

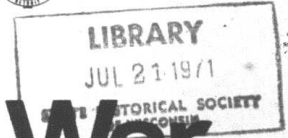
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# Workers' Power

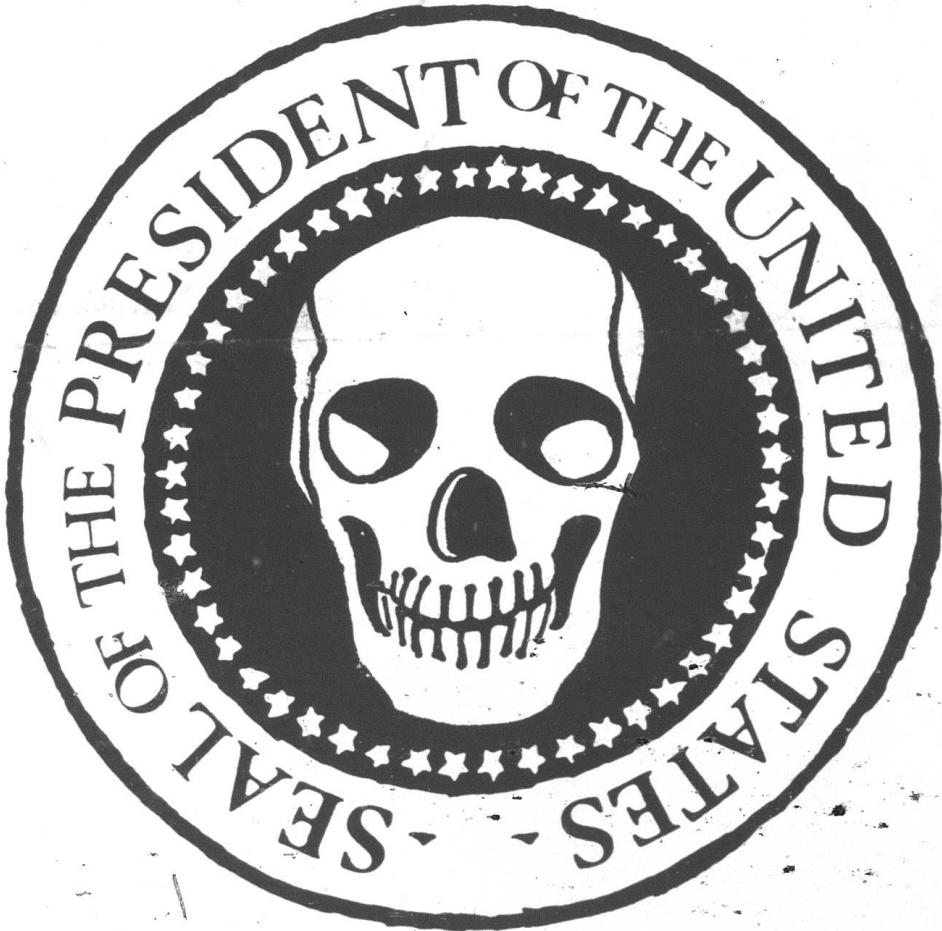
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## Nixon Widens The War



Bolivia · Auto: Who Won?  
My Lai Trials · Johns-Manville  
Abortion Victory

# The My Lai Trials: A Charade

The trials of Lt. William Calley and others involved in the My Lai massacre are currently taking place, with other trials yet to come. At first glance it seems puzzling that the government is staging the trials at all — after all, when the story of the cold-blooded execution of an entire Vietnamese village was first told, it produced a wave of disgust that helped increase anti-war sentiment. Yet now the Government Prosecutor is retelling the story with eloquent indignation. Is the government putting itself on trial? Or is it sincerely interested in justice?

Neither. It's putting Lt. Calley on trial, and not by choice. The government didn't choose to reveal the My Lai story. It concealed it as long as possible, and only admitted it when news-men found out enough to make denial impossible.

At that point the government had to put someone on trial. The government wishes us to believe it is fighting an "honorable" war in which, sometimes, things unfortunately get out of hand. To convince us, it must dissociate itself from My Lai by trying the immediate commanding officer — Lt. Calley.

Even so, the problem is a delicate one. The case must be tried by a military court — the government doesn't want to set precedents by trying a war crime in a civilian court. Yet the Army mustn't be offended. Moreover, the still sizeable (though shrinking) minority of the public which supports the war — and on which Nixon very much depends — mustn't be offended either.

The solution is a trial which is hardly a trial at all. The government's weakest case — that of Sgt. Mitchell, who may actually have been innocent — was tried first, setting a precedent. Lt. Calley is being judged by a jury of officers all but one of whom have served in Vietnam. An acquittal is a real possibility — though the government would probably like a conviction, with a moderate sentence, to prove that My Lai was a mistake that is sincerely deplored.

The truth, however, is that My Lai is typical of the war. Not in its particulars, necessarily. We don't think whole villages of unresisting people are deliberately slaughtered every day. (Although neither do we think that has happened only at My Lai.)

But the war is being fought against the population of South Vietnam (and now, of Cambodia as well). For years, soldiers have been saying you can't tell who's a VC — any Vietnamese could turn out to be one. It was four years ago that the village of Ben Suc was intentionally completely destroyed, its people forced into "refugee" camps — because the village was pro-VC.

Other sorts of My Lais happen all the time: like the soldiers who spend idle time taking pot shots at water buffalo, or villagers in sampans. Like the designation of certain areas as "free bombing areas" where pilots are instructed to bomb anything that moves. Like the use of chemicals and pesticides which destroy vegetation and poison the land, making it impossible to raise crops for years and thus condemning the people to starvation.

When a people is fighting for self-determination, as are the Vietnamese, every one of them is a potential enemy of the aggressor nation. In a war of this kind, killing civilians is logical — it is an inevitable result of this kind of war. In a sense, the whole war has been one enormous My Lai massacre.

This is not to excuse Calley and the other accused. They are vicious butchers and should be dealt with as such — far more severely than we expect the Army to do. They can be judged as individuals because their actions were not inevitable in individual terms: even in this war, there have been many American servicemen who courageously, sometimes at great personal risk, refrained from even shooting at the Vietnamese.

But to point to the inevitability of atrocities is to point out that the trials are phony they are an attempt to find a fall guy for America's genocidal war. Calley is small fry. If he deserves trial, far more should we be trying the generals and politicians who are the framers and executors of this war and the imperialist foreign policy that led to it.

Before and during World War II the world was horrified when the Nazis wiped out whole villages. Today the United States employs the same brutal methods in Vietnam. But not because it is run by fascists. It is liberals who use these methods — Kennedy who sent "advisers" to Vietnam, Johnson who sent in half a million troops, Nixon (a conservative, but a moderate one) who invaded Cambodia and today tries new adventures in North Vietnam.

No liberal critic of the war has opposed it of its imperialist nature — not Bobby Kennedy, McCarthy, McGovern, Lindsay, or any other. Their opposition comes from the fact that the U.S. is losing the war, and that to continue it in the face of domestic unrest threatens America's ability to carry out such wars in the future.

Foreign policy has its roots in the domestic social system. American imperialism stems from the same source as the murder of black militants, the exploitation of American workers and the pillage of our natural resources: that is, from the interests of American capitalism.

In the underdeveloped world, U.S. imperialism fights two kinds of battles. It intervenes against governments or movements which threaten U.S. property — often Communist-led movements. And, even where there is little U.S. property, it opposes Communist movements because the Communist "camp" — even disunited — is a powerful rival. In the Pacific, a failure of the U.S. to "pacify" Vietnam would deeply affect the trade and diplomacy not only of little countries like Thailand, but of the giants like Japan.

Why then does the U.S. "defense against Communism" mean slaughtering entire populations? Because the United States became the most important imperialist power in an era when imperialism was on the decline, when people all around the world were fighting for control of their lives. The only way this country can maintain its world position is by waging war against whole populations — and not only in Vietnam.

It is for this reason that liberals, who are for progress but above all for capitalism and imperialism, are waging war with fascist tactics. There will be more Vietnams if their leadership is not challenged. The same murderous tactics will be employed in all of them; the working class at home will continue to sink under the burden. Every generation from now on will be dragged off to imperialist war. That is the price we pay for maintaining this system. ■

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# Nixon widens the war

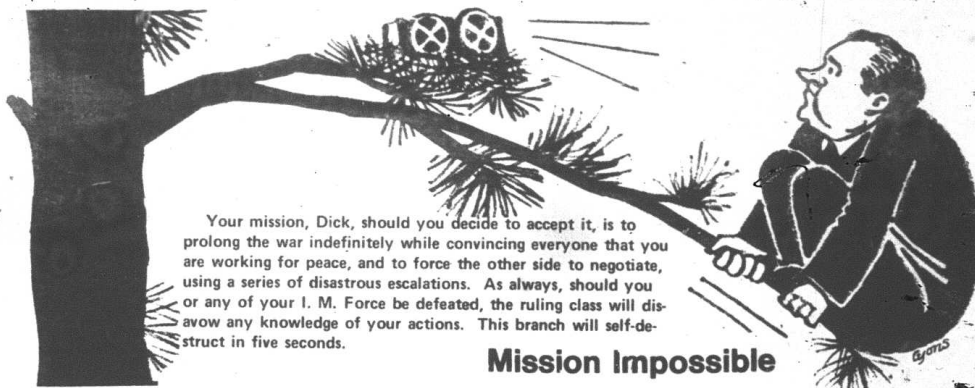
Michael Stewart

On Monday, Nov. 23, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird calmly announced that the United States for the first time in the history of the Vietnam war, had invaded North Vietnam with ground combat troops. A small number of troops landed in the north somewhere near Hanoi, their avowed purpose being to free Americans held in prisoner of war camps there. This action by itself represents a dangerous new escalation of the war, but taken together with the resumption of the bombing of the north, these acts further expose the phoniness of Nixon's "peace initiatives," and demonstrate once again that Nixon has no intention of ending the war.

It has become a litany during the Nixon administration that all acts of war are taken in order to save the lives of American soldiers. (Johnson, you remember, always claimed his actions were taken in order to win the war.) Thus the reported reason given for the resumption in bombing was that these were in retaliation for the downing of an unarmed reconnaissance plane, and hence aimed at saving the lives of pilots in the future. But the lie to this argument was given by sources inside the administration itself.

One high administration official has stated that "If this strike (the bombings) is successful...it will present quite a setback to the enemy." Another source enlarged on this: "In part, we're looking to next summer and beyond, when our force levels will be down considerably. In that context, you can talk of this as an inhibitory kind of attack." (N.Y. Times). These comments indicate that Nixon has still not completely given up the old Johnson strategy of carrying out bombings in order to hurt the other side militarily and force them to negotiate, a strategy that has conclusively proved its bankruptcy in the past.

The raid into North Vietnam is an entirely different affair. This is no return to old policies but a qualitatively new escalation of the war. The major motivation for the raid was probably a desire to bring off some dramatic act in order to bolster the patriotic front at home, a front which has recently been hit with massive doses of propaganda



## Mission Impossible

about the plight of prisoners of war and of their wives at home. Yet its implications are much more far-reaching. Whatever its actual purpose, what the raid signifies to the North Vietnamese is that a major military action or invasion of their country cannot be ruled out in the future. It is the possibility that this is exactly the message Nixon meant to transmit to Hanoi which makes this new escalation so serious.

Nixon's latest surprises are a response to the continuing quagmire he finds himself stuck in. Unable to win the war, and — because of the growing protest movement at home, combined with the social dislocation caused by the war — unable to maintain the U.S. presence there at its current levels, he decided to devise some strategy aimed at prolonging the war until the NLF would be willing to accept some settlement acceptable to the U.S. "Vietnamization" was his solution.

### Vietnamization

Vietnamization aimed at reducing the cost of the war, cutting back the U.S. troop commitment while propping up the south Vietnamese army so that it could handle most of the on-going fighting. It was never viewed as a strategy which would actually result in the Saigon regime being able to stand alone, but was only aimed at pacifying the social protest movement at home so that the war could continue indefinitely. The recent escalations, like the invasion of Cambodia, are evidence that this strategy has been a failure.

In fact, Vietnamization, rather than propping up the Saigon regime, has further undermined it, driving people further into opposition to both the regime and to U.S. imperialism. It is doubtful at best that any real pacification has occurred in the countryside. Even the U.S. admits that the NLF still controls most of it. Recent reports also show that pacification has been a flop in the cities.

Vietnamization has necessitated greatly expanding the South Vietnamese army, creating severe manpower problems. This in turn has led to massive demonstrations by students, young people, and army veterans. Ngo Cong

Duc, a Deputy in the Saigon National Assembly and a leader of the opposition, has described the repression that has followed:

"On the political level, with the Vietnamization of the war, the United States seeks only to uphold the militarists and prolong the war. The government of Mr. Nguyen Van Thieu is a dictatorial government which persecutes all those who struggle for peace and independence, and jails the innocent. At the present, the Nguyen Van Thieu government severely represses all opposition movements. Several hundred war victims are being held in jails; several hundred students were taken to military training camps; the president of the Student Union of Saigon-Hue is in prison. All are subjected to the most savage kinds of torture" (from Win magazine). And all this is done presumably to preserve South Vietnam as a "free" country!

Vietnamization is also taking its toll on the economy. This has led to numerous strikes in the south which have involved hundreds of thousands of workers, ranging from dock workers, bus drivers and hotel employees to water and electrical workers. Though these strikes have not been directly aimed against the war, the fact that all strikes have been illegal since 1965 gives any strike a political character.

Even now rumors are spreading that Thieu will pull a "Johnson," and not run for reelection in order to quiet the opposition. Instead, some compromise candidate will be found. Yet even in the face of all these facts, the administration glibly claims that the Vietnamization program is working!

### Self-Determination

This program is failing for the very same reasons that the U.S. cannot win the war: a majority of the people in South Vietnam, more and more each day, support the other side. This is because the war is basically a struggle for self-determination for the people in Vietnam, a struggle aimed at allowing the Vietnamese people themselves to determine the form of government and society that they want, free from outside domination by the U.S., France,

or any other country. It is a struggle in which the majority of Vietnamese have a stake, and this is the reason for the overwhelming opposition to the U.S. involvement there.

We do not believe that the National Liberation Front will establish a socialist society, but rather one patterned after the already existing one in North Vietnam, which we call "bureaucratic collectivist." But regardless of what we might like, and what we might advise, the Vietnamese people to struggle for, no one has a right to impose any solution there, no one has a right to intervene. That is what self-determination means. And that is why the only solution to the war is for the U.S. to completely withdraw all its troops immediately.

### Beyond the Doves

We are once again hearing the anguished cries of the Doves in Congress who have reassumed their recently abandoned anti-war stance. Once again, they opportunistically jump on the anti-war bandwagon. Yet where were they during the elections, when the war was "not an issue?" Where were they when the Congress voted approval of Nixon's phony "peace initiatives?"

It was, of course, because of the sudden silence of the doves that the war was not supposed to be an issue during the elections. The electorate of this country, however, proved that it still was an issue by passing the three referendums calling for the immediate withdrawal of all troops (by a landslide 65 percent of the vote in Detroit). The Dove politicians have now returned to this issue because they hope that it might give them a handle for the '72 elections. That is all. If we want to see the war ended, we must not rely on them.

The American people are disgusted with this war, and opposition to it is overwhelming. Moreover, the vote in Detroit indicates that this sentiment reaches far into the working class. But to date the anti-war movement has failed to provide an organizational vehicle for this sentiment, to promote such organization among workers, and to relate the war to the economic and social consequences at home. This failure has left the anti-war sentiment that exists to be manipulated by the dove politicians. Organization is a prerequisite to any effective struggle.

The anti-war movement must be revived. It must begin to orient its activities towards promoting the organization of the mass anti-war sentiment that exists, especially among workers, relating the war to the social crisis in this country. It is also imperative that demonstrations be called in response to the recent events. To fail to respond now would give Nixon the free hand he needs to continue to escalate the war.





# AUTO: WHO WON?

**Karl Fischer**

The UAW's nationwide strike against General Motors is over. On Nov. 19, UAW President Leonard Woodcock announced that GM workers had voted to ratify a new 3-year national contract with the auto giant. The final vote count is not in yet, since some locals have not reported the results of their vote. Woodcock, however, stated that at that time 80 percent of skilled workers and 85 percent of production workers had voted for ratification (Detroit News, Nov. 19, 1970). One Detroit television station (WJBK-TV) commented: "The ratification of the settlement means that labor peace will return to the auto industry and to Detroit for the next three years."

They are wrong. Nothing in the new contract will begin to deal with the basic problems and needs of auto workers. Nothing has been done to improve the working conditions that have made auto workers among the most volatile and explosive in America. As discussed in detail in the last issue of *Workers' Power*, the new contract falls far short of meeting the basic needs of the industry's workers.

In exchange for a very modest wage increase, Woodcock agreed to do absolutely nothing in the crucial area of working conditions. The one clear victory in the contract was the return to an unlimited cost-of-living allowance; yet even this was won at the expense of a major compromise on the early retirement program.

As if in echo of this fact, three wildcat strikes broke out in Detroit even as GM workers were voting on the contract. Workers at the Chrysler Mound Road Engine Plant walked out when a steward was punched by a foreman and then fired by the company. Workers at the Jefferson Assembly Plant wildcatted when the plant's heating system failed, and at the Detroit Forge Plant over the disciplinary layoff of 27 militants.

Why then did GM workers ratify? Why, after staying out for eight weeks — the longest nationwide auto strike in 20 years since the 104-day Chrysler strike in 1950 — did they accept a con-

tract which so obviously fell short of their needs? Why, in spite of the fact that many well-known UAW militants — Jack Wagner, President of Local 599 in Flint and leader of the 30-and-Out movement, and Pete Kelly, Vice-President of Local 160 in Warren and chairman of the United National Caucus, to name two — flatly urged rejection?

The answer lies mainly in the way the strike was run. From start to finish, the entire production was carefully stage-managed from the top, from Solidarity House. And its objectives were less to force concession from GM than to cool off the demands of GM workers — keeping them out long enough to get them hungry, but not so long as to create large-scale bitterness.

## The "Friendly Strike"

The rank-and-file worker was ignored during the eight weeks of the strike. No rallies were called, no meetings were scheduled to keep workers informed about the progress of the negotiations; nothing was done to build morale in the ranks.

Moreover, contrary to what the UAW leadership kept insisting, the tentative settlement was used to force locals to settle up. The leadership even went so far as to threaten the militant Mansfield local with being placed in receivership unless they settled by Nov. 21, deadline for the ratification votes to be in. This was no idle threat; the local had been placed in receivership during the last contract.

On the very day of a GM-announced deadline, Woodcock settled. He had kept the strike going long enough to make workers feel the pinch, and put them in a receptive mood for a settlement. But he realized that to keep the strike going longer would have backfired; so much bitterness would result that workers would be far less willing to compromise over the basic issues.

The *Wall Street Journal* quite perceptively commented: "Both sides agree that if the strike had dragged on past Thanksgiving it would have paved the way for an epic dispute continuing into

the New Year. Such a possibility could have tipped the scales within the UAW from a 'heroic struggle' strengthening Woodcock to a messy strike beyond the control of the top leaders and perhaps the downfall of Mr. Woodcock" (*Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 20, 1970).

Thus Woodcock manipulated the situation to produce widespread demoralization within the ranks, and then submitted the contract for ratification. Workers voted for ratification in large numbers not because they were overjoyed with the pact, but because they saw no clear alternative. They felt that rejecting the contract, in the absence of any organized opposition leadership, would only have prolonged the affair. Workers believed that they would only get essentially the same bad bargain back in another month or so. Woodcock played a very tight game, and he won going away.

## Ford Next

The negotiations now move on to Ford and Chrysler; a strike deadline of December 7 has been set at Ford. Woodcock will almost certainly settle at these two companies without a strike; he will present essentially the same contract that he negotiated at GM to workers at Ford and Chrysler.

Even if they reject such a settlement

— as they most certainly should on the merits of the contract — these workers would find themselves in a difficult situation. Going out on strike at this point could be very hard; the strike fund is exhausted, Ford and Chrysler are laying off anyway because of the usual winter production slowdown, and the winter months are the worst time of the year to be out.

However, an immediate strike is not a necessity; certain alternatives are available. For example, the union could be instructed, after a rejection, to continue negotiating for a better contract until this spring if necessary, at which point the rank and file would be in a stronger position for a strike. Or, the union could propose a one year contract on the basis of the GM settlement, after which a strike could be called.

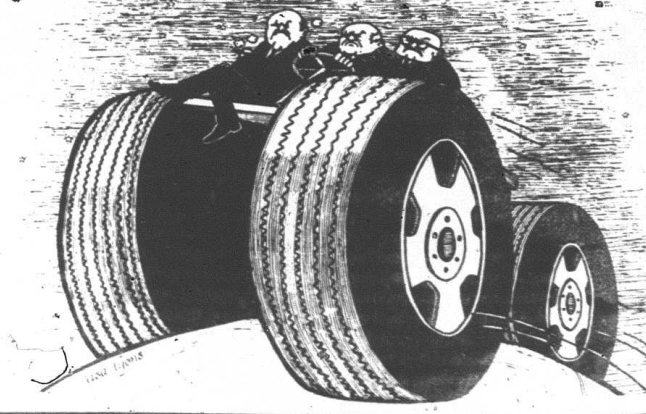
## Two Lessons

Two crucial lessons emerge from the GM strike. The first is that rank-and-file organization is the key to any successful fight, in the auto industry as much as elsewhere. Only when workers are mobilized, kept informed on the issues and strategies of the strike, and organized in such a way as to breathe some life and spirit into a struggle, can there be any effective drive mounted to fight and win real victories.

The union leadership will not do this; they deliberately foster a situation of apathy and general exhaustion to maintain their own control over the ranks. This work must be done by rank-and-file militants, or it will be done by no one.

The second point is that issues of working conditions must become the primary concern of militant auto workers in the coming months. GM has granted some economic concessions in this contract. However small the gains are in comparison to the real needs of workers, they will cost the companies a sizeable amount in increased costs. In response, GM and their junior partners will do what they have always done in such a situation; they will attempt to win back what they give in wages by "increases in productivity": i.e. speed-up, crackdowns on absenteeism, and general tightening of work discipline.

The companies will attempt to make their workers pay for the new contract by taking it out of the workers' hides. Workers must organize to fight defensive battles against the worsening speedup and production squeeze which is sure to come. Beyond that, they must begin to formulate programs to deal with these issues; increases in line stewards, simplification of the grievance procedure, demands relating to presumption of innocence of workers charged with an offense, and the demand for workers' control of all production standards and line speeds. These issues will clearly be crucial in the months and years to come.



# The Canadian Crisis

Tom Condit

The recent kidnappings in Quebec, followed by the military occupation of the province by Canadian troops, have left most Americans (traditionally ignorant of everything about Canada except the fact that it is north of us) totally puzzled. Reactions vary from acceptance of the official press-handout story that Quebec separatism is the affair of a handful of student militants, isolated from the mainstream of French-Canadian society, to the belief that a massive armed uprising is due to break out in Montreal any day now. Uncertain of what is going on or how to react, even radicals in the US have met the massive crackdown and suspension of civil liberties in Quebec with total apathy.

What is more surprising, even Canadians outside Quebec have only the most confused idea of what is going on. While English-Canadians are aware that French-Canadian nationalism exists as a powerful force in Canadian affairs, they tend to see it as a residue of Quebec's rural past, as youthful foolishness of students and intellectuals, or as something which can be assuaged with token gestures such as the use of the French language on money and stamps.

Both the extent of the deep-rooted sense of grievance with which the *Quebecois* masses view official Canadian society, and the newfound self-confidence with which they are seeking to master their own destiny have come as a total surprise to English-Canadians in all classes and throughout the political spectrum. Only the student "new left" of Canada sympathizes with or supports the nationalists of Quebec, and they do so more out of instinct than of understanding.

300 years of feudalism, imperialism and subordination have left the French-speaking people of Canada with a legacy of poverty, unemployment, disease and illiteracy which cannot be eliminated with a French word on a coin or a constitutional adjustment here and there. They have also left an accumulated bitterness which can no longer be contained by the oily words of the priest, the rantings of local fascist demagogues in the pay of Toronto bankers, or the slick manipulations of Pierre-Elliott Trudeau and the "new Liberals." The crisis of Quebec is not a cultural one, but a social one, and it is becoming increasingly a crisis of Canada as a whole.

Young Quebecois intellectuals like to refer to themselves (with some exaggeration) as "white niggers." 30 percent of the people of Canada are French speaking, but they make up only 10 percent of the federal civil service, control only 10 percent of the business and industry in their own province of Quebec, and are only 7 percent of corporate ex-

ecutives. Within Quebec, which has an overall standard of living 27 percent below that of neighboring Ontario, the Quebecois rank 12th in income among the 14 major ethnic groups, above only the Indians and the Italian immigrants.

Tuberculosis, the "disease of poverty" is still common in rural Quebec and in the mill towns along the St. Lawrence, and even more so among the French minority in New Brunswick and the fishermen of the Gaspé peninsula. Overcrowding, slums and illiteracy make up an everpresent part of life in the world's fifth richest country, at least as far as 1/3 of her population are concerned.

English-Canadians are fond of blaming poverty in Quebec on the backwardness of her people. They point to the prosperous, hustling English-speaking *bourgeoisie* of Montreal, and contrast them with the conservative insularity of the priest-ridden *habitant* of the backwoods. The image of the Quebecois in English Canada is not that of the "nigger," as the young Montreal intellectuals believe, but that of the ignorant rural "redneck," trapped in his own cultural backwardness.

When the *Anglais* thinks of French Canada, he thinks of the corrupt and reactionary regime of Maurice Duplessis (the Talmadge of Canada), of the easily-bribeable traffic cops, the humble peasant listening to his priest tell him of the evils of the outside world. All of these things are indeed part of Quebec's heritage, but so are 150 years of struggle against them — of militant organization, of armed struggle and fight against clerical and feudal domination.

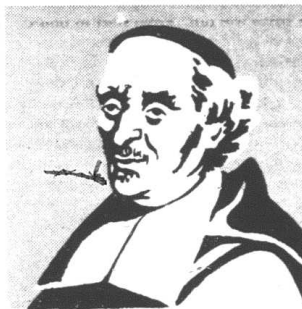
Moreover, the young Quebecois nationalist is burning aware of something the English-Canadian prefers to forget: that at every crucial turning point of the struggle against reaction and backwardness in Quebec, British imperialism and the federal government in Ottawa sided with the same medieval force they point to as the cause of Quebec's problems. The backwardness and poverty of French Canada was and is the product of British imperialism and of Canadian and American capitalism.

## 1. The Feudal Legacy

When the France of the "old regime" began to build its settlements in the New World, they tried to recreate French feudalism in Canada. Grants of land were made to "seigneurs" (mostly commoners) and to the Catholic Church, on the condition that they bring over settlers to populate them. These landlords were granted feudal rights, including monopolies on milling grain, the right to forced labor from their tenants and

a variety of cash rents plus shares of crops. 25 percent of these grants went to the Church.

After the English conquest, the feudal system was retained intact, except that English seigneurs replaced many of the French landlords, who had fled. The Quebec Act of 1774 confirmed the rights of the Catholic Church, provided for government collection of Church tithes, and maintained the French civil code as the basic legal code for the province out of "respect for the customs of the inhabitants" (it happened to be an additional convenience for the colonial authorities that these customs didn't include the rights of *habeus corpus* or of trial by jury). In return for these concessions, the Church threw its full weight behind the British administration, and in particular played a key role in keeping Quebec quiet during the American revolution.



VICAR OF NEW FRANCE

It wasn't until 1854 that the British "abolished feudalism" in Quebec, and then they did it in a most peculiar way. The seigneurs had held title under French law as "trustees," obligated to rent it at customary rates to anyone who would accept the obligations of being their tenants. The government converted this right to that of absolute ownership of all unsettled land, and then \$5 million in compensation for their abolished milling and forced-labor rights (and also paid \$4 million to Ontario landlords, who had never had these rights in the first place, just to be fair), and gave the tenants the choice of buying their land outright for an impossibly high sum or of paying annual interest at 6 percent of that sum.

In 1940, almost 100 years later, 44 percent of the farmers of Quebec were still paying these feudal rents. In that year, the Liberal government bought the land outright for \$3,500,000 and saddled the farmers with another 4 1/2 years of payments to repay the government its expense.

Just to avoid any interference of Church and State, however, the lands of the Catholic Church and its institutions were exempted from the "de-feudalization" of Quebec. The Church continued to reinforce the backwardness of the immense part of rural and urban Quebec it still controlled, and the basis was laid for the alliance between English and French conservatives which controlled Canada for most of the 19th Century.

This continuation of feudalism wasn't just a problem of a few individually oppressive relationships. The tenant farmers of Quebec were barred from infringing upon the feudal rights of their seigneurs, whether lay or clerical: from building gristmills or sawmills, from cutting commercial lumber, from (in short) engaging in any activity other than farming or fishing. This not only tied the individual *habitants* to their land and prevented them from moving into modern occupations, it encouraged a backward subsistence economy which was unable to nourish any commercial classes, which had no home market of its own for any but the most elementary manufactured goods.

It is this heritage which is directly responsible for the fact that only 4 1/2 percent of manufacturing in Quebec is controlled by French-Canadians, while Americans hold 51 percent and English-Canadians 44 percent. When capitalism came to Quebec, it came as a foreign importation, and it found a ready-made reservoir of cheap labor in the impoverished peasants and fisherfolk of French Canada.

Moreover, the compact between the Church and the commercial interests of Toronto riveted the chains of parochial education and illiteracy on the necks of the people of Quebec. All education was in Church schools — French-speaking for Catholics, English-speaking for Protestants — and ignorance and illiteracy found a fertile soil. It was not until the "Quiet Revolution" of the 1960's that the first attempts were made to secularize the school system and break down the rigid segregation between French and English-speaking children.

## 2. The Democratic Heritage

If feudalism, clericalism and ignorance are part of Quebec's legacy, so is struggle against both these and capitalist exploitation. In 1837, the democrats of French Canada rose up against the alliance of the Church and British imperialism, and joined with reformers of English Canada in demanding a democratic and secularized state. The revolt was defeated, and both the Church and the land-

lords retained their privileges, but the British government was forced to concede wider powers to elected representatives of the Canadian people.

The *Parti Rouge* of Quebec maintained contact throughout this period not only with the English-Canadian reformers, but with the British Chartist Movement and the Irish leader O'Connell. They fought for full rights and equality, not only between Protestants and Catholics, but for Jews and "dissenters" as well (at a time when these rights were still denied in England).

The English attempted to keep Quebec down and to force the eventual assimilation of the French by unifying Upper and Lower Canada (Ontario and Quebec) into a single province, where French was denied status as a legal language and an English-speaking majority could dominate. The reformers of both sections continued their close collaboration and resistance to the imperial edict, until in 1848 (with the breath of European revolution on the backs of their necks), the British government yielded, granted greater powers to the Canadian government, and legalized French as an official language again.

Finally, in 1867, Canada was organized as a "dominion" of the British empire, and a federal structure adopted. The political leaders of Quebec, already fatally entangled with the bankers and merchants of English Canada, accepted the compromise by which their rights as a national minority were shuffled aside under the pretext of "provincial autonomy."

The crucial question of equality of both nations in the new state was transformed into the slogan of "masters in our own house" — the right of the Quebecois to run Quebec however they wanted, and the abandonment of the rights of the French-speaking minority in the rest of Canada.

This deal was cemented in the "Manitoba school crisis" of 1890, when Quebec voters were persuaded to accept the abolition of all education in French in the province of Manitoba, on the grounds that the federal government should not interfere with provincial autonomy.



LOUIS RIEL

Although education in French had been quietly eliminated in New Brunswick within 10 years of confederation, Manitoba was a particularly bitter pill to swallow. The province of Manitoba had secured self-government and equality of English and French as a result of an armed uprising of settlers, halfbreeds (*metis*) and Indians, led by a French *metis* named Louis Riel.

The "Red River Rebellion" was the result of a typical Canadian government ripoff — the payment of a huge sum of money to the Hudson's Bay Company for western land it had never owned, and the resale of that land to real estate

speculators and railroads without the consent of those living on it. Although the revolt was defeated militarily, it won a measure of representative government and equality in Manitoba.

Fifteen years later, when Riel and 8 Indian leaders were judicially murdered after leading a similar uprising in Saskatchewan, 50,000 demonstrators sang the *Marseillaise* and lowered the flags of Montreal to half-mast while the Orange Order organized celebrations in Ontario.

### 3. The Manitoba School Crisis

The Manitoba school crisis defined the restrictive framework within which the question of French-Canadian rights has been confined ever since. In 1890, a Liberal government came to power in Manitoba, and secularized the school system. This tremendous step forward — the abolition of Church control of education — was unfortunately accompanied by the institution of public education in English only.

The Catholic Church reacted sharply, and persuaded its Conservative allies to introduce a bill in the federal parliament overriding the Manitoba action. (The Conservative Party was the bastard child of a mesalliance between the Catholic hierarchy, Orangeism and finance capital.) The next federal election was fought on the Manitoba school issue, with the bishops openly campaigning for the Tory candidates, while the Liberals stood for "provincial rights." When the vote was in, the Liberal Party had carried Quebec by 3 to 1.

The Manitoba crisis defined (on both sides) the acceptable limits of debate on the rights and destiny of the French-Canadian nation. On the one hand, the Church and the Tories urged the *Canadien* to identify himself primarily as a *Catholic*. Their image was "jean-Batiste," who appears as the patron saint of Quebec in annual ceremonies — a curly-headed little boy, innocent and naive, leading a lamb through the streets.

The Church and its allies preached virtues of piety, obedience and poverty, and constantly contrasted the pure life of the humble habitant with the evils of materialism, atheism and democracy (the latter two usually presented as synonymous). The peasant of Quebec was told to welcome his poverty and subordination, because it proved his spiritual superiority to the *Anglais*. The British Crown was depicted as the surest guarantor of French-Canadian rights against the encroachments of English Protestantism and ... the Liberals.

The Liberals, on the other hand, dealt with French rights not as a question of religion but as one of "centralization" versus "decentralization." The salvation of the Quebecois lay in provincial autonomy, and this autonomy was defended on grounds of general political and constitutional principles, rather than the specifics of the Canadian situation.

The heritage of this abstract "constitutional" approach has poisoned Canadian politics ever since — it has left the French-speaking minorities outside Quebec at the mercy of English-Canadian chauvinism, barred any attempt at rational centralization of Canadian government, encouraged provincialism throughout Canada, and thrown the Liberals — barred by their own "principles" — from building a strong and unitary binational Canadian state — into the arms of American big business, as an "alternative" to the Catholic Church and British imperialism. It determines the current attempts of the Liberal Party to resolve the Que-

bec crisis by constitutional sleight-of-hand.

### 4. Clerical Fascism

The traditions of provincialism and clericalism found its true unity in the mid-1930's. Maurice Duplessis, provincial leader of the Conservative Party in Quebec, engineered a unification of his party with a number of ultra-rightist, clerical nationalist and fascist groupings, to form the "Union Nationale." Running on a platform of opposition to the "trusts" and affirmation of traditional rural virtues, spiced with attacks on the Liberals as tools of the "Jewish bankers" and lubricated with liberal applications of holy water from the priests, Duplessis swept to power.

The victory of l'Union Nationale was not merely some Canadian peculiarity. The great depression had thrown world capitalism into a panic, and rulers everywhere were throwing their support to demagogues who might channel mass discontent into forms which would support rather than challenge the system. Duplessis received thousands of dollars for his campaign from Toronto bankers and Montreal businessmen. During the same period, Hitler was helped to power in Germany, Huey Long in Louisiana and the demagogic Social Credit Party in Alberta.



MAURICE DUPLESSIS

Nor was the support of the Church merely a reflection of its medieval attitudes. For 100 years, the Catholic Church in Canada had been reinvesting its profits from its vast Quebec landholdings in stocks, railroad bonds and other commercial enterprises. From the bishops down, the leaders of the Church were totally entangled with the same capitalist system the parish priests so piously denounced from their pulpits. The survival of Catholic institutions was dependent upon the survival of the capitalist system, and Quebec was one of the weakest points of that system.

The depression hit Quebec with an impact probably unequalled in North America. Despite the propaganda image conveyed by priest and politician, the typical Quebecois was no longer a subsistence farmer, but a textile worker or lumberjack.

The backwardness of its agriculture (in the mid-30's, for example, Quebec farmers had only 1/5 as many tractors per capita as those of Ontario) had produced an abundant supply of cheap labor, and the forests and rivers of Quebec attracted increasing American investment. With her farming population already permanently depressed, the effect of the great crash upon an industry almost totally export-oriented was catastrophic. Disease, poverty and starvation hit Quebec, followed by strikes, riots and radical agitation.

Duplessis was a godsend to the Canadian capitalists. While the official government paper (edited by the former head of the "National Socialist Party of Canada") churned out anti-semitic prop-

# Alphabet Soup, Canadian Style

[a guide to some Canadian political organizations and their initials]

**FLQ:** Front de Liberation du Quebec, militant separatist organization which advocates a "Quebec brand of socialism" and uses terrorism as a primary political tactic. It has about 130 members free (before the current crackdown) and another 100 in jail.

**PQ:** Parti Quebecois, the largest single party in Quebec, with over 30,000 members. Formed as a merger of three separatist groups, it received 24 percent of the vote in the last provincial election, but only 7 percent of the seats.

**CLC:** Canadian Labour Congress, a national federation encompassing the bulk of Canadian workers; based on the AFL-CIO internationals and very much under American influence. **QFL:** Quebec Federation of Labour, Quebec section of CLC.

**CSN (CNTU):** Confederation des Syndicats Nationaux (Confederation of National Trade Unions), independent Quebec federation of unions with about 250,000 members, almost all French-speaking. Formerly the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Trade Unions, it was set up by the Catholic Church as a "company union" corporatist movement, but has fallen under militant lay control, especially in Montreal.

**FRAP:** Front d'Action Politique, political arm of Montreal CSN.

**NDP:** New Democratic Party, social-democratic party organized by members of the former Cooperative Commonwealth Federation and leaders of the CLC. Receives about 1/3 of labor vote and has 20 members in parliament.

**Union Nationale:** Quebec conservative party, at one time semi-fascist, closely linked with big business and Catholic Church, given to frequent use of nationalist rhetoric.

**Liberal Party:** Traditional party of subordination to U.S. capital, federalism.

**Progressive-Conservative Party:** Traditional party of subordination to British imperialism. Has newly become Canadian nationalist in response to the impending demise of its former British patrons. Dominates Maritime Provinces.

**Social-Credit ("SoCreds"):** Prairie "funny money" party. At one time it had strong fascist overtones, but lately has become just orthodox conservative. Government party in British Columbia and Alberta. **Creditistes:** Quebec split from SoCreds. Scored exceptional electoral victory in 1962, running on slogan: "What have you got to lose?" Heavily nationalist in rhetoric. Many Creditistes have joined the PQ.



David Finkel

# Johns-Manville: The Ranks Continue the Fight

A previous issue of *Workers' Power* (No. 24) reported the development of a strike in Manville, New Jersey, against the gigantic Johns-Manville corporation. At issue were basic economic improvements and the need for protection against the asbestos dust inhaled by workers in the pipemaking factory.

The lack of protection is directly responsible for hundreds of cases of asbestosis, a progressively crippling lung disease, and mesothelioma, a deadly and incurable form of cancer. As of mid-November the strike has entered a new phase, owing to the overwhelming rank-and-file rejection of a contract proposal which the local union leadership had accepted.

After thirteen weeks of struggle during which the union faced the full force of legal repression — injunctions, arrests and contempt citations — the corporation offered a miserable "settlement" which met virtually none of the strike demands. The only concession was the elimination of the "buffer zone" allowing management to distribute overtime work according to its own preferences. (As previously reported, the union demands equal distribution of overtime so that everyone gets an equal chance for extra money — the wage levels are so low that overtime is an economic necessity despite the deadly conditions in the plant.)

## A Slap in the Face

The rest of the "settlement" was a slap in the face. The contract was to run three years, with a November expiration date — exactly the time of year when J-M hits a slack season and lays workers off. The wage offer was for 6 percent yearly, with no escalator, which would leave J-M workers further behind than they already are. And on the life-and-death issue of environmental control, the company proposed a "joint union-management committee" to meet monthly for discussions, without even a timetable for developing real action proposals. The corporation calculated that a three-month strike had bled the workers to the point of accepting anything — a conclusion which the union leadership was unable to challenge.

Up to now the course of events had followed the corporation's script. A

settlement on the proposed terms would set the pace for settlements at other J-M plants where contracts expire this year, particularly at the Lampoc mine in Southern California. The local union, United Papermakers and Paperworkers Local 800, would be bankrupted, demoralized, and left to the mercy of the company-controlled courts. The bitter memory of a costly defeat would erode the possibilities of militant struggle for a considerable period.

At this point, the striking workers themselves took over center stage. The contract proposal came down October 31. A ratification meeting was called for the following Monday. In an atmosphere of virtual chaos, the officials argued that they had won the best settlement possible under the circumstances. Continuation of the strike would mean the loss of holiday pay for Thanksgiving, possibly even Christmas. While they realize the contract is a poor one, "responsibility to the membership" forces them to recommend a return to work.

But in spite of the grim alternatives, this pill was too bitter for the strikers to swallow. Even with no organized opposition to the official leadership, the workers took the floor to denounce the settlement — particularly the length of the contract and the lack of meaningful economic improvements. The asbestos dust control question, however, remained mainly in the background as it has throughout most of the strike, although it has provided a major impetus for the strike and explains much of its determination and militancy.

When a secret ballot was proposed for the ratification, the strikers demanded an open vote. A chaotic parliamentary wrangle ensued and the meeting ended in disorder with no vote. Essentially the same scene was repeated at a second meeting later the same day.

A week passed with the strike in limbo — no further meetings or negotiations. On the following Monday another gigantic meeting was held with 2000 striking workers in attendance. The opposition speakers this time were more articulate, perhaps somewhat better organized than before. A notable feature was the emergence of several

women as important opponents of the settlement. But once again it was the sentiments of the vast majority of the strikers, rather than an organized rank-and-file alternative leadership, which completely transformed the situation.

The anger of the week before had not been a momentary flareup to be forgotten or dissipated in the following few days. By a virtually unanimous decision, the membership refused to even vote on the proposed contract. The negotiating committee was sent back to the corporation with the following minimum demands: for a two-year contract and an August expiration date, a meaningful wage increase, and vacation benefits. Hardly realizing what had happened, the union leadership was completely swept aside — to all appearances, by an unorganized, spontaneous rank-and-file upheaval.

For several days the union leaders practically vanished from sight, as the strike simply continued of its own momentum. After this brief period they resumed leadership and — to outside appearances — the strike continues as before. But unquestionably a new phase has begun. The company refuses to make any new proposal. The union digs in for a strike which might possibly last all winter, even until the end of March when the contract of the huge local in Waukegan, Illinois, is scheduled to expire. In any case, the leadership has advised the strikers to brace themselves for this possibility.

It is completely to their credit — even if they had no choice — that the local leadership has resumed responsibility for organizing and leading the strike. But the turn in the situation has prompted them to begin an attack in another direction as well.

Throughout the strike a group of independent radicals called the Manville Strike Support Group has been actively working to support the strike and build contacts with the workers and the union. During the thirteen weeks before the proposed settlement the union officials seemed completely open to student and radical support; at one point it appeared that massive student support for picket lines would be requested. Since the contract rejection, however, the leadership

has begun an attack on this group, labeling it as a carrier of "a philosophy alien to our way of life." (Earlier in the strike the corporation itself tried the same tactic, without success.) But since this group was expressing openly radical ideas and distributing copies of *Workers' Power* to hundreds of strikers long before the contract proposal, however, it seems unlikely that "philosophy" is the real issue.

The real "crime" of the Manville Strike Support Group was that it distributed leaflets calling for rejection of the contract. It would appear that this appeal played at the very most a small role, if perhaps a real one, in precipitating the actual rejection. But the presence of radicals supporting the strike has changed from an asset to a threat from the viewpoint of the union leadership. It is yet to be seen how the workers themselves, who have not previously indicated that they regard the radicals as "alien," will react to this development. But the changed attitude of the strike leadership can be seen as a sign of the change in the objective situation of the strike itself.

## Organize to Win

The contract rejection was an important step, representing the survival of the workers' struggle at a point where a compromising leadership could have killed it. But victory will only be won if this step is followed by others. The unorganized militancy which rejected the contract must take organized form — otherwise the leaders will come back again with another bad offer, and again if necessary, until a tired membership votes to accept.

Just as important, the most basic demand underlying the strike — for protection against the asbestos dust — must be fought for. Until now it has remained in the background. It's not hard to see why: to fight for real protection would mean demanding standards set and enforced by the union, with the power to close the plant at any time for violations at the corporation's expense. This demand would go beyond traditional wage-and-hours issues and require a degree of workers' control over the company's operations. But to safeguard their own lives, workers will have to de-

mand just this.

The rank and file — through organized committees — should force this demand onto the negotiating table. When the company claims the proposed controls will be too expensive, or that current plans are sufficient, or that profits are in danger, the union should demand the right to inspect its books. If necessary the whole enterprise should be taken over under workers' control, with any losses made good by taxing other corporations.

To fight for such demands effectively, it will be necessary to do more than strike and negotiate. These demands cut into the company's rights, and J-M will fight tooth and nail against them. Yet they are absolutely necessary not only for the Manville workers, but for other J-M workers and workers in other industries: intolerable safety conditions endanger workers' lives everywhere. The Manville workers should seek their support, through sympathy strikes or demonstrations at other J-M plants (such as the Lampoc mine in California, which will shortly begin its own struggle against J-M). Financial aid should be demanded from the AFL-CIO and unions which claim to be concerned about social issues, like the UAW.

### Political Struggle

Finally, the issue should be taken into the political arena. The safety issue really requires industry-wide and nationwide solutions. J-M workers should demand a state safety law and demonstrate in Trenton to get it. They should join with other workers to demand a national safety law.

At this point the struggle would reach a new level: as the struggle for safety became joined with other struggles — for control of working conditions, for full employment — it would require a break with the Democratic Party, whose representatives are tied to protecting the "rights" of corporate property. It would require a class-wide mass political party of working people. On the basis of political independence, the labor movement could unite with the "ecology" movement around a program: not to destroy industrial production, but to transform it into the basis of a society free of pollution, in which technology truly worked to ease and beautify life.

The Manville strikers are concentrating on the immediate tasks ahead. Even aside from pollution control, it is not clear how far the workers will have to go to win their immediate basic economic demands — it's not clear, for example, how the GM strike settlement will affect the bargaining position of Johns-Manville. Fifteen weeks of picketing, harassment, contempt citations, and one miserable contract proposal have already shown that the fight for the right to live and breathe is a long one.

But although the strikers themselves don't yet look so far ahead, the strike points in the direction of a broader social struggle. It will be difficult to sell a "settlement" which says nothing about controlling the asbestos dust which kills on the job, yet to fight for control will require fighting on a broader front than has been the case until now.

This is the reason why the union leaders suddenly find radical ideas "alien" — it is because these ideas are no longer incidental to nuts-and-bolts picket line support, but rather may begin to appear very natural to the strikers and to crystallize demands for political action which the existing union leadership cannot carry out. ■

# LIFE ON THE LINE

John Weber



I work on the second shift at a GM auto assembly plant. Production on our shift is scheduled to run between the hours of 4:30 in the afternoon and 1:00 in the morning, with a half hour off for lunch. But you can't count on a one o'clock quitting time. As long as the line keeps on going, you have to stay at your station and keep on working.

About ten minutes before the line shuts down, the foreman comes around and tells everybody when line time (the time that the line stops) will be. Until that moment, all you know is the rumors, and they keep on changing all the time. There is no way of planning on meeting someone after work or doing anything, because you never know what time you'll get off. You can't even plan on getting together with someone who works in a different department, because the line time is different from department to department.

Every day, the plant manager has a certain production schedule he has to get out. You work until that schedule is met, and that's all there is to it. During periods of normal production, the variation in the line time isn't much more than a petty nuisance. You usually can count on getting out sometime between 12:48 and 1:18. If there is a big breakdown, you work about that much overtime. By and large, nobody seems to get too upset about the unpredictable line time. It's pretty much accepted that we are all just another part of the machine and we just keep on going until the big man shuts us off.

### No Warning

What really causes gripes is when they tell you that you've got to work a couple of hours overtime, or that you've got to come in on a weekend or holiday. Every week they put up a notice saying what the expected production schedule is for the next week. But they don't have to stick to it. You can officially find out about 2 minutes before the scheduled line time that you're working a couple of hours overtime. And at 12:30 on Friday night, they might tell you that you have to come in on Saturday.

Any day of the week they can tell you to come in the next day at some hour so that they can work both shifts overtime. There is nothing you can do about it, even if you have plans. They give you more trouble for missing an overtime day than they do if you miss a regular work day.

They can also single you out and tell you to stay after the line stops. They might give you a broom and tell you to sweep up, or they might put you on a job you've never done before. A lot of guys don't like being told to do something that isn't their job. Other guys really want that overtime, but no one asks what you want; they just tell you.

Skilled trades workers get a lot of overtime work. During changeover they usually go 10 hours every day, 6 days a week. They also have a lot of weekend work all year around. Some of them want all the overtime they can get. But others complain that no amount of money is worth ruining their health. One friend on maintenance told me that they sometimes have to come in on weekends even when there is no work to do. The foremen like the extra overtime money, but can only get it if they call in workers and so they make up jobs to do on weekends.

We expect a real lot of overtime

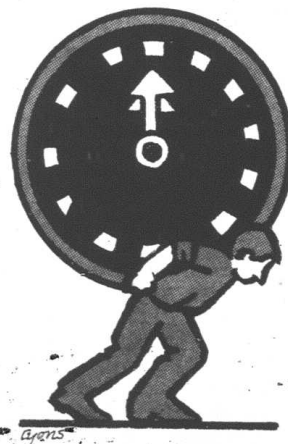
If GM wants to increase production, they should hire more workers: The 40 hour week was supposedly won 80 years ago, and there is a lot of unemployment around. Overtime, particularly if its going to be more than 18 minutes per day, should be on a purely voluntary basis. We know that an assembly line cannot be run without everyone there; if we won this demand, it would mean that there would be no overtime work. GM would have to plan ahead and hire the people it needs to produce the cars it wants on a straight time basis.

A mistake in planning should inconvenience GM and not us. We should get enough pay so no one needs overtime. There would still be some overtime for those who want it on sub-assembly work, maintenance, material and so on. This could be bid for on the basis of seniority and overtime lists. Unfortunately, our union does not consider voluntary overtime to be an important issue to fight for.

### Dictatorial Control

When you hire in to a GM plant, one of the questions they ask you on the application is if you are willing to accept all overtime offered. If you say no, you're not hired. If you complain about forced overtime after starting work, they can show you the appli-

# Voluntary Overtime



when we come back from the strike. Some people think that since GM pays us time and a half rates on overtime, it costs them more to produce cars on overtime and therefore they won't do it except in an emergency. This is not true.

Labor costs are higher at overtime rates, but fixed costs are not affected. The cost of the plant, the machinery, the bookkeeping and clerical overhead, and so on remains just about the same, no matter how many hours the plant operates. Since they figure these costs on the basis of two 40 hour per week production shifts, these fixed costs are free during overtime hours worked. Also, all benefits and the night shift premium are calculated on a straight time basis. As a result, overtime production probably costs GM no more, and possibly less, than straight time production.

where you had already agreed to the overtime. GM considers its dictatorial control over the workforce to be even more important to them than any question about wages and benefits.

In this last round of negotiations, the UAW put voluntary overtime on the table, but it was the first demand they agreed to drop. Over the years, it has proven true that whether the UAW does well or poorly on wages and benefits, the international union is willing to do nothing on the questions relating to working conditions and our life in the plant.

It's hard for a union official who has long been off the line to remember what life in the plants is like. Only when the ranks organize, and force their feelings to be felt, will we be able to make headway on issues like voluntary overtime. ■





# Repression '70 Two Cases



[Everyone realizes now that the political "leaders" of this country, both Republican and Democratic, have decided that the way to defeat movements of social protest is through "law and order" (read repression). However, due to a general press blackout and the legal "muzzling" of defendants, not much is known of the extent of the current wave of repression, nor of how successful it has been. It is up to the movement press to publicize what is going on. The following two reports are cases in point.]

## St Louis

The outbreak of repression in St. Louis is the direct result of the destruction of two ROTC buildings on the Washington University campus. The second building was destroyed on May 5, as a result of the mass outrage at the invasion of Cambodia and the killings at Kent State. Seven people were indicted over the summer, three charged under the 1968 Civil Rights Act, the other four being charged with, among other things, violating the old World War II anti-sabotage act, which has been invoked only twice before. They face anywhere from 30 to 70 years in prison.

Already one person has been convicted of violating the Civil Rights Act and sentenced to the full five years in prison. The six others go on trial sometime between now and February. These seven people are being victimized for the actions of thousands. They are to be examples aimed at intimidating other people from engaging in any political activity at all.

To make matters worse, and hinder any attempts at building a political defense, there has been a complete suspension of civil liberties at Washington University since March 24, when a Temporary Restraining Order was issued — preventing any activity that might be construed as interfering with the "normal" functioning of the University. This restraining order has become a permanent injunction. Help is desperately needed for the defense. Send inquiries or contributions to: Legal Defense Fund, c/o Dick Hazelton, 6612 Waterman, University City, Missouri.

[Adapted from a press release by the New Morning Messengers.]

## Carbondale

In Carbondale, Illinois, "law and order" is taking the form of a Joint House-Senate Committee on Campus Disorders of the Illinois State Legislature. The committee came to Carbondale to investigate the closing of the campus of Southern Illinois University last May following the Kent State murders.

Many people are familiar with the activities of this type of committee since they are patterned after HISC (the House Internal Security Committee). Theirs is an eternal search for "outside agitators," commies, spies, and other intruders hiding under the bed. Thus they have claimed that the

introduction of a pass-fail system to replace regular grades in some courses was a Communist Plot to destroy competition.

What this committee, establishment politicians and Grand Juries are unwilling to accept is the fact that the demonstrations of last May were the result of Nixon's order to invade Cambodia. Whatever destruction took place was most often the result of the police and national guard's attempts to halt the growth of national protest over Nixon's actions.

[As reported to Workers' Power by Paul Y. Zeldovich, a faculty member of the Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and a member of the International Socialists.]



HISC questioning an outside agitator

## Beware The Joy

Richard Lyons

When the Bomb Squad arrived, everyone felt relief, however timorous and reserved. The five volunteer recruits moved in blackly with brief hesitations beneath the yardgoods of their official conservative suits.

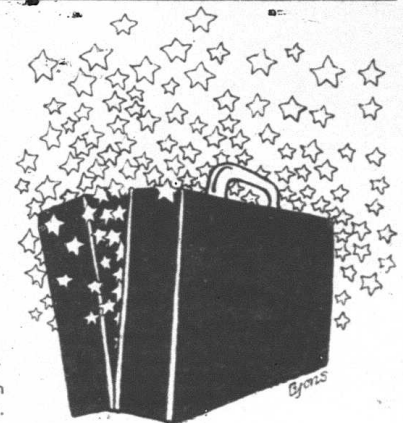
They circled the plain brown Wheary bag on the floor of the airport baggage room, looking as though it would bite the first hand reaching down to bend its heretic white fingers around the handle.

They kept their distance, a close distance, but a distance, as they looked — stooped or stood —

and looked. It seemed to be an ordinary bag that would under cooler circumstance have created no concern.

Well, they came at last to trying out their luck. It wasn't locked. They looked inside. No bomb, no blast, no warning, nothing ticking. They pulled its sides apart slowly as though the hinges stuck.

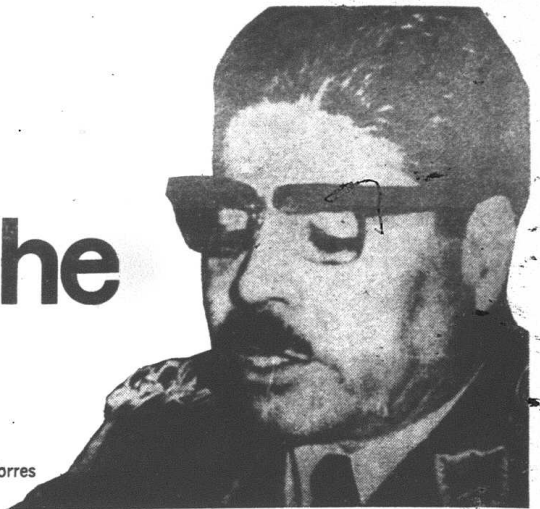
Each man traded eyes, exchanged the same surprise. There were packets not of gloom but of optimism, gayly wrapped and lettered "Help yourself," but small enough for them to flush down the johns in the men's room.



# BOLIVIA: The General & the Working Class

Joan McKenna

Gen. Juan Jose Torres



"The Bolivian tragedy is the absence of strong workers' organizations." In this way the Bolivian Workers' Federation (COB) recently summed up the experience of the Bolivian labor movement which has played an extremely active part in bringing "revolutionary" governments to power, but has only suffered frustration and defeat at the hands of these governments.

The latest government to come to power with the aid of Bolivian workers and students is that of "leftist" General Juan Jose Torres. Gen. Torres is a comparative newcomer to leftist circles in Bolivia. Described by his acquaintances as "strongly ambitious and opportunist," Torres had a reputation as a rightist because of his opposition to revolution and leftist ideology.

Early in his career he supported the military junta that overthrew the legally elected government of Paz Estenssoro. As Chief of Staff he planned the operation against the guerrillas led by Che Guevara and was one of the group that approved the order that Che be executed if captured. Later Torres joined the cabinet of General Ovando, but was fired last July as a concession to the right-wing military leaders. It was then, it appears, that he began talking about "revolution."

## The MNR

Organized labor played a dominant role in the national revolution of 1952 led by the MNR, the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement. Armed miners took control of the mining camps and nearby cities and, together with the national police, defeated the ruling military junta and brought the MNR to power. The new government, ruling in conjunction with the trade union organization, the COB, immediately disbanded the regular military forces, weakened the police and replaced them with armed mine workers, factory workers and peasants.

During the early MNR period the trade unions were responsible for the management of the nationalized industries and for the distribution of food and consumer goods to their members. The COB reviewed all important legislation before it was acted upon by the government.

The most important contribution of the MNR government was the mobilization of the workers and newly emancipated Indian peasants. It was through the revolutionary actions of the population that the most important reform measures of the government were enacted. The long-promised agrarian reform

bill was passed after the peasants had seized the land themselves. The nationalization of mines was legalized after many of the mines had been taken over by the miners.

Although they used the working class to maintain power, the MNR had no intention of letting the workers take over the economy and democratically run it in the interests of all the people. It was not long before the conflicting aims of the politicians in the MNR and of labor were brought into the open in the COB periodical, *Rebellion*.

A radical article argued that "it is

for up to 80 percent of the country's export value, the MNR chose to accept the monetary stabilization program imposed upon it by the International Monetary Fund.

COB leader Lechin objected that the workers were being sacrificed in order to achieve stability that would only benefit capitalist interests. However, it was the fault of the COB reformists that the MNR could get away with just that. The MNR accepted the plan of the world bankers in order to safeguard the continued flow of U.S. AID funds, on which the MNR's position depended.

such measures as firing "excess" workers, cutting wages, eliminating food subsidies, and ending workers' influence over administrative decisions. (It was while the miners were fighting bloody battles against the army and these "improvements" that Che Guevara was operating in the Bolivian jungles, on the elitist theory that the workers were incapable of making a revolution.)

Once again in September, 1969, Bolivian workers witnessed the return of a group of "leftist" military officers to power. Led by General Ovando Candia, calling himself a "revolutionary nationalist," the new government nationalized the American-owned Gulf Oil Company and monopolized the export of minerals. However, it took these steps without any participation of, let alone control by, the people.

## Gulf Oil

Ovando had nationalized Gulf Oil only to gain civilian backing while he made secure his own position with the military. However, Gulf Oil and its allies retaliated by organizing an international blockade to prevent the delivery of material for the construction of a pipeline necessary for oil sales to Argentina. They also shut off U.S. west coast oil markets and subsidized civilian groups opposing the Bolivian government. The U.S. imposed a freeze on foreign aid. By May of 1970, Ovando was ready to protect his position by apologizing to Gulf Oil and bringing it back to Bolivia in a more favorable economic position than it had before the nationalization.

During the past few months guerrillas of the National Liberation Army have become active again, both in the jungle and urban areas. More importantly, protests against the government's policies have included strikes in tin mines and hunger strikes by labor unions, as well as bombings in La Paz, the capital, and countless student demonstrations.

As a result, when General Torres took power from the right-wing junta that overthrew Ovando last month, he wisely called for a "popular nationalist government" resting on four pillars — peasants, workers, students and the military. Reminiscent of the MNR revolution in 1952, Torres used armed peasants as a show of strength against the military rightists. His military police have aided the students against the nationalist police force, and students and workers have taken control of the major newspapers, the tin mines and



Bolivians assail U.S. business

quite impossible to separate the two phases of the revolution: that means that the workers in power must not halt at bourgeois-democratic limits but must strike ever more deeply at the rights of private property, going over to socialist methods..." This statement was immediately denounced by reformist COB leader Juan Lechin. The COB union bureaucrats were unwilling to oppose the MNR and fight to turn the nationalist revolution into a socialist revolution. MNR Nationalists thereafter maintained control of the workers movement.

By 1956 the MNR was capitulating to the demands of American imperialism. The MNR had attempted to industrialize within the constraints of the capitalist world. When faced with inflation and a drop in the world price of tin, which had previously accounted

In its battle with the radical wing of the party led by the labor movement, the MNR began to develop a new "classless" army to counteract the threat of the civilian militia. The U.S. backed this military buildup, particularly after Castro came to power in Cuba. Bolivia became the largest recipient of U.S. AID in Latin America, most of which was used to overcome Bolivia's budget deficit, not for economic development. The MNR became increasingly dependent upon the military for support and was eventually overthrown by a military coup in 1964, with the aid of General Torres, among others.

Bolivian workers, especially the miners, struggled through the particularly repressive regime of General Barrientos. In order to encourage foreign investment, the government attempted to reorganize the tin administration with

[continued on page 9]

# Bolivia

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

major U.S. installations.

But Bolivia is still facing the same major problems, left unsolved by all its reformist governments. It is still a poor, undeveloped nation. Its per capita income of \$189 per year is the lowest in Latin America except for Haiti. Most of the miners make no more than 80c a day. 80 percent of them suffer from silicosis, caused by the repeated inhalation of dust in the mines. Infant mortality stands at 40 percent, and 60 percent of the children who survive suffer from TB.

Economically Bolivia is overly dependent on its major exports, tin and oil, increasing its vulnerability to the pressures of imperialist powers. Those limited social reforms that have been put into effect by previous governments have been dependent upon the flow of U.S. AID, more recently given in the form of loans rather than grants.

General Torres does not promise any real solutions to these problems. He says he will respect all the commitments of the Bolivian government. Presumably this includes the \$78 million promised to Gulf Oil. He promises the nationalization of Bolivian financial institutions and foreign enterprises but he intends to promote the confidence of foreign investors. The workers still maintain control of COMIBOL, the state mining industry. But the government has already taken control of *El Diario* from the workers' cooperative that had been running the paper since the coup.

## Threat From the Right

Though it supported Torres' takeover, the labor movement is being cautious about further support. The COB did not accept Torres' offer that COB name 8 members of his cabinet, and it cancelled a planned rally in support of Torres.

One of the most important demands made by the labor movement and its allies is that Torres purge the armed forces, the majority of whom are conservative and do not support Torres. Torres, however, prefers to use both the military and the unions to support his rule. None of those officers who backed the right-wing coup last month have been removed from their posts. As long as Torres refuses to move against the military, it remains a threat to the popular left forces and serves to intimidate the reformist labor leaders.

## No "Co-Rule"

The miners, however, are once again arming themselves and still control the tin mines. The miners know that "co-rule" will not work; their experience with it in 1952 only added up to a means for the bourgeoisie to control the workers and hold their movement back. It will not be long before Torres or the right wing military steps in to regain control of the tin industry. If the miners have learned from the experience of the past they will know that at that point they will have to fight for state power. ■

[Joan McKenna is a student of Latin American affairs.]

# Notes From the Irish Left

Robert St. Cyr

## Devlin Free

Bernadette Devlin, re-elected M.P. to Westminster, was released two months and four days early from her six month prison sentence for leading the defense of the Bogside against police and Paisleyites in August, 1969. She quickly returned to London to claim her seat (and back pay) in Parliament — and to announce that where she had once "dared to struggle" she now "dared to win" for the cause of a democratic, socialist society.

While in prison her campaign workers organized Independent Socialist Associations within the largely rural, Mid-Ulster constituency. Both Eamonn McCann, chairman of the Derry branch of the North Ireland Labour Party (one of the few socialists remaining in that party, McCann was a guest of the International Socialists in the U.S. last spring), and the People's Democracy welcomed this move. Devlin had been a leader in People's Democracy during its formative "New Left" days. After her election, however, when P.D. began to organize itself toward becoming a serious socialist group, Bernadette declined to apply for membership.

P.D. consistently criticized her for not building any democratic organization to serve her constituents' interests. Now that the I.S.A.'s have filled this need P.D. has been eager to work with them on problems common to all of Ulster and Ireland.

## Reforms?

Among the chief complaints around which the civil rights movement grew were discrimination against Catholics in (municipal) government housing allocations and jobs, and against workers and the poor in local government elections. The highly-touted reform program which Harold Wilson forced down the throats of Ulster's ruling Unionists promised to correct these abuses.

A major part of new housing has been in the hands of local government authorities. The reform's proposal: create a new Central Housing Authority which would remove the question of politics altogether. Of course, the government has done nothing about setting up this new agency.

On the "one man, one vote" demand the reform has conceded this right but has stalled off local elections, first from 1969 to April 1971, and now til 1973! Then they even had the gall to try and sneak through by-elections (i.e., to fill vacancies) under the old franchise. When Prime Minister Chichester-Clark decided to allow local by-elections under the new 18 year old, universal vote the "liberal" Unionist *Belfast Telegraph* con-

sidered it a noble move and a daring slap at the right-wing.

Even when the distant day of one man, one vote really arrives, it will not solve all the questions raised by the civil rights movement. The Unionists — who are just as Protestant as the fanatic, Paisleyite, Protestant Unionists who have split from them — intend to take back with the right hand what they have given with the left. The number of local governments will be much reduced by the creation of larger districts with fewer powers at their disposal.

The government has already proposed a thorough re-gerrymander that would keep most areas under Protestant majorities. The reduction of local government power is a means of neutralizing the democratization of the vote and of placing more government workers on the central payroll (which the Unionists can hope to dominate a lot longer than many local districts.



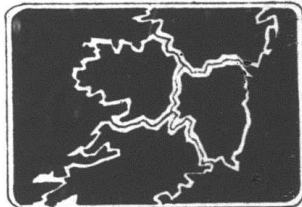
BERNADETTE DEVLIN

## Thin Red Line

The Halloween weekend brought a sharp upsurge of violence to Belfast, notably different from the riots that have become a regular Friday night event. A gelignite bomb was thrown directly into a group of British soldiers and machine-gun fire was reportedly directed at them. London papers carried a story on a special squad of Right Republicans from Dublin who were responsible. The Army, which has been savage enough on occasion, is, of course, burning for revenge.

American radio commentators were very sympathetic toward the soldiers.

When, on the other hand, the Army attacked the Left Republican stronghold of the Falls Road (around July 1), ransacking houses, shooting people and allowing some to bleed to death by preventing their evacuation to hospital, we, in the U.S., heard no denunciations of the British occupation.



When the British Army intervened fifteen months ago they were generally welcomed by the Catholics who looked to them for protection from Protestant extremists and police, and expected reforms to be carried in their van. Protestant workers feared that the intervention marked the end of the "good old days" of anti-Catholic discrimination. Since then both Protestant and Catholic masses have attacked the soldiers — the former for fear of progressive change, the latter because they didn't bring such change. Only the middle classes now support the troops.

Socialists warned from the first that the troops had been sent more to protect property than lives. It was in Britain's interest to put an end to the fighting, lest the fears of Southern Catholics concerning the impending genocide of their fellows in the North lead to acts against British property there, or pro-Republican mutiny in the Irish Army.

People's Democracy, Bernadette Devlin, and the socialists within the NILP agree that socialism in Ireland will only be possible after a democratic, working class movement is built which includes both Protestants and Catholics — with neither forcing the culture of its community upon the other, but rather each respecting the different cultural origins of the other.

Although the Left Republicans are themselves divided on this question, they tend to stress national reunification as preceding the struggle for socialism. The result of this approach, whether intentional or not, would be to perpetuate the opposition of Protestant workers to any joint activity with Catholics. P.D. and other non-Republican socialists stress socialism first, seeing reunification following "naturally" from the growth of a socialist working class movement.

"Free Citizen," the weekly newsheet of the People's Democracy, and "The Northern Star," P.D.'s journal are available from the New York International Socialists, Room 1005, 874 Broadway, New York, 10003. Please include your own return postage or ask a local I.S. branch to order copies. "Free Citizen" is 10c a copy, and the "Northern Star" is 25c.

# Abortion Reform: Victory in Washington State



Lydia Silver

A significant victory for women was won on election day when Washington State voters approved an abortion reform measure in a popular referendum. The new law is not remarkably "liberal," and is similar to measures passed or in progress in at least fifteen other states. Its significance lies in the fact that it is the first of all the abortion reform measures of the past few years to be put to the people. The substantial margin of

victory explodes the highly-touted myth that voters will invariably quash abortion reform if given the opportunity.

The issue was bitterly contested; the abortion measure was considered the most important ballot item in almost every opinion poll. Chief spokesman for the opposition to the reform was a group calling itself "Voice for the Unborn." This well-financed organization used hysteria and scare tactics highly reminiscent of right-wing campaigns. Its chief weapon was an enormous billboard photograph, allegedly of a four-month old fetus removed in an abortion. "Kill Referendum 20, Not Him," the signs shrieked. At a distance the only word visible was *kill*.

The Washington Citizens for Abortion Reform, the best-financed supporters of the measures, deliberately played it "cool." They preferred male "experts" to mere women as spokesmen for their campaign, and did not work to actually organize people in any real way. Even though the Committee for Abortion Reform, a group more oriented towards women's liberation, did take some steps in this direction, the type of campaign waged by WCAR leaves behind it a tremendous task for those who support meaningful change in our abortion laws, change which will make abortion every woman's right.

## The "Conscience" Clause

On election night a WCAR representative (male) told the newspapers that now another real fight begins — the fight to make sure the "conscience" clause in the law sticks. That clause specifies that no medical unit or personnel be required to perform abortions. This is hardly the biggest problem facing the people of this state concerning abor-

tions! A majority of hospitals have tentatively indicated that they will *not* change their existing policies, and almost all who do change will use some quota system. In addition, of course, cost will be a substantial deterrent. In short, as before, there will be one law for the rich, another law for ordinary working people.

If legal, safe abortions are to be available to more than just a few, an important step will have to be taken by the State Board of Health. In early December they will decide exactly what medical facilities other than hospitals will be authorized to perform abortions. This decision is a critical one. If only hospitals are approved, the cost, red tape, and humiliation involved will make certain that safe, legal abortions are still available only to the rich.

It will also be important to insure that conditions such as sterilization are never attached to a hospital's agreement to perform an operation.

One clause in the new law is especially outrageous, and will have to be fought. It states that any woman living with her husband must obtain his permission for an abortion, as though she were a child or his property. Women must have the right to control their own bodies.

Because of this clause women's liberation spokesmen in other areas opposed support of the measure. For example, Lucinda Cisler of New York wrote, in a widely reprinted article, that "It is utterly fantastic, then, to hear that some women's liberation groups in Washington State have been supporting an abortion bill with a consent provision."

However, since Referendum 20 represented a real opportunity to reach people, not just legislators, and to be-

gin to build a movement which discussed the abortion issue in the light of women's overall secondary status in this society, groups like Women's Liberation and the International Socialists rejected the view of those who argued that any imperfect bill should be rejected. They gave active support to the measure while criticizing its obvious shortcomings. Winning limited reforms does not usually "buy people off," but encourages them to fight for more rights.

The results of the campaign will show that this was a step forward, a victory for the women, and men, of Washington State, with national implications. Certainly the Voice for the Unborn understood the national importance of the vote.

## No More Coat Hangers

The fight goes on. One powerful piece of propaganda put out during the campaign was a button which simply showed a coat hanger — the symbol of the dangerous, often fatal, abortions which are now the frequent fate of ordinary women. Until abortions are within reach of all the grisly coat hanger will still be with us.

The most important message of the campaign was one pushed by Women's Liberation Seattle. "Abortion is a Woman's Right," they said. Working women, and those who side with them, will be the critical force in determining whether or not this demand will become a reality. ■

[For further information on abortion and abortion reform, read "One in Four, An Abortion Primer," available for 25c from Women's Liberation Seattle, 3117 E. Thomas, Seattle, Washington, 98102.]

When thousands of women marched in New York for equal rights last August, we didn't know that we were about to lose one of the few rights we had. On September 1st, the New York State Department of Labor announced that it was eliminating protective legislation which prohibited most women from working more than 54 hours a week or after midnight, because these laws conflicted with a ruling by the Federal Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC).

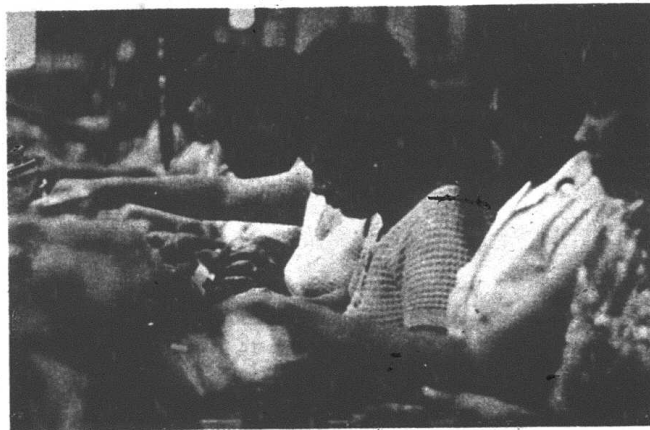
The announcement was given no publicity, and there has been virtually no response to it, even from those union officials who had been testifying against the proposed Equal Rights amendment for the very reason that it would speed up the destruction of such legislation. The Democratic and Republican candidates predictably said nothing in defense of the workers who they were appealing to as "friends of labor."

## Protection & Discrimination

Because protective legislation has been used as an excuse to keep women out of well-paying jobs, many women's groups — NOW in particular — have called for its abolition. But eliminating protective legislation will do absolutely nothing to end job discrimination against most women; it is not really these laws, but the very structure of society which excludes women from equal work.

If employers want to discriminate against women, they don't need protective legislation to do it. Equal work for women will only be won through struggle, not by passing or abolishing a few laws, any more than equal pay was won in 1963 when the Federal Equal Pay Act was passed.

Some women who oppose protective



# New York Ends Protective Legislation

- Beverly Cortelyou

Legislation point out correctly that it doesn't protect the very women who need it the most; cleaning women, nurses' aides, telephone operators, and other women in very low-paying jobs have always been exempted from the prohibition against working after midnight. But recognizing this does not mean that we oppose the laws themselves; rather, we should fight for their extension, just as we fight for the extension of other rights.

The reason that protective legislation has become a weapon against women is in fact because it doesn't cover enough workers: the extension of these laws to

all workers — women and men — would mean that employers could no longer use them to bar women from certain jobs and they would then really serve the function of protecting workers.

Abolishing protective legislation might make it easier for a small number of professional women to get jobs, but it would leave most workers — men and women — more exploited than before. Many gains originally won by women workers, such as days off, lunch breaks, and seating, have been extended to men as well; the loss of protective legislation would be felt by men as well as women. In Michigan, for example, the elimination of a maximum-hours law for a

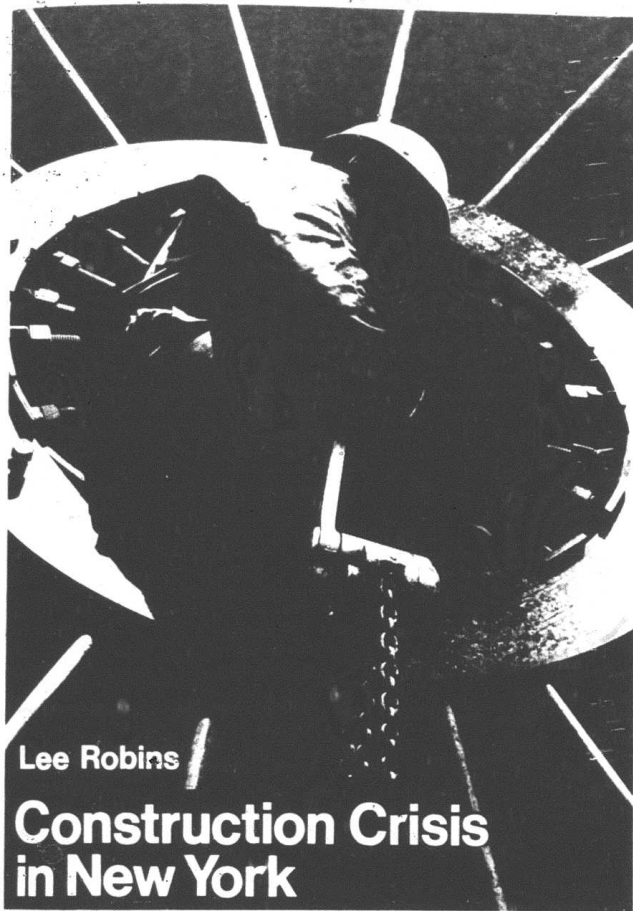
short period last year resulted in a compulsory 12 hour shift for all workers at one plant.

In fact, low pay, bad working conditions, and lack of protective laws tend to go together — the farm workers, lowest paid of all American workers, are exempt from nearly all labor legislation — and it is the states which have the worst record of protective legislation, such as Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, which also have the most vicious anti-labor laws.

## General Offensive

The move to abolish protective legislation comes at a time when the Nixon administration is trying to make the working class pay for the inflation caused by the Vietnam war. Increasing overtime for women is one more way of forcing workers to fight harder just to stay in the same place; working longer hours is no answer to inflation, and winning the "right" of equal overwork isn't any improvement for women. A serious struggle against sexual discrimination on the job must address itself to winning free day care centers, maternity-paternity leave, equal access to skilled jobs and equal pay, not to the abolition of whatever protective legislation we have left — that just plays into the hands of the capitalists.

Instead of accepting the destruction of protective legislation, we should immediately start campaigns in New York and around the country to win back and extend protective legislation to those women who are not now covered by it and to men as well. In this way we can struggle against those aspects of the laws which do discriminate against women without destroying these rights which we have won already. ■



Lee Robins

## Construction Crisis in New York

Fightback, a city-wide organization of black unemployed in New York, called several demonstrations in late September to "shut down construction" at the half-built City College science building. Their demands were to immediately hire 70 qualified black and Puerto Rican workers, and to set up throughout the \$150 million City University building program a means of ensuring equal opportunity for minority workers.

City College was chosen as demon-

stration target in honor of its location — in the middle of Harlem. In addition, the construction is financed and owned by the State Dormitory Authority, conveniently paid for by public taxes.

Minority workers have been hardest hit by the planned unemployment provoked by the Nixon Administration as its unsuccessful answer to inflation. Minority unemployment is over twice the national 5.1 percent. In addition, a public education system even more in-

ferior in ghettos than everywhere else guarantees the disqualification of blacks and Latins from most better-paying, higher-skilled jobs. It is no accident that only about 3.2 percent of all skilled construction workers are black or brown.

Not only do the construction trade unions reinforce the racism in this society by denying entrance to minority workers, they also fail to defend even their own members. Time lost between jobs, and from bad weather, means that construction workers average only about 1500 hours of work a year (compared with the 2000 hours that regular 40-hour-a-week jobs yield). Thus, despite their high hourly wages, most earn far less than the annual \$9000 needed to sustain a small family.

Recent years have seen a steadily decreasing amount of construction jobs — and it is this financial insecurity more than any other factor which makes many construction workers feel threatened by Fightback's demands for more minority hiring. It is harrowingly easy to visualize in New York the intensified racial conflict which has already distinguished Pittsburgh and Seattle. What, then, is the solution to black and Puerto Rican unemployment? Should their struggles cease until *everyone* recognizes their right to fight?

On the contrary, to stop struggling is a sure way to win nothing. For instance, women (who hold the most menial, underpaid jobs in this country) could surely benefit from construction work being opened up to them; but since there is no women's movement demanding it, the chances of this happening at present are nil.

### Jobs For All

Furthermore, it is possible that the very fights of minority workers can have a catalytic effect on the entire working class. Faced with a possible loss of jobs on the one hand, and with a growing black and Third World movement demanding jobs on the other, construction workers *could* fight for more jobs for all. It is crucial that organizations like Fightback demand, along with **Guaranteed Minority Hiring, More Jobs for All.**

Unfortunately, the Fightback tactic has not been to reach out to those construction workers who recognize the importance of opening their own union so

that everyone is strengthened in the struggles for higher wages, job security, and humanized working conditions. Instead, Fightback has appealed to the state, to the Board of Higher Education, to Governor Rockefeller. James Haughton, Fightback's director, has publicly endorsed Adam Walinsky for Attorney General — Walinsky, who is running on the same ticket as Ottinger, a vocal advocate of wage controls!

### Birdshit More Likely

A more disastrous choice of allies could not be made. Asking help from above is like waiting for pie from the sky: birdshit is more likely. It is all too easy, in lieu of the joint struggle of black unemployed and the unionized workers, for the government to implement projects like its recent Operation Breakthrough. True, this federally-financed housing complex did hire an all-black workforce — but at less than half what the unionized workers would have gotten. Somehow, it seems that the money employers can save when they bust the construction unions is a more pertinent reason for their support of groups like Fightback than their "interest" in fair play for blacks.

Why do groups like the Ford Foundation contribute so heavily to black construction coalitions as in Seattle? Because blacks and whites fighting each other over a diminishing job market is a safe, ruler-approved substitute for these workers uniting to challenge a state which doesn't provide decent jobs for anyone.

The *only* long range solution to both unemployment and to the urban decay becoming more and more blatant, is *more* construction; the houses, hospitals, child care centers, schools, and transportation systems that we need would provide enough jobs for the entire population. We must demand that the corporations, sucking billion-dollar profits off the sweat of working people, pay for these public necessities. We must demand that the \$80 billion a year blown into smoke, largely responsible for the present inflationary spiral, be used in our interests — not for the profits of a few.

Ultimately, only a society democratically controlled by the people who produce its wealth, in alliance with all oppressed, can guarantee that our needs are met. ■

Did you know that air and water pollution are really your own fault? Or that "human habit-patterns are what is really at the bottom of the worldwide food problem?" According to a recent "News Analysis" in the *New York Times*, the millions of people who find themselves victims of these conditions are really causing them!

Ten thousand people die of starvation every day on this planet. Starvation occurs, in the *Times*' estimation, because of "human habit-patterns" which keep Eskimos from eating rice or East Indians from eating pork. Not that rice, pork, or anything else has ever been available to the ten thousand daily victims. The *Times* just knows they wouldn't eat it anyway because of "food foibles."

As for pollution:  
"the commonest environmental problems ... are woes that people, to a great extent, bring on themselves ... they neglect to build adequate sewage-treatment plants, they temporize about controlling smog sources, and they still adhere generally to caveman patterns in disposing of refuse."

This is sheer nonsense, since individuals are rarely in a position to construct

sewage plants, incinerators, etc. On the rare occasions when such attempts are made, they are squashed before they get off the drawing board. When tiny Canyon City near Berkeley, California, designed its own non-polluting sewage system, the local authorities rejected their plan and forced them to pay thousands to be hooked up to the existing facility — which of course dumps raw sewage into San Francisco Bay!

Needless to say, the miseries of pollution do not match the tragedy of starvation. But both have the same cause, and that cause is not what the *Times* calls "humans' self-destructive habits." Profit-making social systems cause the vast majority of unnecessary human suffering. Profit made at the expense of the majority of people brings starvation and pollution in its wake just as surely as lightning brings thunder.

The *Times* and its business readership are more concerned about making profit than they are about considering its effects. That is why they discuss starvation in a "human interest" story, emphasizing how quaint it is that starving people should prefer one kind of food to another. ■

Kate  
Spieler

# Ecology and the New York Times



# Having Wonderful War... Wish I Weren't Here



M. A. S. H. and Catch - 22

## Two Movies on War and Capitalism

Judy Barton

Did you also go to see M.A.S.H. under the impression that you were about to see an anti-war film? As I watched it, I began to feel uneasy. Then I figured out what was wrong: it wasn't an anti-war film at all. In fact, under cover of some satire of the Army, it was really a plug for the American Way.

The hero of M.A.S.H. was one of Our-Boys. A Regular Guy. (M.A.S.H., like its title, is full of Capitol Letters.) Even though he was educated — My Son the Doctor — he was no Egghead. He drank, whored, cussed, and loved to play practical jokes, aided by some silly, stacked, sexy nurses (AIF-American Girls). Because he was such a Success in his Profession, he was able to Beat the Red Tape and have a good time in Korea.

Sure, there are a lot of bloody bodies, but everyone had a blast (Wish You Were Here) and we all hate to go home. Oh, What a Lovely War. And sure, maybe some of the things our hero did weren't quite on the up-and-up (like blackmailing a General and drugging the other side in a football game) but underneath the rough exterior beats a heart of gold (the Good Guys tried to save a little Korean boy from the draft, so they could go on corrupting him — excuse me, introducing him to the American Way — as their servant). It's all just Good, Clean Fun.

A little satire does not a radical movie make. But there are radical movies, and one of them is Catch-22, based on the novel by Joseph Heller. Some people call Catch-22 a "black comedy." My attitude is, it's so real it's frightening. A lot of crazy things go on in the movie — but we live in a world that,

like the movie, hovers between tragedy and farce. When the movie starts you think Yossarian is nuts. By the time it nears the end you know that he is the only sane person in a mad world. It's a deeply humanistic movie.

What is war about? "They're trying to kill me," says Yossarian. But they're trying to kill everyone. Yossarian: "What difference does that make?" War is Murder is the theme of Catch-22, and since the main villain is Milo Minderbinder, the capitalist entrepreneur — blond and waspy, he could be the boy next door — it follows that Capitalism is Murder, (for a profit). Proudhon said, Property is Theft, and today that seems mild.

The movie ends with Yossarian escaping from the Army and on his way to Sweden. As the soldiers march off (to Vietnam, perhaps?) Yossarian paddles away in a little rubber raft. The last shot is of Yossarian quixotically paddling out into a huge expanse of ocean. Crazy — from Italy to Sweden in a rubber raft? He can't make it. But he must. He's got to. Humanity hangs in the balance.

In real life, of course, it's not that easy. There are a lot of GIs in Sweden, and still the war goes on. You can't escape the system one by one, and expect it to change; it has to be overthrown.

But as a symbol of sanity in the face of madness, of liberation in the face of oppression, Yossarian's escape means something to all of us. Humanity goes with him, when, in the words of Heller's novel, "The knife came down, missing him by inches, and he took off."



## Embarrassing

There was a conference of Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine "information officers" at the Sheraton Park Hotel in Washington on October 10. Their problem: how to get young men who are against the war to support the military. The *N. Y. Times* interviewed "one young Army information officer (Oct. 10)." It went like this:

"How do you explain the war to them (soldiers)?" he was asked.

"You try to tell them why we're in Vietnam," he said.

"Do you succeed?"

"It's difficult, because the reasons are always changing." ...He mentioned the damage to the Army's image caused by the alleged massacre of Vietnamese civilians at Sonmy and the service clubs inquiry involving noncommissioned officers in the Army. The colonel wonder-

ed how one could explain to the ordinary soldier why the Army was not court-martialing key figures in the scandal even though a Senate committee has accused them of getting rich illegally.

"The best way to handle it is to cover it up and not to talk about it," he said. "Command information never gets into controversial subjects. The Army won't allow it."

Maybe the problem would be solved if all soldiers were given a card stating: THIS ARMY DOES NOT EXIST TO PROTECT YOUR FREEDOM. IT'S AIM IS TO SERVE THE RICH AND POWERFUL OF AMERICA AND TO OPPRESS FOREIGN PEOPLE. SHUT UP AND TAKE ORDERS. Then the soldiers wouldn't ask any more embarrassing questions.



## Military Justice

A black Fort Lewis GI refused last summer to obey orders to shave his beard and be fingerprinted. On October 15th he was sentenced to three years of hard labor for this by an Army general court-martial.

The GI., Theoda Lester, Jr., will also have all pay and allowances forfeited and receive a dishonorable discharge. Lester, 21 and from St. Louis, had been in the army for 2 days when he received the order from the officer in charge of the reception station at Fort Lewis, Tacoma, Washington.

During the court-martial Lester said that he could not relate to the order because he "was used to relating to others on a man to man level." He had explained to the officer that his black nationalism led him to wear the beard, and natural haircut. Lester felt that this belief had the status of a religious belief, and that this should exempt him from the requirement.

A tense crowd supporting Lester, black and white, overflowed the Fort Lewis courtroom on the pleasant autumn afternoon. They heard the judge overrule any attempts by James Vonasch,

Lester's civilian attorney, to seriously question the five-man panel of officers which serves as jury on their racial prejudices. The only question he would allow was "Do you have any prejudices?" to which all the officers dutifully answered "No."

Lester told his supporters that he would fight this "all the way to the end."

On October 26th six more GIs go on trial at Fort Lewis — for refusing orders to Vietnam. Carl Dix, the one black of the group, is also the only one of the six to be forced into pre-trial confinement, most of it in isolation in "J Block" in the Fort Lewis stockade. As the court-martial can only decide whether the six did or did not refuse a direct order, all six will be convicted. While awaiting appeal on their claims for conscientious objection to service in Vietnam, they will remain in jail because the Army has no bail system.

More information and support for the GIs can be sent to the Shelter Half Coffeehouse, S. Tacoma Way, Tacoma, Washington. The Shelter Half, which actively aids the GI movement, is also in desperate need of funds at all times.

aganda and hymns of praise to Hitler and Mussolini, the Union Nationale goon squads got about the real work of breaking strikes, closing down opposition newspapers, and smashing up union halls. Federal politicians, both Liberal and Conservative, piously cited "provincial autonomy" as justification for their refusal to intervene while Duplessis moved Quebec as close to fascism as he dared.

The Union Nationale was out of power for a brief period during World War II, but the Liberal government which replaced it did nothing substantive other than to institute compulsory elementary schooling and "solve" the question of feudal dues with a bond issue.

During the war, the total turn of the unions (and especially the organized cadres of the Labor Progressive Party, Canada's Communists) to support of the war undercut any move on their part to force gains from the Liberals. In 1944, Duplessis was able to utilize Quebecois opposition to the war and especially to conscription to return to power.

For the next 16 years the Union Nationale remained in power, moderating its anti-semitism and fascism slightly to meet the demands of the post-war period and functioning as a run-of-the-mill authoritarian local machine of the type familiar in the American South. Throughout this period, the UN used a combination of terror, corruption and appeals to anti-English sentiment to gain votes, while it sold out Quebec's resources to English-Canadian and American concessionaires to gain money.

This semi-fascist appeal to "nationalist" sentiment has heavily influenced the attitude of many Canadian leftists to French-Canadian national demands, which they are quick to dismiss as "reactionary" no matter what quarter they come from.

## 5. The "Quiet Revolution"

When Duplessis and his chosen successor both died in 1960, the Liberal Party was able to make a comeback during the struggle for power between other Union Nationale leaders. The new Liberal leadership was determined to permanently end the situation which had allowed Quebec to remain backward for so long. With the backing of major financial interests and much of the big press, they set about to make what they envisaged as sweeping reforms in Quebec society.

The first of these was to get rid of the antiquated Church school system which had maintained ignorance and illiteracy among both French and English-speaking Quebecois. The first Ministry of Education was set up, the schools were secularized (but not integrated) and a system of academic-technical junior colleges (the CEGEPs) was instituted. Both big business (in need of a labor force educated for modern times) and the Church itself (which was finding the maintenance of the school system increasingly difficult) supported the move.

The Liberals also moved toward secular control over matters of welfare and medicine, set up a compulsory old-age pension scheme (primarily to obtain working capital from the mandatory contributions), and moved to place the provincial civil service under the merit system, thus undercutting a large part of the Union Nationale's original patronage base.

In the economic field, a provincial planning commission was set up, the bulk of the hydroelectric industry nationalized, and steps were taken to set

up a Quebec iron and steel industry. Extensive efforts (the pension fund the most successful) were taken to channel capital investment into areas which would help to modernize the province.

All of these programs had two main characteristics. The first was that they were of very little immediate benefit to anyone except the Liberal Party's base in the urban middle class, who filled the new posts in secularized schools and the expanded provincial and local bureaucracies.

The second was that they were extremely expensive. Between 1955 and 1965, provincial expenditures increased 270 percent. Given Quebec's limited resources, the Liberals were faced with both the prospect of a "taxpayer's revolt" and the necessity of aggressively struggling with the federal government for a bigger share of overall revenue.

The fight of the Quebec Liberals for a bigger share of overall revenues was a radical departure from Canadian political tradition. Ignoring the traditional verbiage about provincial rights, the agreements (real or alleged) of 1867, and the other ritualistic invocations of the past, the Lesage administration in Quebec put its case in purely practical terms: they were doing a job the federal government couldn't do, they needed more money, and they intended to get it. As one deputy-minister put it: "Quebec's motto is: We're through fooling around! It seems ridiculous to me to invoke the Constitution. It is like invoking St. Thomas."

For reasons which needn't concern us here, the federal government was in a particularly weak position when it came to resisting Quebec's demands. The programs Lesage was pushing were ones with which most Canadians agreed, the government itself was (and had been for some time) floundering badly in developing its own programs, and the Liberal Party nationally was anxious to retain the loyalty of its Quebec branch.

On a whole series of questions, Ottawa either gave way or grudgingly gave its tacit agreement to Quebec's demands and actions. As many as possible of these were cloaked in "general policies" applicable to all provinces in theory, but only to Quebec in fact.

(Even such programs have been passed not so much for the benefit of the Quebecois as for American capital. For instance, the government embarked on a program to lure capital investment to "underdeveloped" areas of Canada—such as Quebec. The program provides grants to industries that move to such areas. But, as *Quebec Presse* pointed out, that meant the government was providing subsidies to IBM and other American corporations.)

## 6. Separatism

Canadian political scientists tend to trace the growth of Quebec separatism in the 1960's purely to this conflict over revenues between the two governments, with a little mass-psychological jargon thrown in. There is little doubt that the "quiet revolution" contributed greatly to the self-confidence with which French-Canadians began to approach politics.

For the first time in over a century, the Quebecois were on the offensive rather than the defensive. Moreover, while the country as a whole lacked political leadership, Quebec was obviously moving forward and French-Canadians were proving their ability to manage modern enterprises and a modern state apparatus.

Separatism had deeper roots than this

however, and the strongest one was the inability of the "quiet revolution" to solve the problems of the French-Canadian masses. Not merely did the Liberal program barely skim the surface of Quebec's backwardness, but Canada itself was increasingly in deep trouble.

20 to 25 percent of the Canadian gross national product is normally exported, and the economy is sensitive to the slightest variations in world conditions. An unemployment rate of 6 percent or higher is almost "normal" in Canada, so that her famous "fifth highest per capita income in the world" has a tendency to be linked with extreme insecurity for the working class and farmers.

Moreover, the colonial nature of Quebec's situation was crystal clear to many Quebecois. The Quebec Liberation Front (FLQ) made few converts with its initial manifesto, but struck responsive chords in many hearts when they said: "Only think of our jobless people by the hundred thousands; of the grinding poverty of our Gaspé fishermen; of the many farmers all across Quebec whose annual income barely reaches \$1,000; of the young people in thousands who are too poor to continue their studies; of the thousands who cannot afford the simplest medical care; of the misery of our miners; of the widespread insecurity of jobholders! This is what colonialism has brought us."

Quebec itself had also greatly changed. It was now overwhelmingly an urban province, and the French-Canadians were primarily wage workers (or unemployed would-be wage workers).

The Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Trade Unions, set up by the Church as a corporatist company union along the lines laid down by Pope Leo XIII, had fallen into the hands of militant laymen free of the entangling business and political alliances of the AFL-CIO internationals grouped in the Quebec Federation of Labor. Reorganized as the Confederation des Syndicats Nationaux, it conducted a massive organizing campaign in low-wage industries which shot its membership up from 140,000 to over 250,000 in less than a decade.

By the mid-1960's, it was clear that thousands of Quebecois were firmly wedded to modernization, and considered separation from Canada an acceptable means of getting their rights if it proved impossible to get them in any other way.

Although the Union Nationale was able to regain power in 1966 by swinging a majority of rural voters against the high taxes of the Lesage administration, their narrow victory (and the fact that it wouldn't have taken place without gerrymandering) left them forced to give at least lip service to the new provincial policies. Quebec politicians of all parties began to emphasize an aggressive nationalism in their slogans; and the national interests of the people of Quebec were given as the justification for every program.

At this juncture, the Canadian ruling class was forced to dispense with the services of its faithful servant Lester Pearson, who was clearly incapable of dealing with the growing crisis. Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, Minister of Justice in the Pearson cabinet, was narrowly elected as his successor by the Liberal Party convention.

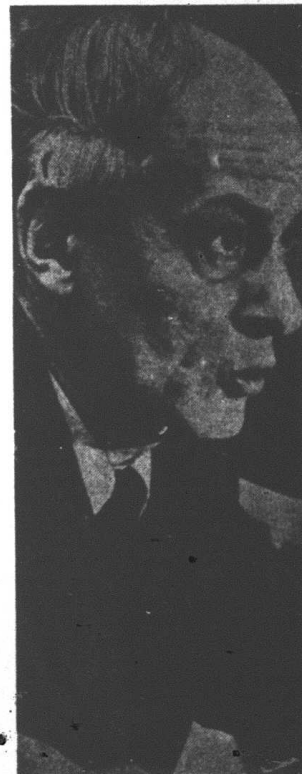
A lawyer and playboy, who had held elective office for only three years, Trudeau was one of a group of former leftists around the Montreal magazine *Cite Libre*, all of whom were strong federalists and opponents of French-Canadian nationalism. An instant P.R. job,

portraying Trudeau as a Canadian Kennedy and emphasizing both his informal style and his status as a "responsible" spokesman for the Quebecois, was launched with huge amounts of cash.

Trudeau pushed for an immediate election, while his image was still bright, and the Liberals won the first majority in the House of Commons any party had held in 6 years. Liberal victory in 56 of Quebec's 74 seats was hailed as a repudiation of nationalism and a vote for a strong federal government. In fact, however, Trudeau had only polled the traditional Liberal vote among French-speaking Quebecois. The vast Liberal upsurge came in traditionally conservative English-speaking areas, and was a vote for "keeping down the frogs."

Moreover, the "Creditistes," a splinter of the Social Credit Party which advocated inflationary currency reform, "trust busting" and a vague semi-fascist nationalism, raised its parliamentary representation from 9 to 14 in the same election. In the previous election they had run on the slogan "What have you got to lose?", and from many rural Quebecers the answer was still apparently: "Nothing."

## 7. The Quebec Left



Rene Levesque

Following on the heels of the election came the formation of the first significant large-scale separatist group. Three smaller organizations merged to form the Parti Quebecois, headed by a former Liberal cabinet Minister (Rene Levesque). With over 30,000 members, the P.Q. has the largest political organization in Quebec, and at the last election polled 24 percent of the vote and obtained 7 percent of the seats in the provincial legislature.

Significantly, the Parti Quebecois represents a major break with the past politics of Quebec. Although it picked up



Michel Chartrand

one Creditiste leader, the party as a whole is mildly social-democratic, not particularly anglophobe and distinctly urban in its appeal.

What this orientation reflects is the growing strength of socialism in Quebec, and particularly among younger workers and students. Although the New Democratic Party, Canada's labor-backed social democratic party, has been unable to make inroads in Montreal because of its congenital mushiness, increasing numbers of French-Canadians are seeing socialism as the only way out of an impossible situation.

The most important sector of the new Quebecois left is the Montreal Council of the CSN, headed by the socialist Michel Chartrand. The Montreal CSN has 65,000 members, and in addition to its trade union work operates tenants' unions and cooperatives, and works with various radical groups.

The CSN weekly *Quebec-Press* gives its readers a socialist analysis of current events, and the recently organized "Front d'Action Politique" (FRAP) entered a large slate of candidates in the recent Montreal municipal elections. (It's no accident that Chartrand and 5 other CSN leaders, along with 2 FRAP municipal candidates, were arrested by the government when the War Measures Act was put in force. The government fears the radical leaders of the labor movement far more than a handful of terrorists.)

Farther to the left, and far more committed to separatism, is the Front de la Liberation Populaire, a coalition of several socialist-nationalist tendencies which organizes demonstrations, engages in street fighting, and has considerable influence among students, young workers and the unemployed, as well as a solid base in several local unions and cooperatives. The FLP, like most Quebecois socialists, calls for a vague "Quebec brand of socialism" which is largely undefined but clearly democratic in intention. They have been highly influenced by Michel Chartrand's eloquent appeals

for decentralization and workers' control, and reject terrorism as elitist and counterproductive.

It was inevitable, however, that the situation in Quebec would lead to the growth of a terrorist tendency on the left. The most important terrorist group, the Front de Liberation du Quebec (FLQ) was founded in 1963 and has carried out several campaigns of bombings and robberies. Over 100 "felquistes" are now in jail on charges ranging from murder to petty theft, and the best estimates of the "at-large" membership is about 130. The FLQ was originally organized by students, but has many young blue-collar workers among its current members and sympathizers.

Although the police and the press like to paint the FLQ as a typical group of fidelistas and maoists, there's little doubt that both its strengths and weaknesses stem from an ideology which is as Canadian as pea soup. Felquistes are far more likely to cite Louis Riel as a model than Che Guevara, and the major outside influence on their development has been the film *Battle of Algiers*. FLO political statements tend to be very vague, but to reject "foreign models" and call (like the FLP) for workers' control.

Unfortunately, their tactics don't lead to building a mass movement for what is supposedly their program. By removing organizers and experienced leaders from the mass movement and placing them underground, by encouraging people to regard revolution as a spectator sport which they can follow the progress of in the papers and over television, and by emphasizing the actions of a tiny elite making secret decisions over those of democratic mass organizations, they hinder the development of a grass-roots movement which can win their cause.

Moreover, the attempt to force the people of Quebec to choose separatism whether they like it or not, rather than winning them democratically to the FLQ program, reveals a not-too-hidden authoritarian bias.

## 8. Unilingualism

More dangerous to the development of the left than the FLQ, whose terrorist actions can serve as an excuse for police repression but cannot influence the course of the movement in the long run, is the unilingual movement, to which the FLQ gives full support. The strongest group in this movement is the Ligue pour l'Integration Scolaire, headed by FLQ lawyer Robert Lemieux, which has as its goal the total elimination of English as a public language in Quebec.

Many leftists supported the LIS in its *McGill francais*, which sought to turn English-speaking McGill University in Montreal, long a bastion of the upper class, into a French university, because they saw the democratic content of ripping off a ruling class institution to serve the people.

The reactionary potential which underlay the drive for unilingualism was quickly revealed, however. The LIS led a series of marches on the suburb of St.-Leonard, whose people are 40 percent Italian immigrants, to demand that English be banned from the schools there. The excuse for this campaign was the supposed necessity of forcing the immigrants to learn French so that they would become assimilated to the French-Canadian, rather than becoming a part of a future English-speaking majority which would swamp the Quebecois. The campaign degenerated into gang-bopping between French and Italians, as the immigrants asserted their democratic right to choose their own language.

The extension of the unilingual campaign to schools in the English-speaking suburbs is the next logical step in the drive to forcibly assimilate immigrants and members of national minorities in Quebec. The extent to which this reactionary and chauvinist demand permeates the rest of the left in Quebec can be seen not only in the FLQ support and the CSN silence, but in the fact that the Montreal mayoral candidate of the Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere (affiliated with the American Socialist Workers Party) made the outlawing of English virtually the sole plank in her platform.

No democratic solution to the Canadian crisis can rest upon the demands of a nationalism (either English-Canadian or French-Canadian) which either openly or secretly seeks to crush the rights

of other nationalities. If the LIS has been open in demanding this in Quebec, it has been the implicit content of English-Canadian nationalism for 150 years — except that the English assumed time would work with them in causing French to disappear.

## 9. Whither Canada?

The chauvinism of the LIS is simply the flip side of the arrogance of English-Canadian and American businessmen in Quebec who discriminate against those who can't speak English in hiring, promotion and the giving of instructions. The revolutionary response to this problem is not the attempt to outlaw the English language, as the LIS and their toadies of the LSO propose, but to join the striking workers of the General Motors plant at St.-Therese (95 percent of whom are French-speaking) who walked off their jobs ahead of the UAW strike deadline in response to GM's refusal to negotiate in French, and who have raised making French the "working language" in the plant as one of their contract demands. When French-Canadian workers refuse to obey orders in English, the capitalists will have to learn French.

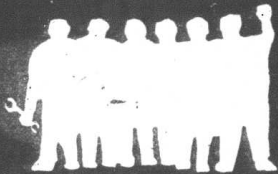
Canadian radicals have a duty to take on English-Canadian chauvinism in every part of Canada, to win bilingual instruction in every school system. Every excuse from the Liberals about the "practical difficulties" of implementing bilingualism is in the real world a refusal to fight prejudice in the English-speaking community. Switzerland has overcome the "practical difficulties" of functioning with five official languages, but Canadian politicians claim they can't deal with two!

Separatism does not have a majority in Quebec now, but unless English-Canadians act to smash the discrimination and oppression under which the French-Canadians suffer, Quebec will have no choice but to exercise her democratic right to withdraw from the Canadian confederation.

For Canadians, whose press and intellectuals agonize constantly over the problem of "national identity," one thing is now clear: that identity will either be based upon the concept of a binational state with full democratic rights for both nations, or there will be no identity at all. If Quebec is forced to separate, English Canada will be swallowed by the United States in fact if not in name. That is why the "Quebec crisis" is really the "Canadian crisis."







# Pass It On John Single

## Job Safety: A National Scandal

*[Below are excerpts from the testimony of a staff representative of the United Steelworkers of America before the House of Representatives Select Subcommittee on Labor (Occupational Health and Safety), November 6, 1969. They tell of a scandal that is horrible and extreme, but not by any means the only one of its kind. The files of the Department of Labor are loaded with evidence of thousands more equally tragic.*

*Last October 13 and 14, a filibuster in the United States Senate postponed until after the November elections any action on the question of a health and safety act. For now, I will reserve comment and let the crimes of the National Lead Company highlight the cowardice of a group of congressmen and the hypocrisy which says that the institution that is the United States Congress is by design responsive to the needs of the laboring class of taxpayers in the electorate.*

*In a future issue, this column will explore the national scandal that surrounds the inability of American labor to obtain even minimum health and safety standards.]*

"One of the plants in which we have membership is the National Lead Company's Hoyt Plant in Granite City, Illinois. Approximately 100 of the 145 employees who work in their operations are contaminated by "high lead" content in their blood.

The Company requires that most employees submit to a blood test, taken by its doctor, each six months. As a result of these blood tests, 80 employees are currently taking medication for having excessive lead in their blood; and, 10 employees previously took medication for excessive lead. Three employees are currently hospitalized for excessive lead and at least 7 were previously hospital-

ized over the past several years. Of these 7, 5 then sought employment in safer industry and have since quit.

Approximately 70 percent of the employees in this plant have become contaminated by lead to the extent of requiring medication. Two employees are currently on retirement because of severe lead poisoning.

The National Lead Company denies knowledge of any lead poisoning history among its employees. As a result, this information was accumulated by the employees themselves.

The State of Illinois Department of

Public Health has conducted several plant inspections over the past few years and as a result of no violations being noted in this area, the Company has insisted to both the employees and the Union, that all the existing state laws are being adhered to.



The Illinois Department of Safety and Health states that in order to properly ascertain the amount of lead-contaminated fumes in the air, constant air monitoring equipment would have to be installed and manned for consecutive periods of at least a month — and further, that the Department has neither the manpower nor the funds to undertake this type of project.

In addition, the city of Granite City enacted an Air Pollution Control Ordinance. In response to an appeal by the local union for an inspection by the Pollution Control Board, I was informed by the Board Chairman that the local ordinance has a clause that excludes jurisdiction within plant areas.

On February 14, 1969, I heard sworn testimony given in an arbitration case by an employee who was then working

in the plant who stated that he was physically suffering from the effects of lead poisoning. Quote: "I have severe stomach pains" — "my joints hurt" — "I can't hardly talk anymore" — "I shake all the time" — "Sometimes I don't think I can get up in the morning."

The employee has been consistently taking medication in one form or another, from the Company, over the past 15 years for excessive lead in the blood. This same employee is currently in

the hospital — severely "lead-ed" — totally and permanently disabled — his nervous system destroyed and his mental processes going fast — speech severely impaired.

*The Company claims its medical records show no history of lead poisoning for this employee.*

Obviously, the existing State Safety and Health Laws are wholly inadequate to protect employees working in the lead industry, and we can expect no help from local or city controlled programs.

Mandatory reporting and record keeping on all industrial illnesses is a must, as well as safety procedures and equipment which will adequately protect the employees in this industry.

The results of our efforts at getting state action in regard to this pollution problem so far have produced only recommendations by the state that the employer should be asked to keep adequate records on its employees. Note that the requirement is only a voluntary one. We are very concerned, even in this regard, about the ways in which "lead-ed" cases are reported because the tests are taken only on blood samples, although the lead may be building up in other organs and bones of the body. Even more than that, the medication, which probably has other injurious effects, may remove the lead from the blood but allow undetected concentrations to accumulate in other portions of the body.

Gentlemen, that is the extent of the state involvement. We are frustratingly aware that nothing is being done to control the atmosphere to which the worker is exposed — at least as a result of positive state action. We need a law not only to provide adequate recording of occupationally diseased workers, but also one which would promulgate standards to prevent contamination.

I strongly urge passage of a Federal Safety and Health Bill that will guarantee both of these items. ■

labor  
today

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

permanent state officers would be selected by a steering committee selected by people selected by voluntary committees that would meet during the lunch break. The voice vote was split on the motion and the chairman ruled that the motion had passed.

If any of the rank-and-file rebels present wanted to learn how to railroad

control of an organization into the hands of an already selected leadership, they were attending the right conference.

But since that was not why most of them had come, that is one reason why many will sooner or later quit the NCCTUAD and the Labor Today people in disgust. The tragedy is that those driven out by these tactics (used by the worst of the trade union bureaucratic leaderships) will be slow to attend future conferences called by active rank and filers who have no reason to fear democratic methods of operation.

Those genuine conferences will come, and the fighting unionists who call them will be interested in solidarity and exchanging the ideas that will further the struggle for a better life, instead of the

politics of control and manipulation. Any rank-and-file conference worth taking the time to attend, for example, would open wide discussion on how to conduct struggles on the shop or workplace floor, on how to get more representation for the ranks in the grievance process and how to mobilize in the workplace — where the ranks are strongest — as well as at the local union meeting to oust conservative official union leaderships.

These lessons will not be learned in conferences like those held by the NCCTUAD organizations because it might set in motion a series of struggles that could grow and succeed without the presence of the Labor Today leadership to control them. ■



# feedback

## Progressive Zionism

The political perspective is disarmingly deceptive in the article "Palestine: Time Bomb in the Middle East" (*Workers' Power*, no. 21). Perhaps the real time bomb is contained in the sentence "Zionism aimed to solve the problem of persecution of the Jews with the help of imperialism."

If Zionism is the name of the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, then it follows that like all liberation movements it too has its conservative and radical wings — with possible gradations between. An organization ostensibly dedicated to workers' power ought to focus on those differences and support the more progressive forces.

As the article now stands it pits the Arab national liberation movement against the Jewish liberation movement. Does this mean that your internationalism is in reality nothing but an abstraction? Unfortunate that it is!

A little more specific clarity is needed. The Israeli government may be pursuing "dead-end" policies vis-a-vis the Arab and Jewish refugees. I believe it is! It is simply not true that all the Arabs (Palestinians) were driven out by the hordes of refugees from Nazi Germany, as well as it is equally untrue that all of the Jews in the Arab nations were driven out. Some of both of these poor policies did happen. Political pundits can self-righteously condemn these policies, completely ignoring the fact that liberation movements are indeed messy affairs. And the cause of internationalism is not served by falsely claiming that "Zionism in the service or pay of western capitalism" is the sole culprit.



MOSHE DAYAN

An internationalist position would indeed support the right of anyone to immigrate anywhere and there to work to support himself. This includes the rights of the Jewish immigrants to Palestine to go there and organize themselves in their own behalf. Other eth-

nic groups could have done the same. Any immigrant arriving anywhere in the world should have the right to purchase land under the given laws to settle.

Then if another ethnic group organizes with the military support of established nations to either destroy the settlers or nullify their land purchases: the beginning of mutual injustices start. Until all national states are willing to abolish their own sovereignty then they have no right of hegemony over smaller ethnic states. And any type of armed force only exacerbates a worker-to-worker solution, thus rendering the possibilities of a more humane democratic and socialist state impossible.

Fraternally,

Dick Williams

[Dick Williams is a member of the Philadelphia Local-Executive Committee of the Socialist Party (Debs Caucus) and the editor of the Philadelphia Observer.]

## P.S.

Your paper's apparent inability to either accurately portray historical facts or derive a political perspective on other than leftist jargon leaves me with no alternative but to request that my name be removed from your mailing list and that I not be sent any future copies of *Workers' Power*.

It disturbs me that so-called leftists can be as blind as fascists.

Am Israel chai,

Richard Williams

## Rejoinder

Although several issues of *Workers' Power* have appeared since the article Comrade Williams is discussing, his letter is still relevant, not only because of the political questions it raises, but also because of its source, an opposition caucus within the Socialist Party. In contrast to the leadership of that Party, which fully supports American imperialism and collaborates with capitalism at home by supporting the Vietnam war and politically collaborating with the Democratic Party, the Debs Caucus claims to stand for a revolutionary, internationalist position. Comrade Williams' letter shows how fragile this commitment is on the part of some of its members.

The core of Williams' argument is the assertion that "Zionism...[as the] national liberation movement of the Jewish people...has its conservative and radical wings...." [The International Socialists should] support the more progressive forces."

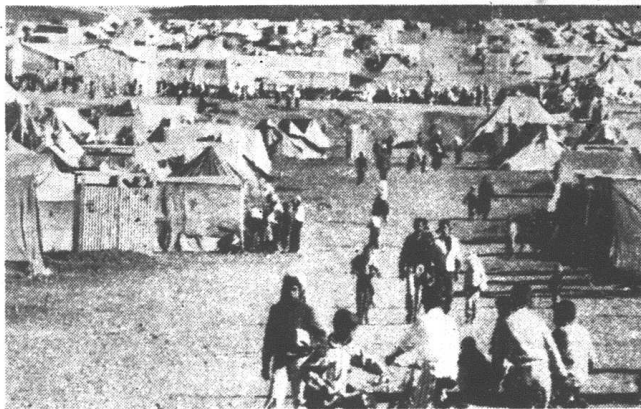
This ignores the fact that Zionism, as a whole, represents the conservative wing of the Jewish movement. Arising

around the turn of the century, Zionism (the movement for a separate state for Jews in Palestine) counterposed itself both to the Jewish socialist movement, widely supported by working-class and intellectual Jews in Eastern Europe and Russia, and to the "assimilationist" perspective, which argued that Jews should become loyal citizens of whatever country they lived in and found strong support only among middle-class Jews in the Western European countries where such assimilation was possible.

Zionism appealed only to the most backward and chauvinist of the Jewish population, to those least capable of a class conception of politics. Because it was founded on narrow chauvinism, it implicitly rejected the national rights of any other people should they conflict with the needs of the Jewish state. And this aggressive rejection is carried through today. Stripped of justifying rhetoric, the position of the Israeli gov-

liberation movement." No, it is *Zionist policy* which has done this. Nor does *Workers' Power* claim that the Palestinians were driven out by "hordes of refugees from Nazi Germany" — *Zionist policy* drove them out, as part of a policy to create an entirely Jewish state, which all sections of Zionism supported.

What is the political meaning of all this? Can Zionism in any form produce what Williams calls for, a "worker-to-worker solution?" Williams' conception of such a solution is to excuse the expulsion of the Palestinians — which even liberals condemn — by reminding us that liberation movements are "messy affairs." Delightful phrase — it is the same argument that has supported every imperialist and anti-democratic policy of "Communist" countries (when used by "progressives") and of the United States and its allies (when used by their apologists). You can't make an omelette without driving people from their land.



A refugee camp near Amman, Jordan

ernment is that to guarantee the existence of Israel, anything goes.

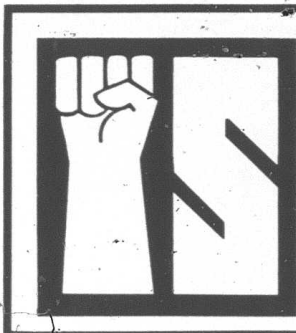
What is Williams' position on this? What is the position of "radical Zionism?" Is it possible to reconcile internationalism (opposition to imperialism) with support for a "radical wing of Zionism?" On all these questions, Williams wades through half-truths and evasions, until even his commas lie.

There is indeed a "radical" (until recently, pro-Soviet) wing of Zionism in Israel; but this wing just as much as the Israeli government wishes to "solve the problem...with the help of imperialism," although it was the USSR to which it looked for an imperialist alliance (since 1967, all wings of Zionism have been in favor of Israel's alliance with the United States). In fact, the only anti-imperialist forces in Israel are those which reject Zionism as well.

And not by accident. Williams says *Workers' Power* "pits the Arab national liberation movement against the Jewish

And this is the point. Under the phrases about "worker-to-worker solutions" (one needs a vague phrase like this to avoid the question of how Palestinian workers are to be reconciled to Williams' solution, "radical" Zionism), Williams is pro-Zionist to the core, and therefore also in favor of Western support to Israel. "Any type of force" is out of the question — by this he means war. It's easy to reject war (wars of self-determination along with wars of imperialism) but not so easy to reject the policies which lead to war — the support for Zionism by the United States. Williams says nothing in opposition to aid for Israel and Jordan — both dedicated to the suppression of the Palestinian people. In opposing war but not aid, he demonstrates an inability to separate himself politically from the liberals whom the Socialist Party Majority supports openly and directly.

W.P. Editorial Board



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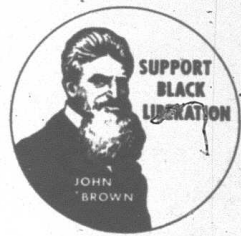
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# Workers' Power

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Rank And File Revolts And The Role Of labor today

Scott Jacoby

George Harney



In the early 1960's the rank and file of American labor ended a twenty year period in which most of its struggles were necessarily defensive, of the guerrilla type and conducted mainly during work hours inside the workplaces. In many of these struggles the official leadership of the union above the local union level was not involved. In fact, not a few of the struggles were opposed by official leaders.

Overworked and underpaid rank-and-file workers made it hard on immediate supervision, supervision in turn again made it hard on them, machines broke down, militants got transferred to isolated jobs, and so on until finally one side or the other gave in temporarily on whatever was being fought about.

That era came to an end and a new one opened when labor's ranks once more began to make large scale offensives against their employers and push the struggle out into the line of vision of the general public. There were mass refusals to ratify contracts negotiated by their own top union leaders, mass unofficial extensions of official strikes and widespread outbreaks of wildcat strikes.

Six years have passed since class conflict became clearly visible beyond the work side of the timeclocks. During that time some significant changes have been made by the ranks. In thousands of locals throughout the country, older local leaderships — who in the 1950's got into the "do nothing" rut so deep that it became habit — were voted out and new and more energetic leaders replaced them. Very often the change in leadership was also accompanied by an increase in local union internal democracy and the revitalization of shop stewards committees. Some locals have even been able to retard the giveaway of protective working conditions established in the 1930's and 1940's.

There are, of course, many locals in which this process is only just beginning to develop. Nevertheless, it is now a fact that a large portion of the locals that had been officially asleep or in bed since the mid-1940's have begun to get back into fighting shape.

## Atomization

The same cannot be said, however, for official union organizations above the local union level. True there have been responses, even significant ones, in several international unions and still more measurable responses at the intermediate (district or regional) levels of leadership. But these responses remain belated and unenthusiastic. By and large, international union presidents as yet feel no need to reexamine their policies — primarily because the ranks are not well enough organized to challenge them with replacement, new policies and the re-structuring of the unions. The revolts in the ranks of labor remain

atomized, isolated on a local-for-local basis, with no organization of any kind uniting the militants even on a shop-for-shop basis within the same geographic areas of any of the internationals.

It is only a matter of time until the obstacle of isolation is overcome, but any force, movement or group that can in any responsible way help to speed the unification of the localized revolts does labor and the entire society a service. Thus, the announcement early this year that a national rank and file conference was to be held in Chicago on June 27 and 28, was greeted with enthusiasm by large numbers of rank-and-file unionists who sorely want to see the struggle escalate via a national rank-and-file organization.

The conference call was put out by *Labor Today*, a Chicago based monthly magazine, and was signed by dignitaries like Reverend Jesse Jackson of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Mayor-elect Kenneth Gibson of Newark, Eliseo Medina of the United Farmworkers Organizing Committee, Ken Yablonski, son of the murdered coal mine leader, and a score of local union presidents and officials.

However, much to the disappointment of many who were present and far more who could not attend but who had high hopes, the conference failed

to provide the ranks of any union with a vehicle that could help their cause. Those who were in charge spent their time maneuvering to make sure that they and only they stayed in control of the conference, while another section of delegates used like tactics to try to win control. Independent rank and filers could only look on in puzzlement or disgust or vote with their feet.

The conference set up an organization called the National Coordinating Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy (NCCTUAD). The delegates met in voluntary "state and area caucuses" and "elected" one hundred and twenty persons to be that coordinating committee. The National Coordinating Committee "in turn elected" a steering committee of "about 25 people" (all quotes from the July-September *Labor Today*). The steering committee then elected the officers of the national organization. The supposed faith that the *Labor Today* people (the conference organizers) have in democracy and the rank and file doesn't exactly jump out and demonstrate itself.

On October 25, the Illinois section of the NCCTUAD, the Illinois Rank and File Conference, called an all day conference in the Packinghouse Labor and Community Hall (Chicago), to con-

tinue what had been started in June. They did just that. Approximately 150 delegates, observers and visitors were present. Like the parent organization, the conference called upon all to support a whole series of what for the major part were perfectly good demands of the type that had brought most of the people together in the first place — and end to the war, racism and exploitation of labor, etc. But if anyone there expected that they would be able to discuss these matters, or vote on the best programmatic formulations or on how to organize and develop strength within the labor movement for these demands, their expectations were totally frustrated.

All the official speeches permitted at the conference were mimeographed days before hand and given to the delegates and visitors as they entered the hall. Then, in a slap at the dignity and intelligence of both the audience and the speakers, the conference controllers had the speakers read off their speeches word for word. After each speech a scattered group "spontaneously" rose to give the speaker a standing ovation. The whole thing seemed a little strained but most people goodnaturedly went along.

As the nature of the conference began to unfold, however, some of the rank and filers present began to raise criticisms. They wanted help in the struggles in their unions and needed to discuss policy and organizing tactics on a higher and more serious level. The controllers were also goodnatured, but rolled right on as before, going from point to agenda point, always on a perfect to-the-minute schedule. No votes were taken on resolutions. They were referred to committee because, in the words of a conference coordinator, "voting would, er ah em, take too much time."

## "Friends Of Labor"

A giant sign over the speakers rostrum called "For a Politically Independent Labor Movement." Good, but an equally big sign stated: "Defeat the Nixon-Agnew-Smith Conspiracy...Vote Nov. 3." By elimination this could only mean a vote for the "champions of working class rights" that run the Democratic Party.

The leadership of the NCCTUAD and *Labor Today* clearly support the Democratic Party, not independent labor political action. What is more, they are not about to let anyone in Illinois, let alone in the national organization, say a word of criticism of this bold vanguard policy.

Democracy faired little better in the selection of officers. The conference callers made a motion which indicated that, as at the national conference, the

[continued on page 11]

