

Workers' Power

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NIXON REGIME ON THE BRINK

Workers' Power

No. 78

June, 1973

25¢

Watergate Crisis Rips Apart Nixon Regime

EDITORIAL

The Watergate break-in, bugging, conspiracy and cover-up scandal has erupted into a full-scale government crisis. Public attention is riveted on the live radio and television coverage of the Senate hearings, which have as their stated mission the goal of finding out exactly who was guilty of what. More sophisticated columnists, however, have already begun to note a deeper result of the Watergate crisis: the government itself faces the threat of near paralysis.

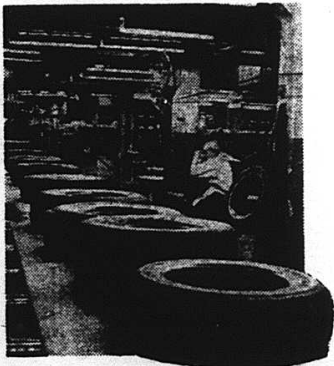
The dismissal of Nixon's top White House aides, along with the indictment of former "law and order" Attorney General Mitchell on charges of attempting to hide Nixon re-election campaign funds, have stripped away much of the prestige gained by Nixon in the 1972 campaign itself. Few people, if anyone, still believe that Nixon himself was not involved in the cover-up.

The first two weeks of the Watergate Senate investigation have also exposed a few more inches of the tip of the enormous iceberg of manipulation, fraud,

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Rubber: Ranks Fight Back



The first sign of rank and file militancy and anger during the 1973 contract bargaining round has shown up in a nationwide strike of rubber workers against the Goodrich Tire & Rubber Co. Members of the United Rubber Workers (URW) struck on May 8, when Goodrich could not offer a satisfactory contract. The strike is the first real break in a pattern of contract negotiations which have been settled peacefully and without substantially exceeding the government's wage guidelines.

Agreements in the oil and gar-

ment industries included wage increases of about 6%. Railroad workers, who settled three months before their contract deadline, got only a bit more. Chicago Teamsters locals, which led the 1970 rebellion that overturned the national settlement, announced that they would go along with whatever the national settlement was. The pattern was complete with I.W. Abel's signing of a no-strike sell-out agreement in the steel industry.

Rubber seemed to be headed in the same direction when URW President Peter Bommarito set-

tled with Goodyear, the "target" company, for about a 5.5% wage hike and only minimal gains in retirement benefits.

At this point, however, rank and file rubber workers began to make themselves heard. Although the Goodyear settlement was approved by a majority of the Goodyear locals, the largest, Local 2 of Akron, rejected the settlement unanimously. Local 2 President John Nardella, who, as a member of the negotiating team had helped draft the settlement, did not even have the guts

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June 9 Conference: Struggle In The Prisons

The revolt in the prisons, and the defense of political prisoners subjected to brutal repression for their ideas and for their struggle for dignity and freedom, will be the subject of an educational conference to be held in New York on Saturday, June 9.

The conference will begin at 10 A.M. and run until 5 P.M. The conference is sponsored by the International Socialists Prisoner Education and Defense Committee, and will include panels and speakers on issues of concern to activists in the prison liberation support movement.

The first panel will analyze "The Meaning of Prison Revolts." Among the speakers will be Dolores Costello, of the Attica Vanguard Defense Committee and the Third World Program Director of radio station WBAI. The moderator will be noted civil liberties lawyer Conrad Lynn.

A topic of vital importance in the prisons today is the threat of "psycho-surgery": the use of "experimental" medical techniques designed to destroy the minds of prisoners and their

ability to resist the treatment they receive.

Among the prisoners facing such "experimentation" — the scientific value of which is the same as that of the experiments carried out by the Nazi regime in Germany on Jews in concentration camps — are Martin Sostre and Eduardo Cruz (see article on p. 5 of this issue).

Gabe Kamovitz, a Detroit lawyer who has tried the key psycho-surgery cases, will speak on the nature and implications of this barbaric practice.

The final panel will discuss "Resistance and Defense" in the prisons. Speakers will include Dan Georgakas, of the Martin Sostre Defense Committee; Joe Falcon, of the Eduardo Cruz Defense Committee, and George Rodriguez, recently released from Greenhaven and a former inmate of Dannemora, Comstock, Elmira and Sing Sing prisons in New York.

The conference will also be addressed by a spokesman for Curtis Brown, a leader of the resistance movement in the Tombs prison.

The defense of political prisoners



and victims of the class struggle is one of the finest and most important traditions of the revolutionary movement.

The development of political consciousness inside the capitalist prison system, and the rebellions which have brought the brutality, racism and class character of the prisons to public notice, present revolutionaries with new responsibilities

and opportunities.

The June 9 conference is planned as part of the ongoing struggle to win freedom for all political prisoners and for all victims of the system of capitalist "justice."

The conference will be held at the Main Building of New York University, Room 703, at the corner of Washington Square East and Waverly Place. The donation will be \$1.75. ■

STOP S.T.A.R.T.

I am writing this letter in an effort to obtain your assistance in putting a stop to this neo-Nazi brainwashing S.T.A.R.T. Program here at the U.S. Medical Center, Springfield, Mo.

S.T.A.R.T. (Special Treatment and Rehabilitation Training) has been in operation since Sept. 1972. I have been here since Feb. 15, 1973, and I can honestly state that this "program" is only punishment under the guise of treatment; I have personally seen fellow prisoners drugged and brutally beaten for having the courage to stand up as men.

If you care to know more about

S.T.A.R.T., please let me know.

We need your help; you can help in the following manner.

(1) Write to Norman A. Carlson, Director; U.S. Bureau of Prisons; 101 Indiana Ave., N.W.; Washington, D.C. 20537 and ask him to either abolish S.T.A.R.T. or make it voluntary.

(2) Write to the U.S. Magistrate; U.S. District Court; Western District of Missouri; Springfield, Mo. 65801, and ask him to rule on behalf of the prisoners who are challenging this "program."

We sincerely thank you in advance.

Peace and Power,

F. G.



boycott lettuce!

Workers' Power 78

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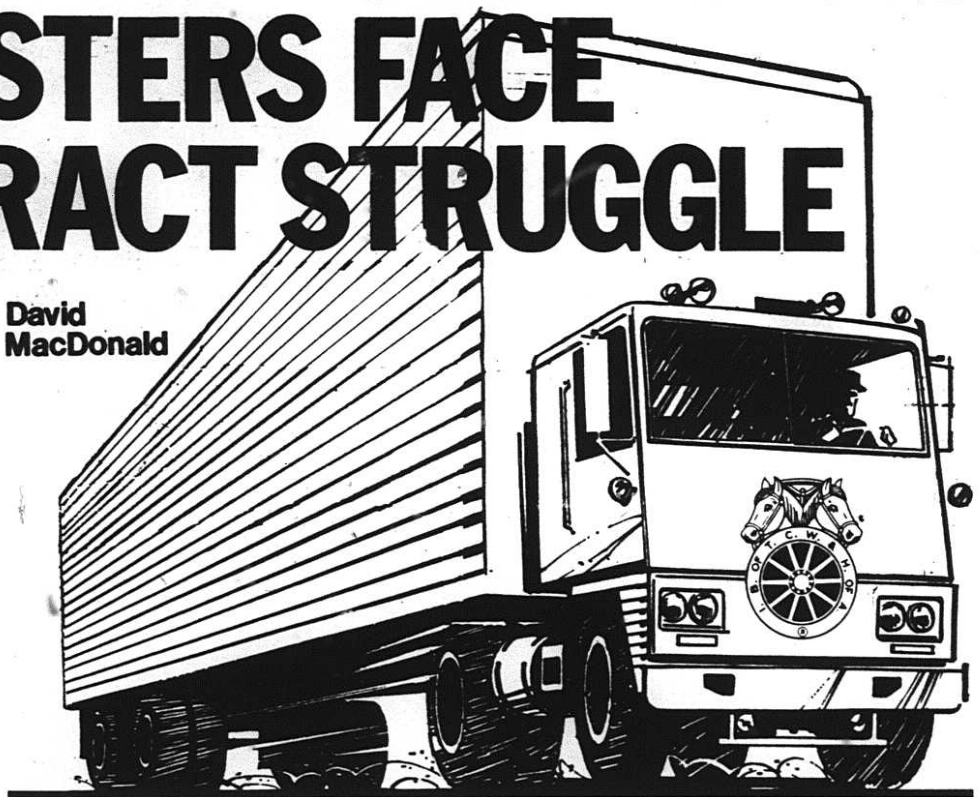
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TEAMSTERS FACE CONTRACT STRUGGLE

David MacDonald



The expiration of the national Master Freight Agreement (MFA) on June 30 poses a giant test for some 400,000 members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Many workers consider the Teamsters a good union that gets a lot for its members. This is mainly due to the reputation the union has for what it wins for the workers covered by the Master Freight Agreement.

The Teamsters union has nearly 2 million members but this contract covers only certain drivers who carry freight.

The current contract, which was negotiated in 1970 by union President Frank Fitzsimmons, was won only because of a rebellion by rank and file Teamsters.

At that time, independent drivers in Chicago won 65¢ an hour more than Fitzsimmons got when he sold out to the trucking industry. Wildcat strikes by Teamsters forced him to reopen negotiations and get the same for them.

Fitzsimmons' policies since then have weakened the union's position to the point where it will be very difficult to make up for the past, let alone win real gains for the present.

Inflation — the mounting cost of living — means that workers need a strong contract more than ever.

The employers' answer is to make the workers pay, through higher productivity — more work — and less wage increases and fringes.

The government agrees with the bosses; that is what the wage controls and Phase III are for.

Fitzsimmons has agreed to support the government and the capitalists by making his ranks swallow this bitter pill. In return he expects help from Nixon in his fight to retain his power.

Fitzsimmons first distinguished himself from other top union bureaucrats by remaining on the pay board after Meany, Woodcock, Abel and Smith walked off.

While Meany and Co. finally denounced the Pay Board as a fraud, Fitzsimmons publicly embraced Nixonomics: "equal sacrifice" by everyone for the good of the system.

Fitzsimmons apparently placed faith in the historic fairness and moderation of the capitalist class, as well as in his growing friendship with Nixon himself.

Although Meany and Co. never intend to put their rhetoric into practice, they have left themselves an out. Fitzsimmons has not.

He is now allied so closely with the Nixon administration that to break with it is practically impossible.

Since he has banked everything on that cooperation and has not even attempted to mask his treachery from the rank and file, it is inconceivable that he will attempt to fight for real improvements in Teamsters' standards of living and work.

Fitzsimmons' policy of collaboration with the government and the employers has found a further practical application. The IBT has stepped up its attack on the United Farm Workers Union (AFL-CIO) and has signed

sweetheart contracts with the majority of growers in the Coachella Valley in California.

The IBT is recruiting strikebreakers from local hiring halls (at \$67.50 per day) to "protect" growers' fields from the Farmworkers.

Fitzsimmons is doing California agribusiness a big favor that will be repaid by dues from sweetheart locals — if the attack is successful.

The capitalists' attack on the living standards of workers encompasses more than economic policy. Nixon hopes to blunt and possibly end, legalistically the most basic right of working people — the strike.

The United Steelworkers settlement (see *Workers' Power* Nos. 76 and 77) sold out the right to strike for a "special bonus" of \$150 per worker. Fitzsimmons intends to go along with this.

Beyond all this is the total discrediting of Nixon and the government through the Watergate scandal. While this is only the most obvious fraud on Nixon's part, it indicates his clear attitude — he and the capitalist class he represents will stoop to any level in their own interests.

Fitzsimmons' complete willingness to go along with the rhetoric as well as the intention of the steelworker settlement signifies a large sell-out coming for the Teamsters in this contract.

The discrediting of Nixon, however, threatens to drag down with it Fitzsimmons' power to suppress the ranks. The political crisis opened up by Watergate could give the ranks the chance to break through the cozy relationship between the union bureaucrats and the government.

Only the independent willingness of the ranks to organize and fight for a decent contract can change the outcome of the negotiations that Fitzsimmons and the corporations have planned.

Several groups of Teamsters have already expressed their concern by putting forth their own programs for a decent Master Freight Agreement.

These include:

- Substantial wage increase — \$1 an hour per year.

- 32 hours work for 40 hours pay.

- Improved, democratized grievance procedure.

- (a) Innocent until proven guilty.

- (b) Settle grievances in the barns.

- (c) Restore the 24-hour strike.

- (d) Speedy and open hearings.

- Improved working conditions.

- (a) No jobs lost through change of operations, mergers, technological advances.

- (b) Double time for all overtime.

- (c) Ban triples (3 trailers in tow).

- \$500 per month pension at age 50.

- Increased sick leave, health and welfare benefits.

This program would provide a significant breakthrough for Teamsters nationally. It would mean a decisive smashing of the wage guidelines once and for all.

The demand for a shorter work week at no loss in pay and for a ban on triples speak directly to the threat to jobs in the transportation industry.

For a Nationwide Strike

Struggles at the local level can have an important impact. Resolutions around these and other demands can and should be pushed at local union meetings.

Local bureaucrats can be forced to take a stand — and their actions remembered in local elections. Nevertheless, national action is necessary.

The IBT bureaucracy is thoroughly entrenched and has generally a stranglehold on local bureaucrats through large and corrupt material incentives, multiple pension plans, the threat of trusteeship not to mention the threat of physical violence.

Militants of integrity and fighting spirit can and will be elected to local office. But they cannot in isolation successfully challenge the IBT leadership.

The 1970 contract showed that determined, militant action by the rank and file could in fact win substantial gains, even in the face of an attempted sellout by Fitzsimmons.

This year opposition to Fitzsimmons'

policies, while nationwide, was being put forward most strongly by the locals in the San Francisco Bay Area.

There, sparked by the actions of the ranks and some of the officers of Local 70, several of the Bay Area locals have made gestures towards bargaining independently of the national Master Freight Agreement.

These locals proposed, as an immediate action, local control over local supplements; that is, that every local agreement, which covers much of the contract, must be agreed to prior to a settlement nationally. Fitzsimmons squelched this.

At this point, Local 70 and other militant locals as well as militants all over the country must use this contract and the fight around it as a means of building a movement which can decisively take on and defeat both the trucking companies and Fitzsimmons.

While they have not yet been successful in creating an alternative bargaining plan to Fitzsimmons; they must organize now a campaign to reject the coming sellout.

Based on that action, militants must fight for: rank and file control over the bargaining at all levels; for the best local supplement to be the pattern nationally; and for a nationwide strike with no return to work until all local supplements are signed.

The struggle of the Teamster rank and file over this contract will only be the first part of their struggle. It is also the first major national agreement in this bargaining round and will have an important impact in negotiations to come.

But it is the tasks of fighting the sellout, totally smashing the governments' wage policy, and destroying the one-man rule in the IBT, that is the giant test for the ranks.

[Further information about the Teamsters Union and the policies of its leadership can be found on p. 13, where we analyze the Teamsters' attempt to destroy the Farmworkers' Union.]



Editorial

Scandals Rock Nixon

[Continued from page 1]

political repression and secrecy that characterize all American domestic politics and foreign policy. A vast political espionage network, aimed at destroying democracy in every-but name and publically "justified" by the need to protect the government against "violent disruption," has come to light.

As we have stated before, none of this comes as any surprise to socialists or radicals. At the same time that Donald Segretti's actions in fabricating "sex scandal" stories involving leading Democratic Presidential candidates came to light, for example, it was also revealed that one of the leading terrorists of the Weathermen — a man who trained many of the Weathermen leaders in manufacturing bombs and actually initiated many of their bombings — was a government agent recruited specifically for that purpose!

For American business, however, the question has never been one of preserving "honesty" or democracy in the government. Their problem now is to restore to the government, somehow or another, the authority it has lost. Without such authority, business rightly fears that the government may be unable to continue to discipline the working class and thereby maintain the capitalist "prosperity" of the American economy.

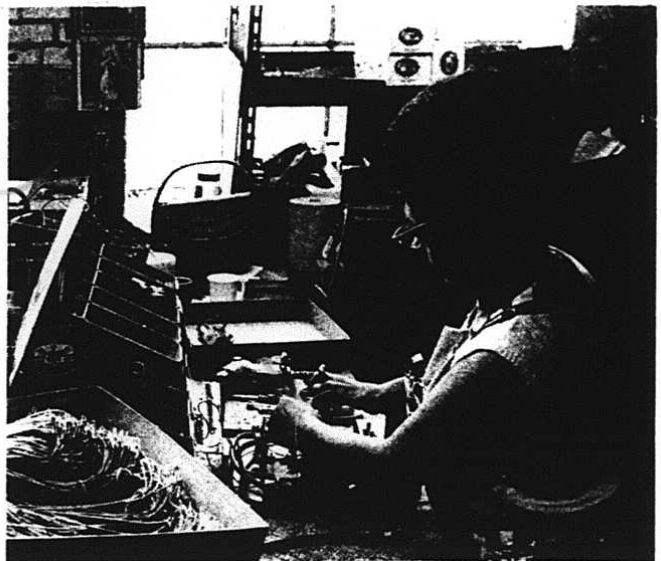
Whether Nixon is forced to resign, is impeached, or is retained in office has little to do with the truth as to the full extent of his involvement in Watergate. Unquestionably, his conduct during the whole affair is already enough to justify his removal — if that is what the ruling circles of business and finance want. What Watergate has called into question, from the capitalists' standpoint, is not Nixon's honesty but rather his ability to govern in their own interests.

The Watergate scandal has erupted precisely at the time when the current "boom" has begun to give signs of turning into a recession. At the same time, the working class has begun to show signs of increasing economic militancy — best shown by the strike of Goodrich rubber workers — and wage increases in recent weeks have in some cases crawled a few points higher than the 5.5% Phase 3 guidelines. At such a juncture, the ruling class wants a government with the full authority to rule — to reimpose formal wage restraints, even another freeze if necessary, as many capitalists expect it will.

The liberal politicians, afraid of the implications that a change or further erosion in the authority of the government could provoke a powerful labor upsurge and further economic instability, have largely refused to even suggest Nixon's impeachment or resignation. At this point, they do not trust their own ability to take responsibility for carrying through the anti-labor policies which Nixon initiated with their support.

For the working class, however, the need for a new offensive against the Phase 3 policies of the Nixon regime has never been more timely or urgent. In whatever form it is reorganized, under Nixon or a new Administration, the government's first acts will try to prove to its capitalist masters its abilities to renew the offensive against working people.

To counter this attack, the rank and file of labor must organize today to challenge the corporations and the government in every upcoming contract. They must also begin the fight for a break with the capitalist parties of corruption, inflation and profit and for an independent party of labor that challenges the capitalists' right to rule. ■



The first women's conference of the California State Federation of the AFL-CIO took place May 19-20 in San Francisco. That it happened at all was a victory for women in the labor movement.

The conference attracted notice chiefly because the delegates picketed a Safeway store en masse during one of their lunch breaks in support of the Farmworkers Union. Coming from AFL-CIO delegates, that was indeed unusual enough to merit press coverage.

The press overlooked, however, the uniqueness of the conference itself, one of the first products of awakening women activists in the labor movement.

The Women's Conference was forced into being when members of Union Women's Alliance to Gain Equality (Union W.A.G.E.) grabbed the microphone at the State Federation's convention and demanded it.

After launching the Conference, unfortunately, W.A.G.E. let the initiative pass to state AFL-CIO leaders in organizing it.

Consequently, over half the delegates were labor officials. The leadership fell to more conservative elements, and most California working women never heard of it.

But many female activists on the shop steward level showed up anyway, forming a left axis in the discussions.

The split personality of the Conference showed up again and again. Delegates gutted the Affirmative action resolution by cutting out all specifics — deadlines, quotas, etc. — for fear of putting too much pressure on the State Federation.

One delegate from a university employees' local protested angrily, "The University of California yells up and down it's for Affirmative Action," she said, "but in the past few years it

has done absolutely nothing [to correct discrimination]."

The conference reaffirmed, however, a strongly worded resolution in support of the Farmworkers — over the objections of the Resolutions Committee.

This committee, representing the leadership of the Conference, had deleted a section calling for mass civil disobedience in support of the Farmworkers.

Several women took the floor to speak in favor of the deleted portion, and to amend the resolution to support the rank and file Teamsters who oppose their union's policy.

When one woman began her remarks by criticizing the AFL-CIO for not doing enough for the Farmworkers, the chairwoman suddenly bethought herself of Roberts' Rules and ruled the speakers out of order, spending fifteen minutes to denounce one speaker for taking up the time of the Conference.

Nevertheless even hard-core bureaucrats found themselves at a loss to explain why they should vote against rank-and-file Teamsters. They made a feeble appeal to "labor unity" and abstained on the vote.

The other delegates reinstated both the deleted section and the amendment to the Farmworkers' Resolution.

A good deal of the Conference was geared toward officials and professional women. Five minutes was allowed for a plea for the embattled Shell strikers, but an hour was taken up by two actresses discussing "Images of Women in the Media."

Many of the official speakers appealed for more women in high places, but few emphasized concern for the numberless women who will remain in ordinary, dreary jobs.

It is these women, the rank and file women workers who were the object of numberless resolutions but whose needs and struggles were not the real focus of this Conference, who represent the future of the women's liberation movement. ■

Union Women Meet In California

Marie Pielka

End Prison Terror-- Free Martin Sostre!

Martin Sostre, born and raised in Spanish Harlem, was convicted in 1952 of selling narcotics and was sentenced to 6-12 years. Sostre served every day of the 12 years (divided between Clinton and Attica Prisons) because he challenged the all white composition of the parole board and successfully forced the state of New York in one of his many lawsuits (Sostre v. McGinis 334 F. 2d 906) to recognize Islam as a religion and provide facilities for its practice in state prisons.

He was kept in solitary confinement for five of his twelve years in prison, an experience which Sostre claims has increased his ability to resist.

Sostre, self-educated in prison, was released in 1964 at age 41. He settled in Buffalo, New York, and worked as a laborer at Bethlehem Steel.

In March of 1965, with savings from his wages, Sostre opened the Afro-Asian Book Store on one of the main streets of Buffalo's black ghetto.

The store specialized in books by revolutionary authors, African objects of art, and jazz and soul records. It gradually became a center where neighborhood people, especially youth, would come to discuss politics and buy or read books.

Later, Sostre quit work at Bethlehem Steel to devote full time to the store, clearing an average of \$60 a week. Often he would keep the store open until 2 or 3 in the morning.

Harrassment to Frameup

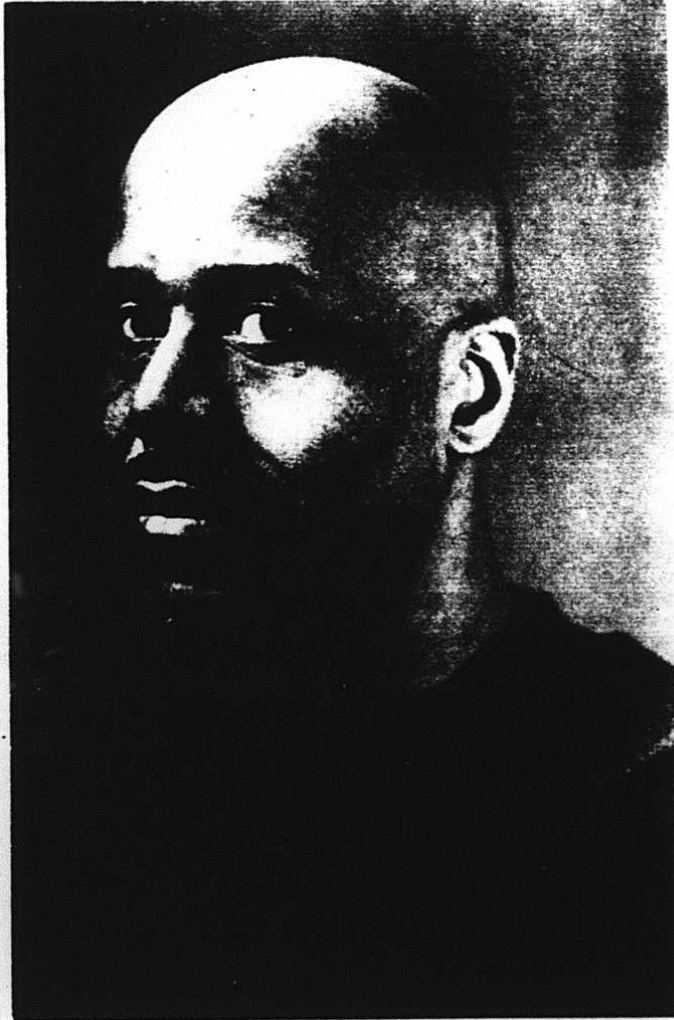
In June of 1967, Buffalo was shaken by the nationwide wave of ghetto rebellions. Under the pretext of putting out a fire in the tavern next door to Sostre's book shop, firemen broke the plate glass windows and sent streams of water throughout the store, soaking the stock.

Harassment continued, culminating in a police attack in July, 1967. Buffalo and state police burst into the store and arrested Sostre and his co-worker Geraldine Robinson, after sending in a known addict (then in jail for burglary) to set up Sostre.

He was charged with arson, inciting to riot, assault on a policeman, and illegal sale of narcotics. (At his trial the charges of arson and inciting were dropped). Bail was set at \$50,000.

Held eight months in jail, not permitted to search out his witnesses, Sostre was tried before a judge whose sympathies were developed as a local prosecuting attorney. Refusing a court appointed attorney, Sostre attempted to defend himself before an all white jury. His spirited defense provoked the judge to bind and gag him.

Sostre refused to offer a defense and in less than an hour, the jury found him guilty. He was sentenced to 25-30 years on the sale of narcotics, 5-10 years for assault of a policeman, one year for possession of narcotics, and 30 days for contempt of court.



Martin Sostre

Sostre was sent to Attica, but was quickly transferred to Greenhaven Prison due to the reputation he had made during his prior 12 year sentence. After two months at Greenhaven, he was placed in solitary for 372 days for "practicing law without a license."

After a hearing before Judge Constance Motley, the only black woman on the Federal Bench, Sostre was ordered released from solitary and awarded \$13,000 in compensatory and punitive damages. This decision was appealed by the state of New York.

The Court of Appeals mutilated and largely reversed the enlightened rules for prison discipline and practices ordered by Judge Motley. The award of damages was reduced to \$9,000, and ultimately Sostre received nothing. In March of 1971, Arto Williams, the addict who co-operated in the framing of Sostre, wrote a letter to Judge Motley from a drug rehabilitation cen-

ter in California. In the letter he informed the Judge of his willingness to tell the truth.

Later, in an affidavit, Williams described how he approached Sgt. Alvin Gristmacher and Michael Amico of the Buffalo Police Narcotics Squad for help on his burglary charge, how he was released from jail to act as the set-up man against Sostre whom he knew from frequent visits to the book store, and the details of the frame-up plot, including the planting of the glassine envelope of heroin.

This affidavit was used by Sostre as the basis for a petition for a new trial. However, the system that had originally imprisoned Sostre was not about to give him his freedom without a struggle.

The problem was that Sostre was required to have Williams personally present in New York to recant his prior testimony. In being present and so testifying, Williams would be com-

mitting perjury regarding his earlier false testimony. The state of New York allows no grant of immunity in such cases and Williams refused to appear. Sostre's petition was dismissed.

At Auburn prison Sostre was placed in solitary confinement. He was transferred there after he was active in organizing prisoners over the issue of prisoner wages. He refused to work [at Walkill] unless paid the legal minimum wage.

Throughout his long years of imprisonment Martin Sostre has been subjected to cruel and inhumane treatment by prison authorities.

On January 30, 1973 he was stripped naked and forced to walk in an outdoor courtyard in below freezing weather.

Sostre is currently at Dannemora. Despite brutal reprisals against him by the authorities, he continues to refuse to submit to rectal searches and to shave his beard.

Psychiatric "Treatment"

Sostre and several other prisoners are being considered for "treatment" at the psychiatric center there.

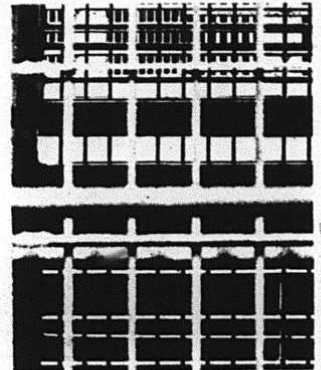
The Federal Government, while cutting back on funds for education, daycare, and housing, has granted over \$100,000 for programs which include electric shock treatment, prolonged isolation, use of drugs, and lobotomy on prisoners.

Eduardo Cruz, involved in organizing Puerto Rican students and subsequently framed for possession of explosive powder, has along with fifteen brothers from Comstock been singled out for such treatment as well.

Workers Power joins with the Martin Sostre Defense Committee, the Committee to Defend Eduardo Cruz, and other Puerto Rican committees in the fight to expose and stop such vicious programs. Martin Sostre and Eduardo Cruz will not be silenced!

In learning of his recommendation for the RX treatment program, Martin Sostre stated: "To me it is just another challenge, another trial from which I shall emerge, not only victorious but with heightened revolutionary spirit and resoluteness." ■

[For more information write to: Martin Sostre Defense Committee, Box 327, Glen Gardner, NJ, 08826.]



Jordan Sims Wins Big Victory At Eldon Local

Lynn Jones

Jordan Sims, black co-chairman of the United National Caucus, an opposition group within the UAW, has won the Spring UAW elections for local president in the Eldon Avenue gear and axle plant. Sims beat all his stooge opponents by a 3-1 margin, including the current president of the local in the first round, followed by a 2-1 victory in the two candidate run-off election.

Sims' victory comes after three long years of struggle against Chrysler Corporation's racist and exploitative policies and the UAW's cooperation with them.

After 22 years in the plant, Sims — who was then chief in-plant bargaining

agent — was fired in 1970, along with several others in the union leadership.

They were fired for leading a struggle against the murderously unsafe working conditions that existed and still exist at Eldon.

When the dust had cleared Sims was the only one who remained fired, because he was the only leader solidly committed to a fight for the interests of the rank and file.

Chrysler Corporation stated, "Sims' reinstatement would be like placing a time bomb in the plant. Chrysler would be living with the constant uncertainty of when Sims will next explode and institute an illegal strike or other illegal activity."

Sims' victory is especially a victory for black production workers who are subject to the most rotten conditions. Though today the plant is 70% black,

few of the black workers have ten years seniority.

They started coming in in the booming 1960's when white workers were moving up to better jobs, creating vacancies for blacks. When the blacks came in they got the hardest, most dangerous jobs.

In Eldon that meant constant danger: 3 workers were killed before Sims was discharged. One black worker, James Johnson, driven to insanity by the conditions and the speed-up, shot his forman and two others.

Chrysler Corporation was later found guilty of driving Johnson insane and ordered to pay him workman's compensation. In effect, this was a judgment that Chrysler was guilty of murder.

Conditions like these produced a high state of tension in the plant.



Jordan Sims

Added to them was the militant consciousness produced among black workers by the rebellions of the 1960's.

Added to this, the arrogant attitude of a management that refused to allow a woman run over by a fork lift to go home for sick leave (she died weeks later), and that fired a worker for walking off a job after the foreman threatened to attack him, created all the conditions for rebellion.

The rebellion took place in the form of a series of walk-outs led by the union officials. Sims was ousted and lost his appeal in arbitration. Then began phase two of the struggle.

Sims ran for election as local president in May, 1971 on a platform of waging a fight for the rank and file. He built his campaign around a base of mostly black shop floor militants, both stewards and rank and file workers.

That base stayed together and lay behind his current victory.

In the 1971 election, Sims led the five candidates, but failed to win a majority. He was thus forced into a run-off with Frank McKinnon, an older white man.

McKinnon upset Sims by a 33 vote margin, but that was only because over 1000 workers — most of them black production workers — were prevented from voting.

The grounds were that they were behind in dues payments, although the UAW constitution specifically forbids preventing members from voting when dues check-off is in effect.

Sims challenged the election. Despite the clear violation, the UAW International sat on the challenge for six months. Finally, President Woodcock overturned the results, but refused to

(Continued on page 16)

Fighting For Justice At Chrysler Jefferson

Lynn Jones

For the first time in many years an opposition candidate has won a top union position in UAW Local 7, at Chrysler Corporation's Jefferson Avenue Assembly Plant.

In local elections held on May 15 and 16, Mary Woodberry, a candidate of the United Justice Action Caucus (UJAC), won the position of Recording Secretary.

The UJAC was formed just prior to the elections when the United Justice Caucus and Action Slate merged.

Since its birth well over a year ago, the United Justice Caucus has been a force in the Jefferson Avenue Plant. The Caucus has not, of course, been a perfect rank and file workers' group at all times.

The UJC tried, however, to support and lead the day in and day out struggle against the company that goes on in every auto plant in town.

Fighting the corrupt and cowardly Local 7 leadership has been necessary at every step along the way. The caucus has won widespread support in the plant for its program and actions.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the group the caucus merged with before the elections, the Action Slate. Only rarely in the last year has the Action Slate — really just a group of individuals and not an organization — shown any outward signs of interest in workers' struggles at all.

Neither this group nor the individuals in it have done much of anything to win the respect of Jefferson workers. We felt at the time of the merger and still feel that the United Justice Caucus should not have merged with this group.

In fact, the militants who originally formed the United Justice Caucus did so as a result of their disagreements with the Action Slate group, of which they were once part.

The founders of the United Justice

Caucus broke with that group because they wanted to form an organization that could bring together shop floor militants to wage an on-going struggle in the plant.

The Action Slate, on the other hand, was more interested in securing union offices for themselves.

The United Justice Caucus has worked long and hard to win a reputation as a fighting organization. Merging with a group like Action Slate can only win the scorn of the Local 7 membership.

The UJC could only have made this decision for the worst possible reason — to try to gain votes in the election.

United Justice Caucus should reconsider its decision. It was right over a year ago when it broke from the Action Slate. Reuniting with Action Slate is a step backward for the caucus.

Elections are not yet over at Jefferson. There are a number of run-offs yet to be held. Many offices, including that of President, have not yet been decided.

Although the UJAC is involved in a few of these run-offs, most of the competition now is between the Progressive Slate and the Progressive Independent Slate.

Both slates are part of the Local 7 bureaucracy, which had a family spat over who should run for the top union offices and split into two groups as a result.

Bill English, Progressive Independent candidate for president, is running on the very militant program of building on to the Union Hall. We can only assume the Flowers-Bellomo team, Progressive Slate candidates for president and vice-president, are running on the fine job of strikebreaking they did in a recent wildcat strike at the plant. ■



Opposition Forces In Maritime Election

Bill Hastings

The National Maritime Union (NMU), one of the three unions representing seamen on the coasts, Great Lakes and rivers, and the Panama Canal is currently holding elections for top offices.

Just prior to the start of the election, which runs from April through May, the first and only NMU president, Joseph Curran, stepped down from office, taking with him one million dollars in "severance" and pension pay.

This latest action is a hallmark of Curran's long years in office — years of corruption and gangsterism, years of the erosion of job standards and

security for most NMU seamen.

The NMU was built out of the struggles of the seamen in the 1930's. Curran, at the time with the support of the Communist Party (CP), was always willing to sacrifice the NMU membership to strengthen his own position.

He forced union acceptance of a no-strike clause, not just during World War II but for a long time afterwards.

When he broke with the CP members in the union, Curran forced them and all oppositionists out of the union, using beatings, denial of votes and collaboration with the owners to deny militants jobs.

At the same time, the seamen's working conditions have deteriorated,

the number of jobs is way down, and pay has fallen far behind that of other maritime workers.

In the face of this erosion of work standards and job security, the Curran regime squeezed out of the 38,000 NMU members vast sums of money for astronomical bureaucrats' salaries, two Joseph Curran buildings in Manhattan, and a huge officers' pension plan.

When Curran stepped down, his place was filled by Shannon Wall, long-time associate of Curran's and the NMU Secretary-Treasurer, making Wall the "incumbent" in this election.

Wall's past actions show conclusively that he will continue Curran's policy of collaboration with the shipping owners at the expense of the members' jobs.

In the last ten years, under the Curran-Wall administration, the number of deep-sea jobs bargained for by the NMU has gone down from about 26,000 to 7,000 or to only one-quarter of the previous level.

Wall's main competition in the election is James Morrissey, once a minor official under Curran during the drive against the Communists.

Morrissey, who has been an oppositionist for some time, is leading a full slate of candidates for office on a program of democratizing the union, more jobs, equal pay for equal work, ending discrimination against Panamanians working in the Canal Zone, and strengthening union representation on board ship.

Morrissey does offer an alternative to the policies of the Curran-Wall

administration, but it is a partial and defective one.

While he sought out and obtained the endorsement of Arnold Miller, the Miners For Democracy leader elected president of United Mine Workers, Morrissey does not represent any real rank and file movement as did Miller.

His strategy to save seamen's jobs is to rely on liberal Democratic politicians and friends like Joseph Rauh, rather than organizing the ranks for mass struggle.

While Morrissey may represent rank and file desires for democracy and for waging a fight around job losses, he has not even attempted to organize a real movement even though this is desperately needed in a union riddled by gangsterism and corruption and for years under the iron-fisted control of one man.

The ranks will obviously have no guarantee that Morrissey's victory will actually democratize the union instead of eventually replacing one dictatorial regime with another.

Because of the program he is running on, however, Morrissey's victory would open up possibilities for real rank and file motion to begin.

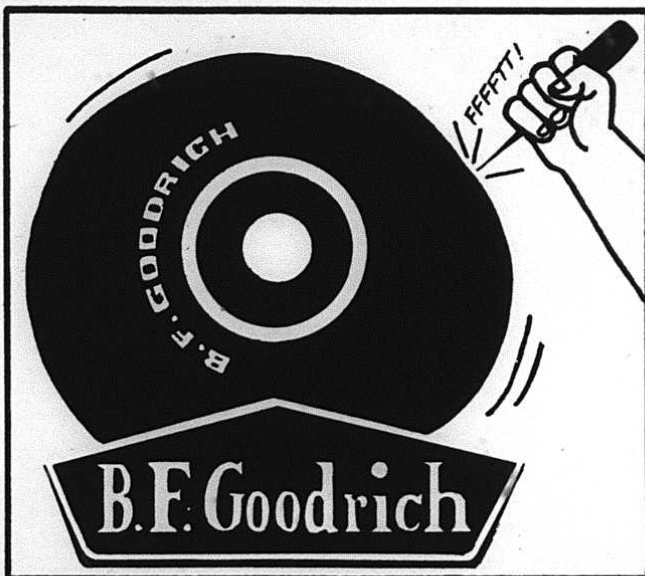
Because of the nature of his campaign, much like a slate representing no organization, the militants in the NMU must use the election period as a means of developing a rank and file movement.

We believe that support for the Morrissey campaign, even though it is organized and run bureaucratically,

[Continued on page 16]

Goodrich Strike: Rubber Ranks Reject Surrender

Jim Woodward



[Continued from page 1]

to defend the agreement before his angry membership. The Local 2 membership passed a motion instructing its leadership to start a petition campaign to reopen the contract on the question of pension and retirement benefits.

At the same time, wildcat strikes broke out at Firestone plants in Decatur and Bloomington, Illinois and Salinas, California, and at the Goodyear plant in Union City, Tennessee.

Under this pressure, the URW International extended its bargaining goals for the Goodrich negotiations. The URW leadership has tried to explain that "conditions are different" at Goodrich, and therefore a better settlement is needed.

While it is marginally true that the problem of layoffs and job loss is more serious at the Akron Goodrich plant than at the Akron Goodyear facility, it is clear that the URW leadership did not increase its goals for that reason.

Goodrich rightly points out that it would be economically foolish for them to agree to a substantially larger settlement than Goodyear, the largest company and leader of the industry.

The URW leadership is clearly doing nothing more than making a tactical reverse to try to save its skin before an angry rank and file.

What Bommarito and crew have succeeded in doing is to put the rubber workers in a worse position than if they had fought for a decent contract from the beginning.

The Goodyear settlement can only strengthen the resolve of the other rubber companies to hold the line against any substantial improvements on the Goodyear model. For this reason, a fight to reopen the Goodyear contract is a necessary party of the struggle at Goodrich.

One lesson that should be learned from this experience is that a new leadership in the rubber workers union is

absolutely essential. To fight for this and to defend their interests, rubber workers will need to organize a national opposition group within the union.

Goodyear Local 2 might well be a starting point for such an opposition. The membership there has already realized the need for nationwide joint action to reopen the Goodyear contract, and has instructed their leadership to take action to this effect.

What is clear, however, is that the Local 2 leadership must go as well. It has demonstrated that it will fight only when forced to by the rank and file.

Further, the scope of an opposition movement cannot be limited to a simple reopening of the Goodyear contract to improve the pension provisions. It will have to develop a program and strategy for reversing the rubber companies' productivity attacks, the flight of jobs to Southern low-wage plants, and the loss of jobs to automation.

The beginning of a program to deal with these problems would include demands to stop speedup, pay equal wages to all rubber workers throughout the country, modernize existing plants at company expense rather than moving, and institute a 30 hour work-week for 40 hours pay to stop the loss of jobs.

The Goodrich strike has already shown that rank and file workers can fight the collusion between their leadership and the companies. It is the first significant sign of the rank and file discontent that could break loose this year due to the escalating inflation.

Corporate heads, union leaders, and rank and file workers are watching the Goodrich strike. In particular, negotiators in the electrical industry are keeping an eye open, anxious to see what the settlement will be.

If the Goodrich strike is won, it will have a profound effect on the course of contract negotiations during the rest of 1973.

Labor In Brief

Jim Woodward



Electrical workers coalition faces G.E.

A critical part of this year's contract bargaining round comes in the electrical industry, where contracts are about to expire. The settlements arrived at by the electrical workers and the rubber workers, currently on strike, will lay important ground-work for bargaining by Teamsters, auto workers, longshoremen, postal employees, and airline mechanics later this year.

The first electrical contract to expire is the General Electric pact on May 26. The unions have, however, in effect extended the contract until June 5 by failing to give the required 10-day termination of contract notice. Contracts with Westinghouse expire June 10.

Electrical workers are divided into a wide variety of unions, making effective bargaining much more difficult. Of the 137,000 organized G.E. workers, 83,000 are represented by the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) and another 17,000 by the United Electrical Workers (UE). The rest are organized by twelve other unions including the Teamsters, the IBEW, the IAM, and the UAW. In addition, one-third of GE's 160 plants are completely unorganized.

The fourteen unions involved have again joined in a coalition bargaining agreement. During the 1969-70 strike, such a coalition bargaining approach was able, in the course of 102 days on the picket line, to defeat GE's traditional take-it-or-leave-it approach to bargaining.

Although the unions were able to force GE to improve on its original offer, however, they did not win gains large enough to protect their members from inflation.

The cost-of-living escalator clause in the 1970 pact contained a "cap" which permitted increases of only 24¢ during the life of the contract. As a consequence, electrical workers have fallen 29¢ behind.

One of the goals of the electrical unions this year is to make up that lost 29¢ and to remove the "cap" on the cost-of-living clause. The unions are also asking for a "substantial" wage increase with improved pensions, vacations, and sick pay, but the union

officials refuse to state publicly any precise goals.

The rationale for this is that they do not want GE to know in advance what their demands are — they plan to spring the demands one at a time.

The only ones kept in the dark by this procedure, however, are the rank and file, who will be told that a "complete victory" was won regardless of the final outcome.

According to news reports, negotiations this year are quite friendly. GE hasn't used the take-it-or-leave-it approach, and the unions haven't threatened to strike yet.

Nevertheless, as prices continue to rise, the rank and file is less and less willing to settle for small potatoes. Any settlement which begins to meet the needs of electrical workers will have to go substantially above the 5.5% wage guidelines.

If the rank and file is able to force this kind of a settlement, its impact on the rest of the 1973 bargaining round will be highly favorable.

Paper, hospital, airline workers break through wage controls

A number of contracts have been signed recently which provide for wage increases significantly in excess of the official 5.5% guideline. In some cases the Cost of Living Council (CLC) has not objected, and in two cases it withdrew or reversed earlier decisions.

In the pulp and paper industry, 121 workers at the Menasha Corp. in Oregon won a 7.5% increase, while Weyerhaeuser and Boise Cascade employees received deferred 7.4% raises with no objection by the CLC.

The number of workers in the Menasha settlement is small, but potentially significant since contracts covering about 100,000 workers in the pulp and paper industry expire this year.

Negotiations are now underway at a subsidiary of International Paper in Georgie employing 10,700 workers. Management there is complaining that the union's position has stiffened because the government failed to challenge the Menasha agreement.

In another case, the CLC reversed an earlier decision by the Pay Board and allowed 33,000 New York hospital workers, members of Local 1199, Drug and Hospital Workers Union, to receive the full 7.5% increase they had won. The Pay Board had ordered the increase cut to 5.5% in January.

A week after the Local 1199 decision, the CLC dropped its objections to an 8.9% pay hike for 600 IAM members who are mechanics for North Central Airlines.

Contracts of many airline mechanics expire this year, thus adding significance to the North Central situation. The United Air Lines contract, which has been a pattern-setter in the past, expires in August.

All these cases show that it is possible to break the 5.5% guidelines. They represent some small softening of

the government's attitude towards wage controls.

Up until now, the working class has put up with rising prices (and thus lower living standards) with only a minimum of protest.

The government knows this situation cannot last forever and fears that if it presses down wages too hard, an explosion will result.

It is in this situation, where the government wage-controllers have displayed a case of jitters, that the time is ripe for a general working class offensive against the wage controls.

The leading role falls on the Goodrich workers, currently on strike, and GE employees, whose contract expires shortly.

Harry Bridges prepares new longshore sell-out

Harry Bridges, President of the International Warehousemen's and Longshoremen's Union, has announced plans in a joint press conference with Edmund Flynn, head of the employers' group, to try to arrive at a contract by the end of May. The present contract does not expire until July 1.

Bridges and the employers are seeking an early agreement to dissuade shippers from diverting their cargo to other ports in anticipation of a strike. Last year's strike lasted 134 days.

There is nothing objectionable in trying to reach an agreement 30 days ahead of time. It seems reasonable to think, however, that Bridges' announcement is the prelude to another sell-out.

For one thing, no longshoreman would expect the employers to give in so easily if Bridges intended to fight for the wage increase, the cost of living protection, the job security, and the work rule changes that the dockers need.

Second, Bridges said he is now willing to sign a contract for more than one year, and also indicated in advance that the union would accept a certain amount of cutting down of the wage settlement by the Cost of Living Council.

Houston Shell workers strike settled short

Members of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union in Houston have ended their four-month strike by signing an agreement with the Shell workers on strike at refineries in Los Angeles, Denver, New Orleans, and Anaconates, Washington.

The questions in dispute have been primarily health and safety issues.

At *Workers' Power* press time, details of the agreement were not clear. A spokesman for the Houston OCAW local maintained that terms of the settlement were virtually the same as agreements with the other major oil companies.

Shell management, on the other

hand, said that the health and safety committee established in the contract is purely advisory, and thus not similar to other agreements.

If management's claim is accurate, this local settlement will hurt an already weak union and strengthen the position of Shell and the other oil companies.

Miners for Democracy wins district elections

Miners for Democracy slates have won overwhelming victories in two more United Mine Workers district elections.

In Eastern Pennsylvania's District 25, the MFD slate rolled to victory by a 6-1 margin. The vote in District 4, Western Pennsylvania, showed the MFD winning by 3-1 and 2-1 margins in balloting for district officers.

These districts had been held in trusteeship under former UMW boss Tony Boyle and previous administration. The election in District 4, for example, was the first in that district in the 84-year history of the union.

In a related development, the UMW leadership revealed that 25 miners were killed in mine accidents during the first three months of this year.

This figure, high as it is, reflects a 50% reduction over the comparable period for 1972, and probably indicates a willingness of rank and file miners to press the safety issue harder after having ousted Tony Boyle.

Women fight job discrimination in mining

Changes other than union leadership may be coming to the coal industry.

In Dante, Virginia, four women have applied for jobs as coal miners. The women are all from coal mining families. Previously, the four women worked at low-wage garment factories in the area and then came back to the "second job" at home.

Their applications have received a mixed reaction from male miners, some supporting them but others justifying their opposition on the grounds that women underground are supposed to bring bad luck.

"I worked at the factory and came home and cleaned out the barn, and then I stayed up half the night taking care of my six kids," said one of the women. "I think I'd like to come home from the mine at 3:30 p.m. and sit around on the porch."

Company officials have suspended all hiring at the mine until they can decide what to do about the women.

If there is to be any real influx of women into coal mining jobs, it is important that the new UMW leadership and rank and file miners strongly support them. Otherwise the way will be open for the mine operators to take advantage of this new division in the work force.



Workers' Power

Workers' Power Special:
Defend The Farmworkers!

Workers' Power Special

June 1973

5¢

Farm Workers Union Fights For Its Life

EDITORIAL

A co-ordinated, well-financed and heavily muscled campaign is underway, aimed at destroying the United Farm Workers Union. Lined up against the farm workers are the economic and political power of the giant growers, the authority of several state legislatures, and the full forces of the corrupt bureaucracy of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Opposing these forces of agribusiness unionism are the fighting spirit and dedication of the farm workers themselves, and potentially the support that can be gained from the rank and file of labor and from the Chicano community. The survival of the farm workers' movement depends upon the union's ability to mobilize its own members and its masses of potential supporters for the all-out struggle now underway.

The UFW-Teamster struggle in agriculture (detailed in a feature article in this Workers Power supplement) represents two different directions for the labor movement. Despite many shortcomings and weaknesses, the UFW in practice points in the direction of fighting militant unionism in the interests of the rank and file. It poses the direction for the labor movement of organizing the unorganized, building labor solidarity, and winning oppressed minorities by fighting for their special needs.

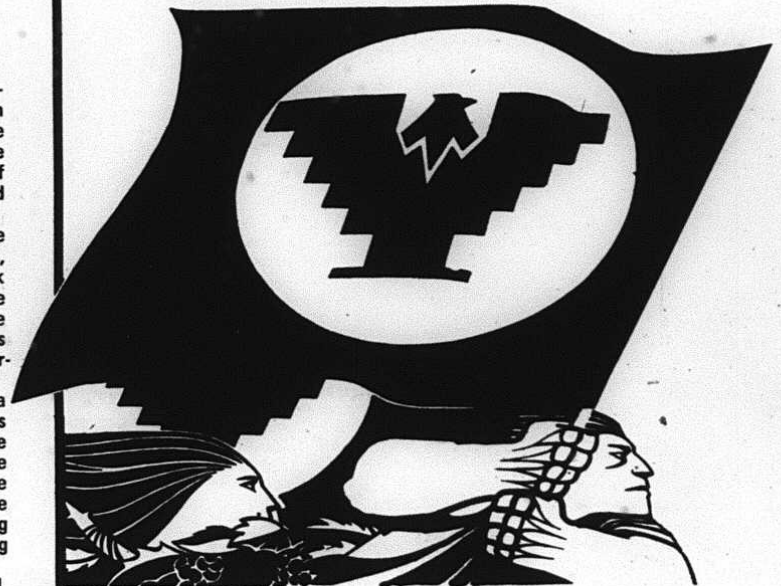
The Teamsters' presence in agriculture, on the other hand, represents the crudest form of collaboration with the employers against the workers. The IBT contracts which the growers are now rushing to sign reinforce the hated system of labor contractors, many of whom are now being made "Teamster Organizers" who automatically enroll the scabs they recruit into the Teamsters. Once the IBT has a contract, its only presence on the farm is its union bug on grower packaging. The gangsterism and collaborationism of the IBT bureaucracy not only threatens the farm workers, but also strengthens the power of this same bureaucracy against its own rank and file.

In no way does this struggle represent simply a "jurisdictional dispute," as both the growers and Teamster officials claim. Behind the IBT raid on the farm workers lies all the power of the growers themselves. Indeed, the IBT raid represents only one part of the growers' overall strategy to wipe out unionism in agriculture.

Another part of this strategy is to pass laws that would effectively strip the Farmworkers of any real power. Such laws, which vary from state to state, include a "cooling off period" during strikes — which would effectively outlaw strikes during the harvest season. Secondary boycotts — boycotts against the products of a firm that does business with a scab employer — would be illegal. Some of the laws, such as the infamous Proposition 22 which was defeated by referendum last year in California, would also have outlawed primary boycotts, making it a crime to even say the words "boycott lettuce"!

There have been serious attempts to implement such laws in at least the states of California, Washington, Florida, Idaho, and Oregon. In Arizona, the law to smash the farmworkers has been passed.

[Continued on next page]



The battleground of the farm workers' struggle for a union and for dignity has returned to the birthplace of the United Farm Workers Union: the California grape vineyards. The current battle began on April 16 when the UFWA struck the grape growers of the Coachella Valley as they signed sweetheart agreements with the Teamsters.

The militancy of the strike was an indication that the farm workers are well aware of its significance. The growers are mounting an all out attack on the union at its base — the grape industry.

In the first week, over 300 people were arrested for violating injunctions against picketing. There was "militancy" on the other side, too, as grower security guards and Teamster goons threatened pickets and intimidated workers who left the fields to join the strike.

Finally, with public exposure of the violence employed by the Teamsters and growers, a new restraining order was issued barring both threatening or displaying weapons such as grape stakes, baseball bats and lead-pipes.

Presently the strike is spreading to other areas throughout California as the thinning (and harvesting) season moves North. Virtually the entire grape

industry is united on the move towards sweetheart pacts with the Teamsters, and the growers are lining up to sign.

Between now and July 29, when the Delano area contracts expire, growers employing over 30,000 workers during harvest will attempt to force the phony "contracts" on their workers.

To a casual observer the strike scene in the vineyards looks like many others in recent years. This strike, however, is different.

This conflict goes far beyond the question of unionizing particular corporations, or even the grape industry as a whole. It is part of the decisive battle the growers have launched to break the Farm Workers Union.

It was in the grape vineyards of Delano that the union was born some eight years ago, with a strike and later a boycott of grapes. It was in grapes that the UFWU signed its first contracts. And in 1970, after years of strikes and boycotts, the bulk of the grape growers were brought under contract with the union.

The organization of an entire commodity provided the union with a base it could move on to organize the rest of agribusiness. The Farm Workers continued their drive in 1970 with the Salinas Valley "Salad Bowl" of Northern California.

The heart of many of the agribusi-
[Continued on next page]

MASS STRIKE CAN BREAK

Ken Smith

[Continued from previous page]

ness giants, some of these operations extend from Salinas south to the Imperial Valley and Arizona, over 500 miles.

The growers responded to the organizing thrust of the farm workers by inviting the Teamsters Union, representing drivers, shed workers and crate stichers in the area, to sign sweetheart agreements with the unorganized farm workers, helping to keep out a real union.

The Farm Workers retaliated by calling a strike in Salinas, and 7000 workers walked out in a massive strike wave.

The strike and the threat of a boycott forced the largest lettuce grower, Interharvest (United Fruit Corporation) and a couple of others to sign with the UFWU. All the other growers, however, have held out through the strike and the lettuce boycott.

Since 1970 the struggle has escalated. The UFWU relied on a national lettuce boycott and the liberal wing of the Democratic Party for support.

In addition they have left it up to the AFL-CIO leadership to force the Teamster bureaucrats out of the fields, and to live up to the "No Raiding" pacts the Teamsters have signed with the UFWU.

The effect of the pacts, if they were honored, would be to leave field workers to the UFWU, and shed workers and drivers to the Teamsters.

While the Farm Workers were moving slowly by calling on new strikes, the growers were marshalling their forces to fight together to defeat the UFWU. The assistance of the corrupt Teamsters' bureaucracy has given them the edge they needed to try to destroy the farm workers' union.

No longer on the defensive, they are attacking the heart of the union's strength, the grape canneries.

If the growers can defeat the UFWU in grapes, they know that no grower anywhere will be forced to deal with the crippled union.

The union finally went on the offensive, calling the strike in Coachella, and in other areas as the grapes need thinning and harvesting. The Delano area, the original seat of La Huelga, is especially important because of its history of successful struggle.

The strike offensive was coupled with an announcement by Cesar Chavez of a new national boycott of grapes to be launched after the harvest.

Boycott Lettuce!

The boycott is the strategy that won for the farm workers in the past. Strikes, while hurting production, have been difficult to sustain.

The ability of the growers to get court injunctions, the lack of strike funds, and the availability of so many poor people desperate for work were the major obstacles for the fledgling union.

The Farm Workers turned to the boycott, building a wide-spread community support movement with only token support from the rest of the labor movement.

Building strike support committees, and politically fighting the image of union-organizing as a narrow parochial

struggle, were the keys to a successful boycott.

The Farm Workers, adopting their methods from the civil rights' movement, using non-violent tactics and skillfully exposing the poverty and degradation of the lives of migrant farm workers, transformed their union struggle into "la Causa" in the eyes of significant sections of the population.

The boycott alone could not sustain and extend the struggle to the unorganized farm workers. It had to be coupled with an aggressive and unceasing drive to organize and politically educate farm workers throughout the agribusiness industry.

The tactic of organizing community support increased the strength of the UFWU, and could have been used to draw in the active support of organized sections of the working class, but could not by itself swell the ranks of the farm workers' union.

As the struggle and boycott continued, however, the UFWU continued to rely more and more on such support tactics and especially on the "protection" of the Democratic Party and other liberal supporters, at the expense of the grass-roots organization of field workers.

Since 1970, when the major breakthrough in grapes occurred, no new organizing moves have been made in the fields, no new major strikes have been called.

La Causa has been critically weakened, the AFL-CIO leaders have allowed the Teamsters to eat away at the farm workers' base, and the growers have moved to the offensive.

Dangerous "Allies"

The heavy ties of the UFWU leadership to the Democrats has been a crucial error. Although the UFWU has refused to endorse pro-grower liberals, like Jess Unruh, candidate for governor of California, and US Senator John Tunney, the UFWU has made a conscious alliance with the Kennedy wing of the Democratic Party.

Chavez and the rest of the UFWU leaders didn't draw the conclusion that Kennedy, and Kennedy men, have more in common with agribusiness and with their own corporate class than they do with field hands, and that they would not flinch from using a popular liberal cause for as much political mileage they could.

Rather than being used by Democrats, the Farm Workers should be in the lead of a struggle for a new party representing organized and unorganized labor, and black and brown people. The UFWU should be supporting La Raza Unida Party as a step in this direction.

In the fields, the UFWU leadership can no longer rely on the boycott to save the union. In 1970 the growers were not united; today they are, and today they are launching an all-out campaign to crush the union and all forms of farm workers' solidarity.

The growers know the key to their goal is to crush the grape workers. They know what a grape boycott means from past experience, and today they are willing to accept whatever consequences are necessary in order to make sure the farm workers are knocked back into place.

Some growers may be willing to

subsidize the grape growers through the boycott. Other growers are giant corporations that can absorb the loss in the grape harvest for a long time.

Most important, the union cannot indefinitely maintain the solid dedication and fighting spirit of the workers while the main battleground is far from the fields, at the supermarkets.

The boycott is no longer sufficient, and the time for the non-violent tactics of the civil rights' movement is past if the union is to stay alive. The UFWU must begin direct action. A strike with teeth, one that prevents the growers from importing scabs to get the crops in is an absolute requirement.

A Strike With Teeth

A strike on a mass scale in agriculture is very difficult, but it is a crucial part of the only strategy that will beat back the attack by agribusiness.

The first element in a mass strike would be to spread it out of the grape industry into all the major areas of California (and other states) as thinning and harvesting seasons arrive.

The 1970 Salinas strike must be repeated across the farm lands — it must be built and extended on an even greater scale.

The second element in the strategy must be an appeal to the rank and file of other unions. The most logical place for the UFWU to begin is in the canneries and processing plants that employ over 70,000 workers during the harvesting season.

Most of these workers are organized into the Teamsters Union. Most have a close sweetheart agreement, and that agreement expires July 1.

The publicity campaign from the original boycott must be re-launched, aimed this time at fellow workers. The majority of the cannery workers are Chicanos and Mexicans, many in and out of field work themselves.

They know field conditions at first hand, they know the importance of the Farm Workers Union. The cannery workers are under the "protection" of the Teamsters, and a Cannery Division that is dominated by a clique of (anglo) bureaucrats.

Discontent in the canneries is high, and pro-UFWU Cannery Workers Committees and other oppositionist groupings already exist in many areas.

The potential of spreading a mass agricultural strike to the canneries is greatest now and should be aggressively fought for by the UFWU leadership.

To spread the strike to the canneries would be a serious blow to agribusiness, on the one hand, and on the other would be a sharp warning to the Teamsters that they too are vulnerable.

Building a farm labor strike that can win is a mammoth task, under any circumstances. Unless the question of scabs is adequately dealt with, a winning strike is impossible.

At the start of the Coachella strike, Cesar Chavez pointed out they were just one hundred miles from the Mexican border and some very, very poor people. In addition there are scab contractors who recruit in the cities and bus scabs into the fields.

The Farm Workers must take a position that scabs will be stopped, but unless fruit is picked by union labor it rots on the vine. The question of violence must be turned around, and pointed directly at the growers.

The growers have poisoned, evicted, and tried to starve out the farm workers. The growers are the ones who have been brutally violent in their attempts to destroy the union and keep their profits as high as possible.

The farm workers have a right to defend their jobs, and their lives by preventing scabs from entering the fields.

The only way to do that is mass picketing, whether it violates a court injunction or not. It also means mobilizing urban support to cut off the supply of scabs from the cities.

The Coachella Valley is only two hours from the largest Chicano Barrio

this stance by the UFWU leadership has alienated many of the most militant and highly political Chicanos in the cities, as well as some field workers who support the legalization of all "illegals."

If the Farm Workers are willing to champion the rights of "illegals" in this way, actively supporting their struggle against deportation, they will be in a much better position to both organize "illegals" and to fight scabbing by "illegals."

The halting of the scabs is one of the major tasks of the farm workers in their battle. There are others equally serious.



in the US, East Los Angeles, where unemployment reaches 25%. The Chicano community must be mobilized behind the farmworkers to join mass demonstrations to stop scabs.

The Farm Workers must also aim their appeal for support to the organized labor movement as a whole: not to the leaderships for "protection", but to the rank and file for active solid support.

Many of the scabs are so-called "illegals," that is, Mexicans who are illegally in the United States. Thousands of these so-called illegals are field workers, and are among the most difficult to organize because the possibility of being deported away from their homes and families is a common one. [For a fuller discussion of the Mexican so-called "illegals," see Workers' Power No. 77.]

Because the illegal immigrants are more difficult to organize, the UFWU leadership has taken the exactly wrong position: calling for the deportation of all illegals back to Mexico.

An issue that has already caused divisions in the Chicano community,

Farm workers are among the poorest people in America. Finding a way of supporting them through the long, arduous, but necessary strike is imperative.

The UFWU itself has little money. In addition to demanding political support from the rest of the labor movement, the UFWU must actively begin soliciting financial support.

One of the major reasons for Chavez' alliance with Meany and the rest of the AFL-CIO leadership was the need for funds. While this strategy got \$1.6 million for the union, the price paid has been both to downplay the militancy needed to build a mass strike and to restrict the actual building of an aggressive fighting organization in the fields.

That decision has crippled the union and helped to put it in its defensive, weak position today.

In addition, \$1.6 million is actually chicken feed, since that amount would support 50,000 strikers for one short week (\$32 a piece) as at a bare minimum level.

UNION-BUSTERS

When the cost of launching and building the campaign around a mass strike is added to the cost of sustenance of the strikers, the financial needs of the UFWU become enormous.

The money and other support that is needed from organized labor must be openly fought for within the labor movement.

The leadership of the UFWU will not get the assistance it needs from the official labor leaders, some of whom are becoming more and more openly hostile.

Recently, Harry Bridges, president of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, had invited Chavez to speak at the ILWU Convention. When the Teamster bureaucrats let their displeasure be known, Bridges quickly "uninvited" him.

Chavez could and should have appeared anyway, fought for the floor, and if successful appealed directly to the delegates for support of the farm workers' struggle.

In addition, it becomes increasingly important for Chavez and the Farm Workers Union to build solidarity relations with opposition caucuses and groups throughout the labor movement.

Breaking down the isolation of insurgent elements in separate industries both strengthens the opposition forces, and brings those insurgent elements close to supporting the farm workers' struggle.

Solidarity actions, by forging links throughout the labor movement, can begin the process of building a labor movement with roots in the daily struggles of workers, like the farm workers, who have been consistently sold out by the labor bureaucrats.

AFL-CIO Betrayal

The extent to which Meany and the rest of the AFL-CIO leaders have tried to cripple the farm workers' struggle is especially apparent in the farm workers' fight for protection under the National Labor Relations Act.

The National Labor Relations Board is the major protector of the legal (although arbitrarily restricted and often violated) right of unorganized workers to form a union. Agricultural workers have always been excluded from that legal protection.

The NLRA, however, as amended by the Taft-Hartley Act (which the AFL-CIO has ceased to oppose), outlaws secondary boycotts, such as the grape and lettuce boycotts.

While the legal rights under the NLRA would be a tremendous help to the farm workers in continuing to organize field workers, making illegal the advocacy of a secondary boycott would cripple what has been their most effective tool to date. The farm workers have been fighting for an exemption.

The Teamsters, and the growers, as expected, want the UFWU covered by the Taft-Hartley Act. The AFL-CIO leadership is also in favor of the UFWU coming under the jurisdiction of the NLRA, as amended by the Taft-Hartley Act.

The AFL-CIO, in fact, has exactly the same position as the growers and the Teamsters.

While the AFL-CIO will probably provide enough token support towards its affiliate to protect its reputation, that clearly will not be enough to help the farm workers win their battle against the corporate growers.

The UFWU must rely on the farmworkers themselves with their magnificent fighting spirit, the allies it can find and organize for support in the rest of the union movement, and the Chicano community.

But the farm workers must aggressively fight for that support, showing potential allies how they too will be strengthened by a mutually supportive and independently organized labor alliance.

This is the kind of bold strategy the farm workers need to turn back the massive offensive mounted against them by agribusiness.

There have been dozens of attempts to organize farm workers in American history. None had lasting success, because of the enormous difficulties in organizing poor and often migrant workers, until the Farm Workers Union grew out of the Delano fields.

It has been the United Farm Workers Union that has led great strikes and marches, that rallied millions in support of La Causa and La Huelga, and that improved the conditions of hundreds of thousands of farmworkers.

It was the willingness of the UFWU to abandon the tired methods of the labor bureaucrats for new methods of organizing that has enabled it to do this.

The farm workers' struggle provides an inspiration for, and should be supported by all working people, all oppressed and unorganized workers.

A farm workers' victory is a victory for all workers, for all oppressed people, and for the trade union movement.

A defeat would give a green light for union-busting and the crude and vicious business unionism of the Teamster bureaucracy.

The farm workers' struggle is therefore a crucial one. All militants should demand and organize all possible active support within the labor movement for this critical battle. ■

"Farm Workers Union Fights For Its Life" is a special pamphlet supplement to Workers' Power, the biweekly newspaper of the International Socialists. Bundles of ten copies or more are available at 1¢ a copy. Worker's Power plans continuous coverage of the struggle to defend the Farm Workers Union against the grower/Teamster attack.

The International Socialists have established a special fund to furnish free introductory subscriptions to farmworkers and to teamster rank-and-filers who support the UFW. For additional copies of this pamphlet, a subscription to Workers' Power, or further information on the International Socialists, please write:

*International Socialists,
14131 Woodward, Highland
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Editorial

[Continued from previous page]

The "support" for the farmworkers from the organized labor movement, much advertised in the AFL-CIO press, is largely a sham. The \$1.6 million pledged by the AFL-CIO does not even match the \$2 million already committed by the IBT to organize against the UFW, let alone the tens of millions of dollars in strike funds that most major unions have at their disposal. Nor does this figure match the millions that the AFL-CIO spends in supporting drives in third world countries to establish pro-American, pro-capitalist unions — often with CIA and State Department involvement.

Even more important, while the AFL-CIO did support the grape boycott, it has done nothing to support the boycott of scab lettuce, although the strike and boycott in lettuce by the UFW has been on for almost two years. A further indication of the resistance of the labor bureaucracy to supporting the UFW occurred at the "United Labor Action" demonstration in San Francisco opposing Phase 3, where even the most liberal bureaucrats refused to allow a farm worker speaker, or even any mention of the UFW, because of a conscious decision not to antagonize the Teamsters.

Were the AFL-CIO to seriously support the UFW, it would be mobilizing huge mass demonstrations to help shut down the farms, to defy anti-farmworker laws and injunctions, and in other ways support the farm workers' struggle. The failure to do this proves once again that the official labor leadership is so tied to bureaucratic methods of organization, dictated by its reliance on the capitalist system and the Democratic Party, that it cannot even attempt to mobilize its real strength in order to help organize the labor movement.

The support which is not coming from labor's officials must come from the rank and file. Committees to defend the farmworkers' strike and to build the boycotts should be organized by militants in every union, including the Teamsters. In addition, socialists and radicals must use all possible means to publicize the farmworkers' struggle and its crucial political significance for the entire working class. ■

BEHIND TEAMSTERS' RAID ON U.F.W.

Ken Smith

In their struggles with the United Farm Workers Union, California's agribusiness magnates have always had all the resources of the government at their disposal. But it's not right-wing Governor Ronald Reagan that has made possible the latest all-out grower attack. Another union is to blame — the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Teamster chief Frank Fitzsimmons proclaimed a full-scale Teamster-grower alliance at the convention of the California Farm Bureau last December. Since then, the Teamsters have dramatically escalated their long-standing efforts to raid the farmworkers, herding scabs, signing up the hated labor contractors as "Teamster organizers," renewing previous "contracts" with 170 lettuce and vegetable growers, and signing a bundle of new sweetheart contracts with the California table grape industry.

The Teamsters are a full partner in the growers' campaign to crush the Farmworkers. It is the willingness of the Teamsters to sign sweetheart contracts that has given agribusiness the muscle to launch a showdown with the UFW.

Sweetheart Contracts

The contracts that the Teamster officials and growers are signing aren't called "sweetheart" agreements just because they are inferior contracts. Most contracts signed today by union officials are inferior, providing for fewer jobs, no-strike-clauses, "management rights" sections, and so on. But most contracts are still better than none at all.

The Teamster-Grower Contracts are sweetheart agreements because they are signed — against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the workers — for the single purpose of defeating the workers who are fighting for real contracts under the UFW banner.

The signing of such sweetheart contracts is an old story with the Teamsters Union. For example, Teamster leaders have tried to justify their raids on the UFW with the boast that they organized 40,000 cannery workers back in 1945 and that food processing has since become a "formidable section of the Teamster membership."

It is true that the Teamsters did incorporate 40,000 cannery workers into the union in 1945, but they did so using a red-baiting scare campaign to defeat a CIO organizing effort. It's also true that since then much of the food processing industry has been brought into the Teamsters. But most of these workers suffer under the "protection" of contracts that provide for low-wages, vicious piece-work schemes, seasonal layoffs, and dangerous conditions.

Over the years the bureaucracy has used the strategic leverage of truck drivers to organize many groups of workers from the top down into what is called a "conglomerate" union. At this point, trucking accounts for only about half the membership of the Team-



Teamster President Fitzsimmons boasts to growers of his plans to break the UFW

sters, with the other half coming from such diverse occupations as airline stewardesses, hotel workers and salesmen.

The Teamsters have raided many unions in the past, including the Brewery Workers, the Machinists, the Retail Clerks, and others. Now they have turned against the Farmworkers. The AFL-CIO knows full well that the Teamsters are willing to use their power to scab on other unions, and they know that support to the UFW may bring retaliation from the IBT.

The many varied groups that the Teamsters have organized in one bureaucratic campaign after another make up an enormous but totally fragmented bloc in the Teamsters Union. They provide the bureaucracy with a gigantic dues base. But more than that — drawn from many different occupations with little in common and no way to communicate with each other — they have been unable to defend their own interests against the bureaucracy. Bureaucratically managed from the top down, as they were organized, they have been used as a club against insurgent movements among rank and file truck drivers.

So it was only natural that the Teamsters bureaucrats would look upon the farmworkers as another helpless plum to be picked. In 1961 the Teamsters had their first chance to move into this area when Bud Antle, a big lettuce producer, got into bad financial trouble. They loaned him \$1 million in return for a sweetheart contract "covering" his field workers. But this "success" didn't lead to any real Teamster involvement in the fields until the UFW began organizing workers in the grape vineyards.

Here the piccards saw another opportunity for a raid. In 1966, after the UFW had been striking and boycotting a \$200,000,000 conglomerate, DiGiorgio, for a year, DiGiorgio called in the Teamsters.

In a deal cooked up by DiGiorgio, his friend Governor Pat Brown (a liberal Democrat who had received campaign money from DiGiorgio) and the Teamsters bureaucrats, a rigged election was set up to allow the Teamsters to "represent" DiGiorgio's workers. But the

corporate heads, their politicians, and the IBT bureaucrats underestimated the farm workers — who eventually forced a halfway fair election which the UFW won handily.

Again in the summer of 1970, the Teamsters announced — with the blessings of the growers, of course — that they "represented" the lettuce workers in the Salinas Valley of Northern California. But 7,000 lettuce workers walked off the job in response to a call from the Farm Workers Union. The strike during the harvest season forced several growers (including the giant Interharvest) to hold representation elections — and the field workers voted 95% for the United Farm Workers.

These earlier raids on the UFW were the brain child of West Coast Teamster organizer William Grami, a well-known Reagan supporter. They were something of an embarrassment to such "labor statesmen" as the IBT's Western Conference Director Einar Mohn. But today the entire Teamster bureaucracy is solidly behind the attack on the UFW. It's not just that they want to sign up farmworkers to bleed them for dues. The Teamsters rightly perceive the UFW as a major threat to their whole rotten operation.

This is first of all true because of the canneries, where the Teamsters have some 70,000 workers under contract, the majority of whom are Chicanos, and many of whom are former farmworkers. Militancy in the canneries is on the rise, and the days of this being a "quiet" dues base for the bureaucrats are over.

There are militant (and pro-UFW) Cannery Workers Committees throughout the state, and they are in a position to challenge the entrenched officials. The Teamsters leaders know well that if the UFW gains strength in the fields, then militancy will spill into the canneries, intensifying a dangerous threat to the piccards on top. There could even be a move to de-certify the Teamsters and get them out of the canneries altogether.

But the threat posed by the UFW is even broader than that. The Teamsters' attack on the Farmworkers has become a battle between their corrupt business unionism and the from-the-bottom-up

unionism of the UFW. If the Teamsters lose now, it will represent a defeat for their basic approach of business unionism.

A defeat would discredit the bureaucracy before the membership, and strengthen opposition currents in the union. It would tarnish the Teamsters' phoney reputation of "crooked but able to deliver the goods." In short, it would threaten the bureaucracy, its policies, and all that it stands for.

Although the bureaucracy is united behind the raid on the farmworkers, the rank and file of the Teamsters are not. Although most have little information except the Teamster Magazine (which tells of happy farmworkers embracing Teamster organizers!) many members have spoken out against the raid, especially in California.

Los Angeles drivers Local 208, which wildcatted against Fitzsimmons' settlement in 1970, voted unanimously to condemn the raid and support the UFW. Three locals in Northern California have passed similar resolutions, including soft drink bottlers who were on strike for 6 months and were sold-out by the International (and who received picket line support from the UFW during their strike). Of course the cannery workers are a source of opposition as well.

This highlights the need for Chavez and the UFW to actively support the rank and file oppositionists in the Teamsters. They should make it clear that they are fighting for a different concept of unionism and openly support dissident cannery workers and drivers. In particular, if any insurgencies break out around the National Master Freight Agreement (which covers 450,000 drivers and expires June 30), or the Cannery Contract, which expires the following day, the UFW should be prepared to lead labor support for the rank and file of the Teamsters, and thus concretely link the struggles of farm workers to the struggles of Teamsters.

The Teamsters' raid must be opposed throughout the entire labor movement. Socialists and all militants should fight for the labor movement to take the side of the UFW in the strongest way possible.



Workers' Power photo by Ken Smith



Chicago: Moreno Hits Capitalist Parties

Dan Lawrence

The name of Angel Moreno on the June 5 ballot for the Seventh Congressional District seat will for the first time in many years give Chicago's Latin and working people a real political alternative. Breaking with capitalist political parties, and posing many real solutions for some of the problems of the Latins, Blacks, poor and working people of the Southwest Side, Moreno's campaign points toward a new direction — political action based on the independent power and organization of workers and oppressed people.

Moreno's base of support is among groups in Chicago's Latin community. Chicago contains more than a quarter of a million Latins: mostly Mexican, but also 90,000 Puerto Ricans and about 8,000 Cubans.

Latins live crowded into three or four of Chicago's oldest and most dilapidated neighborhoods. The first is the Southwest side where the poverty and oppression of the barrio and the ghetto run side by side for miles.

The second is the Northwest side, where Latins and Blacks inherit the hundred-year-old houses and schools to which the realtors and politicians have confined them.

Finally, there is South Chicago, in the shadow of the steel mills and constantly fouled by their soot and stench. Tens of thousands of other Latins live crammed into the industrial areas of East Chicago and Hammond, Indiana, among the refineries and the mills.

Excluding Blacks, Latins are the fastest growing ethnic group in the Chicago area and are now second in size only to the Polish.

Unity and Disunity

While held together by their common position at the bottom of the economic ladder, the discrimination which they all suffer, and by their common language, there are also many factors which drive the Latin community apart.

Boricuans, Puerto Ricans, come largely from the East Coast or from Puerto Rico, an island which is 90% industrial and urban and is a colony of the US, while Chicanos come from California, Texas, or Mexico, or have grown up in the Mexican area of Chicago.

If they come from the Western States, they have probably been part of the agricultural working class, migratory farm workers. If they are from Mexico they are leaving a backward country only half urban, with only a minimum of light industry and ruled by a terroristic authoritarian regime.

The cultures and the dialects of Spanish spoken by the various groups are very different. Political interest in the Puerto Rican community is oriented toward Puerto Rican independence and perhaps towards the

Puerto Rican Socialist Party and the Cuban Revolution.

Working class Chicanos, on the other hand, have identified with the movement of the United Farm Workers led by Cesar Chavez.

Cubans are often conservative, having come into conflict with Castro's regime either from the right in defense of property and privilege, or from the left, in defense of democracy or working class rights; in any case they are often soured on "the left."

The Seventh Congressional District is one of the areas of Latin concentration. It runs from Lake Michigan to the city's western border in a strip between two and three miles wide and contains a quarter of a million people, about 37% Latin, half Black and the rest White.

Moreno himself described the area when he announced his candidacy:

"Let us look at some of the problems that are evident in all of our neighborhoods. Our children are sent into dangerously deteriorating overcrowded schools.

"Our schools are not controlled by the community in which they exist, but by a viciously corrupt educational bureaucracy, bent on its own self-preservation and not meeting the educational needs of the children.

"On your way here you could not miss the obvious deterioration of the overcrowded housing in which we are forced to live.

"At the same time there exists thousands of empty lots in this district alone, destined not for human habitation, but ill-planned high-rise buildings, and urban renewal projects that can only become concrete cages, unsuitable as dwelling units.

"The economic situation in our communities is such that we pay the highest prices for the lowest quality goods. Unemployment ranges from 25 to 30 percent within the age group of 16 to 25 years old.

"Residents of this Congressional District, whose population has more than doubled within the last fifty years, find themselves with recreational facilities merely adequate for the population of 1920."

Moreno, originally from McAllen, Texas, is a national officer of the Raza Unida Party and the Party's Illinois President and organizer. He and his supporters have seen building Raza Unida, which Moreno translates the "United People" as part of building a Latin Movement working with other poor and oppressed people.

For many months Angel Moreno worked primarily with the Asociacion por Derechos Obreros (APO) (The Association for Workers' Rights). The main activity of this group was fighting to gain more jobs for Latins on the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), pointing out that only 1.9% of the CTA workers were Latins.

In May 1972 the group began negotiating with the CTA, attempting to set up a hiring plan and a time table.

After the consistent refusal of the CTA to negotiate a reasonable plan the APO group led a mass demonstration in the loop on July 30, 1972 in which 12 people were arrested.

When negotiations continued to be fruitless another demonstration took place September 25, 1972 in which over 500 people interfered with CTA bus lines and another 32 persons were arrested.

In addition to fighting for more jobs for Latins, Moreno has also worked to build the anti-war movement and to point out the connection between the war in Vietnam and the oppression and exploitation of minorities in the US.

Moreno was spokesman for the Chicano-Boricua contingent of the January 20, 1973 anti-war demonstration which took place in Chicago.

In his speech delivered at that time, Moreno stressed the connections between American imperialism in Vietnam and the oppression of Chicano and Puerto Rican working people at home. He ended that speech: *"Imperialism must be defeated! The War is yet to be fought!"*

In addition to this Moreno and his supporters helped mobilize the Latin community to participate in the April 4 demonstration against the budget cuts organized in Chicago by PUSH, NWRO and several unions. They've also built the Farah boycott demonstrations.

Because of the discriminatory voter registration policies on the West Side Moreno was unable to secure the 10,000 signatures he needed, but due to a quirk in the election law he did get on the ballot. The law states that anyone who requested nomination and is not challenged will be on the ballot.

While Democratic candidate Cardiss Collins has distributed her portrait widely she has had nothing to say on the issues that confront the West Side community. The Republican candidate isn't even seriously considered by the poor and working people of the area.

Moreno is the only candidate who has presented a program which, while it has limitations, speaks to the needs of the area and presents real solutions.

Two-Headed Monster

Moreno breaks completely with the capitalist parties: "The two-party system," says Moreno, "has become a two-headed monster bent on our enslavement and exploitation."

"I have lost all faith in the Democratic Party. They don't want us to participate. They don't want us to decide our own destinies."

Moreno believes that Black people, as well as Latins, will have to break with the Democrats.

Moreno believes that he can best represent all of the people of his district, including Blacks, because, as he says, "... our problems are basically the same: police brutality, over-crowded medical facilities, over-crowded and deteriorating schools and houses. No construction is being done. Problems with welfare."

Moreno has opposed wage controls; demanded that funds used in Vietnam be spent to provide full employment, jobs, and medical centers; called for self-determination for Puerto Rico; and, most important, attempted to build a movement that will fight for these desperately needed changes.

Moreno's campaign and the Raza Unida Party, in order to become an effective political organization must organize and mobilize the working people of the barrios and ghettos.

We support Raza Unida in its struggle to give Latins political representation and to free them of the domination of the racist capitalist political parties.

However, we must also recognize that Latins and Blacks are concentrated in the industrial work force. Being concentrated they have immense potential force: the power to make things stop.

Working class and Latin militants and revolutionary socialists should be involved in this campaign, attempting to make it a success by making connections between the campaign and those workers.

Working class politics should be brought to Raza Unida, and a real independent political alternative presented to workers. In this way a giant step toward a party of working people — a labor party — can be built. ■



NATIONAL OPPRESSION, NEW SHAKEUPS SHOW GROWING SOVIET CRISIS

Paul Benjamin



For the past year the ruling bureaucratic class in Russia has intensified its new attack on the rights of national minorities within the Soviet Union. This new offensive includes traditional aspects of "Russification" — attacks on the languages and historical traditions of the various national republics. But its goal is a fundamental restructuring of the Russian economy, in the interests of the central bureaucracy.

1. "New Community"— Intensified National Oppression

The justification for this, according to Communist Party boss Leonid Brezhnev, is the creation of a "single economic organism" throughout Russia, and the creation of a "Soviet socialist culture, uniform in spirit and in its fundamental content."

Political, economic and cultural propagandists have been stressing that "a qualitatively new historical community of people" now exists in Russia. This of course means that relations between nationalities must develop some "qualitative new features" of their own.

In practice, this means a renewed emphasis on the study of the Russian language in all the national republics. It also means that social scientists, writers and artists will be required to emphasize the "drawing together of nations" when discussing their own country's history, economy and culture.

In doing so, they will be expected to condemn "outdated and worthless practices which are adhered to under the pretext of consideration for specific national features." This rhetoric thinly veils the anti-Socialist, anti-democratic suppression of national rights which is the real content of the campaign.

2. Lenin vs. Stalin on National Self-Determination

The nominal occasion for this campaign was the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922. The irony in this is shown by a brief look at the real history of the founding of the USSR.

In 1921 and 1922, the Caucasian Republics of Georgia, Armenia and the Ukraine opposed the attempts of the Soviet Commission on Nationalities — headed by Stalin — to restrict their rights of national independence. This was part of the general question of the relationship between the Russian Soviet Federation and the other national Soviet governments.

Stalin argued for an "autonomization plan" which would incorporate the independent national Republics as "autonomous" Republics within the Russian Federation. The government of the Russian Federation would also be, according to Stalin's plan, the government of all the Republics.

Lenin successfully fought against this plan, arguing for a voluntary union of the various Republics. Indeed, the national question was the occasion of his open break with Stalin, which ultimately led to his urging, from his deathbed, that Stalin be removed as General Secretary of the Communist Party.

Lenin himself had originally urged the economic integration of the three republics. *But Lenin absolutely rejected the idea that this integration, or any form of integration, could legitimately be forced on the non-Russian Republics against their will.* This distinction is the key to understanding the Leninist method of dealing with the national question in a multinational state.

3. The Bolshevik Revolution and the National Question

The victory of the Bolshevik Party did not end the national question in Russia; it merely opened up the road to its solution. Tsarist Russia had been an empire known as the "prison-house of nations," in which the Tsarist bureaucracy crushed the national aspirations of its subject peoples.

The Bolshevik Party owed a great part of its victory to its support of the self-determination of peoples within the Russian Empire. Through this support, it was able to win the workers and peasants of the oppressed nations to the cause of the Russian proletariat.

The young Soviet Republics were proud of their independence and suspicious of any attempts to limit it. Consequently, Lenin urged the utmost caution in advocating plans for economic and political union. In doing so, he recognized that the national governments had legitimate grounds for suspicion.

It would be all too easy for the arguments for efficiency, unity and against "national deviations" to become the cloak for policies designed to subjugate the newly independent states to the control of Russia, while maintaining a purely formal allegiance to the right of self-determination.

It was precisely this danger to which Lenin pointed in his attacks on Stalin, saying that, "It is quite natural in such circumstances that the 'freedom to secede from the Union,' by which we justify ourselves, will be a mere scrap of paper, unable to defend the non-Russians from that onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great Russian chauvinist, in substance a rascal and a tyrant, such as the typical Russian bureaucrat."

4. Stalinist Counter-Revolution and Russian Imperialism

These fears were not only realized, but surpassed during the years following Lenin's death. The isolation of the USSR by the defeat of the workers in Europe, and the decimation of the revolutionary proletariat in Russia after years of civil war, allowed the

bureaucracy to consolidate a complete stranglehold on political power.

The bureaucracy, through a brutally exploitative policy of economic expansion and a series of purges which liquidated all the revolutionary forces and the Bolshevik Party itself, transformed itself into a new ruling class which maintains itself through its control of the state machinery and the nationalized means of production in the hands of that state.

In consolidating its power, the Stalinist regime destroyed all those institutions which could limit or challenge its totalitarian rule: the Soviets, trade unions and other working class organizations created by the Revolution. This included as well the elimination of the national republics as independent political entities.

As he crushed the democratic rights of the national minorities, Stalin declared the problem of Great Russian chauvinism "eliminated" and the real danger to be the "reactionary nationalism" of the republics.

In the name of "unity," Stalin destroyed the USSR in all but name and opened up the period of Stalinist imperialism — the subjugation of nations to the power of the Great Russian central bureaucracy.

In the course of the 1930's, as part of the forced collectivization of the peasantry and the Great Purges, the Communist Parties of the national republics were utterly destroyed.

By 1938 the whole or majority of thirty national governments were purged. Literally millions were deported in attacks against "reactionary" national elements in the population.

The Russian language became a compulsory subject in the schools, while the Cyrillic alphabet replaced the Latin alphabets used in the ethnic republics.

The Kalmuk Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was liquidated by the Supreme Soviet in 1943. The Chochno-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was also abolished. Three Muslim nations — the Crimean Tatars, the Karachi, and the Baikars — disappeared without public explanation, literally wiped off the map.

The extension of Stalinist imperialism across the historic boundaries of Russia was an extension of the same policy. Thus the Baltic Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, as well as part of Poland, were swallowed up in World War II.

Following the war, through the collapse of the bourgeoisie and the intervention of the Red Army in Eastern Europe, the bureaucratic collectivist social system represented by Stalin's rule in Russia was expanded to Eastern Europe as well.

Thus the economies and political direction of the Eastern European nations were also subjected to the needs of the ruling class in Russia.

In those Republics which survive on paper, the most powerful political posts are held by men appointed by Moscow through the "Department of Party Organs for the Union Republics."

The head of the political police is generally a Russian. The Chief Prosecutor is responsible only to Moscow. The Military Commandants of the chief cities are likewise appointees of the Kremlin.

This is what Leonid Brezhnev refers to when he says, "In summing up the heroic accomplishments of the past half century, we have every reason to say that the nationalities question, in the form in which it came down to us from the past, has been resolved completely, resolved definitively and irrevocably."

5. Bureaucratic Consolidation and Economic Crisis

It is with these "heroic accomplishments" in mind that we must examine the "single economic organism," the "qualitative new historical community" which is put forward by the Russian propagandists as justification for the new campaign of Russification.

For the truth of the matter is that this "single economic organism" is in serious trouble.

Some aspects of Russia's economic difficulties have been well-publicized. The chronic weakness of Russian agriculture resulted in the wheat purchases from the US last fall. The inability of the economic system to generate sufficient capital funds has helped bring about a general increase in East-West trade and the wave of American, European and Japanese investment in Russia.

On the domestic front, the regime has scrapped its 1971-75 Five Year Plan in an effort to consolidate and centralize its industrial planning.

A key to this consolidation is the elimination of the old planning system, in which planning regions followed the boundaries of Russia's eighteen ethnic republics. These will be replaced by seven huge "interregional planning areas."

6. Russification vs. "Parochialism," "National Egoism"

It appears that the regime fears an outbreak of national resistance to this plan. This fear lies behind the new Russification campaign, which is clearly directed towards this danger.

Thus P. Masherov, head of the Byelorussian Communist Party, wrote in October, "Economic ties between nationalities and between republics, which are constantly expanding and deepening along all lines, are making for the closest possible combination of economic interests of all the nations in the country and the virtual fusion of these interests into a single nation-

wide interest corresponding to society's progressive development.

"For this reason; in today's conditions all vestiges of parochialism, national egoism and isolation are intolerable in any form whatsoever."

"In economic relations, this type of anomaly may be expressed, on the one hand, in a special kind of parasitism, in a desire to receive as many assets and capital investments from the all-Union funds as possible; and on the other hand, in the belated and incomplete fulfillment of obligations to the country as a whole, in the absence of proper concern for ensuring on-time inter-republic cooperative deliveries and the best and most efficient utilization of allocations from the all-union funds, as well as of local resources and assets."

All this, asserts Masherov, not only leads to losses of a material and economic nature but also "has a negative effect on people's frame of mind and psychology and impedes the formation of internationalist consciousness."

7. Georgia and Armenia: Reshuffling the Bureaucracy

Recent shifts in the bureaucracies of the "national" republics indicate that there is indeed a problem of "national egoism" in the ethnic republics, as local bureaucrats compete for Russia's limited capital funds. Thus last June the head of the Georgian Communist Party and the Minister and Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs were replaced.

In Armenia, the second secretary of the CP Central Committee has been ousted from his post. In the non-Russian Republics, this is usually a watchdog post, given to a Russian national from the Moscow bureaucracy. Armenia had been an exception; it is no longer.

Last November, the head of the security police, also a native Armenian, was replaced by a Russian from the central bureaucracy.

And recently a veteran Communist Party official, Alexander M. Yakovlev, who sharply attacked excessive Russian nationalism and over-glorification of the Russian past, has reportedly been ousted as acting chief of the ideological section of the Russian Communist Party's Central Committee.

The ultimate consequences of this policy are spelled out in Russian economic and technical journals. In an article called "The Leninist Nationalities Policy and Economic Regionalization in the USSR" the economist V. Kistanov stated that, "In a number of instances, the Union-republic boundaries and the territorial economic complexes that objectively exist or are in the process of formation do not coincide; this frequently complicates the resolution of the regions' economic development." He recommends, "therefore it would evidently be advisable to readjust these boundaries."

Kistanov reveals that in some cases these "complications" have already been dealt with. He concludes, "This has already made it necessary in certain instances not only to create inter-republic economic agencies but also, by legislation, to make certain changes in boundaries between Union republics."

The thrust of this and other articles is clear: national boundaries will be ignored if necessary according to the lights of the central bureaucracy. Even the paper existence of the national republics could be brought into question.

This possibility was explicitly opened up in the conclusion of Brezhnev's speech on the national question, in which he states, "We expect to sub-

mit appropriate proposals on a new text of the Constitution before the next Party Congress."

Given the substance of this speech, we should remember that Stalin's 1936 constitution includes articles maintaining the right of nations within the USSR to self-determination, including the right to secede.

Given the "irrevocable" character of the regime's solution to the national question, even these paper guarantees may be on the way out.

8. Revolutionary Socialism and National Liberation

It is quite true, as the Stalinists are fond of repeating, that Lenin said that socialism will "facilitate and enormously accelerate the drawing together and amalgamation of nations."

But in Russia the ethnic republics have been neither drawn together nor amalgamated. Rather, they have been blasted apart, to the extent that the bureaucracy has been able to do so. And this dynamic has nothing to do with socialism.

Lenin pointed out again and again that imperialism also aids in "bringing together nations." In doing so, he argued that the economic dynamic of dependence and interdependence has nothing whatever to do with the right of national movements to their own national state, with the question of the political self-determination of nations, which revolutionary socialists must deal with in assessing the recent events in Russia.

Socialists oppose any form of imperialism, whether that of the reac-

tionary capitalist world system or that of the equally reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy. Therefore we support the right of self-determination for all peoples caught up in the web of either of these imperialist systems.

In doing so, we point out that it is the working class alone which is capable through socialist revolution, of achieving a lasting solution to the national question.

In discussing the national question in Russia, Leon Trotsky stated, "The right of national self-determination is, of course, a democratic and not a socialist principle. But genuinely democratic principles are supported and realized in our era only by the revolutionary proletariat; it is for this reason that they interlace with socialist tasks."

These principles, reaffirmed by Trotsky a generation ago, remain the standard by which revolutionary socialists must measure their attitude toward the national question in Russia. We support the national aspirations of the ethnic minorities in Russia.

We support the revolutionary overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucrats presently in control of these "national republics," and the reconstitution of these republics as independent socialist republics.

The democratic demands of the oppressed nationalities, far from representing "reactionary parochialism," will not only challenge the ability of the Stalinist bureaucracy to strengthen its economic apparatus, but will also contribute to the working class socialist revolution that will destroy the bureaucratic class in Russia itself.

Under these conditions, the national republics can again determine for themselves, of their own free will, the question of their inter-relations with the Russian state and people.



The Song Is Over— Stalin Embalmed



But the Melody Lingers On— Chairman Brezhnev



"State of Siege": Heroism in Limbo

Ken Morgan

"State of Siege," a tense, exciting movie about recent political events in Uruguay, is based on the kidnapping and eventual execution of an American police "expert" (Yves Montand) by the Tupamaro urban guerrillas.

As in "Z" and "The Confession," two of Costa-Gravas' earlier films, the director has used fast cutting, and hand-held, "hidden" cameras to create a documentary-like effect.

The result is fast-moving and entertaining. The political significance, which is what has generated the controversy, unfortunately does not measure up to the artistic level.

The film portrays two groups, the Tupamaros against police and army security forces, fighting an elaborate duel. The Tupamaros, we are told, are for freedom and act in the interests of "the people."

The police and army gangsters, on the other hand, are for repression, and act on the behalf of the rulers of Uruguay and their United States overlords.

The film, however, with its lack of

political analysis of a political situation, makes the opposing forces come off like two Mission Impossible teams: skillful, daring, and brave, but with little relation to actual conditions in Uruguay.

The Tupamaros have few people, and minimal resources, but are intelligent and incorruptible. The police leaders have the whole apparatus of the government to use (arms, electronic devices, helicopters, thousands of men), but are not very competent.

Ironically, the kidnapped American they are searching for was sent to Uruguay to train the military in the techniques of repression.

The sympathies of the audience are correctly drawn to the guerrillas: predominantly young and beautiful, they remain cool under tremendous pressure.

The precision-timing and brilliant execution of the kidnapping are to be admired, but Costa-Gravas builds the well-deserved sympathies of the audience on the basis of romantic idealism. The style and commitment of the Tupamaros to "the people" remains an abstraction throughout the movie.

The police are neither as smooth nor as beautiful, but with their ability to draw on the total resources of the

state eventually pull off their operation. The Tupamaro leaders are captured.

The film does, indeed, show us a lot: the industrialists and bankers whom the police serve, a rather pitiful parliament debating events it cannot control, liberal journalists and a university rector discussing a favorite topic—legal loopholes in the constitution.

It is what we do not see, however, that leaves the film somewhat flat and unsatisfying. The film never explains the relationship between the Tupamaros and "the people" under whose banner they fight.

The people, and especially the workers, are shown merely as bystanders to the struggle.

The Tupamaros, in large part, came from the middle-class—they are mostly young professionals.

It was their politics, as well as the over-powering force of the state, that led to their defeat, because they attempted to substitute their rebellion for a workers' rebellion, thereby isolating themselves from the potential power of the class.

Isolated, they were all the more easily picked off by the police and the army.

This criticism is not simply a political criticism, since the political vacuum results in an artistic vacuum. The

emotional content of the film, the attempt to move and involve the audience, is ultimately false.

In this film the tortured, the exploited and the oppressed don't ever fight for themselves—only the Tupamaros fight for them.

"State of Siege" could just as easily be about a band of sheep-men fighting the ranchers, or Eliot Ness and his Untouchables against Al Capone and the corrupt city officials.

"State of Siege" clearly shows that for a political artist to simply be an anti-imperialist and a leftist is not sufficient. Although Costa-Gravas' films are exciting, they arouse little more emotional impact than a "French Connection."

Political movies, movies which attempt to break out of the old standards of heroes and heroines, are perhaps the hardest of all to make—they require the filmmaker to find some other protagonists, some other force to build tension around.

Eisenstein, working in the period before the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, was able to portray the masses as hero, as the leading actor. Costa-Gravas, unfortunately, has nothing—either artistically or politically—with which to fill that gap. ■

NMU

[Continued from page 7]

provides the best opportunity for militants doing that.

Using his campaign as a starting point, NMU militants must demand that Morrissey build a genuine rank and file organization. Morrissey must not be supported uncritically.

An important part of organizing by militants must be exposing the holes and weaknesses of Morrissey's program and past history.

While Morrissey says he is for union democracy, he proposes no means for rank and file control through a body of elected representatives with real power in the union.

To save seamen's jobs, Morrissey simply proposes a tax on the super-profits of those shipping companies which operate runaway fleets flying "flags of convenience". Morrissey's answer to the problem of jobs, while better than Curran's open reactionary protectionism, is no more viable in reality.

In the long run, seamen must fight for a real way to provide and guarantee the jobs necessary — for a nationalized shipping industry under workers' control.

This, along with many other important programmatic demands, is

supported by another grouping, the NMU Militant Solidarity Caucus, which is running one candidate for president in this election. This caucus is uncritically endorsed by the Spartacist League newspaper, *Workers' Vanguard*.

The MSC, despite its advanced program of "class struggle" demands, is unfortunately using the election campaign for precisely the wrong purpose — not to advance the real class struggle by building a fighting rank and file movement, but rather to run in effect a socialist educational campaign in the union election.

It is not only the "full program" of the MSC, which does not advance workers' consciousness but rather leaps over it, but also its conduct in the campaign itself which reveals its abstentionist and sectarian approach. The MSC, able to find only one candidate to run on the basis of its "full program," urges the workers to leave the positions for other officers blank. Such a campaign is unlikely to be taken seriously by rank and file militants.

The MSC and other NMU militants should be using the Morrissey campaign to begin organizing independent rank and file activity and organization.

We urge members of the MSC to disband their own campaign for office, without in any way demanding that they abandon their organization or program, and to critically support Morrissey as a step toward building a struggle for a genuinely democratic, rank-and-file-controlled NMU and for a real struggle for the defense of rights and jobs of the seamen.

No socialist or militant can be indifferent to the outcome of this election.

Sims

[Continued from page 6]

count the challenged ballots and instead ordered a new election.

At a local meeting it was voted that there should be a month's notice before the next election to allow for adequate campaign time. Ignoring the vote, McKinnon called an election on five days notice, in violation of the UAW constitution and federal labor laws.

McKinnon won by 23 votes. Sims again challenged, but this time his challenge was ignored.

Since then, McKinnon was discovered to have his hand in the local's till to the tune of \$8000. He was "reprimanded" by the UAW bureaucracy and told he must pay it back, but he was allowed to keep his local president job and to run again.

In this latest election, then, Sims has scored a smashing success over both the company and the union bureaucracy. It gives an opportunity to the UNC to start building itself a real base among black production workers, who will be the heart of any upsurge in the auto industry.

The success, however, is only a first step. Though Sims will be President, virtually all the rest of the offices are held by bureaucratic types — in-plant and out.

He will have to wage an aggressive public campaign before the rank and file to win them to his ideas about how to organize the local and how to wage a militant fight, and convince them to replace the officials he now has.

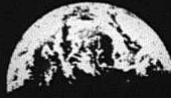
Moreover, the momentum he has established gives him the opportunity to go beyond one plant. There are organized, if weak, oppositions existing in many of the Chrysler plants.

Sims could call together these groups and begin forming a Chrysler-wide opposition whose first task would be to fight for a better contract in the upcoming fall contract negotiations. Such a movement could begin to provide the base for the launching of an effective opposition throughout the UAW. ■



international report

Paul Benjamin



Japan: Tokyo paralyzed by general strike

Tokyo and other Japanese cities were paralyzed last month by a general strike of public sector workers which hit railways, post office and telecommunications, docks, hospitals, rubbish disposal and internal airways. The strike, which was planned to last three days, ended with concessions by the government after the first day.

The public sector strike was part of a strike wave that usually happens in Japan every spring as wages are renegotiated. In the past 20 years of Japan's "economic miracle," annual wage increases have been between ten and fifteen percent.

This year the unions, encouraged by socialist and Communist Party gains in December's elections, are fighting for improved pensions and social services as well as for a record wage increase.

The struggle in the public sector is especially bitter, as the government still refuses to recognize public employees' right to strike and follows each strike with harsh reprisals.



Nurses at a sanitarium

Belgium: Strike wave hits back at runaway inflation

Belgium, which has had more general strikes than any other European country, could be facing another one with transport workers, dockers, air traffic controllers and factory workers all striking in the past few weeks.

Many strikes have been wildcats, and some union officials got a stormy reception from workers. Typically, union leaders have accused "leftists" of fomenting trouble.

The outlook seems bleak for the Leburton government, formed in January after a two month long cabinet crisis. The inflation affecting all of Europe has caught Belgium in a vicious circle.

Belgian workers' wages are attached to a cost-of-living index, and since the government is the largest employer, it has to raise taxes to cover wage costs. But if it does so it meets the resistance of the strong and militant small traders.

Chile: Form workers' militias to fight growing fascist threat!

The illusory calm that surrounded Chile's Congressional elections in March has now been broken. The elections themselves solved nothing.

The Chilean working class rallied to defeat the threat of right-wing parties increasing their control of the legislature to the point where they might impeach Allende, head of Chile's Popular Unity government. But this victory simply guaranteed the continuation of Chile's constitutional crisis.

More important, the election campaign itself brought to the fore the more "moderate" forces on both sides. On the right, this means mainly the Christian Democrats, who hope to control Allende through legislative sanctions rather than overthrowing him outright.

On the left, the "moderates" are Allende's supporters in the Socialist Party and the Communist Party itself, which hope to reach some kind of accommodation with the Christian Democrats that will allow them to stay in power while providing some crumbs for the workers' movement that brought them into office.

Now these forces are losing control of the situation. The right wing, led by the National Party and several outright fascist groups, is growing impatient with constitutional battles. The workers themselves expect an extension of reforms by the government to combat Chile's economic crisis.

This has caused both sides to harden their positions. Allende has doubled the five lowest grades of wages to keep up with inflation, has nationalized a few more companies, and has implemented reforms in the educational system.

The Christian Democrats are trying to impeach Allende's entire cabinet, and are pushing for constitutional reforms that would annul any nationalization of industry which has occurred after October 14, 1971.

In fact, the real struggle is no longer focussed on the various parliamentary maneuvers. The battle has returned to the streets.

In the last week of April the right wing brought private school students on to the streets in violent anti-Allende demonstrations. They seized control of several town centers, including the capital, Santiago.

Aided by squads of the fascist National Front for Fatherland and Freedom, they attacked trade unionists and the left-wing parties and struck at their offices and printing presses.

The following day the center of Santiago was again filled with anti-Allende demonstrators. In the afternoon, the Chilean trade union federation brought some 10,000 workers in from the industrial suburbs for a counter-demonstration.

As they passed by the building housing the Christian Democratic Party headquarters, a machine gun opened up from the roof of the building, killing one worker and wounding at least seven others.

In the face of the deteriorating situation, Allende remains determined to present himself as the defender of bourgeois legality. In his May Day speech he urged the workers to increase production: "Only the devastating force of the people can detain this fascist threat by producing more, working harder, and showing greater total effort."

More to the point, on May 6, the army revoked all civilian gun permits and banned unauthorized public meetings.

The Chilean workers' movement cannot afford to stand still for this kind of rhetoric and this kind of law. In the face of mounting fascist attacks, it must defend its right to meet and its right to defend such meetings against attack.

In doing so, the workers' movement will have to develop its own means of defense, its own militia. For it is clear that the Allende government has neither the ability nor the desire to mount a serious defense of the workers' movement in Chile.



Spain: May Day demonstrations ignite battles with police

Freedom to demonstrate does exist in Spain after all. On the day after May Day there were demonstrations in Madrid, accompanying what may be the beginning of a real crisis for Franco's government.

These demonstrations met with none of the repression usually faced by students and workers who oppose the regime. The demonstrators were policemen demanding that repression be stepped up.

May Day had been, as usual in Spain, a day of violent action by the police against workers trying to celebrate. For workers in Spain, who have no democratic rights, merely to demonstrate in the streets is regarded as an intolerable attack on "society."

But this time the victims were not all, as normally, on the same side. The demonstrators defended themselves and some policemen were wounded. One policeman was killed near the Atocha railway station.

The next day's demonstration in Madrid, headed by a lieutenant-general of the paramilitary police, was organized to protest that police had not been



allowed to use firearms on May Day.

In Barcelona, 2,000 demonstrators wearing the insignia of the secret police marched through the streets manhandling anyone who refused to give the fascist salute.

In the Cortes, the Spanish parliament, a deputy got up and said that, "the civil war which began on July 18, 1936 has not yet come to an end."

Demonstrating policemen are listened to in Spain. The government immediately promised to "guarantee public order" and to increase the police force's "means of defending society."

The government also condemned the use of violence. Presumably it meant by working class demonstrators, since the violence of the police who regularly cause workers' deaths passes without comment.

Czech Stalinists intensify repression, police terror.

The Czech government has recently armed itself with an arsenal of new laws designed to aid in the "normalization" of Czech society since the Russian invasion in 1968.

Under the new legislation "violations of work discipline" — they mean strikes — will be forbidden to members of agricultural and productive cooperatives.

The "diffusion of false information to foreigners," and attempts to flee the country, will be met by severe penalties.

For those who have been "re-educated" through prison terms, the government has devised a system of post-penal surveillance. Convicts must of course report to the police regularly.

In addition, police now have the right to break into their homes at any time, to make sure that they are not seeing anyone who "could complicate the process of correction" and that their homes have not become a place for the "gathering of anti-social elements."

The main point of these laws is that the government found it necessary to enact them at all. Nearly five years after the "Prague spring," the government still finds it necessary to reinforce its authority. Evidently movements of opposition to the government have continued to exist.



Rejoinder on UNC

In *Workers' Power* No. 77 a letter by Neal Brigham and Dan Potter appeared criticizing an earlier article by me on a February conference of the United National Caucus — UAW.

As the letter was submitted just before the copy deadline, my reply was delayed until this issue.

The letter characterizes my political approach as "in effect, dropping all the 'controversial' parts of a real transitional program."

According to Leon Trotsky, leader of the Russian Revolution and author of the 1938 "Draft Transitional Program", the slogan of *soviets* (cross-industry councils of workers representatives) crowns any transitional program.

Do Brigham and Potter propose that the UNC should raise the call for *soviets*?

Isn't it true that any workers' movement which in the long run cannot build such organs of workers' power and carry them to state power will be crushed? Yes, it is!

Soviets are the means through which a national workers movement can democratically organize itself, involve and give voice to unorganized workers, and constitute the basis for the workers to rule the society.

But the IS does not raise the slogan of *soviets* today because it is a *pure abstraction* to the movement at the existing non-revolutionary level of struggle.

It is not our duty to put forward as a program for the organizations of the working class movement today everything which we believe will be necessary in the future (no matter how devoid of content at present).

Instead we must constantly re-evaluate the political situation and the relationship of forces and raise our demands as they become *meaningful* (which does not mean non-controversial) as solutions to the problems faced by the movement.

Unless Brigham and Potter raise to the UNC the demand for *soviets*, the question is not whether we "drop" parts of our transitional program, but rather *which* parts we raise as necessary program for the movement today. To this question their letter addresses not one word.

Neal and Dan provide no method of advancing the movement to our ideas. They caution us to "never put [our program] forward in sectarian or ultimatum-like fashion."

Content dominates form, however, and there is no non-sectarian way to seriously put forward a sectarian program.

In the auto industry today, there exists a fundamental conflict between the companies and the present UAW leadership on the one hand, both committed at all costs to capitalism and the profits it requires, and the mass of workers on the other hand (especially production workers, the most numerous and most oppressed), who face daily all the devastating companions of this

social system — slavery on the job, inflation, unemployment, and racism.

The former's forces are organized and led from corporate headquarters and from Solidarity House. They have behind them seemingly limitless money and the full power of the state.

The latter are unorganized and without an existing alternate leadership.

But there *does* exist in the plants a *potential alternate leadership*: thousands of rank and file militants, leaders of the shop floor struggle, many of whom have already learned that a struggle for their needs requires fighting both the company and the union bureaucrats.

These militants represent the potential for a revolutionary part in the future.

Our task of building a socialist force and training it for revolutionary

But the UNC program provides the basis and *direction* for a movement to be built.

The letter writers assert that this program "laid the basis for our past defeats." Where is their evidence for this?

They have every right to decide that our work — and the work of all revolutionaries within the UAW since its founding — has been totally wrong, but in proposing so serious a revision of our politics they have the duty to show how it "laid the basis for our past defeats."

They must provide an alternate program as well, not in the form of a couple of general slogans but concretely. What should the IS have raised that it didn't?

It is impossible to pin down the political content of the letter's vague generalities in order to respond to them.

My criticisms of the UNC leadership were on the need for a black production worker leadership and against what I felt was their redbaiting at the conference.

I agree in addition with Dave Finkel's criticism of their position against immediately and irrevocably breaking with the Democratic Party.

Neal and Dan's problem is not that they are critical but that they have a different criticism to make. They want the IS to criticize this rank and file caucus because it is not a revolutionary sect. Brigham and Potter need to learn the difference between

We joined Fox and Kelly in opposing this attempt to turn the UNC into a sect.

This year we fought the Communist League again as they sided with UAW International and a local leadership in opposing a wildcat strike carried out in defense of militants fired for struggling against speedup.

Joe Fine

Reply to Finkel

David Finkel's reply to the letter by Brigham and Potter criticizing *Workers' Power* coverage of the United National Caucus (*Workers' Power* No. 77) not only is vituperative and bombastic in tone, but also confirms most of the charges which were advanced only tentatively in the letter itself.

Now it is the *Workers' Power* editor who feels he must uncritically defend Art Fox and Pete Kelly even when this means whitewashing Fox's obvious eagerness to see socialist literature tables taken down by building guards.

Now it is *Workers' Power* that distorts Brigham and Potter's criticism of the program of the UNC leaders, declares that Brigham and Potter attack the demands of "the existing rank and file movement in auto," and by implication equates the leaders of a particular organization with the rank and file movement as a whole. (Even Joe Fine's original article (*Workers' Power* No. 73) admitted that the UNC had failed to make much contact with the existing, but unorganized, rank and file movement.)

Now it is *Workers' Power* that declares that the revolutionary call for a Labor Party based on a program which can actually resolve society's crisis — a transitional program — "fails to add the slightest political content" to Fox and Kelly's mealy-mouthed "call" for a labor party, whose *real* political content is shown by their unwillingness to offend the Communist Party or give leadership to rank and file workers by declaring a break with the Democratic Party.

Finkel's reply appears to put *Workers' Power*'s stamp of editorial approval on the political approach criticized in Brigham and Potter's letter. Is the IS so fearful of offending the existing rank and file leaders that we are unwilling to take an independent socialist stand?

James Mott
James Coleman

Greek Revolutionary Newsletter

We wish to announce the *Front Line*, a newsletter devoted to the problems of the Greek Revolution.

Our effort goes beyond the existing activity in the U.S. in that we are primarily interested in reaching the Greek community directly (as opposed to "influencing" governments) with news and texts of the active resistance within Greece.

We will report on *all* the groups which we know of that are engaged in active struggle. We invite all interested persons to contact us.

\$1 will bring the first five issues and any amount over that would be greatly appreciated. Buttons and bumper stickers are also available.

Pena
Box 5128
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08809



UNC Co-Chairmen Jordan Sims and Pete Kelly speaking at UNC Conference

Workers' Power photo by Kit Lyons

leadership cannot be divorced from the necessity to put forward a program and strategy for this central conflict.

Such a program provides the basis on which the best militants can be organized today to lead other workers in a battle for their own defense and for improvement in their standard of living.

The UNC program — for struggle over wages, working conditions, shop floor unionism, unemployment, Phase 3, and for a labor party — provides the rudiments of what is needed.

We do not minimize the difficulty of building a leadership of rank and file production workers capable of putting the program into action. Nor do we pose the idea that the UNC (which is essentially an organizing committee for a caucus) has at present such a leader-

ship and a revolutionary party.

The UNC has as advanced a program as any rank and file caucus in the trade unions. As stated above we believe it to be the correct basis for a trade union caucus. Art Fox and Pete Kelly agree with us on this program. We will "align ourselves with them" in the struggle for this program as far as they will go.

Another example, by the way, of how little revolutionary phrasemongering has to do with the actual task of revolutionaries in the labor movement can be found in the group called the Communist League.

They demanded at the UNC Conference on Racism in 1972 that the UNC call for a revolutionary communist party for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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THE CAPITALIST STATE: REFORM OR REVOLUTION

By BRUCE LANDAU

50¢

The subject of Bruce Landau's pamphlet is the nature of the capitalist state: that is, the way in which power is exercised in capitalist society. The importance of this question is well-known to all Marxists. In fact, the relationship of the working class to the struggle for political power and to the state has been the central question facing the international workers' movement in this century. Socialists and militants will find in Landau's pamphlet a specific application of Lenin's theory of the state to the contemporary reality of U.S. politics, as well as a concise analysis of the bankruptcy of reformist politics in the labor movement internationally.

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Workers' Power

WE STAND FOR SOCIALISM: the collective ownership and democratic control of the economy and the state by the working class. We stand in opposition to all forms of class society, both capitalist and bureaucratic "Communist," and in solidarity with the struggles of all exploited and oppressed people.

America is faced with a growing crisis: war, racial strife, pollution, urban decay, and the deterioration of our standard of living and working conditions. This crisis is built into capitalism, an outlived system of private profit, exploitation, and oppression. The capitalist ruling class, a tiny minority that controls the economy and politics alike, perpetuates its rule by dividing the working people against each other — white against black, male against female, skilled against unskilled, etc. The result is ever greater social chaos.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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