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# The ORGANIZER

Black Unity Day

## A Call for Independent Political Action

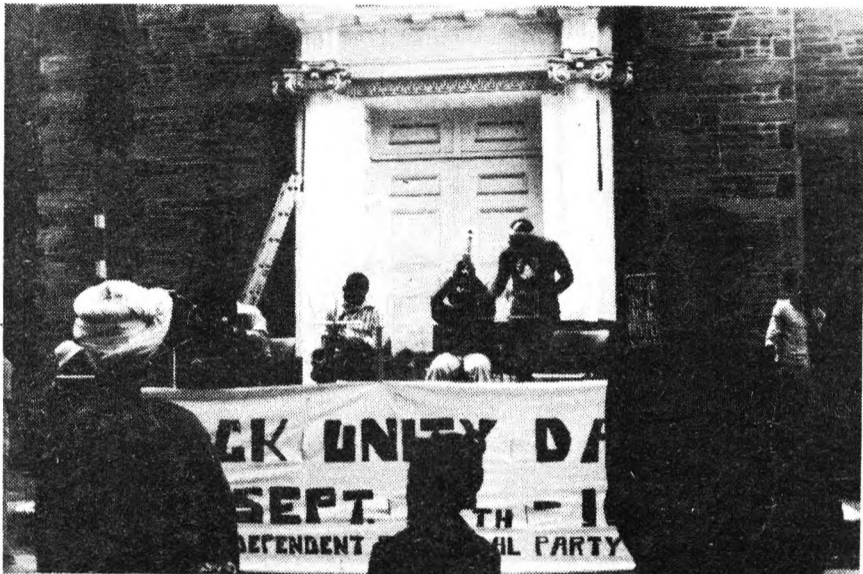


photo credit AFSCME 3713 David Coulton

Black Unity Day in Germantown featured musicians, speakers, a drill team, and educational exhibits. Sponsored by the Black Independent Political Party, the event was a step in broadening the support and unity in the Black community in the struggle for independent political power.

by JIM GRIFFIN

September 10 was Black Unity Day in Germantown. Several hundred people attended the rally and cultural event in Vernon Park sponsored by the Black Independent Political Party. In the words of the Party, the event was aimed at "bringing together the many elements of the community to struggle for the common objectives of the masses of people."

Clearly, everyone in Germantown did not share these aims—Rizzo's Rangers for one. According to BIPP spokesmen, the police harassed the organizers of the event, stooping to tearing down posters all over the community.

These tactics hampered publicity and made for a poor turnout. As a result the march planned to kick off the day was cancelled. But the fact that the guardians of the established political order found it necessary to resort to these measures indicates that the BIPP must be doing something right.

### FOR BLACK INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION

It's not too hard to figure out why and company feel threatened. The BIPP's purpose is to de

It's not too hard to figure out why Rizzo and company feel threatened. The BIPP's purpose is to develop an independent Black politics and break the dependence of the Black people on the two established parties, particularly the racist, Rizzo-dominated Democratic machine. The BIPP's independence extends to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party.

As Melvin Burgess, BIPP President put it: "White liberals are afraid of strong Black leadership because strong Black leadership means Black people pick their

own leaders. White liberals love to pick Black leaders. They like Black leaders who they feel they can talk to. White liberals will take leadership in the Black community if we allow them. The old saying 'the natives can't do without me' is their hope. If I can't become a leader on Snyder Ave., why should they be leaders in our community?"

While focusing on the need to develop a base for independent politics in the Black community, the BIPP recognizes the need for coalition with progressive whites who actively oppose racism and respect the right of the Black community to determine its own political destiny. What the BIPP rejects is the paternalistic missionary complex and political vacillations that are so characteristic of the traditional white liberal "allies" of the Black people.

### REAL POLITICAL FORCE

In its five years of existence, the BIPP has shown that it is a force to be reckoned with in local politics. Beginning as the Northwest Political Caucus some five years ago, the organization has mobilized sizeable support for independent-minded Black candidates. BIPP members knocked on doors, ran voter registration drives, and organized motorcades down Germantown Ave.

They campaigned for six Black judges, Dave Richardson for State Representative and Councilman, Hardy Williams for Congress and Ben Johnson for city council. Two years ago the group changed its name to the Black Independent Political Movement and recently to the Black Independent Political Party. Members now say their emphasis is working outside rather than within the Democratic Party to bring about an independent Black politics.

### ACTIVIST APPROACH

The activities of the BIPP are not just limited to election day. The BIPP aims at being a year-round force in the community. BIPP members are active in community struggles, have begun publishing an issue-oriented newspaper, Black Explosion, and also plan to develop service programs.

The group also has a political education committee and is seeking to deepen the community's understanding of the predicament facing Black people and what can be done about it. The BIPP seeks to build a broad organization and is open to any interested Black person. Its present membership includes people in their mid-teens to early forties, but most members are in their twenties.

The BIPP represents part of an extremely important trend toward independent political action on the part of Black people all over the U. S. While this move to date has been largely within the framework of the Democratic Party, important forces have broken away from the two party system, and this trend is likely to grow given the nature of the Democratic Party.

As a party committed to maintaining profits and stability for the monopoly corporations, the Democrats' commitment in words to racial equality is nothing but idle talk and racist hypocrisy. Smilin' Jimmy Carter represents just the latest in a long line of betrayals by fine-talking white liberals.

More and more Black people along with growing numbers of Chicano voters are realizing that there's no future in a party that talks about equality while supporting the likes of Frank Rizzo and James Eastland. . . that there is no future with fair-weather liberals who have tested the political wind and decided that the gains of the civil rights movement are expendable. This independent trend on the part of the organizations of national minorities needs to be emulated by the whole working class.

### FLUNKEYS FOR DEMOCRATS TAKE HEED

The critical importance of independent political action on the part of Black people was highlighted in a speech at the Black Unity Day rally by Rosemary Mealy of the Third World Coalition: "Black people historically have never been passive observers of the struggle between other forces over the question of slavery or freedom. We cannot be passive observers today. . ."

"Our struggle is not a popularity contest where the hungry and jobless stand on the sidelines watching the Andy Youngs, the Robert Nixes, the Earl Vances and Joe Colemans apologize for apartheid in South Africa, for racism in America, and for police brutality and repression in Philadelphia. Upholding the free enterprise system is their answer to our plight. That is why the likes of them are not here to address us today and will criticize us for holding this event tomorrow. . ."

## STEVEN BIKO

Murdered in  
S. Africa p.9

The U.S.S.R.-  
friend or foe?  
p.8



AFSCME rank and file  
makes a clean sweep p.5

# PWOC Convention Charts Future Course



Meeting in convention last month, the PWOC summed up its past work, took stock of its present situation, and charted its course for the future. The Convention is the highest decision making body in the PWOC and determines the overall line, direction and leadership for the organization.

The Convention adopted a main political resolution which sought to define the overall political context for most immediate tasks, a resolution on the Afro-American National Question which summed up our theoretical work in that area and a resolution on the international situation.

The most important discussion focused on the main political report which analysed the strengths and weaknesses of PWOC work over the past period and outlined the plan of work for the coming one. The Convention also approved some amendments to the PWOC rules and elected a new Executive Committee.

The main theme of the Convention was summed up in the slogan "The Year of the Advanced Tasks" -- the need to take up and develop the work of winning the

advanced workers to Marxism-Leninism and building a communist current in the working class. The need to correct deficiencies in organization, to fight for a more systematic and collective approach to these tasks was pinpointed in the report and discussion as the key to implementing this slogan.

Strengthening the overall ideological grasp of PWOC cadre and rectifying rightist tendencies in outlook and practice was also identified as a critical element in a more consistent and aggressive pursuit of the advanced tasks.

Pessimism about the strength and potentials of the fightback movement, overestimation of the strength of reaction and a tendency to minimize the danger of revisionism are the features of a rightist outlook in the PWOC. In practice, this outlook takes the form of tailism in relation to propaganda and recruitment work and thus threatens our capacity to address the advanced tasks.

The right tendency by no means took the form of hard and fast positions on questions facing the PWOC, nor was this tendency primary in the work of the overwhelming majority of PWOC cadre. But

the Convention rightfully understood that unless measures of rectification are aggressively pursued, errors become deviations and tendencies become definite trends.

Both the political report and the discussion emphasized the critical role of organization in rectifying these weaknesses. Without systematic attention to carrying out tasks, without a clear line of communication between leadership and rank and file and without a consistent practice of criticism-self-criticism, cadre will tend to lose focus in their work, become demoralized and make errors. Only with a more conscious and systematic approach to our work can we lay the basis for successful implementation, testing and refinement of line.

## FOR A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Another related theme of the Convention was the importance of national work. The political report noted, that while much remains to be done locally, fundamentally we have come up against the limits of a local form of organization. To further advance in the process of party-building and fusing Marxism-Leninism with the working class movement, national forms are needed.

Immediately, this means a leading ideological center for the Marxist-Leninist trend that can lay the groundwork for national organization. The PWOC as a whole needs to be more connected with this work and bend every effort to insure that it succeeds.

An ambitious plan of work was adopted.

Essentially, the plan of work represents deepening and strengthening of our activity in areas where we are already committed. However, some new focal points were also identified. Among them were the need for systematic theoretical work on the international question, particularly the aspect of the character and role of the Soviet Union, a more systematic approach to the Latino community, and the development of PWOC work in the women's liberation movement.

Consistent with the emphasis on the advanced tasks, the plan calls for focusing resources and energy on propaganda and agitation work aimed at the advanced workers, the further development of *Organizer* circles and recruitment. The plan also calls for strengthening the multi-nationality of the PWOC, emphasizing the need for white cadre to improve their practice in the struggle against racism and more systematically approaching the recruitment of workers and activists from the oppressed nationalities.

## PWOC UNITED AND RESOLUTE

The Convention saw broad participation from the membership in the discussion and debate. The PWOC emerged from the Convention with a deeper appreciation of its tasks and with the unity and resolution to carry them forward. In future issues of the *Organizer* we will publish some of the Convention materials. We hope to have a packet of the resolutions and general political report available in the near future.

## Philadelphia Workers' Organizing Committee

# Who We Are



The PWOC is a Communist organization, basing itself on Marxism-Leninism, the principles of scientific socialism. We are an activist organization of Black and white, men and women workers who see the root causes of the day-to-day problems of working people as the capitalist system itself. We are committed to building a revolutionary working class movement that will overthrow the profit system and replace it with socialism.

We seek to replace the anarchy of capitalist production with a planned economy based on the needs of working people. We want to end the oppression of national minorities and women, and make equality a reality instead of the hypocritical slogan it has become in the mouths of the capitalist politicians. We work toward the replacement of the rule of the few -- the

handful of monopolists -- by the rule of the many -- the working people.

The masses of people in the US have always fought back against their exploitation and today the movement in opposition to the monopolists are rapidly growing both in numbers and intensity. What is lacking is the kind of political leadership that can bring these movements together, deepen the consciousness of the masses, and build today's struggles into a decisive and victorious revolutionary assault against Capital.

To answer this need we must have a vanguard party of the working class, based on its most conscious and committed partisans, rooted in the mass movements of all sectors of American people and equipped with the political understanding capable of solving the strategic and tactical problems that present themselves on the difficult road to revolution.

The PWOC seeks, in conjunction with like-minded organizations and individuals throughout the US, to build such a party -- a genuine Communist Party. The formation of such a party will be an important step forward in the struggle of the working class and all oppressed people to build a new world on the ashes of the old.

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# Labor Round-up

## Legal Workers Organize



Burger/cpf

On June 17, workers at CLS—clericals, paralegals, investigators and social workers—voted, by a two-thirds majority, for District 1199C to represent their interests. The victory was a surprise to no one except perhaps CLS management which had stepped up its efforts to appear liberal and benevolent towards employees ever since the drive to unionize began. Workers have seen through that sham, though, and realized that the recent move to give workers both a pension plan and life insurance—benefits before unheard of at CLS—are just an effort to try to buy them off.

**THE SHAM GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**  
The best example of the CLS administration really showing where they are at has come through in the use of the grievance procedure. Up until three weeks before the election, workers had no way of grieving issues that affected them. Now that a "company" grievance procedure exists, workers have proven that it is no more than a token effort at democracy.

The paralegals, as a collective body met together and voted to file a grievance to try to correct some intolerable work practices being enforced at one of the CLS offices where the paralegal staff are mostly Black. The paralegals realized that what was happening to their fellow workers at one center could very easily happen to all of them eventually. This was an important step for CLS employees and particularly for paralegals who are beginning to see through the idea of "professionalism" and see themselves as workers.

Management refused to meet the time limits it had established for itself in answering grievances. Finally, after some pressure was put on the Board of Trustees, the answer came that class action grievances were unacceptable and any grievance, to be accepted, must be filed by the affected individual! It became quite obvious that this new grievance procedure was set up so that management could easily pick off the "troublemakers"! This experience served to reinforce the need for unity among all the workers.

### NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE STARTS WORK

When the negotiating committee was set up it was recognized that it was important that the body be representative of the workforce at CLS. And in fact, members of the bargaining unit who were elected to the committee do reflect the composition of the workforce. The committee, which is largely Black, with Puerto Rican and white membership, met and discussed for one and a half months before coming up with their proposals to be presented to the bargaining unit for ratification. What they came up with is a very strong contract that deals with issues important to the entire membership. Is-

sues of seniority in upgrading, training for all workers, affirmative action in hiring, increase in wages, and a two-step grievance procedure were all unanimously accepted by the membership.

One of the areas of controversy was the issue of the right to strike. The 1199 leadership favored a no-strike clause during the length of the agreement. The negotiating committee was divided over the issue as was the membership. The 1199 organizer argued a no-strike clause was necessary in order to have a "stable" and "orderly" grievance procedure and that arbitration was the best way to settle problems.

Many workers opposed this logic. As one union member put it: "It's the whole reason we have a union in the first place. . . . to put the power in our own hands." The decision to put a no-strike clause in the contract was carried by a few votes. This is a definite area of weakness in the union's contract program.

Negotiations opened on the 19th of September, but it will be up to the 150 workers at CLS to ensure that their demands will be met. The coming months will be the test of CLS workers' new found unity.

## Jobs Rally Flops



organizer photo

On September 10 rallies were staged in fifty cities across the United States demanding that the Carter Administration produce "Jobs, not promises". The mobilization, sponsored by the Full Employment Action Council, a coalition of trade unions and civil rights organizations, proved to be a dismal flop.

In Philadelphia, only about 250 people attended the event at the Amphitheater on Independence Mall. The poor showing was another indication of just how little influence the labor union leadership has among its own rank and file.

With national unemployment in excess of 7% and unemployment among Black people reaching its highest point since the second world war, the international unions have been unable to exert any meaningful political pressure on the Carter administration.

## Rank & File Steward Loses Arbitration

On August 15, Ron "Redbone" Ardron, who was unjustly fired from Bluebird Food Products because of his militancy as shop steward of Amalgamated Food Employees Union Local 196, AMC&BW lost his case in arbitration.

Ardron was fired in December while out sick. He applied for unemployment compensation benefits which the company contested and didn't receive a hearing for five months. But the very next day he

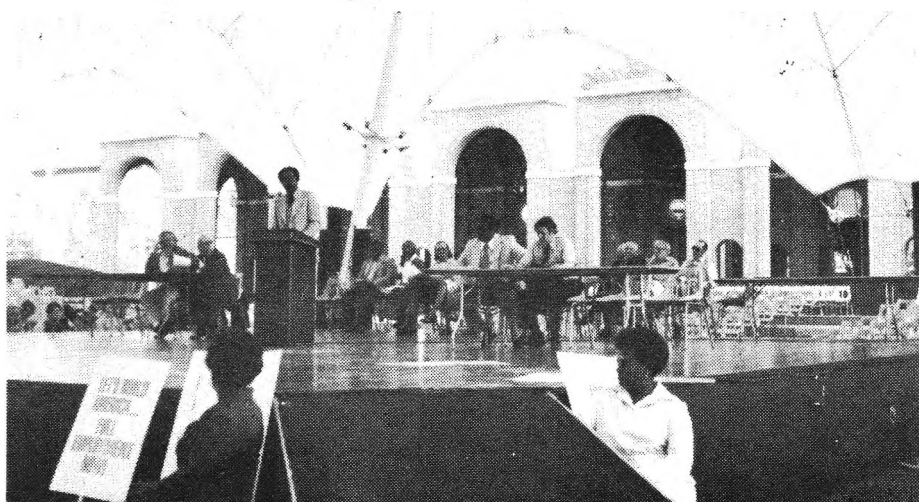
was found ineligible for benefits. Even though at the arbitration hearing it became apparent that Ardron had acted according to both the company's work rules and the union contract, and that Ardron had several witnesses while the company had none, the arbitrator ruled against him.

Also, despite the fact that Ardron had several doctor notes for the time he has out sick, the company lawyer implied that Ardron was out of the country during the time and generally engaged in "subversive activities".

However, it's clear that Ardron was fired because of his rank and file activities and for being a militant steward. He consistently fought for better working conditions, union representation, and against the company's attempts to divide the Black, Puerto Rican, and white workforce by the use of racist practices.

It is also clear that the rank and file stands behind Ardron and what he was fighting for. Once, the Vice-President of the union tried to remove him as steward and the workers staged a work stoppage. And when Ardron was fired 50 workers from Bluebird demonstrated in protest at company headquarters in sub-zero weather.

Ardron is planning to appeal the arbitrator's blatantly unjust decision.



organizer photo

Co-workers demonstrate at Bluebird offices last winter demanding Ardron be rehired.

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# Shop steward tells why Alan Wood Steel closed its doors

(the following article was contributed by a now unemployed shop steward at the Alan Wood Steel Co.)

The Alan Wood Steel Company is now completely shut down. Like a gigantic dead animal the plant, which was the largest employer in Conshohocken, is lying idle, slowly rotting. Only a small fire-watch crew remains from the over 2,000 workers who once produced steel. The company is in receivership and is expected to be sold at auction, probably for scrap.

## THE WAY IT ALWAYS IS

And so workers who have put their lives into the company are now left with nothing. We workers, who spent years making profits for the company, working in hazardous and unhealthy conditions, are once again forced to see the inequality between the workers and the owners.

The owners and managers have lost their company but you can bet that they have plenty put aside for such a rainy day. They've got money in the bank that they've siphoned off from the profits we made for them over the years. And meanwhile, our bank accounts are nearly bone dry.

We face a long cold winter with jobs scarce and bills piling up just the same. But they've got the money and the connections to get started again without much trouble. Under this system, that's the way it always is.

It shows too that there is something very wrong with the United Steelworkers leadership which preaches that the interests of workers and employers are in harmony with each other. The "Work Together, Win Together" philosophy of the USW is as bankrupt as the Alan Wood Steel Co.

## WHAT WENT WRONG?

How did a company go from a 10 million dollar profit in 1974 to over 25 million dollars in debt in 1977? The company would like us to believe that it was foreign steel and high labor costs that did them in. Naturally, they want us to blame ourselves and steel workers like us in other countries for the company's decline. And naturally they reject the real causes — their own mismanagement and the boom-bust cycle that is part of the profit system.

It is sure enough true that steelworkers are trying to get better wages. Who could blame us given runaway inflation? The company came to us three times over the last year-and-a-half and asked us to take wage cuts. Maybe the workers might have gone for it if they were honest about the real financial picture of the company, if they hadn't been so greedy and asked for such big cuts, and most important if they had shown any willingness to put their own house in order.

Management's hypocrisy in asking us to tighten the belt, while they continued to get fatter and fatter didn't win much sympathy from the workers. When departments were closed or reduced, there was no reduction in the number of foremen. Added foremen sprouted like weeds all over the plant over the last two years. While asking labor to take cuts, the owners allowed management costs to rise.

And even if we had taken the cuts, would it have made a difference? No. . .not according to the court-appointed receivers who admitted that if we had taken a large cut a year ago the company still would have gone bankrupt.

## THE IMPORTS SCAPEGOAT

The steel companies, along with the textile, apparel magnates and the auto companies, are crying about imports. It is true that U. S. steel manufacturers have priced themselves out of some markets. They blame high labor costs.

In looking at this argument we should keep three things in mind: First of all, the steel companies are not exactly going broke. Profits for U. S. Steel, for example, in the second quarter of this year were \$76.3 million, up over 300% from the last quarter of 1976.

Secondly, U. S. steel manufacturers have not kept up with technical improvements in production. They've fallen way behind Japanese and German manufacturers and allowed their plants and machinery to become obsolete. This means that their costs of production are higher and their steel is less competitive with these foreign manufacturers.

Finally, and most importantly, our interests as workers are not in keeping out imports, but in fighting alongside foreign workers to improve wages and conditions. As long as employers abroad can force foreign workers to work for less, our jobs are in jeopardy.

The answer is not to keep out the products they produce but to support the workers abroad in their struggle to improve their lot. The imports argument plays into the hands of the employers and splits the ranks of the workers along national lines.

In the case of Alan Wood the imports argument is even more off base. The orders that once kept Alan Wood hopping are

## Narcisco and Perez sentenced- Demo set for Oct. 11

by ANN BILY

End racist scapegoating! Free Narcisco and Perez! On Sept. 15th, 20 picketers raised these demands in front of the Federal Courthouse to protest the sentencing of Filipino nurses Narcisco and Perez. On this date there were nationwide demonstrations for the nurses' defense.

Federal District Judge Pratt deferred the sentencing of the nurses ordering them to report Sept. 22 to a Federal prison in West Virginia for tests. Asst. U. S. Attorney Richard Delonis stated that "The purpose is to give the judge more information about the two defendants as human beings." The judge set no new



gone now. But they weren't lost to foreign manufacturers. They were lost period. And this is the chief cause of Alan Wood's problems.

## BOOM & BUST

The steel industry got hit by the recession a year and a half ago and still hasn't come out of it. Alan Wood got caught in the web of the economic recession. While the larger companies have diversified holdings in other industries, produce a variety of steel products and have a large supply of cash to ride out the rough spots until the road gets smoother, Alan Wood is locked into an economic elevator which is steadily sinking toward the basement. Without its own coal mines, iron ore pits, and shipping companies, Alan Wood was in a poor position to compete with giants like U. S. Steel which owns all these things and more.

In the jungle that is American business, it is survival of the fittest. The boom-bust cycle that is a built-in feature of the profit system speeds up the process of the big fish eating the little fish. Companies like Alan Wood go under and the monopolies like U. S. Steel get bigger and stronger.

Before the turn of the century, there were many small steel companies of roughly equal size. Today there are a few giants like U. S. Steel, Bethlehem, and a few smaller companies still clinging to survival. Alan Wood, over 150 years old, finally got caught.

But why now instead of earlier? Criminal mismanagement is the answer — management so bad that we wondered when the asylum was going to come and take some managers to where they belong.

date for sentencing, but under Federal law it must be done within 90 days.

Leonora Perez and Filipina Narcisco were convicted of poisoning and conspiracy to poison last July — two years after a series of breathing failures in the VA Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The convictions followed a prejudicial FBI investigation (an investigation that failed to research other suspects and other possible causes, e.g., drug contamination, and that submitted altered evidence as well as deleted information favorable to the nurses) and a trial during which prosecuting attorney Yanko admitted that he had no direct eye-witness testimony, no direct evidence, no confession, and no motive. (See Sept. *Organizer* for more analysis and details.)

Immediately after the conviction, hundreds of outraged co-workers and supporters demonstrated at the VA hospital and the Detroit courthouse. Ms. Judy Polacheck, staff nurse at the VA hospital, resigned in protest of the trial's outcome. Alternative juror Kathleen Robinson proclaimed that "Twelve people (the jury) can be wrong, as this sorry situation proves." And the Michigan Nurses Associ-

Over the years Alan Wood has had both large and numerous small orders. In bad times, like the '58 recession, it was the small but consistent orders that kept the firm going. About two years ago, Alan Wood started dumping these small orders. It had come off a banner 1974 year and the future looked bright.

Bright new managers figured the small orders were too much trouble. Alan Wood's small order customers were told to take their business elsewhere. They did, and when the recession hit, and Alan Wood told them they were welcome to place their orders again, Alan Wood was told to take a hike.

Having cut the company's throat, some managers decided to get something for themselves while the getting was good. The result was a scandal involving millions of dollars of steel sales. The steel was sold well below the market price with Alan Wood managers and the customers presumably sharing in the booty. This behavior, along with the refusal to reduce management costs, was the kiss of death.

## SO WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

While better management might have helped the company survive, better management was no solution for the workers. Better management means bigger profits and bigger profits mean increased productivity and lower labor costs — in other words, speed-up, layoffs, and wage-cutting.

As long as there is capitalism, the trend toward monopoly in which big companies eat up little companies will continue. The employers will continue to put their money where the biggest profits are and

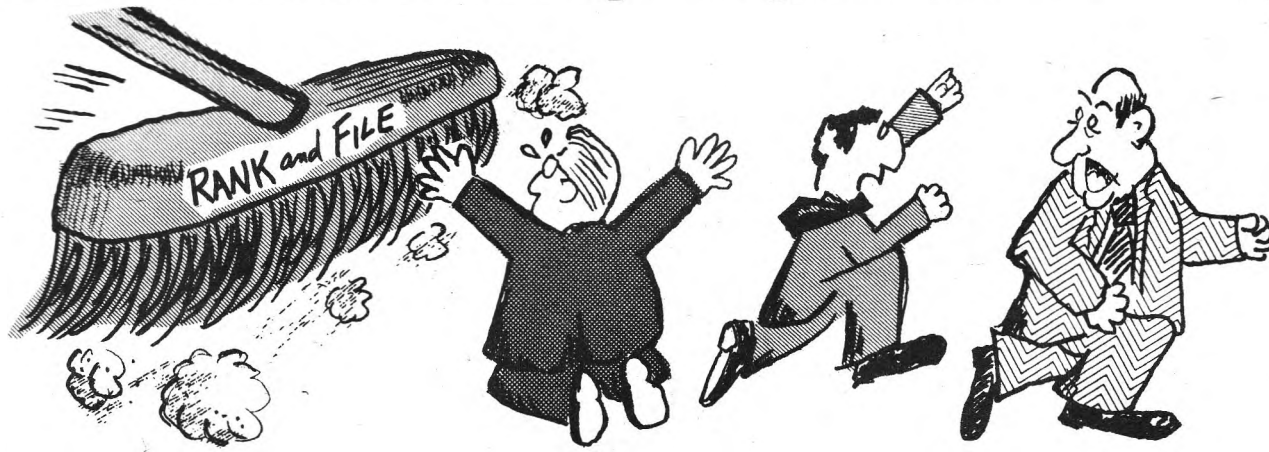
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ation's Board of Directors expressed "grave concern" over the trial verdict and urged a congressional investigation "without delay" in view of what it considers serious unanswered questions about the case.

Here in Philadelphia the Southeast Pennsylvania Professional Nurses Association (PNA), a generally conservative organization, is taking up the defence of the two nurses. Nurses increasingly understand that this racist frameup is a threat to all nurses. The whole working class needs to rally against this racist attack and the attempt to scapegoat health workers for the sorry condition of the health care system.

Workers and justice-loving Americans are joining the Filipino community in their demand for freedom for the innocent nurses. On October 11, Judge Pratt will decide whether or not the trial was a mistrial and that a new trial (hopefully more just) will be conducted. There will be rallies across the nation demanding a new trial. In Philadelphia, at Judge Lewis Quadrangle, 6th and Market, there will be a rally between 3 and 6 P.M. Come and join the call for justice for Narcisco and Perez!

# AFSCME leadership rejected



## Rank and File Sweeps to Victory

organizer graphic

The leadership of AFSCME District Council 47, which represents Philadelphia's white collar city workers woke up last month to find themselves out of work. The Rank and File Action Caucus swept into office, winning control of the Executive Boards at both the local and district level and capturing almost all the leadership posts, including the presidency of the District Council.

The election results were a damning indictment of the class collaborationist leadership of D. C. president Jay Kogan. City workers all across the country are under attack. Layoffs and cutbacks in wages, benefits, and working conditions are the order of the day. The workers first line of defense is their union. Kogan and company have conducted business as usual in the face of these attacks, allowing Rizzo to close out PGH and negotiating a weak contract earlier this year.

### ELECTION DELAYED

Last month's election was originally scheduled for last October. The election was delayed when the Rank and File Action Caucus protested the exclusion of Local 1971, which includes the Redevelopment Authority employees and is a bastion of anti-Kogan sentiment, from the election.

The Kogan forces sought to justify the exclusion of 1971 on the grounds that the Redevelopment Authority workers are not technically city employees. This distinction, however, had not prevented Kogan and company from taking the dues of 1971 members. The caucus appealed this action to the International which after nine months decided to separate 1971 from D. C. 47, ordered new elections immediately and called for the District to hold a constitutional convention. The District Council has operated for six years without a constitution.

With only six weeks to organize for the elections, the Rank and File Action Caucus was hard pressed to mount the kind of in-depth campaign that could really educate and mobilize the membership. The Kogan people expected a quick and easy victory, but they were in for a rude shock.

The main base of the caucus is in Local 2187, which includes the city's non-supervisory professional and technical employees. Here the caucus put forward its own slate of rank and file activists, most of whom have been active in the caucus since its formation in 1975.

In the other Local, 2186, which is much smaller and consists of supervisory personnel, the caucus helped pull together a slate of independents who had a reputation as good union people and a history of opposition to the Kogan leadership. These independents ran with the active support of the caucus. The District leadership was to be elected by delegates from the two locals, and the caucus put forward candidates for all these positions.

### ECONOMIC ISSUES CENTRAL

The central issues in the campaign were

the economic interests of the membership. Job security was a major concern. In the wake of the closing of PGH the Rank and File called for a no-layoff clause in the next contract and criticized the capitulation of Kogan and company on this issue. The caucus called for an expansion of benefits and the inclusion of a Cost-of-Living clause in the pension plan. D.C. 47 retirees are currently losing approximately \$600 a year because of the effects of inflation on pensions.

Union democracy was also an issue. The Kogan leadership has been characterized by a distrust of the membership—an unwillingness to draw the rank and file into the decision-making process. The caucus called for polling of the membership to determine contract demands and a more democratic approach to ratification.

The actual campaign was a model of rank and file organization. The caucus organized carefully for the nomination meetings and insured that all their candidates got on the ballot. They also elected people to the Elections Committee to minimize the possibility of fraud.

Caucus members aggressively leafletted these meetings. A phone list of all union members was obtained, and all of them were called. The caucus' aims were explained and each member was urged to vote for its slate. Responses were recorded and divided into three categories—friendly, unsure, and opposition supporters. Follow up was organized accordingly.

Special attention was aimed at trying to draw shop stewards into the campaign where the caucus had no active members. Distribution of leaflets was thorough and carefully organized. Caucus members were careful not to campaign on city time in order not to present the Kogan people with a ready-made issue. A mailing was sent to every member with an open letter and resumes of every Rank & File candidate. By way of contrast the Kogan leadership did little active campaigning and was apparently very complacent that they could win without lifting a finger.

### ORGANIZATION PAYS OFF

The combination of the caucus stand on the issues and strong organization paid off. In the first election in Local 2186 the caucus-backed slate won every Executive Board and leadership position. In Local 2187 the carried all positions with the exception of Local President.

Thomas Paine Cronin, the caucus candidate, polled the most votes but fell short of a needed majority because three candidates were on the ballot. In a runoff the Kogan-backed candidate won by six owing largely to a last minute smear campaign which included letters sent out from the union office to the membership accusing Cronin of neglect of his Executive Board responsibilities.

In the District Council elections, the Kogan forces, who had now come to understand their precarious position, tried to

stall. The Council elections were by delegate instead of a direct vote by the membership. The caucus had historically opposed this method on the grounds that direct election was more democratic. Kogan and company naturally favored the delegate method as being easier to control.

But now, with their backs to the wall, they sought to have the constitution changed to direct election by the membership. While the caucus supports such a change, under these circumstances they recognized it for the stalling tactic it was.

The delegates rejected this ploy and went on to elect the Rank and File Action candidates by an overwhelming margin. James Dempsey, a charter member of the caucus, a shop steward, Health and Welfare Trustee, and Executive Board member, was elected to replace Jay Kogan as D. C. 47 President.

### THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

While caucus members are naturally jubilant about their success, there is also an understanding among many that this is only the beginning. The Caucus is not going to disband. It plans to continue and see that its program is realized by the new leadership. As one caucus member put it: "The caucus is more important than ever now. We have to continue to education and mobilize the membership and hold our new leadership accountable."

The caucus is not without its weaknesses.

The campaign tended to focus on the narrowest issues and failed to take up the more advanced trade union demands. Lack of time was definitely a factor here. But as is often the case election campaigns tend to water down the election program in the name of garnering the most votes.

The caucus did not speak directly to the question of racism in its campaign and this must be counted as a serious weakness. The fact that it is the national minority communities which are most directly and most deeply affected by the cutbacks makes it imperative that city workers take up this struggle.

Also, the city professional and technical employees are overwhelmingly white. Affirmative action to remedy this situation is necessary and is part and parcel of forging unity between city workers and consumers of city services.

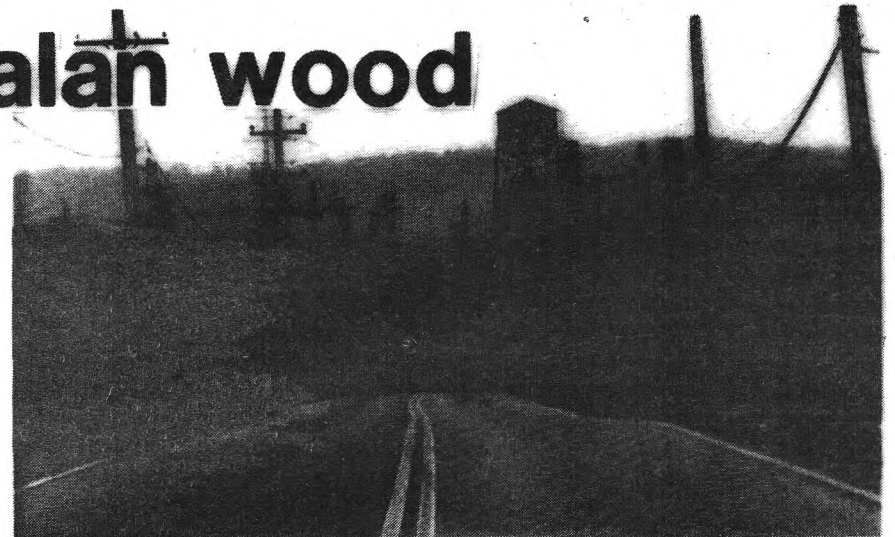
A Rank & File election platform adopted last year included strong planks on both affirmative action and the need for unity between city workers and the public in the fight against cutbacks, but neither issue was developed in this year's campaign material. The caucus slate was also overwhelmingly white.

While this reflects the composition of the district's membership, this is no excuse. It is precisely to change this sorry situation that strong Black leadership must be developed in the caucus. The only way to do this is to aggressively take up the struggle against racism. Given that the caucus failed to do this it is now in a weak position to carry out its programmatic commitments to affirmative action and building unity.

The International appears to have played an even-handed role in the election. They understood that the rank and file insurgents might win and thus did not want to risk alienating them. Now that the votes are in, the International will undoubtedly move to get in tight with the new District leadership and split them off from the rank and file. The caucus must be vigilant about this danger.

All in all, the election victory marks a big step forward for the rank and file movement in Philadelphia and a major setback for the labor bureaucracy. It is also a message to city worker union leadership across the country that the workers are not going to be a sacrificial lamb for the bankers, politicians, and corporate interests.

## alan wood



continued from previous page

shut down places where the rate of profit is not so great.

The boom bust cycle will continue with recession and depression that kill off the weaker firms and put millions of workers out of jobs. The capitalist system is the root cause of the problem, and we will never rid ourselves of the problem until we rid ourselves of this system. That's the long run solution.

But we can't forget the short run. The unions have to become more concerned with our job security and less concerned with the companies profit rates. Instead of blaming foreign steel for layoffs and

the loss of jobs, the union has got to start fighting the companies to create more jobs.

This can't be done at the bargaining table alone. It's going to take political action by the whole working class around the fight for the shorter work week at no loss in pay and similar demands. If the union leadership won't do this now (and in the USWA they sure as hell won't) then the rank and file is going to have to organize to see that they do or kick them out. At Alan Wood it may be to late. But in our union and other unions as well the fight has just begun.

# Tenants' Bill of Rights before City Council

Ever been refused an apartment because you have children? Or had your hot water heater break and had to wait two weeks for the landlord to get around to fix it? Or have the landlord suddenly nearly double your rent?

These are just some of the practices that will be outlawed if City Council adopts "The Tenants Bill of Rights", a piece of legislation being backed by the Tenants Action Group. The proposed law calls for:

## PROTECTION FOR FAMILIES AND THE UNEMPLOYED. It would be illegal to refuse to rent on the basis of:

\*\*Source of income (DPA, unemployment compensation, Social Security, child support)

\*\*Family composition (single parents, presence of children);

\*\*Age.

## FAIR LEASES

\*\*No more pass through or escalator clauses

\*\*Landlords promise to make repairs;

\*\*Landlord entry with notice only.

## REPAIR AND DEDUCT. Tenants can:

\*\*Make repairs and deduct the cost from the rent after giving 20 days written notice;

\*\*Make deductible emergency repairs after 48 hours notice.

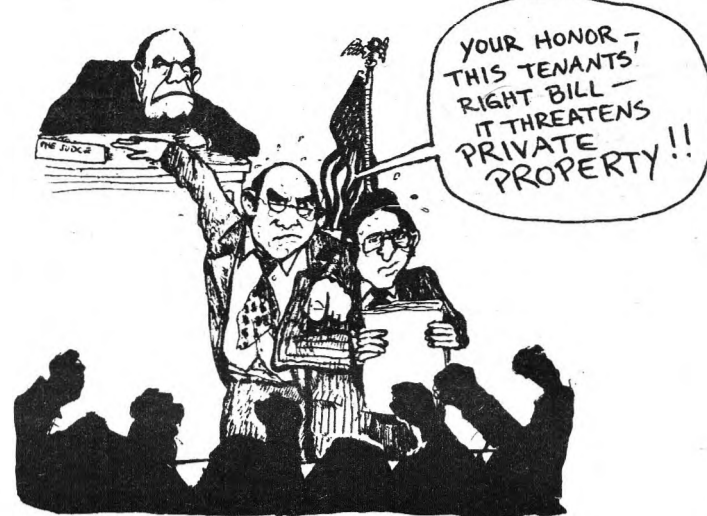
## RENT STABILIZATION.

\*\*Rents can only be increased once per year;

\*\*Rents can go up no more than 5% unless landlords can demonstrate need;

\*\*Evictions can only happen for good cause;

The *Organizer* urges you to write or call your city council representative urging support for the bill. You can be sure the landlords will be on council's back. For further information call: Tenant Action Group, 563-5402.



## Stop Police Brutality!



Police crimes against the people of Philadelphia, in particular against the Black and Puerto Rican communities, have increased at an alarming rate. In response to these attacks a demonstration against police brutality was organized by a coalition representing religious groups, community organizations, legal groups, and concerned individuals. On September 24th, 250 people marched to City Hall chanting "What about our human rights?"; "Let's face reality—stop police brutality!"; "Four killed in six days!" At City Hall several speakers addressed the crowd.

organizer photo

# Busing Stalled as Schools Reopen

by JACK OWENS

In July, Pennsylvania joined the growing movement by state and federal authorities to reverse the civil rights gains of the last two decades and to turn the clock back to 1896 when the US Supreme Court first gave official sanction to the racist "separate but equal" doctrine.

On July 1, the Commonwealth Court accepted the so-called "voluntary" desegregation plan of the Philadelphia School Board and rejected Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission arguments that the plan was a farce and would, at best, desegregate only 10 to 15% of Philadelphia's school population.

Citing the "poor track record" of the School Board in ducking desegregation for nine years, and the fact that voluntary desegregation "hasn't worked anywhere else", the Human Relations Commission demanded at the very least, a back up

busing plan in case the "voluntary" plan failed. This was also rejected.

## SUPREME COURT SETS NEW PRECEDENT

In siding with the School Board, the Commonwealth Court was following the lead of the US Supreme Court. Under its new doctrine of intent (which states that to obtain system-wide desegregation one must not only prove the *fact* of segregation but that such segregation was *intentionally* discriminatory), the Supreme Court has struck down busing plans in Austin, Texas; Indianapolis, Indiana; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Dayton, Ohio. It has also voided a Detroit metropolitan busing plan by stating that such an inter-district plan cannot be instituted unless one proves that the *suburban* districts collaborated in intentional school segregation. (See the August, 1977 *Organizer* for a fuller discussion of the Detroit and Dayton decisions.)

The Detroit decision has especially grave implications for a proposed metropolitan plan which would have joined the mostly Black Wilmington, Delaware, school district with its white, affluent suburban neighbors. This plan, which was to have gone into effect last month, has now been put on hold pending an appeal to the Supreme Court by the state of Delaware and the suburban school districts.

## SCHOOL BOARD VACILLATION FOSTERS VIOLENCE

These Court precedents also bode ill for desegregation in Los Angeles where the LA Board of Education has been fighting desegregation since 1970. In July, Superior Court Judge Paul Egly rejected the latest LA plan because "it does not desegregate any school in the district."

The stalling tactics of the LA Board of Education has encouraged anti-busing sentiment in the lily-white San Fernando Valley where "Bus-Stop" -- an anti-busing organization with an estimated 40,000 members and reported KuKluxKlan financing -- recently was able to elect its executive director, Bobbie Fiedler, to the Board of Education.

Such vacillation by local authorities has helped to foster racist violence in places like Boston and Louisville, Kentucky, where on August 17 the car of long-time civil rights activist Anne Braden was fire-bombed one day after the FBI uncovered a large cache of guns, ammunition, and explosives belonging to a local anti-busing group.

## CONGRESS VOTES FOR RACISM

Meanwhile on Capitol Hill, support has gathered for an anti-busing amendment to the Constitution. House supporters of the bill have issued a joint statement that concisely spells out most of the racist anti-busing myths being touted from coast to coast: "We sincerely believe in the neighborhood school. We furthermore believe that forced busing has caused white flight to the suburbs; it has caused resegregation of school systems; it has pushed school systems to the brink of bankruptcy; and it has caused chaos and disorder in many cities."

On the other side of the Hill, The Senate Appropriations Committee voted 13 to 8 in August to prevent the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) from cutting off funds to schools that fail to comply with civil rights laws. The motion was sponsored by Senator Thomas Eagleton (D-Missouri) who declared flatly: "Racial-balance busing is out."

## CARTER ADMINISTRATION ON RECORD FOR RACISM

Finally, in a gross disregard for "human rights," Jimmy Carter's executive branch has shown itself to be the willing ally of racism. In March, assistant Attorney General Drew S. Days, the first Black head of the Justice Department's civil rights division, said he would not press for extensive busing and wide-ranging desegregation unless the criteria of intent were met.

And at a June 5 commencement at New York's City College -- HEW Secretary Joseph Califano capitulated to racist college admission practices when he stated: "Arbitrary quotas will not be a part of our enforcement system." Instead he asks minority students to rely on the "inspiration" and "good faith" of colleges and universities who have discriminated for generations!

## SURRENDER NOT THE ANSWER

While the picture painted above appears bleak, we must remember that the civil rights gains of the 50's and 60's were not handed to us -- they were won only through a determined and militant mass movement. Recent events are proving only too well that the courts and legislatures, under capitalism, are unwilling and undependable allies at best who will turn on us in a second if we relax our vigilance.

Knowing this, we cannot afford to surrender to demoralization. The solution is to build a multi-national, anti-racist movement anchored firmly in the working class, the national minorities and their progressive allies. Only such a movement will be capable of the strength necessary to reverse the racist tide and win the democratic rights crucial to all.



# OVERTURN the BAKKE DECISION

## affirmative action in jeopardy

by ANNA GOLD

Marvin Jones, a Black youth, grew up in a West Philadelphia row house, the son of a press operator at Budd. He attended public school and community college and did well in the basic courses offered. Marvin was determined not to join the 40% of Black youth hopelessly searching for a job. His dream was to be a doctor, and when he graduated he applied to Medical school.

At the same time, John Smith graduated from an Ivy League school, the son of a Main Line doctor. He also did well in school, and took advantage of many of the specialized courses offered. He too applied to Medical School.

As recently as five years ago, the Medical School was all white and Marvin's dream would have remained just that -- a pipe-dream. But because of an affirmative action policy the dream became reality. Marvin became one of a small number of national minority applicants to be admitted, though his test scores were slightly lower than John's, who was denied admission. Was John a victim of "reverse discrimination?"

### BACKLASH AGAINST CIVIL RIGHTS

The job squeeze has tightened for everyone and white as well as national minority workers are being turned away from personnel offices and school enrollment desks. And now we are hearing an increasingly shrill accusation that the gains of the Civil Rights and women's movements have resulted in a tendency to discriminate against white men.

**Black unemployment is more than double white unemployment and the gap between the wages received by women and men is increasing. Yet you hear people say, "Sure, there used to be discrimination. But that's against the law now. If you admit Black people according to a quota system then you're turning the white guy away because of his race. Two wrongs don't make a right."**

Allan Bakke, a 34 year old white applicant to the University of California Davis Medical School took these arguments to the courts in an attempt to challenge the hard won gains of the civil rights movement. The Bakke case, due to be heard in the US Supreme Court in October, has received national attention as Black, Chicano, Asian and progressive white people organize themselves to defend the affirmative action approach to hiring and admittance.

### WHAT ARE THE FACTS OF THE BAKKE CASE?

In 1974 there were 3737 applicants fighting for 100 openings in Davis Medical College. 16 of these spaces were earmarked for "economically and educationally disadvantaged" applicants and they were awarded to 6 Blacks, 8 Chicano, and 2 Asian-American students. Bakke was one of the 3637 applicants turned down. He had already been rejected by at least 10 medical schools and this was his second attempt to get into Davis Medical School.

Although there were 32 white students ahead of him outside of the Special Admissions program, Bakke became convinced that he was the victim of "reverse discrimination" and that he had been denied entrance because of the existence of the Special Admissions policy. It is worth noting that in 1973 the UC Davis

Assistant to the Dean for Admissions had provided Bakke with legal counselling and encouraged him to bring a suit against the special admissions program.

The case was brought before the California Supreme Court. While the Bakke case was itself weak, the University of California legal team hardly put up a fight. They refused to hire a minority counsel, which meant that those most directly affected by the suit did not have any input into the legal defense. Their general lack of commitment to the struggle against racism was evidenced throughout the trial.

On September 16, 1976 the California Supreme Court declared the special admissions program at Davis unconstitutional. It cited the fact that the University had not presented any evidence of past discrimination to justify an affirmative action program. Secondly, it argued that the University must prove not only that the previous policies had the effect of discriminating against minorities but that it *intended* to do so. Finally, it ruled that the minority students in question were less qualified as shown by the Medical Admissions Test.

### HISTORY OF RACIST POLICIES

Had the University of California been serious about defending the rights of national minority students, its counsel could easily have countered these points. First, the history of discrimination is well-documented. There were no Black or Chicano students at the school before 1970 when the program began. In 1974 there were 57, only 7 of whom were admitted under regular admissions. Despite various affirmative action programs effective over the past 8 years, whites still hold 91% of medical school places. Enrollment in state university systems is only 2.7% Black.

**Secondly, it is almost impossible to prove that any institution intended to discriminate, particularly in the post Civil Rights Act period. To demand such proof is to place an extraordinary burden upon the victim of discrimination and effectively rules out any possibility of correcting the present imbalance.**

Finally, Bakke's claim that he is better qualified than those admitted in the Special Admissions Program is based on the Medical College Admissions Test. However, the Association of American Medical Colleges has shown that "Blacks who had successfully completed the first two years of medical school had lower MCAT scores than whites who had flunked out."

The absurdity of Bakke's argument is underlined by the fact that 36 whites with lower grades than his were admitted. Clearly grades and tests are only some of many indications of the potential strength of an applicant.

### DECISION WILL HAVE FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS

The Bakke case may seem far removed from the problems of the construction worker in New York, or the nurse in Oregon. However, if the US Supreme Court upholds the findings of the California Court, the decision will immediately affect all affirmative action programs which have attempted to reverse the historic pattern of discrimination. The decision is bound to set back the gains made by women as well. Particularly threatened are national minority women who bear



Demonstrators protest the Bakke decision. Alan Bakke, a white applicant to medical school, blames his rejection on the Special Admissions policy which reserves openings for "economically and educationally disadvantaged" applicants. California courts ruled in favor of Bakke—a blatantly racist attack on Black civil rights and on all affirmative action programs.

the double oppression on the basis of race and sex.

The issue at stake is whether or not schools, employers and social service programs will be forced to put into practice a verbal commitment to end discrimination. The Justice Department has stated that while race *can* be taken into consideration, quotas or numerical goals are unconstitutional. President Carter is trying to keep one foot in each camp, claiming that while he is in favor of affirmative action he opposes "quotas."

**It is however, impossible to be on both sides of the question. The history of racism and sexism in the US has shown us that high sounding phrases about equality are not sufficient. Even the New York Times calls on President Carter to "reject the Justice Department's seductive but unworthy compromise over equal opportunity." They further state that "It would be shabby politics indeed to endorse the end but forbid the means."**

In a letter to Carter the Congressional Black Caucus said that a ruling in Bakke's favor would be a "landmark setback for the civil rights of Blacks." It goes on to say that such a ruling would "jeopardize virtually all government programs which are designed to ameliorate the conditions of Black people."

What about the argument that white applicants are presently being victimized because of past racist practices for which they are not personally responsible? If reverse discrimination were a reality, how would we explain the fact that the gap between white and Black workers is growing in every aspect of their working lives? And in the educational field this is even clearer. White access to medical training has increased, not decreased, since 1968. The number of first year medical school places occupied by whites rose by 49%. So it can hardly be argued that affirmative action programs have cut into job possibilities of white applicants.

### WHO'S REALLY TO BLAME?

To the extent that white applicants perceive that their opportunities are narrowing it is a reflection of two things: 1) the impact of the recession on the job market for everyone and 2) the fact that white applicants are no longer automatically assured that they will receive preference over their national minority and women counterparts.

**The whole working class, whites as well as oppressed nationality workers, suffer from lack of jobs and opportunity. Racism diverts the attention of the white workers away from the real source of the problem, the employer class and the profit system, and leads them to blame national minority workers for their problems. The result, of course, is to drive a wedge between the white workers and the**

**oppressed nationalities to the detriment of both.**

It is wrong to counterpose affirmative action demands for full employment or expansion of educational opportunity for all. Both must go hand in hand if we are to secure united working class action.

In the past couple of years we have witnessed a consistent attack on the gains made by the Civil Rights and the Women's Movements. Programs which promote equality for minorities, women, the unemployed, the aged, or the poor are being butchered. The courts have recently played a major role in the attacks.

Numerous busing plans have been struck down, seriously setting back the move to desegregate the schools. Discriminatory zoning rules which perpetuate segregated housing have been upheld. Discriminatory hiring and seniority systems have been ruled constitutional where "intent" to discriminate has not been proven. The courts have ruled that women do not have to receive disability pay during pregnancy and state medical plans do not have to cover abortion costs. Now if the Bakke case is upheld it will give credibility to the concept that the victims of racism and sexism have in fact become the perpetrators.

### OPPOSITION ORGANIZING

The struggle against the Bakke decision has included numerous civil rights and women's rights groups, community organizations, government officials, rank and file groupings and some unions. The National Committee to Overturn the Bakke Decision has been organizing around a number of tactics to pressure Carter to reject the Bakke arguments and to force the Supreme Court to strike down the Bakke decision. They have focused around three major demands:

- 1) Overturn the Bakke Decision.
- 2) Implement, maintain and expand special admissions and other essential services for minority students at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Only such programs will insure that minorities learn skills necessary to serve the needs of their communities and to participate fully in all aspects of society.
- 3) Implement, maintain and expand affirmative action programs in employment. The Bakke decision is not only a question of minority access to education, but is an attack on minority peoples as a whole, and will have a very negative impact on the aspirations of women as well.

A national day of protest against Bakke is scheduled for October 8. A student day of protest will be observed on October 3. All workers have a stake in standing up and being counted in the struggle against this attack on our class.



MPLA troops march in Angola. The Soviet Union was an important ally in the struggle to overthrow colonialism and imperialism.

## The Soviet Union and southern Africa- Friend of the liberation forces?

by JENNY QUINN

Ten years ago, thousands of Americans were marching on the Pentagon and militantly demanding that the U.S. get out of Vietnam. In the ranks of the anti-war movement, anyone who suggested that we call instead for both "superpowers" to get out of Vietnam, the USSR along with the U.S., was immediately recognized as a dupe of the State Department. After all, this is just what Johnson, McNamara, and Rusk were proposing in order to hide their aggression in Southeast Asia.

Today, the struggles in southern Africa demand our attention and call for our solidarity. But within the forces who say they support the liberation of southern Africa, we hear solidarity defined in terms of fighting both superpowers, or even that the Soviet Union, and not the U.S., is the main threat.

But this time it comes from a different quarter...not simply from the State Department, but from so called Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries as well. Because this logic is dressed up in a revolutionary garb, it is sowing confusion in the ranks of the solidarity movement and misleading some honest anti-imperialists.

Therefore, it is necessary to analyze what the real role of the Soviet Union is in South Africa. Is the Soviet Union as some say a Social imperialist power more dangerous than the U.S.? Is it a socialist model of internationalism as other argue. Or is it something that lies somewhere between these polarities?

### CONTRADICTION NATURE OF USSR

The Soviet Union is a socialist country and for this reason has a very definite, built-in antagonism with imperialism. Its socialist character propels it toward support of all the other forces in the world that share a basic antagonism with imperialism.

But socialism in the Soviet Union is diseased. A revisionist party stands at the helm of state, a party with a class outlook akin to that of the capitalists. Consistent with that outlook, and in order to protect their privileged position, the revisionists pursue a policy of accommodation with imperialism, and their relations with other peoples are marred by Great Power Chauvinism -- that is, the pursuit by a large and powerful nation of its own interests, rather than mutual benefit, in its relations with a smaller nation.

From the standpoint of the world's peoples, the Soviet Union is an ally, but

it is stretching the point to call it a friend. If the USSR is a friend it is the sort of friend who cannot be fully trusted to give his all in a battle and who might turn and run...the sort of friend that does not give friendship selflessly, confident that you will return the same.

No, this friend is quick to remind you of your debts to him, quick to attach strings for favors rendered. And when you must fight your enemy, this friend urges appeasement and unnecessary compromise.

This friend is even ready to talk to your enemy behind your back in order to "help".

This is not the stuff of which real friendship is made. Nor is it the content of proletarian internationalism.

In looking at Africa we can see all these contradictory aspects of Soviet policy.

### MATERIAL AID

In Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa itself the Soviet Union has provided valuable military and economic aid as well as diplomatic support to the liberation movements. This aid has been indispensable and without it it's doubtful that the liberation movements would have been able to succeed to the extent they have.

This is most clear in the case of Angola. In 1975 with the collapse of Portuguese colonialism, Angola stood on the brink of liberation. In a desperate attempt to turn back the tide, the U.S. and South Africa intervened. The U.S. bankrolled Holden Roberto and the phoney CIA supported FNLA (Front for the National Liberation of Angola). South African troops rushed to join the forces of UNITA, another phoney national liberation movement.

The aim of U.S.-South African policy was to thwart the MPLA, the liberation movement which had fought the brunt of the war against the Portuguese and was clearly committed to an anti-imperialist course for an independent Angola. The MPLA called upon the Soviet Union for an escalation of military assistance *only after* these initiatives by the U.S. imperialists and the South African racists.

The Soviet Union had been aiding the MPLA for years and under the circumstances increased their aid to the tune of \$100 million in order to repel the imperialist threat. Independently of the Soviets, the Cubans came to the aid of Angola with volunteers. The result was

that the FLNA and UNITA were routed and, for the moment at least, the U.S. had to accept defeat.

Clearly, without Soviet and Cuban aid, the MPLA would have been defeated or at very least a long civil war would have been the result. This is the objective effect of the slogan "Soviet Social Imperialism out of Africa". In practice it stands for an Angola under the neo-colonial domination of U.S. imperialism.

### BUT STRINGS ARE ATTACHED

At the same time, the strain of Great Power Chauvinism is evident in Soviet behavior in Africa. The small country of Guinea in West Africa is a case in point. In 1958, Guinea gained its independence from France and announced its determination to pursue a non-aligned course. The imperialist countries boycotted trade with Guinea and tried to force it into submission. The 1970 agreement between the USSR and Guinea gives some indication why.

The Soviets loaned Guinea \$92 million for the construction of a bauxite mine. Ninety percent of the mine's output was to be exported to the USSR, 55% to pay off the loan and 35% as barter for Soviet produced goods. These goods were often of inferior quality and in some cases bore no relation to the needs of the Guinean economy. Diplomats told stories of warehouses full of Bulgarian sesame seed paste, perhaps a great staple in the Eastern bloc, but inedible to most Guineans.

Only 10% of the mine's output was left to be exchanged for freely convertible currency. The Soviets secured the bauxite at \$10 a ton below the world market price. All in all, an agreement that is hardly consistent with a policy of proletarian internationalism.

At the same time it should be remembered that such inequitable trade agreements are not equivalent to the export of capital characteristic of imperialism, however reprehensible they may be. After all, the Guineans own the mine and once the Soviet debt has been retired will be free to market the bauxite according to their own lights.

It is cases of this sort that lend most credence to the warning that nations and movements that value their independence should steer clear of the Soviets.

### LIBERATION MOVEMENTS GUARD OWN INTERESTS

But in some ways, the most important

factor to take into account is the liberation movements themselves. The liberation movements who have been fighting colonialism for years are not about to trade their hard-won independence to anyone. The newly independent countries of Southern Africa are jealous of the prerogatives of sovereignty, and given that they waged a protracted armed struggle and won over the masses in the process, they are in a strong position to resist encroachments from any source.

It is the liberation movements themselves which are in the best position to decide who is the greatest threat to their independence. And these movements have made it clear, that it is U.S. imperialism that constitutes the real and immediate danger.

Angola, the country which has received the most aid and is at the same time been most dependent on that aid, is a case in point. The People's Republic of Angola has made clear from the outset its intention to follow a policy of non-alignment. That this is more than words is reflected in the actual relations between the newly independent country and the USSR.

In 1976, Angola signed an agreement with the Soviets covering mutual cultural, scientific, military and trade relations. While all the features of the agreement are not known, some key features stand out. Soviet-Angolan trade is to be conducted in freely convertible currency, which means that Angola is not locked into a junior partner relationship within the USSR's "international division of labor" that prevails among Soviet bloc countries.

Angola joins other socialist countries which like Vietnam, while friendly to the USSR, have chosen to remain outside COMECON and retain their trade options. Also, contrary to the predictions of our "Marxist-Leninists" the Soviet Union did not acquire any military bases in Angola.

### ALVES AFFAIR

The Alves affair is another indication of the MPLA's determination to guard its independence. Early last spring Nito Alves, a member of the MPLA central committee, held private meetings with Soviet diplomats in Lusaka, Zambia. Alves made statements that Angolan President Neto was "anti-Soviet". Following this, a Soviet diplomat was expelled from Angola and Alves and his cohorts were expelled from the MPLA central committee.



# Steven Biko, Revolutionary Brother Murdered in South Africa

by BELINDA

Prime Minister Lopo de Naciminto journeyed to Moscow for discussions with the Soviets. Two months later, Alves led an abortive coup attempt against the MPLA.

There is no evidence that the Soviets were involved in this or supported it. The coup is suspected to have been linked to members of the PIDE (the Portuguese Secret Police) and have been part of a coordinated imperialist plan for "destabilization" of the anti-imperialist front line states. The same day as the coup, South Africa mounted a ground and air attack on Mozambique.

The incident reveals both the Soviet penchant for meddling and the Angolans determination to maintain their own course. As Neto himself put it: "We have a series of capitalist countries who are against us and don't want us to follow this path (of non-alignment). We also have friendly countries, who while they are friends, are countries who don't understand our options very well."

## USSR NOT ALONE

Unfortunately the Soviet Union is not the only socialist country guilty of meddling in African affairs. In Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) ZANU and ZAPU, the two major liberation organizations, are joined together in a Patriotic Front aimed at ousting the Smith regime. ZANU has historically been close to China politically while ZAPU's primary ties have been with the USSR.

Recently, on the eve of a meeting of the OAU (the Organization of African Unity), the Chinese news service released a statement attributed to Robert Mugabe who had just returned from the People's Republic. Mugabe allegedly accused the Soviet Union of social imperialism and said it was more dangerous than western imperialism. If the statement had been true it would have destroyed the unity of the Patriotic Front.

Mugabe countered the statement, saying: "Such fabrications are aimed at undermining the Patriotic Front. It is absurd to come out against the Soviet Union which makes tangible contributions to the cause of liberation of Southern Africa from the yoke of racism." From the standpoint of the interests of the African revolution, this is doubly unfortunate. Historically, China's role in relation to the liberation movements has been characterized by a much greater attention to the ideological side of developing People's war than the aid of the Soviet revisionists which has tended to place technical considerations above politics. Also China's economic and trade agreements have been on the basis of equality. But in recent years, China has increasingly sought to attach the political string of anti-Sovietism to its support.

## A MARXIST-LENINIST VIEW

As these examples indicate, the situation in Africa is complicated. There is little room for rosy idealizations of the Soviet Union ala the CPUSA. Nor can we stand reality on its head as the CP-ML and others do in order to conform with the People's Republic of China's view of the world that sees the Soviets as the wolf at the backdoor, more dangerous than the U.S. tiger that is battering down the front door.

As proletarian internationalists, it is our responsibility to build solidarity with the liberation movements which necessarily includes their right to take aid from the Soviet Union. While we have no interests in aiding revisionism by glossing over the negative aspects of the Soviet role in Africa or anywhere else, we have even less interest in promoting the line of the State Department that Soviet aggression is the issue in Southern Africa. The African people and the U.S. working class will both be best served if we strive to tell the truth.

In his short lifetime, Steven Biko, a leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, had established a rich history of resistance to the racist regime of the South African government. He had been imprisoned several times for his political activities although he never stood trial. Since 1973 a five year ban had forbidden him from meeting anyone publicly, from publishing and from being quoted (even after death).

During the Soweto uprisings, he was detained for 101 days without hearing or trial, spending most of that time in solitary confinement. His last jailing came on August 18, when he was arrested but not charged. At that time, he was put in solitary confinement at Port Elizabeth. On September 12, Steven Biko died in that South African prison.

Biko was the 21st political prisoner to die in police custody during the past year and a half. When the news of the death hit the papers across South Africa the reaction was strong and immediate, provoking the biggest wave of protest against the government of South Africa since police in Soweto attacked demonstrating school children last year.

Just hours after his death was announced, anti-apartheid forces gathered in memorial services for Biko. It was the first of several demonstrations to the memory of a man who was described by one newspaper as being "perhaps the most important Black leader in South Africa."

When 1200 students tried to hold a service at a Black university outside Johannesburg, they were quickly surrounded by police, herded into a grandstand, and taken away in police vans. Officials said the students were being detained under the Riotous Assemblies Act, which requires official permission for public gatherings of more than three people.

Opposition groups in the white community joined Black leaders in demanding a judicial inquiry, the removal of Police Minister James Kruger, and the revocation of the Terrorism Act under which Biko had been held since August 18th.

Internationally, the sounds of dismay came quickly from the United States and Britain which are desperately involved in working out a deal with the South African government to try and squash Black liberation movements in neighboring Rhodesia and Namibia.

Feelings ran so high in South Africa that 20,000 people attended the five hour long funeral despite the government's prohibition of bus permits which would have allowed buses to travel outside their normal areas.

## THE GREAT BLACK HOPE?

Why all this sound and fury about a single man? A man described in the press as a Black moderate. A man, according to the Philadelphia *Bulletin* who "simply wanted Black to stop being subservient to white..." A man described by one white South African editor as "one of the main hopes for a peaceful solution to the racial crisis in this country."

Steven Biko was a thirty-year-old Black man whose influence on the course of events in South Africa has been and will continue to be for some time profound and lasting. He was instrumental in the founding of the South African Students Organization (SASO) in 1968, and he was the leading theoretician of what has come to be known as the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). SASO was formed from a caucus of students within the University Christian Movement in an important step towards consolidating an alliance among non-whites in South Africa. As the first president of SASO, Biko spent working to ensure that political unity be established among Indian, "Colored" (mixed-race), and African

As the first president of SASO, Biko spent a considerable amount of time working to ensure that political unity be established among Indian, "Colored" (mixed-race), and African students—a difficult task in the face of the white power structure which works against unity of any kind.

In 1970, Biko remarked that "the Black (non-white) people of the world, in choosing to reject the legacy of colonialism and domination have at last established a solid basis for meaningful cooperation among themselves in the larger battle of the third world against the rich nations."

This kind of statement indicates that Steven Biko understood the need for unity among third world peoples, and, more importantly, realized that the goal was

not to replace Black faces for white within the power structure, but to overcome and rid the third world of its dominance by the rich and powerful colonialists and imperialists.

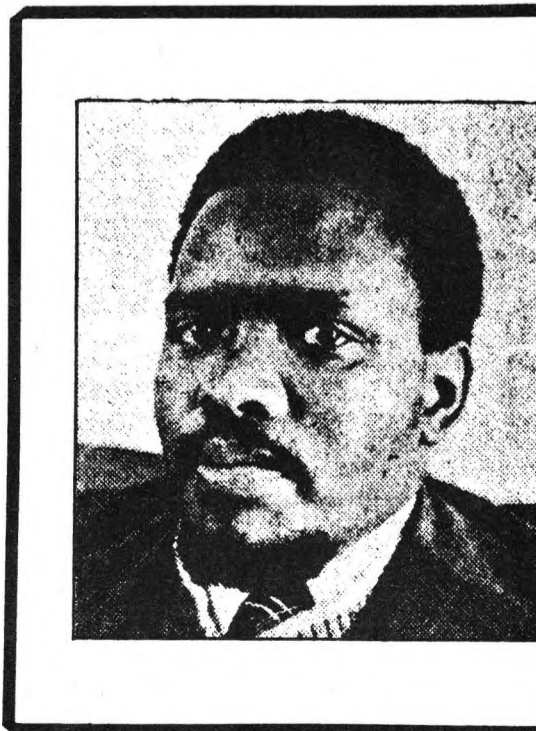
This same theme runs through the policy manifesto adopted by SASO at its 1971 general conference. At that meeting SASO endorsed a resolution which rejected foreign investment in South Africa, saying that investors "profit from exploitation and end up with a vested interest in its maintenance." The resolution condemned "Black puppets who go overseas under the cloak of leadership and persuade foreign investors to stay in South Africa with the belief that (that investment) is for the betterment of Blacks." At that same meeting, SASO declared its solidarity with the people of Namibia "in their determination to rid themselves of this unwarranted (South African) occupation."

From the beginning, SASO and its community counterpart, the Black People's Convention, emphasized its ties with both urban workers and rural peasants. It organized literacy projects, self-help programs such as medical clinics and cooperatives and devoted much time and energy to stimulating and supporting trade union militancy.

None of this should be taken as being a moderate's view of the means toward liberation. Biko fully understood the implications. He observed: "the importance of the SASO is not to be found in SASO per se. . . rather it is to be found in the fact that this new approach. . . heralded a new era in which blacks (third world peoples) are beginning to see with greater clarity the immensity of their responsibility."

This new "greater clarity", is what the Black Consciousness Movement is all about. And Steven Biko played a prominent role in its formation. Steven Biko is dead, but the Black Consciousness Movement is very much alive.

As stated by the president of the Black People's Convention, Kenneth Rakhidi, when delivering the funeral oration for Steven Biko: "Forward we march until we win. The best road to follow is the road that Steven Biko followed."



Steven Biko (left) and his wife and children (right) showing that they are as determined as ever to carry on the struggle for majority rule in South Africa.



# The Guardian Clubs and our party-building tasks



by CLAY NEWLIN

Today, the Marxist-Leninist forces in the U.S. are characterized by a chaos of organizational forms, significantly different levels of political development and the absence of an organizational center. Localism and small circle mentality dominate. Mass work of communists is considerably circumscribed and, except on a local level in a few instances, does not proceed on the basis of a strategic plan -- or even a tactical plan.

The present backward state of the movement will prevail unless an ideological and organizational breakthrough can be achieved.

A serious party-building effort today must take on two characteristics. One, it must in fairly rapid order take on a national character, linking up Marxist-Leninists throughout the country on the basis of ideological unity and common organizational form. Two, it must deepen and expand the struggle for ideological clarity and begin to develop a common political outlook based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and rich experiences our movement already possesses.

In these words, the *Guardian* has advanced a plan which, in its opinion, "would make a substantial contribution to party-building forces." As initially discussed in the party-building supplement (June 1977) and elaborated upon in the September 7, 1977 issue, the *Guardian* proposes to organize a series of clubs "based upon a common set of ideological principles and unified organizationally by its connections with this newspaper."

These clubs would engage in activity in three areas, described as "party-building," "local political action" and "*Guardian*-building." While the organization of study, as well as, for example, southern Africa solidarity work and strike support are considered important, building the influence of the *Guardian* is called the "chief form of practical activity for the Clubs."

## A CENTER?

In essence, this plan amounts to an attempt by the *Guardian* to set itself up as a center for the Marxist-Leninist trend. On the one hand we are told: "We do not propose, at this time, to spell out an organizational plan for party-building."

The implications of this statement are that the clubs merely serve to consolidate the *Guardian's* political supporters in order that they can better serve the overall development of the trend. In this case the clubs would be seen as one form, among several, which would help to hammer out "an organizational plan." In particular, their role would be that of strengthening the *Guardian's* input into the efforts to develop this plan already underway.

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However, the real thrust of the supplement is somewhat different. The forces in the Marxist-Leninist trend are characterized as primitive organizations in which "localism and the small circle mentality dominate." Their work in the mass movements is said to be "considerably circumscribed" and unlightened by a "strategic plan." In addition, these forces "lack an organizational center."

Following this (generally accurate) assessment of our forces, we are informed: "A SERIOUS party-building effort must take on two characteristics (my italics-CN)." The first -- and most emphasized -- characteristic is that this effort "must in fairly rapid order take on a national character, linking up Marxist-Leninists on the basis of ideological unity and common organizational form." Then, the *Guardian* proceeds to propose its clubs, "linked together in a network with a national political newspaper as their focus."

The clear implication of all this is that the locally-based forces in our trend are wedded to localism in principle, and that, therefore, the *Guardian* has no choice but to play the leading role in the party-building process. With all the local organizations mired in a "small circle mentality," a "serious" effort which assumes a "national character" and unites Marxist-Leninists in a "common organizational form," must come from it alone.

## THE REAL SITUATION

The impression created here is false. As the *Guardian* knows full well, efforts by a broad spectrum of local organizations are underway to achieve precisely these aims. A number of local groups have called for the formation of a national ideological center to centralize the ideological struggle in our trend, and have already taken concrete steps to bring that center about.

The conception advanced by these organizations stresses the need to establish firm and principled political unity among Marxist-Leninists, and as quickly as possible, to clothe that unity in organizational form. Moreover, through materials that have been circulated and discussions and conferences that have been organized, these efforts have already begun to assume a "national character."

Repeated attempts have been made to incorporate the *Guardian* into this work; they have been requested to attend meetings, participate in discussions and make concrete proposals as to what course of action should be followed. Even when the *Guardian* said it was not able to play a direct role in the process, it has been kept informed of all major developments and its input has been continually sought. And yet the *Guardian* has assumed a posture of "benign neglect." It has chosen to stand on the periphery of these efforts, and now has counterposed its own narrow plan.

Furthermore, the *Guardian's* plan does not really lend itself to developing the

unity of our trend or pushing forward its party-building tasks. The most highly developed of our forces are organized into local organizations and collectives. While still primitive, these forces have gone beyond being mere study circles and have begun to take up the task of elaborating an application of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions in the U. S. A few have done fairly extensive theoretical work on some questions, which is being refined in the process of repeated testing in practice.

In addition, they have taken the first tenuous steps toward the working class and the oppressed nationalities. Some have even evolved a measure of strategy and tactics to guide them in this work. Moreover, internally they have begun to apply the Leninist principles of organization, developing primitive democratic centralist structures, programs for developing communist cadre and real division of labor in their work. As a result of these developments, the knowledge and experience of these organizations is a considerable resource for our trend.

The *Guardian*, however, while concentrating its efforts on organizing unaffiliated individuals, makes no attempt to provide a plan to unite these forces. On the contrary, the supplement ignores this task—an act of considerable political irresponsibility.

## THE GUARDIAN'S DEFICIENCIES

But most importantly, the *Guardian*, while it has many strengths and continues to play a generally positive role in our movement, is not capable of playing the role of a center. In the first place, it lacks the theoretical and practical requirements to provide leadership to the trend. To the extent that it has done theoretical work, that work has remained on the most abstract and general level, and is not capable of serving as a guide to action. The *Guardian* has no direct way of testing its theoretical formulations, and thus is unable to concretize and refine them in relation to an actual working class movement.

Practically, the *Guardian* has no experience in organizing the implementation of a political line, little practice in cadre building, and insufficient knowledge of the techniques of communist organization. Furthermore, the *Guardian* has no direct relationship to the practical workers in our movement.

Moreover, the *Guardian* lacks the understanding to guide our party-building efforts. Since it denies that fusion is the very essence of party building, it has no objective basis to distinguish between our primary and secondary tasks. Take our theoretical tasks, for example. If we recognize the centrality of fusion, then, clearly, we must direct our theoretical work to solving those problems which pose the greatest obstacles to achieving a greater measure of fusion with the advanced workers.

But if fusion is renounced, what theor-

etical tasks receive priority? Those that most serve to unify the existing stock of Marxist-Leninists? In that case we will never achieve political clarity. On the contrary, we will be forced to take up whatever questions happen to be current in the party building movement -- in our case the questions raised by the dogmatists—irrespective of whether they have any relation to the real world or not.

## THE QUESTION OF MULTI-NATIONALITY

A further example of the *Guardian's* lack of understanding is manifest in their approach towards the question of multi-nationality. One of the most severe weaknesses of our trend is its lack of multi-national unity; our trend as a whole is overwhelmingly white. Owing to our weak grasp of the centrality of the struggle against racism, most Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian and Native American Marxist-Leninists are not prepared to commit themselves to developing the trend. Furthermore, where there is multi-national participation, it mainly takes the form of separate organizations, all-Black, all-Chicano, etc. The number of organizations than can even lay claim to the beginnings of multinational development can be counted on two hands.

This fact has significant political consequences. Our insufficient multinational unity reflects a low level of fusion with the working class. It is part of the ABC's of our political perspective that the core of the united front in the U. S. is the alliance of the multi-national working class and the oppressed nationalities. Oppressed nationality workers stand at the forefront not only of their own liberation movements, but also of the working class movement as a whole. Our movement will be absolutely powerless unless it makes real strides towards winning over these workers.

How does the *Guardian* address this pressing question? They accord it the significance of the following single phrase: "From the beginning they (the clubs) would strive to become multi-national organizations."!!

## WHO MUST LEAD

No, the *Guardian* cannot play the role of a center for our trend. Rather, it is the local Marxist-Leninist organizations which will have to play the leading role in creating such a center. They have done valuable theoretical work and acquired valuable theoretical experience which will help them in this effort. But they cannot succeed if they remain isolated and disunited. Success requires that they take immediate steps to come together to establish a leading ideological center as the first step towards building a national pre-party organization.

We would have hoped that the *Guardian* would support this development and would aid in bringing it about. But instead of helping to build and develop local organizations and working to bring them together, the *Guardian* is further fragmenting our movement by estab-

continued on page 13

# Our response to the Women's Health Collective-

## The working class must lead women's movement

by SARA MURPHY

The following was written as part of a response to the Women's Health Collective. As a result of their attending PWOC's event on International Women's Day, an exchange of views was begun, starting with their criticisms of our views as put forth at International Women's Day. This article focuses on a question raised by many activists in the women's movement: What are the basic differences between Marxism-Leninism and Feminism?

To quote the Women's Health Collective:

We know we disagree about the basic causes of women's oppression. We believe that patriarchy has a force and life of its own, predating and outside of the capitalist economy. Because of this, we think an autonomous women's liberation movement will always be necessary part of the struggle to overthrow the present order.

Our most over-riding criticism lies in the way in which the women's movement and feminism was portrayed. For example, we found it ironic that feminism was denounced at a gathering celebrating International Women's Day -- feminism was casually described as a "false alternative" by the speaker from New York (a guest from El Comite/MINP, a Marxist-Leninist organization in New York City, made a statement at the IWD event, ed.). This event would not have taken place had not an autonomous women's liberation movement begun in the late 1960's, and had that movement not revived the holiday originally created by working women.

The women's movement was repeatedly described as a monolithic movement without a left and a right wing, and without ideological struggle. If you were describing the new communist movement you would make a much more precise delineation between different political tendencies and would project an understanding of the importance of the struggle between the reformist and revolutionary tendencies.

### PWOC'S RESPONSE

While the Women's Health Collective raised many other points, both positive and critical, about our International Women's Day celebration, we felt this section of the letter raised the most profound political questions concerning the differences in perspective between feminism and Marxism-Leninism: How we see the question of an autonomous



The Women's Liberation Movement is one of the great progressive forces of the 60's and 70's. But it is being held back by the political currents which dominate it.

women's movement, how we see the various trends in the movement and the struggle between those trends, and how we see the resolution of that struggle.

Communists see the reality of a mass women's movement which arises under capitalism, and understand the need for mass women's organizations throughout the epoch of socialism. However, our aim is not to have these women's organizations "autonomous" but rather as an ally of and under the leadership of the multi-national working class.

It's true that our differences around this question stem from our theoretical view of the root causes of women's oppression. We see that women's oppression is as old as and is completely bound up with the origin of private property and class society. The Feminist view denies that women's oppression is based in class society, and in fact many see the matter in quite the opposite way -- that class society is but a reflection on a broader scale of male dominance, inherent in male-female relationships.

Thus, our entire approach to how to resolve the contradiction between women and men takes on a different character. We see that the working class has an objective interest in uniting the sexes on a basis of equality, of championing the cause of women's equality. Under socialism, the working class has an objective interest in abolishing economic inequality between men and women, and in doing away with all cultural manifestations of centuries of oppression. In our view, not only can the working class abolish sexist oppression through its revolution, but it must, and moreover, this is the only way women's oppression will be overcome.

### DISTRUST OF WORKING CLASS REVOLUTION

The feminist failure to recognize the class basis of women's oppression, however, leads to a distrust of the worker's movement and the socialist revolution. Since the contradiction between the sexes is seen as a force outside class society, only an autonomous movement of women, setting itself apart from the struggles of the working class and oppressed nationalities, although joining with them in a limited way, could guarantee that the struggle against sexism is not "lost in the shuffle" of revolution.

Marxist-Leninists do not believe that women's oppression will spontaneously get taken care of as some sort of by-product of the socialist revolution. We hold that only a conscious and protracted struggle for full equality by the whole working class will produce this result. And that is precisely the point. By emphasizing autonomy, separation from the working class, feminism erects an obstacle to this process.

It diverts our attention away from the need to win the whole working class to the struggle for women's equality and counterposes to this the notion of an autonomous women's movement. The underlying premise is that the working class cannot be trusted with women's liberation because working class men do not have an objective interest in equality for women. This is the nub of our differences.



It is in this sense we think it is not only defensible but necessary to describe feminism as a "false alternative" as the comrade from El Comite did. We do not think there is any great irony or contradiction in saying this in light of the fact that International Women's Day was revived by the feminist movement. The Women's Health Collective seems to confuse a rejection of feminism as an ideology with a repudiation of feminism as a social movement.

### WOMEN'S MOVEMENT -- A PROGRESSIVE FORCE

We see the Women's Liberation Movement as one of the great progressive forces of the 60's and 70's. But we also see that it's revolutionary development is being held back by the political currents that dominate the movement. We think an ideological struggle must be waged to isolate and defeat these ideas if the movement is to go forward.

This is our attitude toward the other great social movements as well -- the Worker's Movement is dominated by trade union reformism which we combat -- the Black Liberation Movement contains various retrograde political tendencies which we combat. We obviously regard these movements as progressive nevertheless.

### STRUGGLE FOR A WORKING CLASS PERSPECTIVE

For the PWOC the International Women's Day celebration was an attempt to wage this ideological struggle. Our primary aim was not to critique feminism for feminists, although that is an important front in the ideological struggle. Our purpose was to bring to a predominately working class audience of Black and white men and women that Women's Liberation is necessarily for the working class -- the working class needs equality for women, and the women's movement for democratic rights needs working class leadership. This was the burden of what we were trying to say.

In developing this theme it was absolutely necessary to draw clear lines of demarcation with feminism. Feminism is in the long run a dead end for the working class. And in the immediate feminist politics tend to prevent the working class from taking up the struggle for women's liberation as a conscious demand. Admittedly much of what is perceived as feminist politics is a caricature produced by the bourgeois media, but the real core of those politics -- its attitude toward class unity and its approach to class struggle -- cannot but help to go against the grain of the class conscious worker.

We think it was necessary to speak to Black women and make clear that a working class approach to women's liberation does not relegate the struggle against racism to second place. That has been their perception of the Women's Movement, and are they wrong?

We think it was necessary to speak to men and explain that a working class per-

spective on the struggle for women's liberation places emphasis on working men's real interests in fighting sexism and seeks to persuade them to take up this struggle. Male workers generally believe the Women's Movement is at best indifferent to their interests and at worst hostile to them. And can we say this attitude has no basis?

Our aim was to develop the understanding that the working class has to take up the struggle against sexism if it is to unite its ranks and go forward. Furthermore, we sought to bring forward the idea of the class conscious workers as a distinct and leading trend in the struggle to emancipate women.

Certainly we recognize that the Women's Movement is not a monolith, that it has a left and right wing. But this had little relevance to the themes of International Women's Day. While in other contexts such distinctions may very well be crucial, in this particular context they were largely beside the point. The differences between the various trends were not so important in that context as what they still have in common. And these differences pale in comparison to the gulf between the actual movement of today and the potential movement of tomorrow in which women of the working class and oppressed nationalities armed with a class conscious politics will provide leadership.

We saw International Women's Day as a very small, beginning step in that direction. While we in no way want to deny what has been progressive in the Women's Movement of the last decade, we have no interest in prettifying it either. Our interest is in bringing forward the movement's antagonism with capital and thus its revolutionary character. Our interest is in overcoming "autonomy" and forging strong unbreakable bonds with the movements of the working class and oppressed nationalities. Working class leadership can only develop in the struggle against the ideological influence of feminism.

We in no way see this ideological struggle as standing in contradiction to unity of action between Marxist-Leninists and Feminists in the fight against sexism. Furthermore, we welcome this struggle as a means of sharpening our differences and deepening our unity. We hope the Women's Health Collective will continue its course of principled criticism and dialogue with the PWOC in the pages of the *Organizer* and elsewhere.

# ELVIS - the legend and the hype

by RON WHITEHORNE

*Deep down in Louisiana, close to New Orleans*

*Back in the woods among the evergreens  
There stood a log cabin in the piney wood*

*Where lived in a little boy named Johnny B. Goode.*

*He never learned to read and write so well  
But could play his guitar just like ringin the bell.*

*His mother told him someday you will be a man.*

*And you will be the leader of a big ol band.*

*People comin from miles around*

*To hear you play your music when the sun goes down.*

*Maybe someday your name will be in lights.*

*So Joinny B. Goode tonite.*

The legend is well-established in the folklore of our time: The poor country boy who picks and sings his way to fame and fortune. It goes all the way back to Jimmy Rodgers, the singing brakeman, who came out of Mississippi in the late 1920's and put country and western music on the commercial map. Then there was Hank Williams from the cotton country of southern Alabama who was to dominate the Nashville scene in the 40's and early 50's.

But the biggest name of all was Elvis Presley. Elvis -- who grew up in a two room shack in Tupelo, Mississippi on the wrong side of the tracks, who at 21 years of age went from being an obscure truck driver to a teen-age idol and who, when he died this August, had racked up 55 gold records...The "King of Rock n' Roll"... "The Living Legend".

## THE BIG BEAT KEEPS YOU ROCKIN IN YOUR SEAT

When Elvis gyrated onto the Ed Sullivan show in 1956 to sing "You ain't nothin but a hound dog," the guardians of popular taste were outraged. They were accustomed to the bland pleasantries of Eddie Fisher and Rosemary Clooney.



In his final days Elvis was more pathetic than tragic. The real Elvis, the Mississippi truck driver who had a good way with a song, died long ago. In his stead the record producers created an image -- the King. Elvis was not the only victim of slick packaging and fantasy world stardom. We are all exploited by the class system which fills us full of idle dreams and then keeps sticking it to us.

American morality was caught in a bind. It accepted the sale of sexual provocation by women -- "the blond bombshell", Jane Russell and "the sweater girl", gyrations by lines of half naked chorus girls. But Elvis "the pelvis" was a sign that men were on the market too. Male superiority was challenged by this open sale of a male sex object. But Elvis' lyrics and style reinforced all of the male dominant rules of the game. Elvis came on the scene as a seemingly unAmerican musical Neanderthal man.

But actually, Elvis' music was very American, drawing as it did on white country blues popularized by Jimmy Rodgers and Hank Williams, and reflecting the influence of the Black rhythm and blues sound. This was to be the synthesis that became known as Rock n' Roll. Elvis' earliest recordings, particularly those on the Sun label before the big promo men at RCA stuck violins and choruses in his act, are powerful if primitive statements of the new music.

Unlike Rodgers and Williams, Presley broke out of the C&W rural market and captured a national urban audience. Rock n' Roll became the first truly national popular music and Elvis Presley was it's biggest pioneer.

Prior to the 1950's, country and western and rhythm and blues were both distinct regional and racial phenomena. While urban whites may have been listening to Frank Sinatra, in rural white America they tuned in Grank Old Opry, and the so called "race" record companies flooded the Black market with rhythm and blues. Rock n' Roll, by synthesizing elements from both these forms, supplanted the Tin Pan Alley sound with a music that had blood in it's veins.

Many of the musical innovations and much of the vitality which made Elvis' music popular came from the influence of Rhythm and Blues. Capitalist promoters understood that an Elvis would sell -- as Sam Phillips, head of Sun Records in Memphis put it, "If I could find a white man who had the Negro sound and the



negro feel, I could made a billion dollars."

Racism dictated that Black music would get lifted from its creators and become part of the music industry's new white music. Elvis respected and learned from Black musicians, but his promoters found a way to keep Blacks in the background by promoting him. It wasn't until the sixties that Black music hit the charts on a national scale -- hand in hand with the successes of the civil rights movement. Elvis and Rock'n'Roll was a musical first step towards the later acceptance by most Americans of Rhythm and Blues as an important part of America's music.

## LIVING HARD AND DYING YOUNG

But the legend also has a dark side. Hard living and dying young are the handmaidens to fame and fortune...or so the story goes. Jimmy Rodgers...dead from hard liquor and T.B. before he was thirty. Hank Williams...shot heroin, drank whiskey, dead in an auto crash at 29. Elvis by comparison was a ripe old 42 when his heart gave out after too many years of pill popping.

For the fan mags and the scandal sheets, this is the stuff of which high tragedy is made. Genius cut down in the bloom of youth. Artists of great passion who simply have to live hard to create. The wine, women and song is all a natural excess that is part of the trade, part of it's romance and appeal. And death is it's tragic consequence.

Elvis Presley in his final days was more pathetic than tragic. He came to his end while straining to move his bowels. He was found next to the toilet on the floor with his pajamas down around his ankles. Not a very dignified way for a "living legend" to go. Death by constipation is short on romance.

Nor was there really very much that was romantic about the rest of Elvis' life. Elvis' widely reported drug use seems to have been less a matter of "getting high" and more a business of coping with insomnia, anxiety and depression. He popped pills for almost anything, which led to a deterioration of his health which in turn led him to take even more pills.

Elvis suffered from high blood pressure, mild diabetes and chronic constipation. Lloyds of London had refused to insure

him because of a liver ailment. An autopsy revealed that his heart was twice it's normal size.

Elvis Presley made and spent a huge fortune. In 1974, a bad year by his standards, he grossed 7 million dollars. He spent every penny and even had to dip into his savings. His Memphis estate, Graceland, sported stables, racquet courts and a guitar shaped swimming pool. He owned dozens of Cadillacs, snowmobiles, motorcycles and three airplanes. A staff of 40 ran the estate and kept Elvis company.

## THE MAN BEHIND THE GLITTER

While Elvis began his career with a raw talent, he never developed as an artist. His voice remained untrained and erratic. He couldn't play the guitar beyond strumming a few chords and really only used it as a stage prop.

For the record companies to get the big bucks, it was enough to cover up his deficiencies with orchestration, choral arrangements and engineering gimicks. He was given songs to record that aimed at the lowest common denominator of the pop market rather than material that could serve as a vehicle for his artistic development.

While other C&W and rock artists have received increasingly serious critical recognition, Elvis' work has mostly been ridiculed. His importance, with the exception of a few early recordings, is largely as a symbol, a sociological curiosity, rather than an artist. Elvis undoubtedly knew how slender his talent really was. He was terrified of performing and could not bear criticism.

Elvis was vain to an extreme. He dyed his hair and would not even visit with friends without putting on mascara. He had special jumpsuits designed for him to conceal his midriff bulge and wore a girdle when he performed.

With the barbituate use came moods of morbidity and violence. Elvis frequented morgues in Memphis in the wee hours to peer at cadavers. He had a huge collection of firearms and would shoot the television or the record speakers when angered by what he saw or heard. He even shot up a toilet when it wouldn't stop running.

In 1974 he was sued for assaulting a fan with a clumsy karate chop. He became increasingly interested in police work, watching all the cop shows on tv, attending the FBI academy and flying law enforcement friends around in his planes.

The picture that emerges of the King of Rock n' Roll is that of a deeply insecure man who sought to buy his friends, insulate himself from anything that could threaten his image of himself, and was fast falling apart both mentally and physically. A wasted talent, a wasted life and the horror of self realization closing in.

#### THE SELLING OF ELVIS

Perhaps the reason Elvis and so many other "idols" end up so badly is because of the gulf between what they are expected to be and what they really are. The entertainment industry manufactures "stars" in their studios just like G.M. turns out cars on their assembly line. Packaging is all important. An image or mystique must be built around the performer.

Maybe there is something real in the beginning, but it's soon buried under tons

of public relations hype. Once the image has been molded, the performer must then live with it or live up to it as the case may be. Strong personalities manage to cope. Weaker egos literally die trying.

Elvis was programmed to be the King -- the biggest sex symbol around, the greatest of the rockers, the object of the adolescent fantasies of millions. But really Elvis was a guy who drove a truck, had a good way with a song and got very lucky.

As the years passed, it must have become more difficult to square image and reality. But there was always another tour with the fans to let him know he was still King. Another tour to keep the money coming in so he could pay the price of maintaining the fantasy. In the end the price was to include his life.

#### ANOTHER AMERICAN DREAM

And what about the legions of fans? Why do they care about so sorry a figure? Elvis' fans are mostly hard working, ordinary people who get knocked around by the system.

Lots of working people reach for the glitter that covers America's "hot selling items" like Elvis.

People who think they are above all that ought to think twice. We are all victims of this legend. We all yearn in one way or another for what it represents. If we did not there would be no "stars". No Marilyn Monroes, no Clark Gables, no Joe Namaths, no Mick Jagers or Bob Dylans.

It is not "human nature" that is at fault. We have stars because we have a class society organized for the profit of the

few and the exploitation of the rest of us. We are given the stars to help us from seeing the truth of the matter and we take them because we don't like what we've got. A socialist society has its creative giants, but there are no stars, no cults -- because people do not need them.

It's just another way in which the people who rule America set us up. They fill us full of idle dreams and while we dream they keep on sticking it to us.

## Guardian Clubs continued from pg. 10

lishing parallel organizations, organizations which may have some semblance of national form, but will be unable to be national in content because they will be isolated from the most advanced of our forces.

That the *Guardian* could act in such a manner is a product of their voluntaristic party building line and their belittling of fusion. Seeing no preconditions to party formation other than ideological unity on "the inherited legacy of scientific socialism", the *Guardian* is content with issuing a set of unity principles and calling for unity around them. Seeing the fusion of Marxism-Leninism with the the work-

ing class as essentially diversionary, the *Guardian* naturally underestimates the critical importance and central role that those organized forces which have taken the first steps toward this fusion must play.

#### THE GUARDIAN'S CHOICE

Nevertheless, the clubs do not have to have a negative effect. If the *Guardian* were to use the clubs to spur on the development of local organizations and to aid in the construction of a real center for our trend, then the clubs would play a very useful role. This however, assumes that the clubs' center is insightful enough to change its attitude.

# Will the UAW rejoin the AFL-CIO?

By DUANE CALHOUN

The United Automobile Workers may be calling a special convention in November to decide whether or not to rejoin the AFL-CIO. Walter Reuther, late President of the UAW, pulled that union out of the AFL-CIO in 1968.

Publicly, Reuther quit in protest of the AFL-CIO's do-nothing attitude about civil rights for the Black people, organizing the unorganized workers, and other issues that the AFL-CIO took a conservative, pro-business stand on. Privately, Reuther was angry at federation president George Meany for obstructing Reuther's ambitions to be President of the U. S.

Over the last few years, the UAW and the AFL-CIO have moved closer together, cooperating on unemployment protests, the labor law reform campaign, and other projects. The top leadership of both the AFL-CIO and the UAW have been feeling increasing pressure from the ranks to put up a real defense of workers' interests, and this has led both groups of bureaucrats to make at least a show of united action.

Both the AFL-CIO's Meany, and the new UAW President, Doug Fraser, now strongly support reaffiliation of the UAW to the federation. During August, a letter signed by the majority of the International Executive Board was sent out to the UAW's 1600 locals, calling on the membership to support reaffiliation. Citing the growth of conservatism and reaction in Congress and of a hard-line stand by the companies in contract bargaining, the Executive Board letter pointed out that a single labor federation would have more strength than the UAW and the AFL-CIO separately.

Fraser and his supporters on the Board also promised a campaign to reform the AFL-CIO from within. The Executive Board called for a discussion of the issue at the local and regional levels, and hope

to win the membership's support in time to call a special convention on the issue in November.

Heavy opposition has come from some UAW local officials and rank and filers, however. These UAW members fear that their union will drift further towards company unionism if it rejoins the conservative and craft-union dominated AFL-CIO. Six members of the International Executive Board (including Sec.-Treas. Emil Mazey and GM Department head Irving Bluestone) have sent out their own letter to the locals opposing reaffiliation on these grounds.

The *Organizer* believes that the UAW leadership already practices basically the same brand of company unionism as the top AFL-CIO leadership, and that it's a mistake to oppose reaffiliation from fear of a further big move to the right. Although the leadership of the UAW and the AFL-CIO do have important differences on some issues (and the UAW generally is more progressive) these differences don't run nearly as deep as the basic similarity in the actual practice of both groups of bureaucrats.

Both groups pull down salaries five or ten times that of the average worker, hold powerful positions in the Democratic Party that depend on good relations with the businessmen who finance this Party, and are protected from their own rank and file members by election rules that make it nearly impossible to vote them out. The UAW leadership will be conducting business as usual, whether or not they rejoin the AFL-CIO.

There are several good reasons why the union rank and file should support reaffiliation of the UAW. For one thing, a single united federation including the UAW would be more powerful. Even though the programs that the labor bu-



George Meany of the AF of L and Walter Reuther of the CIO celebrate the amalgamation of the AFL-CIO in 1955. The alliance between the two ended when Meany got in the way of Reuther's personal political ambitions. Now the reunification of the UAW and the AFL-CIO is once again on the drawing boards.

reaucrats favor never go far enough, most of these programs are better than nothing and, if won, would benefit the working class. Labor law reform to make union organizing easier, and more government spending on jobs are two examples.

Also, the UAW is a large industrial union with a militant and progressive rank and file, and could serve as an additional lever pushing the AFL-CIO to take up some of the urgent demands of the working class that the federation now ignores. This weight can be brought to bear much more successfully from within the federation than without.

Probably the most important benefit for the rank and file workers would be the greater unity that could be generated between the rank and file caucuses within different unions. Right now, powerful caucuses exist within the UAW and in many AFL-CIO unions. Most of these rank and file groups don't even know that the others exist, and most are battling the companies and the labor bureaucrats in isolation from one another. The majority see their struggle only in terms of their own union or industry, and aren't able to really deal with their most basic problems which are national problems facing the whole working class.

If all these workers were members of a single union federation, with common officers and a common program, the desire

and practical opportunities for working together would be greater. City-wide multi-union caucuses, regional caucuses, and eventually a national caucus with common demands would be much easier to build under such circumstances. Such organizations would multiply the power of the caucus movement, and would help rank and file activists to see how their problems (and the solutions) aren't just local ones, but are the problems of the working class as a whole.

The UAW leadership has already promised the membership that if they rejoin the AFL-CIO, they will fight to reform it from within. It's up to the membership to use the upcoming local and regional meetings, and the November convention as well as a platform for putting out a realistic and concrete program for a united AFL-CIO. Putting the heat on Fraser to commit himself to such a program is the best way to use his big promises and militant talk to the advantage of the workers.

The short work week at full pay, an end to racism in hiring and upgrading both in industry and in the building trades a cut in military spending, democratic reforms in union structures -- these are some of the basic demands that the rank and file movement must unite around (both in the UAW and the AFL-CIO), as the foundation for a rank and file movement of the whole working class.

# Hey Jimmy! What about Human Rights for Undocumented Workers?



Mexican child bound for Texas fields.

Guardian

by JENNY QUINN

"They (the immigration officers) came with no warning, just like Hitler and the Gestapo. They grabbed all my workers, threw them in a van and took off. When you tried to ask questions, they just took off."

—Warren Porch, New Jersey Farmer

"I have a wife and four children. I was desperate for a way to feed them. I swam across the Rio Grande and walked to Corpus Christi, Texas."

"There is no work, no money in Mexico and I have five children. There you work on a farm all day and make \$2. That is not enough to eat with."

—Two undocumented workers rounded up in raids taking place in Jersey farm country.

Did you have a piece of cantaloupe for breakfast? Or fruit cocktail with your lunch? Chances are that the fruit was picked and the fruit cocktail canned by the hands of some of the United States' two to eight million illegal aliens. Ever since the states of California, New Mexico, Texas and Arizona were annexed from Mexico after the Mexican-American War, people hungry for work have waded the Rio Grande, crept through bushes at night or spent their last penny riding in to the U. S. to find jobs.

Special laws were enacted to allow Mexican field workers in during picking season. Crackdowns by the immigration service, the migras, could be expected regularly as the harvest season neared the end.

The agribusiness tycoons who own most of the farmland in the U. S. have benefitted year after year from the backbreaking labor of illegal aliens. But now that high unemployment is accepted as an institution by the U. S. government, the Carter administration is telling us that jobs are being stolen from U. S. citizens by illegals, and it is time to keep them out for good.

Human Rights Jimmy has let loose a new immigration control proposal which

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would make one-tenth of California's workforce, either subject to deportation or ineligible for any social services for the next five years, while they wait for permanent residence status.

## CARTER PROPOSAL

Carter's proposal was presented in a seven page letter to Congress on August 4. Its basic outline covers:

—punishment for employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens.

—punishment for any person aiding undocumented workers in finding employment.

—permanent legal alien status for anyone living continuously in the U. S. since 1970.

—use of the social security card as an identification certificate.

—temporary legal alien status for anyone living continuously in the U. S. since Jan 1, 1977.

—major additions to the budget, staff and equipment of the immigration including at least 2000 more patrols on the Mexican border.

—increased cooperation with the source country governments, primarily Mexico, in internal economic development and stopping illegal immigration racketeers.

Lets look at what this means, and separate fact from fabrication. Are undocumented workers really draining our economy, as Carter would have us believe?

No. While many undocumented workers send money home to their relatives, over sixty percent of their wages go back into the U. S. economy. In California alone, illegal aliens pump billions back into circulation. They contribute far more in taxes than they collect in services. In San Diego, California, a study showed that while the drain on the county budget was two million dollars, the undocumented contributed \$48.8 million in taxes.

## DO UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS TAKE JOBS FROM U.S. CITIZENS?

No. Despite the word of L. A. County AFL-CIO executive William Robertson, who said, "we feel undocumented workers displace American workers", both government and private industry service show the opposite.

Although the federal government tried to implement a plan for shipping the urban poor on welfare out to the fields they concluded that the pay was too low to make it feasible for people to accept the jobs, and discontinued the program. Both agribusinessmen and industrialists complain that mechanizing and paying living wages —what it would take to make working conditions and pay attractive to any but the absolutely desperate — just aren't worth it. They would rather move their business to some other country and go for cheap labor.

## IS IT THE UNDOCUMENTED WORKER WHO THREATENS THE UNIONS?

No. The United Farmworkers, the union whose members most directly face replacement by the undocumented, are opposed to Carter's plan. The UFW sees the plan as an attack on all people of color, a measure that reinforces and stirs up racism. Furthermore, it is not undocumented workers who threaten U. S. workers. It is the drive of the employers to maximize their profits by forcing these workers to work for starvation wages.

The answer is not to throw these workers out, but to fight to prevent the bosses from being able to force them to work for low wages. As long as they face the insecurity of illegal status, they will be at the mercy of the employers.

The workers movement in the U. S. has to fight against these measures while pushing for unionization and better wages and

working conditions in the industries where undocumented workers are concentrated. This way will build our unity. The approach of the AFL-CIO only deepens the national divisions between the workers. The UFW has learned this lesson from hard experience the rest of the trade unionists should heed it.

## WHO WILL BE HURT THE MOST?

Those who come forward and register as temporary resident aliens will have almost no legal rights. Food stamps, and other programs which seasonal workers and anyone else who faces sickness or lay-off expects, would be off limits for five years while the Federal government decides whether or not they can have permanent resident status.

## WHAT ABOUT "HELP" FOR MEXICO'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

An example is the negotiations with Exxon Corp. for exploitation of Mexico's treasured oil reserves. Ever since a progressive government paln in 1930 to use Mexico's oil for developing the national economy, they have kept foreign investors to a bare minimum. Recent negotiations are going to reverse those policies.

Meanwhile, the U. S. press has refused to say a word about the massive government attacks on Mexican unions in the past few months.

12 thousand armed police invaded the Autonomos University of Mexico, 530 strike leaders were kidnapped, and church-funded groups which supported the union had their offices invaded.

This is an example of what undocumented workers are returning to. Last year, 15% of the working age population was unemployed, and another 40% were only able to find occasional work. And things are getting worse, not better.

Nobody benefits from Carter's plan except the owners of agribusiness and big corporations. And maybe the few thousand people, who, as Farmer Porch says, get jobs acting like the Gestapo, raiding farms, factories and homes for illegal aliens. The rest of us should stand firm against this attack on the working class.

## WORKERS' VOICES

### Woody Guthrie

Woody Guthrie knew the plight of the migrant workers first hand. Born and raised in Okemah, Oklahoma, Woody was an Okie, one of the thousands of people displaced by the Depression and the dust storms that swept the Plains states in the 1930's. The Okies went west ending up working the fields of California. Oppressed by the bosses, cops, and vigilantes, living in shacks, dumps, and under bridges, their kids running hungry and half-naked, the lot of the Okies was a hard one. Woody was their champion, their voice.

But Woody's fierce hatred for oppression and love for the working people was not limited to the Okies. In his songs, in rallies, and on a thousand picket lines, Woody championed the cause of the unions, the cause of racial equality, and the cause of internationalism. Woody was where the action was and he didn't care if the red-baiters didn't like it. "leftwing or chicken wing, it's all the same to me if it's for the people", was the way Woody put it.

Today if Woody were alive he'd be out on the picket line with the United Farmworkers, picking that old guitar with the inscription that read: "This machine kills fascists".

The following song is a powerful statement of Woody's identification with the undocumented migrant and his conviction that there can be not national borders in the fight against exploitation.



### Deportees

The crops are all in and the peaches are rotting  
The oranges are laid in their creosote dumps  
You're flying 'em back to the Mexican border  
To pay all their money to wade back again

My father's own father, he waded that river  
They took all the money he made in his life  
My brothers and sisters came working the fruit trees  
And they rode the truck till they took down and died

Some of us are illegal and some are not wanted  
Our work contract's out and we have to move on  
Six hundred miles to that Mexican border  
They chase us like outlaws, like rustlers, like thieves

We die in your hills, we die in your deserts  
We die in your valleys, we die in your hills  
we die 'neath your trees and we die in your footsteps  
Both sides of the river we die just the same

Chorus: Goodbye to my Juan, Goodbye Rosalita  
Adios, amigos, Jesus y Maria  
You won't have your names when you ride the big  
airplane  
All that they'll call you will be deportees