or the other Stalinist ruling class, an attempt to justify their betrayals of national liberation struggles in Vietnam, Bangla Desh, and elsewhere.

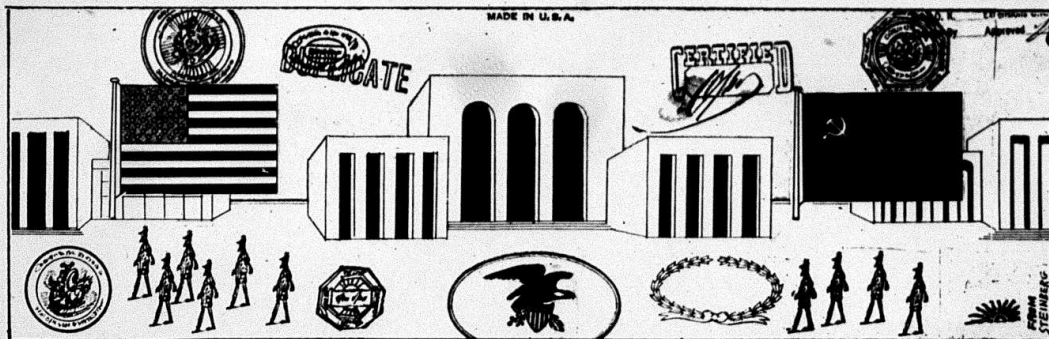
The long-term prospects of the new-found Russian-American "friendship" are not very good ones. As class and national struggles sharpen within each bloc, each will be forced to try to stabilize itself at the expense of the other.

While the US requires a further op-

ening of markets and access to investment in areas where profit rates are high, Russia requires the extension of its sphere of domination and must attempt to regain complete control over the economic policies of its satellites. When the rivalry sharpens once again, each side will try to freeze the class struggle in its own boundaries by paralyzing the masses with the fear of outside attack.

Socialists everywhere must struggle

to build a revolutionary force -- the working class and enslaved masses of oppressed nations -- against imperialism East and West. The exposure of the politics of the "Moscow Summit" -- that is, of the fraud of arms limitation, the betrayal of national liberation, the false hopes for peace generated by the imperialists and the long-term preparations for a new round of international warfare -- is one step toward building such a force. ■





Protestant vigilante in Belfast

Irish crisis grows

Joan McKiernan



IRA member guards the Bogside

83 percent of the voters in the Irish Republic voted in May to join the Common Market, despite a long campaign against entry waged by both Official and Provisional IRA's, the Irish Labor Party, and socialist leaders, including Bernadette Devlin. This was only one of many setbacks suffered recently by the Republican movement in Ireland.

While the Unionist (Protestant) community in the North has become more militant, the Catholic community is moving more steadily away from the IRA and toward the British government's so-called peace initiatives.

Barricades have been set up in the major Protestant working class communities in Belfast and Derry. They were originally a protest against the no-go areas that exist in the Catholic areas, but the Protestants ended up fighting British troops in several areas to protect their own no-go areas.

British troops moved in on several occasions to brutally remove the barricades, using CS gas, rubber bullets, and gunfire. One leader of a Protestant para-military group that organized the no-go areas said: "I'm beginning to think those people in the Bogside were right about Bloody Sunday. The paratroopers do behave madly when they come into an area."

Secular violence has been waged by both Protestants and Catholics. A bomb was set off in a Catholic pub, injuring 63 persons. While rescuers were evacuating the wounded, they were fired at from a nearby Protestant housing estate for half an hour before the British army came on the scene. A few days later, Catholics fired at workers leaving a factory known to have a Protestant-only hiring policy.

TARTAN GANGS

The Tartan Gangs, made up of hundreds of Protestant youths, attempted to attack Catholic neighborhoods in Belfast. When they were prevented from doing so by the troops, they rioted for four nights, fighting police and troops.

Meanwhile, the Provisional IRA insisted upon continuing its bombing campaign. Outstanding among its latest actions was the bombing of Belfast's largest department store, the Co-op, causing \$24 million worth of damage.

The explosion left 750 people out of work in an area already desperately suffering from unemployment.

This tactic of bombing factories and shops is not going to force British big business to give up control of its investment to the Irish people just because a small part of that investment has been physically destroyed. The bombing of the Co-op only added to the militancy of Protestant opposition to the IRA.

The Official IRA made its own contribution to the outrages by shooting a young soldier from Derry who was home on leave from Germany where he was serving in the British Army. The IRA said that the soldier was "apprehended in suspicious circumstances." But the soldier had served as a Catholic vigilante in Derry during 1969 when that area was fighting the police and Orange attackers.

EXCUSE FOR THE RIGHT

This was just the excuse needed by the Catholic Church and the Catholic middle class politicians who have been trying to defeat the IRA in the Catholic areas. 5,000 people led by 25 priests attended a funeral for the soldier in Derry.

John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labor Party (SDLP), condemned the IRA. Hundreds of women marched on Official IRA headquarters screaming "murder."

The Officials then promised to stop shooting except in defense of the Bogside and Creggan areas. The Provisionals however, insisted that they would continue to fight British occupation, and to make the point, carried out a number of bombing the same week.

A meeting of 2,000 Catholics was then held at which the IRA leaders were not allowed to speak. A priest said, "This is the end of the road for the IRA. No terrorist organization can exist without the support of the people."

Because the people are tired of the bombings and what they see to be senseless fighting, the Catholic politicians were able to make their move.

Tom Conaty, a middle class Catholic who has the support of the most conservative Catholic priests and who is the head of the Central Citizens Defense Committee in Belfast, agreed to serve on the British advisory commission for Northern Ireland. This body will serve as a Cabinet to William Whitelaw, the British-appointed ad-

ministrator for Northern Ireland.

The SDLP urged 400 Catholics who left public office when internment was imposed last August to return to their jobs. The SDLP and the local Catholic officials had promised that they would not return to their jobs until every internee was released, but there are still 666 men in Long Kesh and more are detained every week.

The SDLP had also stated that it would enter no political talks until internment was ended, but now the SDLP feels safe enough to threaten to begin talks. They see the bombing campaign as simply an attempt to keep politicians out of Parliament and they are now better able to convince the people that this is its only aim.

It appears obvious that the IRA has failed to convince the people of Northern Ireland of any viable alternative to the British imposition of direct rule. Although the Official IRA campaigned against direct rule, the only alternative strategy it offered was a campaign to democratize Stormont, and that is all it has offered since direct rule.

This has obviously not met the needs of the people in the Catholic ghettos. They are now tired of fighting with no end in sight and do not look forward to a war with their Protestant neighbors. They are now ready to listen to Whitelaw and the priests.

They were in full support of the IRA a few weeks ago after the murder of IRA leader Joe McCann and after the British whitewash of the Bloody Sunday murders. Now, however, there is a vacuum into which the priests and politicians are ready to move (that is, until the next British atrocity).

SOUTHERN REPRESSION

This change in the consciousness of the people in the North has opened the road for Lynch in the South to move against the IRA. The Curragh, which is usually used for internment in the South, has been opened, and political prisoners who recently led riots in the Dublin prison, Mountjoy, have been transferred there.

More seriously, the Irish government has set up a special criminal court to try members of the IRA. The court will have three judges but no jury. The government is also attempting to weed out judges known to have republican sympathies who have been responsible for the release of many IRA men in the courts in the South.

While the IRA faces increased re-

pression, the Irish working class continues its struggle against its Irish and British bosses. 43 furniture workers in Navan in the South took over their factory when it was about to be closed because it wasn't making enough profit to suit the Irish owner. Hundreds of Protestant workers in Sirocco, the North's largest engineering works, were defeated after a four-month strike.

The Belfast shipyard workers, who are hard-line supporters of Craig and the Orange Order, are facing an attempt on the part of the British management to make the shipyards more productive. Britain just made a loan of \$30 million to the shipyard management, but the Belfast yards produce only about one half of the output per man which yards in Japan and Scandinavia produce. Management is now demanding more work from each man for the same pay.

The loyalty of these Protestant workers has paid off in the sense that they at least have a job, but it has not protected them against exploitation.

ROAD FORWARD

The Irish entry into the Common Market and the continued oppression of the Irish working class by British troops and British and Irish bosses all make clear the need for a working-class-based revolutionary socialist organization.

Only such an organization could provide real support for the struggle in the North by linking it up with the struggles of the workers in the South. Only such an organization could begin to offer a real alternative both to the bewildered Protestant workers now marching with Craig and to the Catholic working class now misled by the false offers of peace from Britain.

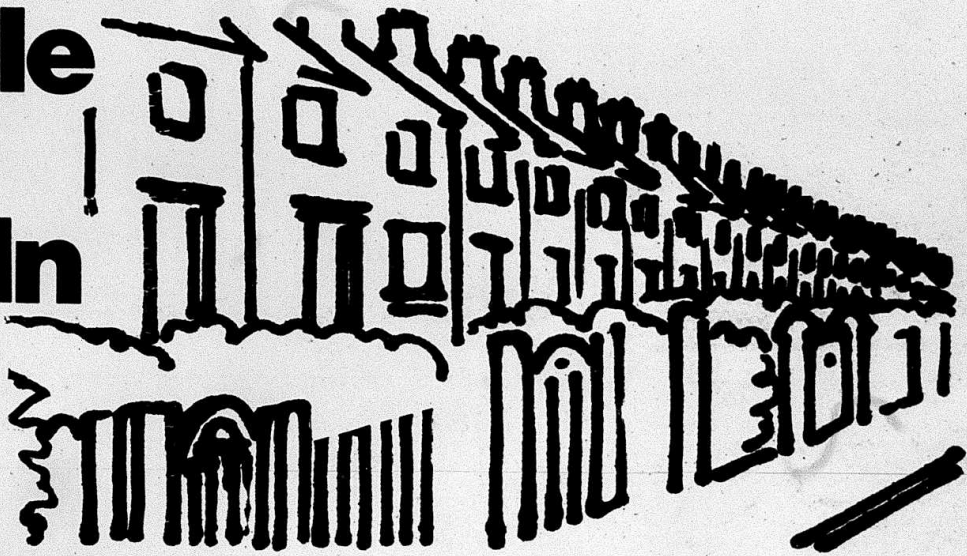
The revolutionary socialist organization must base itself on the workers' struggle on the job where working people have power. Such an organization will be able to show that the workers' struggle, North and South, and the military struggle against British imperialism are part of the same struggle -- the struggle for an Irish Workers' Republic.

An important step toward such an organization is represented by the formation of the Socialist Workers' Movement.

[For more news on Ireland and the Socialist Workers' Movement, see International Report, page 12]

Struggle Over Rents In Britain

Norah Carlin



The Tory government's offensive against the working class in Britain has many fronts. The wages struggle, the anti-union laws, and general cuts in welfare have been prominent in the last two years. With the Fair Rents Bill, now before Parliament, housing also becomes a central issue.

There are three main points in the Bill: the principle of Fair Rents, its extension to the public sector of housing, and its modification by income-related rebates.

Fair Rents, a concept introduced by the last Labour government for privately rented housing, means in practice *market rents*. They are determined by Rent Assessment Panels with a built-in majority of lawyers and surveyors, appointed by the government. Since they were set up in 1965, the Panels have overwhelmingly favored landlords' applications, and raised far more rents than they lowered.

Rent-fixing by these panels is now to be extended to local council dwellings, which house 5½ million families in Britain. The government's intention is to transfer the crippling burden of interest payments on housing loans -- which take up 65 percent of all local councils' housing budget -- to the tenants themselves, and so re-

duce central government subsidies to housing. Stringent penalties are provided against councils which refuse to implement the Bill.

To give some credibility to the term Fair Rents, a rebate scheme is included. This means that the ideal Fair Rent will be reduced according to family income, and a wide range of working class incomes is provided for, including many well above the average.

This is a vast extension of the means test principle which has permeated the Tories' welfare legislation. The rebate is not automatic -- individual families will have to claim it, as they now have to claim free school meals, free medical prescriptions, welfare payments, etc.; and about half of those entitled to such benefits never claim.

The real viciousness of the scheme is that it proposes a redistribution of income among the tenants as a solution to the problem caused by the stranglehold of the moneylenders over local authority housing.

The practical consequences of income-related "benefits" is that workers who fight and win wage increases lose benefits in proportion to their increase in income. So far, this has applied mainly to those workers trying

to cross the borderline that makes them "low income families" entitled to various benefits; but now up to 6 million families, in public and private housing, will find themselves affected by the same con trick.

What can be done to fight the Tory legislation? The Labour Party, where it still has the remnants of a working class base, is already organizing meetings, tenants' committees, petitions, and demonstrations. But it frowns on rent strikes, and Labour-controlled local councils (with only three exceptions so far) are refusing to defy the government and incur the penalties. Its strategy is electoral -- vote for us next time and we'll repeal the Bill.

The Communist Party, which has some experience of organizing tenants, trails behind the Labour Party, with a strategy of working class militancy as a form of pressure to produce "left-wing" policies in a future Labour government.

The International Socialists of Britain are calling for the building of a mass tenants' movement with the support of the trade unions at local and national level, to use rent strikes and possibly industrial action as the only effective weapons. It is vitally

necessary to push the Labour and Communist Parties towards action rather than words, and to expose the limitations of their politics.

Many tenants who fought and lost rent strikes against individual local councils in the late 1960's are reluctant to begin again, but the possibilities of nationwide tenants' action are being shown at the moment in the South of Ireland, where really solid rent strikes have won substantial concessions against a similar Differential Rents scheme.

The importance of working class power in industry to the rents struggle was shown by the great strike of Glasgow workers in 1915 against rising wartime rents. This resulted directly in the first rent control legislation for private housing (now to be finally abolished by the new Bill).

The Fair Rents Bill could produce a major confrontation between the working class and the Tory government. Only revolutionary politics can aid the struggle; the Labour and Communist Parties want to tone down the anger of tenants to the level of "protest" rather than action.

[Norah Carlin is a member of the International Socialists of Britain.]

The Attacks Of Zion

Ted Crawford

One of the leaders of the Israeli Black Panthers, Kokhavi Shemesh, recently addressed an audience of young people on a collective farm just south of the Sea of Galilee.

A reporter present was horrified to hear him say: "It is our aim to make a social revolution in this country, to make a new society, unlike any other in the world, socialist, but not like Russia or China -- 100 percent egalitarian."

"We have to reach a situation where we can fight together with the poor screwed-up Arabs against the establishment. We, the Panthers, are the only people who can constitute a bridge between the Arabs and ourselves on the basis of struggle against the establishment."

"We are against colonization, which involves dispossessing the local inhabitants. Therefore we, unlike Mapam (the local Zionist left), do not distin-

guish between military and civilian colonization."

Shemesh added that, as far as the Panthers were concerned, there was no difference between the so-called left and right in the Zionist establishment. They were all -- MPs and top civil servants -- members of the 300 top families.

Shemesh said the establishment had fostered racial hatred between Oriental Jews and Arabs, and claimed the Panthers had held meetings with the poorest groups of Arabs in Jerusalem and Nablus. The middle-class Arab leaders have shown little interest in these sections.

The degree to which the Arabs are oppressed can be understood by looking at their working conditions. They have to live in their own villages in Israel or the occupied territories, and find work in the Jewish-owned factories outside. Often they have to get up at 4 a.m. to catch the labor lorries,

and get home only at 7 p.m.

Laws against child labor are being broken. One factory -- making Vita soups -- is employing Arab girls aged 11 and 12.

The situation is beginning to resemble the Buntustan system in South Africa. Any Arab showing political interests is at once watched and warned. If he persists in pushing socialist or radical ideas he is deported or imprisoned under the emergency laws which are still in force in Israel as a relic of British rule.

But the Israeli Socialist Organization -- Matzpen -- is continuing its work, despite internal difficulties and splits. Eytan Grossfeld, who was put in a lunatic asylum and reformatory, has been released, partly as a result of world protests.

[Reprinted from Socialist Worker, the weekly newspaper of the British International Socialists.]



international report

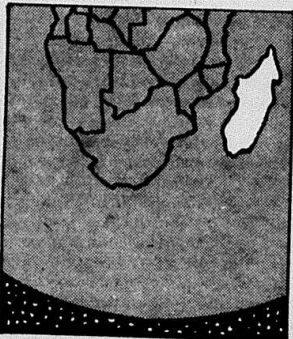
David Finkel

Malagasy Republic: regime threatened by demonstrators

Clashes in April between police and demonstrating workers and students in Tanarive, capital of the Malagasy Republic (Madagascar), have caused the deaths of at least 19 demonstrators and 7 police. The protests began when students demanded educational reform (students are forced to study medieval French language and geography rather than their own literature and country), employment for graduates, and the release of imprisoned militants.

Responding to this example, trade unions called on workers in both private and public industry to demonstrate in support of the students, an increased minimum wage, and the resignation of the Minister of Labor.

4,200 French troops stationed in the Malagasy Republic stood by to intervene if requested by the regime. Nevertheless, the demonstrations have led to the fall of the Tsirinana regime. The President turned power over to General Gabriel Ramanantsoa, commander of the Army, who promised to trim French influence but continued to consult with French military advisors.



Ireland: new socialist newspaper confiscated

The Worker, the newspaper of the newly-formed Socialist Workers Movement in Ireland, reports that Bernadette Devlin was stopped by an Irish Republic military roadblock in the border area and that several dozen copies of *The Worker* were found and seized.

A military policewoman leafed through a copy of the paper, noticed pictures of British soldiers on the first and second pages and decided that it must be anti-British propaganda. "Not the kind of thing we want people to see," she said, following the policies of the Lynch regime (Britain's client state in the South). It hadn't occurred



to her that people in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland see and feel the rule of British soldiers every day.

Although people have been stopped and questioned in the same area after buying copies of *The Worker*, the SWM is determined to sell it as widely as possible, North and South.

[Copies of *The Worker* are available from I.S. Books, 14131 Woodward, Highland Park, MI 48203 for \$.25 a copy. Subscription rates are available from the SWM, 30 Strandville Ave., North Strand, Dublin 3, Ireland.]

Britain: dock workers refuse to end boycott

Dock workers in Hull, England, "gave a massive snub to their union leaders on Monday (May 22) when they voted to defy the Industrial Relations Act and continue their boycott of container firms," reports the British I.S. newspaper *Socialist Worker*.

Spokesmen for the Transport Workers Union told the 1,700 dockers that if they refused to obey the ruling of the National Industrial Relations Council, ordering an end to the boycott, the union's funds would be endangered. (The union leadership paid a fine of over \$100,000 imposed for a container boycott in Liverpool.) But when the vote came, only 20 of the 1,700 Hull dockers voted for their leaders' spineless position.

The NIRC has ordered the union leadership to either force the dockers to end the boycott, or take away stewards' credentials from the militants who have organized and led the boycott action.

Turkey: dictatorship executes young radicals

The Turkish regime has executed three young members of the Turkish People's Liberation Army (TPLA). Denis Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Hüseyin İnan were hanged on May 6.

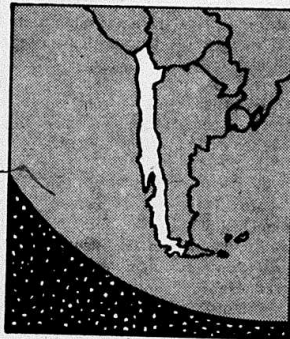
The executions, expected to be followed by others, followed a wave of terrorism and guerrilla actions carried out by the TPLA. These actions have failed to shake the stability of the strong-man regime of President Gevdet Sunay, who is backed by the military (although it is not actually a military government).

The impasse in Turkish politics, which led to the present government, was the result of the collapse of the political workers' movement led by the Turkish Labor Party. For a number of years a militant student movement with strong links to the working class carried out powerful actions against the domination of Turkey by Western imperialism. With no clear revolutionary leadership, however, the workers' movement split and collapsed and the student movement fragmented and dissolved into heroic but futile military adventures.

Chile: Allende bargains while militants clubbed

A demonstration of 500 students, revolutionaries, and rank and file members of the ruling Unidad Popular (Popular Unity) coalition in Santiago, Chile, was attacked with teargas and clubs by the police. The April 21 march was in protest against the war in Vietnam and the presence of Robert McNamara.

The Allende government, which claims to be "socialist" and "anti-imperialist," had other fish to fry with McNamara, who was attending a United Nations Trade and Development conference. Allende is dependent on the World Bank, which McNamara heads, to negotiate loans to prevent his regime from going bankrupt.

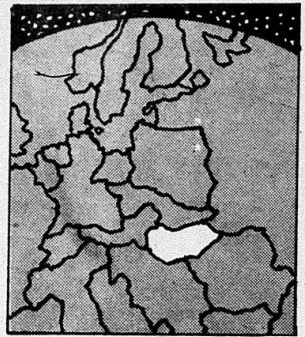


Hungary: students protest living standards

The Hungarian Communist Party has admitted that student demonstrations against the Kadar regime did break out in Budapest in March. But the CP newspaper denied that police were forced to build street barricades to halt the demonstrations. The demonstrations coincided with the anniversary of the 1848 Hungarian uprising against Austrian oppression.

According to "unofficial reports," said the *London Times*, "the demonstrations were directed against the high living standards of party officials and the slow pace of economic life." This reflects the fact that in the Stal-

inist countries, the living standards of the masses are depressed, often below minimum necessary standards, in order to advance the power and privileges of the bureaucratic ruling class.



Finland: labor unrest and economic recession

"Labor unrest" is growing in Finland, despite the fact that two-thirds of organized workers are covered by new 12-month contracts based on agreements reached between central union and employer organizations.

A building trades strike was answered by the employers in April with a lock-out. The building workers' union is the most militant in the country. At the same time, the possibility of a dock and transport strike threatens to disrupt Finnish foreign trade.

The agreements reached in March provided for across-the-board wage and fringe benefit improvements of 8 percent for industrial workers, 10 percent for the service trades, and 7.6 percent for farmers. The gains won by labor (although considerably below the unions' demands) and the continuing political impasse, under which the last Parliament was dissolved two years early, comes "in a phase of unexpectedly deep economic recession," according to the *Financial Times*.

Eight Bombay workers were killed in late April by police who opened fire after 600 steel workers blockaded management inside a factory. Protesting a delay in payment of their wages, the workers pelted police with steel rods and rocks.

South Africa: students strike against apartheid

Student strikes in solidarity with 1,146 students expelled from the African university in the Transvaal (South Africa) are spreading throughout the Colored, Indian, and African universities.

The expulsions occurred after student Ramothibi Tiro gave a hard-hitting anti-apartheid speech at graduation ceremonies and was immediately expelled. A sit-in by the entire student body followed. With the help of the police, all the students were then expelled and shipped home in separate trains.

The solidarity strikes have been organized by the South African Students Organization, a militant all-black movement. ■

The Doomsday Fraud

Joe Felsenstein



a review of "The Limits of Growth"

When *The Limits to Growth* came out, it caused something of a sensation. It seems to show that the world is going to end fairly soon, and that there are only a few things that can be done to save it. The book is the product of an elaborate MIT computer study. It was financed by the mysterious Club of Rome, and published by the previously unknown Potomac Associates.

Reality turns out to be not quite so dramatic, but it is even more interesting. The Club of Rome is not a Vatican plot, but an international group of the kind of people the press calls "public-spirited citizens." It was supposedly formed to spread information about world problems and their solutions.

To kick off this project, the Club got the Volkswagen Foundation to put up money for a study of the limits of the growth of population, food, and industry on this planet. The study was done by a group of "systems analysts" at MIT.

The MIT analysts did the usual systems analysis thing. They set up equations to "simulate" the growth of society from 1900 to the year 2100. A computer did the calculations. The equations and calculations are not really very mysterious or complicated. On the contrary, they're wildly oversimplified. The authors of the book are very careful to point that out.

The first thing they try is projecting the present situation into the future. In their scheme, things keep growing nicely until just after the year 2000. At that point the earth's non-renewable resources, such as minerals, oil, etc., begin to run out. This reverses the growth of industry and of food production. Once these decline, the population of the world starts dropping in about 2050, as a result of mass starvation and a lack of health services.

So the MIT group tried again, this time assuming twice as much nonre-

newable resources available. This time the economy grew until about 2030. By that time industry had grown so much that everyone and everything were poisoned by skyrocketing pollution, complicated by resources also running out.

If they tried changing their scheme so that far fewer resources were needed by industry, then resources did not run out, but they still found that there was a pollution disaster which wiped almost everything out. So they tried another "run" with partial pollution controls added. Now there was no pollution crisis, but instead agricultural land was used up. Capital had to be diverted to produce food, health care deteriorated, and there was still a crash.

They next tried a run with increased agricultural productivity plus pollution controls. But this time industrial production grew very rapidly, and even though 75 percent of the pollution had been eliminated, there was still a pollution disaster.

The MIT analysts kept doing this sort of thing, always looking for a technological solution -- and nothing worked. Something always ended up running out -- resources, land, or breathable air.

In all of these tries, they allowed both population and industry to keep growing. When they stopped population growth alone, they still found that industry grew until resources were used up and there was a crisis. The only way they found to save their miniature world was to limit both population growth and industrial growth.

Thus, they wound up concluding that unless population and industrial growth are both limited soon, there will be a crisis in less than a century -- and most of the world's population will perish in this crisis. But the best standard of living they can foresee for the world if growth is stopped would only be about equal to the present European standard of living, about half the present US real wage.

When it comes to writing down their results, the MIT group pretended to be very fair. They carefully point out the limitations of their work. They don't give specific dates or numbers, because they don't think that their work is accurate enough for that.

But read between the lines, or just soak up the atmosphere of the book, and it looks very different. It's an old-

fashioned Fire and Brimstone sermon about the sicked folly of humanity, pointing out the One Road to Salvation.

A good tipoff is the quotations which they put at the start of each chapter. All are various fulminations about limits to growth. There is even a passage from St. Luke, admonishing the sinful. It is impossible to see this book as anything but a propaganda tract.

Its message is that population growth and industrialization as such cause the destruction of the environment. The desire of the world's people for a higher standard of living is viewed as a threat to ecology. In particular, the masses of the non-industrial world are condemned to continued poverty and underdevelopment.

POLITICAL POLLUTION

The fundamental weakness of the MIT analysis lies in the basic assumptions of the study. They set out to project the present situation -- and then some variations on it -- into the future, and they found disaster looming.

So far as it goes, this conclusion is a perfectly valid one. If the population and industries continue to grow on the present basis, we are not far from the time when something -- minerals, land, breathable air -- will indeed start to run out, bringing growth to a halt.

But that doesn't mean that there is no way to avoid disaster, only that if we keep on doing things in the same way, some kind of disaster will occur. The problem is not industrialization per se, but industrialization on the present basis -- that is, for the sake of making profits, not meeting human needs. The problem is not a contradiction between popular aspirations and available resources but between popular aspirations and present social systems.

At the root of our ecological crisis is the profit motive. Technology is not an impersonal force above and beyond human control. It is put into use by industrialists for a purpose -- to make money. Any new technology which creates more profit for the industry, but more pollution for everyone else, will be adopted without hesitation.

The profit economy pays attention only to that which creates profit and

accumulates capital. The true loss or benefit to society comes under the heading "side effects."

Dealing with ecological crises will require not ending all growth, but building a new social system, permitting democratic social planning and regulation of the economy, for use not for profit.

Because planning is required, some left-wing writers on ecology argue that a capitalist economy can never even attempt to deal with the environmental crisis. This is where *The Limits to Growth* becomes really interesting.

It seems that the Club of Rome is headed by Aurelio Peccei, who is described as the head of a consulting firm called Italoconsult, and is "affiliated with Fiat and Olivetti." Other directors of the Club include the scientific director of OECD (the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), and the director of the Japan Economic Research Center.

These are the men whose job is long range planning and forecasting for the ruling class. They are not just "public-spirited" citizens; sponsoring studies like this is part of their job.

That job is not to be of service to all people, but only to those who employ them, the financial and corporate elite. That explains the most puzzling feature of the book, the fact that there is no discussion of how to achieve the state of balance which it advocates.

Despite what many radical critics say, the ruling class is quite willing to try to prevent ecological crisis. The intriguing Club of Rome is one indication of their willingness. The ecological ballyhoo by the *Wall Street Journal* and *Fortune* magazine is another. The rulers of this country realize that ecological crisis is a threat to their power, and they want to avoid it. But whether they can is another matter.

Many individual private interests will resist any effort to impose a solution, even one which is carried out in the long-term interest of the capitalist class. But there is a more important difficulty. The money to finance the cleanup will be taken out of the hides of working people. And the fantastic waste and inefficiency which afflicts any profit economy will not be eliminated. To do so would threaten the power of its rulers, and that is the one change they cannot tolerate.

NO NEUTRALS

Coming at a time when working people are resisting attacks on their standard of living, the struggle for a real solution to environmental problems promises to be quite a fight. *The Limits to Growth* pretends to be neutral. But it is written as part of a campaign for superficial environmental reform, not for revolutionary basic social change.

This is a conflict over the direction the ecology movement will take, over whether it will oppose movements of working people or side with them. The debates raise every major political and social issue. Only in a miniature world of equations and variables can one escape this reality. With all the resources of MIT behind them, the systems analysts have missed the point -- deliberately. ■

[Joe Felsenstein is a member of the International Socialists. He teaches genetics at the University of Washington in Seattle.]

Black liberation and rank and file revolt

David Finkel

Proceedings Of the I.S. Educational Conference On Rank and File Revolt, Part Two

In *Workers' Power* No. 58 we outlined the presentation by Art Fox, at the May 13-14 International Socialist Educational Conference in Chicago, on the nature and impact of the capitalist economic crisis. The other major presentations at the conference covered "Socialist Perspectives on the Black Liberation Movement" and "Rank and File Labor and the Tasks of Socialists."

I.S. National Secretary Joel Geier, speaking on Black Liberation perspectives, began by stating that revolution in the United States can succeed only as a working-class revolution. The collapse and disintegration of the New Left was rooted in its failure to recognize and direct its program toward the revolutionary potential of the working class.

A workers' revolution in the US, however, can succeed only if it stands for Black Liberation. The struggles of black people are crucial for any revolution in the US, not only because of their special oppression but also because of the central position of black workers in the American working class. Black workers are among those who feel the worst effects of inhuman working conditions, and it is they who bring to the working class the consciousness of the Black revolution which has shaken American society.

Geier pointed out that the ghetto uprisings which occurred in every major city in the 1960's were the events which revived revolutionary ideas in this country, following the long period of political reaction of the 1950's.

The historical tendency of the Black struggle to move in a working class direction was expressed in various ways as the central focus moved from the South into the Northern ghettos. Since 1940 the majority of blacks have moved from being farmers and domestics to become blue-collar, white-collar, and service workers. The ideologies and activities developed by Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and the Black Panther Party reflected the growing centrality of the black urban masses both in the black movement itself and in any struggle for change throughout American society.



As the working-class aspects of the black struggle have emerged, the Black Liberation movement has run into the central problem of the American working class as a whole. The all-pervasive influence of white racism throughout society has made racism a powerful force among white workers, given the absence of a powerful socialist movement, rooted in the working class, capable of fighting it.

White workers have often supported the exclusion and special oppression of blacks and refused to fight alongside them. Yet the whole experience of the Black movement of the 1960's was that black people can win some gains fighting strictly on their own, but that no fundamental improvement in their position can be won without revolutionary change, in which the participation of the entire working class is essential.

The contention of the International Socialists, Geier stated, is that the economic and social crisis in the US today opens up the possibility of joint black-white working-class struggle, and the overcoming of white racism in the process of that struggle.

It is only within the working class that there exists a tendency to overcome racial differences, because of the need to work and struggle together on

the shop floor. While this tendency does not always operate -- white racism continues to play a major role in shop-floor life as elsewhere -- the working class is the only social force in which, because of its relation to production, there is even the potential for black-white unity in action.

In the last great period of labor upsurge -- the rise of the CIO -- the industrial unions found it absolutely necessary for their own survival to organize black workers and treat them as equals. Yet the continued existence of racism, even in the CIO, played a large role in its failure to organize the South and then its degeneration. For the rank and file movement of the 1970's, the need for joint organization and struggle by black and white workers, based on equality, is doubly and triply crucial because of the much greater weight of blacks in the industrial working class today.

A critical weakness of this movement in its early stages has been the fact that most rank-and-file caucuses, especially those organized on a national scale, are almost entirely white. For such caucuses, a program of demands to fight racism -- even though very difficult to implement -- will be a life-and-death necessity without which they will remain isolated and collapse.



Strike wave led by rank and file miners broke through Phase II wage controls

Even as the rank and file movement and its organizations grow, the self-organization of black workers in their own caucuses (as well as their participation in integrated caucuses) will remain necessary. Of all workers, black and other oppressed minority workers feel most sharply the effects of the wage freeze. In fighting for Black Liberation they must inevitably fight the wage freeze and other attacks levelled against them as workers. In this respect black workers will be taking the lead in the movement of the entire working class through the dynamic of their own struggle.

Geier explained that socialists defend the right of black people to self-determination, because the oppression of blacks is a dual one -- consisting not only of their exploitation as workers, but also having aspects of the oppression of a nationality. While the black population in the US is not a fully-formed nation at this time, it is for blacks themselves to decide whether or not to move in the direction of nationhood and self-determination. Within this context socialists argue against black separatism as a dead-end strategy, calling for the building of a class struggle of black and white workers as the key to creating the conditions for winning Black Liberation.

Only when the rank and file movement taps the creativity and revolutionary passions of the black masses, and their willingness to break from bourgeois legality and property relations, will there be the possibility of a successful mass working-class and socialist movement in the US.

WORLDWIDE UPEHAVAL

Brian Mackenzie's presentation emphasized the importance for socialists of the current upsurge of industrial militancy in defining our current tasks -- the first steps in the building of a revolutionary party. While the cadre for a revolutionary party will not, of course, develop solely from the organized labor movement but will include revolutionaries from all sections of the working class as well as intellectuals, nonetheless it is from the trade union struggles that the broadest layer of revolutionary leadership will emerge.

Mackenzie pointed out a number of features which characterize the worldwide industrial upheaval of today, despite all the obvious special factors existing in each country. The main common feature has been a growth of rank and file activity essentially independent of the bureaucratic trade union "leaders."

Wildcat and "unofficial" strikes have occurred throughout the US and Western Europe against the wishes of all trade union bureaucracies -- social-democratic, Stalinist or (as in the US) openly pro-capitalist. At the same time, the bureaucratization of the official trade unions has been accelerated

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Occupation

with the conscious co-operation of the union leaders themselves.

Mackenzie noted that in the 1950's union leaders consciously traded away working conditions for wage increases and fringe benefits. As working conditions and speedup became unbearable, workers responded with wildcat strikes and the formation of "reform caucuses" within both industrial and craft unions. In the early and middle 1960's, a new phenomenon developed as workers began to reject large numbers of contracts negotiated by their leaders.

Alongside the old reform caucuses have appeared new formations based on black and Latin workers and the attempt to organize such workers into unions (including the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee and the organizing drives among black sanitation workers in the South). The Post Office strike of 1970 marked a turning point in that black workers spearheaded a struggle by workers who had never before carried out any strike action.

The main new feature of the labor movement today, argued Mackenzie, is the emergence of national opposition caucuses within major unions -- auto, steel, teaching and elsewhere -- going beyond the limited local reform groups of the past.

The pace of all these developments has been accelerated by the new period of capitalist instability. For the capitalists, the need to hamstring the unions and take away the power of the ranks has become a political question requiring direct state intervention. Simple pressure exerted by the bureaucracy has not succeeded in suppressing the rank and file.

Nixon's program of wage controls and the moves to take from the ranks the right to ratify contracts are designed to strengthen the hand of the labor bureaucracy against the ranks inside the unions as well as strengthening the companies against the unions themselves.

The reality of state intervention is

therefore an immediate problem which nationwide opposition caucuses must confront. So far, the working class has suffered a series of short-term defeats under the new policy, including the defeat of the seven-month New York Telephone strike and the ability of the Pay Board to cut wage increases without resistance. Mackenzie emphasized, however, that these defeats are temporary (although very real), and that the decisive battles lie ahead as new forms of struggle and leadership develop.

To speak politically and programatically to the new rank and file leadership being trained in struggle today is the major job of socialists in the working class. For 25 years, the American working class has been without any genuinely independent working class leadership (revolutionary or otherwise) for its struggles.

Furthermore, this class is probably the most fragmented in its consciousness of any working class in the world. Among white workers, shop-floor mil-

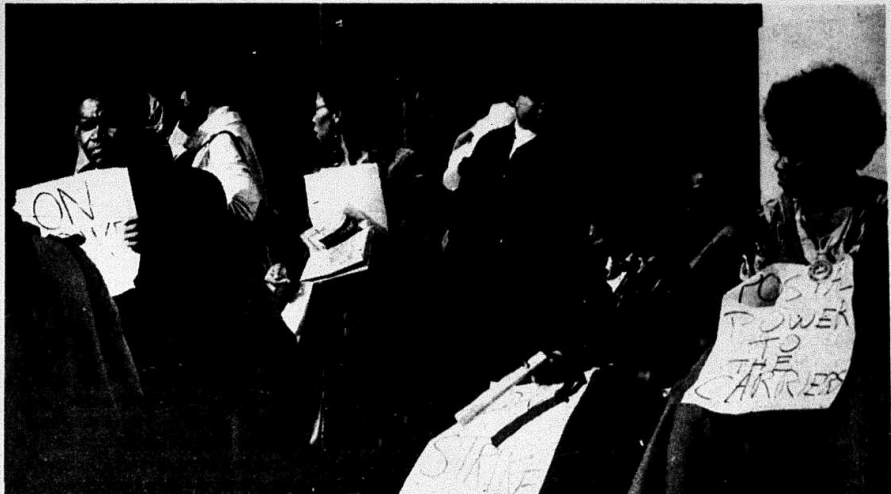
itancy may coexist with racist pro-Wallace sentiment -- while among blacks, the rise of militant black self-consciousness (which is an enormous step forward) could take reactionary and destructive political forms (terrorist, Maoist, or race-baiting) if black revolutionaries remain isolated from the masses of black workers as well as from whites.

Mackenzie argued for transitional program as the essential method for socialist participation in workers' struggles and for the unification of those struggles. Such a program includes strategic and organizational perspectives for immediate struggles, but includes also broader demands designed to point those struggles in the direction of fighting for political and social power.

The starting point for any working class transitional program today, Mackenzie stated, must be the issues raised today by the rank and file revolt in the labor movement -- for an end to labor compliance with wage controls

and productivity drives, for democratic rank and file power in the unions, for full equality for black workers, Third World workers, and women. It will also be important that the program speak to the needs of other working-class sectors -- the unorganized, the unemployed, the welfare victims -- so that rank and file union militants begin to play a leadership role for the entire class.

Underlying this conception of program for the rank and file movement -- as opposed to the limited reform and local-issue programs of the past -- is the perspective that this movement is not only a significant step forward in itself, but that it will provide the training ground for a new generation of working-class revolutionaries whose responsibility will be to lead the American socialist revolution. To contribute to the training of these cadre, and to recruit them to the politics of revolutionary democratic socialism, is the fundamental task of socialists in the United States.



Black workers helped spearhead nationwide postal strike in 1970

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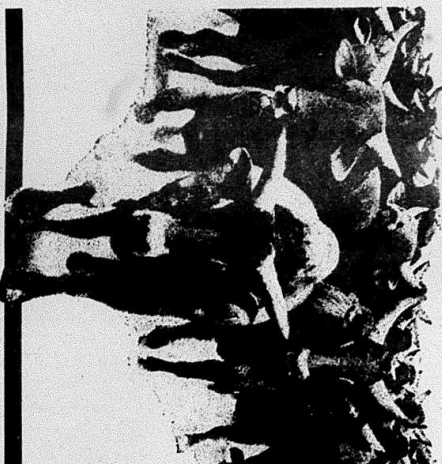
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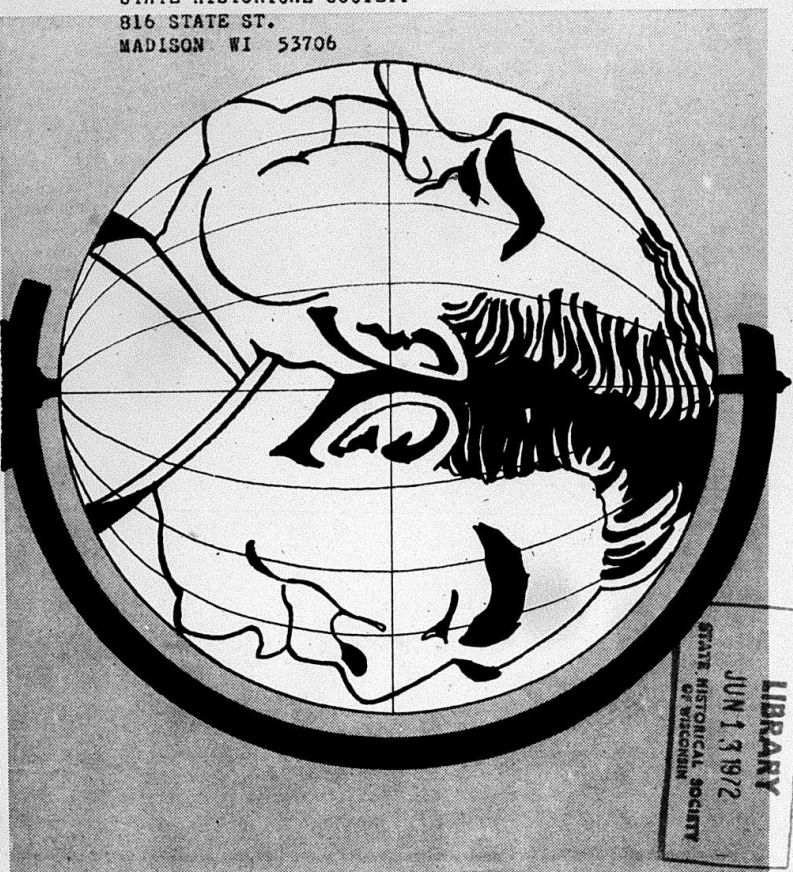
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international socialist biweekly **59**

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