

CAPITALISM IN CRISIS— **FIGHT FOR A DECENT EDUCATION!**

BY THE REVOLUTIONARY UNION



ABOVE: Students and graduate student assistants (teaching assistants) waged a month long strike at the University of Michigan against teach-in cutbacks.--January-February 1975

Getting an education in this society isn't an easy thing. The crowded classrooms, the buildings falling apart, the tracking system that channels students out of school. When it gets to "higher education" most working class kids know they haven't got a real chance. First there's just passing all the tests to get into classes, and trying to keep up with school work. Then there's the whole thing about money-- because it costs to go to college and it's getting more expensive every day.

But the main thing is we want to get some kind of education so that we can have a decent life for us and our families. That's where the City Colleges come in-- most of us go here because it's not as hard to get in as Northeastern or Chicago State, and it isn't as expensive either. If you're trying to go on to a four year school, starting out at City College seems like a pretty good idea.

ATTACKS ON OUR EDUCATION AT THE CHICAGO CITY COLLEGES

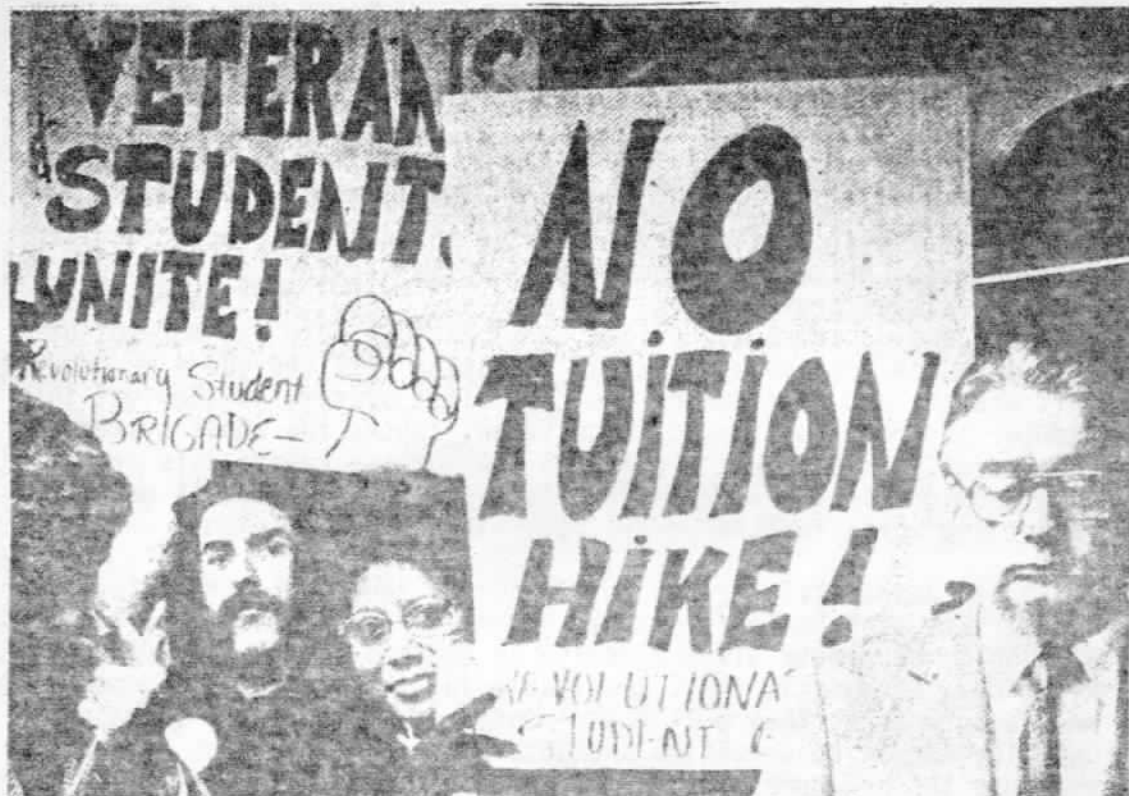
That's why most City College students are fed up with all the cut-backs coming down at the city colleges. First the tuition started last year-- which meant right off that most of us would be paying two or three times what it cost before. Now the City College Board is trying to cram even more students into a class, while they're cutting down on the total amount of teachers. The Board is starting to cut back on the general education and liberal arts programs-- which means even fewer students will be going on to four year schools. At the same time they're taking each school and specializing it around one or another career program-- like electronics at Wright or transportation at Southwest-- so we have to go chasing around town to find the one we want. On top of all this, they're already talking about raising tuition again-- and soon.

Because of the way this comes down on us, only about 1/4 of the students that enroll in first year courses even make it back the second year, and a lot of students have to quit after one semester.

WHO IS EDUCATION SET UP TO SERVE? NOT THE STUDENTS!!!

The fact is, standing behind these attacks is that the City colleges and all education aren't set up to serve students. The City Colleges are set up to serve the ruling capitalist class-- the owners of the electronics industry, like Zenith and Motorola; the owners of the steel industry, like Inland and U.S. Steel; the big trucking firms on the southwest side; banks and businesses in the Loop, like First National. The City Colleges are set up to make sure these corporations get enough people with certain skills so they can keep going. If any of us get an education in the process it's because we're struggling to get through school, not because they set up the schools to help us out.

Just look at some of the "educators" in Illinois. On the Board of Higher Education is the former chairman of Inland Steel; and even on the City College Board there's guys like Taylor (the chairman) who used to be an executive for WTTW -- the station CCC uses for TV college.



WHY ARE CUTBACKS COMING DOWN? CAPITALISM IN CRISIS!!!

So why, if the schools serve the capitalists, are they cutting back in education? Well, the schools do serve them, but they don't make any profits off the schools either. They put money into schools because they're looking to get it back in better or more production later on (when technicians trained here go to work for them, for example).

In the 50s and 60s these capitalists were making tremendous profits --and they needed a big educational system. That's when the City Colleges really started to expand, that's when Loop and Olive-Harvey were set up.

But right now, and for the last few years, they've been cutting back on money for schools-- like at the City Colleges, and the Public Schools, and all across the country (they cut \$120 million from the schools in New York this year!)

The capitalists' hatchet men, like Gov. Walker, Mayor Daley, and the Board have been making these cuts because for the capitalists, money is getting scarce too! They need money to invest-- all the time-- in production, to buy new machines and open new plants. The amount of money they need, to invest in better production and compete with each other, is always going up-- like junkies, they always need more and more. And they have to compete with each other for the money itself! While they're trying to increase production with "productivity drives" and speed-up, forcing workiers to produce more; they are always trying to cut wages to the bone. What happens is products end up stockpiled (like cars) because more and more of us have less and less money to spend on buying back the goods we produced. This anarchy and disorder of the capitalist system, as they get into fiercer and more cut-throat competition, causes the whole system to break down. That's what's going on now-- these capitalists are in an economic crisis-- a profit crisis-- and this crisis is getting deeper and worse for them every day, with no end in sight!

And in desparately trying to get out of their profit crisis, the capitalists step up their attacks on the working class-- the class of people who create all the wealth in society in the first place, Right now, because it isn't profitable for them to build new homes or manufacture cars, they pull their money out. The result is massive unemployment in construction and auto-- we get laid off. We could sure use the new homes to live in, and the cars too, for that matter -- but because production under capitalism is based on their profit, not our interests, all we get is poorer.

And these attacks on us are carried over into social services. They start cutting back on welfare, unemployment compensation, veterans benefits and schools. They want to get rid of 80-100 teachers in the Chicago City Colleges and slash night school and adult education teachers' salaries by 50%!

THE WHOLE SYSTEM IS ROTTEN!!!

It isn't Walker alone, or the City College Board alone, because they do the actual cutting, who's responsible-- it's the whole rotten system that's unable to provide for the needs of the majority of people, including our need for a decent education-- because it isn't profitable for them!

But we need more education-- not less! We all want to do something with our lives-- to have a decent future for us and our families. But the capitalists have only one use for us-- to be useful for their drive

for profits. Besides setting up the schools to train us to fit in with their profit system as workers or technicians, the schools also serve them by running down lies to us. In school, the history books tell us that the masses of people are just a bunch of sheep, led around by "great leaders". Capitalism always points to these "leaders" as our salvation, and tells us to sit back and let them do the thinking (and it's no coincidence that just about all these leaders are capitalists too!). They put out this crap to confuse us and isolate us ("everybody's out for themselves so look out for number one") and to make us think that capitalism will always be around and we shouldn't even try to do anything about it ("you can't fight city hall"). The capitalists can't provide us with a really decent education-- one that teaches us our real history and helps us figure out our future-- because it isn't in their interests.



PHOTO ABOVE: 100 students at the University of Florida at Gainesville, including members of the Revolutionary Student Brigade, marched over to the President's office and occupied it for 1 1/2 hours. This action, which followed a rally, protested tuition hikes from \$15 to \$52 a quarter (Spring 1975)

OUR FUTURE IS WITH THE WORKING CLASS

In fact, the only class of people whose interests it is in to provide us with a decent education is the majority of people in this country-- the working class. The working class has nothing in common with the capitalists, for workers create all the wealth in this society by their labor and sweat in the factories, fields and mines.

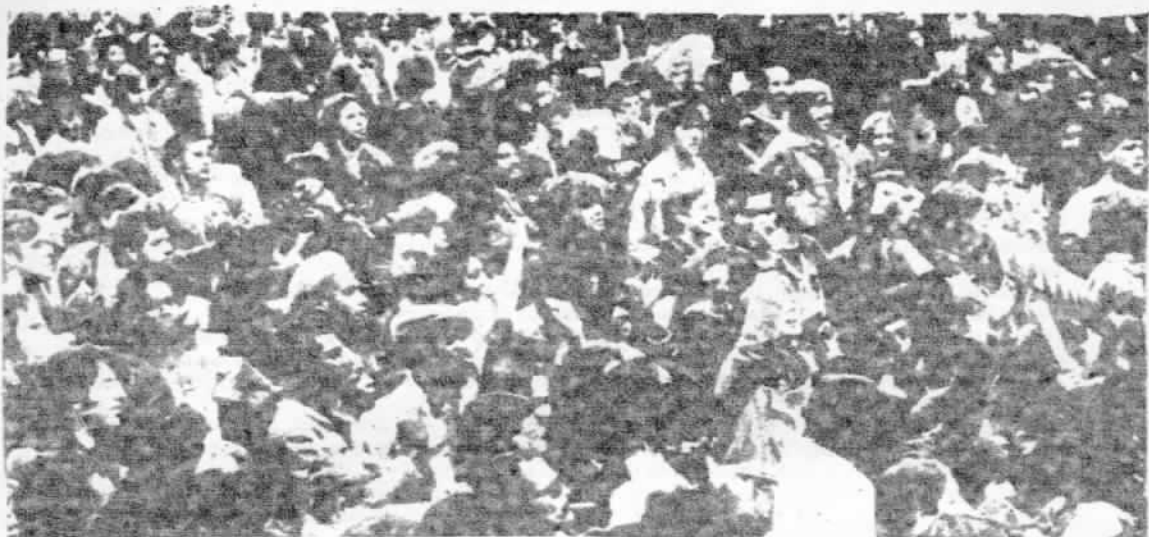
The capitalists get their profits by ripping off this wealth from the working class. The working class has nothing at stake with the way things run now-- and it has everything to gain by getting rid of capitalism and building a new society, free from exploitation of one class by another.

Just in the last year, thousands of students, all over the country have taken up the fight for decent education-- with demonstrations of thousands in New York, with administration office takeovers at Brown and Brandeis Universities, and up in Wisconsin, thousands of Technical school students marched on the capitol in Madison. And the working class and its allies-- especially students-- will build the fight for better education-- just as we are doing here at the City Colleges. With every battle, we will become stronger and more united; while the capitalists are becoming weaker and more exposed. But behind all their cutbacks is the way the system works-- and it really doesn't. Capitalism can never provide for the needs of the people-- even in "good times", unemployment is around 5% (5 million people out of work!) prices are going up and wages are going down. The only way we will be able to stop cutbacks from coming down-- and really get a decent education-- is to get rid of capitalism, overthrow it, smash it into a million pieces. In its place we need to build a new society, run by the working class, which will serve the needs of all the people (except the capitalists).. This society-- Socialism-- won't allow the exploitation of one class by another. Socialism will involve the overwhelming majority of people in building their own future, together.

THE FIGHT FOR A DECENT EDUCATION IS PART OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE

It's always been the struggle of the people, and especially the working class, that has moved society forward. It's the struggle of the working class that won a lot of the social services like social security and unemployment compensation. It was the struggle of millions of Black people that created the civil rights and Black liberation movement and shook capitalism to its foundations. It was the struggle of millions of people in the US and all around the world that united with the Vietnamese people and drove the US out of Southeast Asia. The history of the working class shows that we have to fight to get anything under this system and then fight like hell to keep it!

PHOTO BELOW: Thousands of students from City University of N.Y. demonstrate at the Board of Higher Education against cutbacks (1974).



In order to fulfill our needs and interests, the working class and the masses of people are waging a war-- to overthrow capitalism and set up Socialism. In every war, there are many battles--battles that must be fought and won in the course of fighting the overall war. And the fight for a decent education against the current wave of cutbacks in education and social services is one such battle. It is an important battle that the working class and especially students can and must take up as part of the fight against capitalism, and all over the country this is happening. From Boston to the Bay Area in California, students are uniting to fight for a decent education by organizing and relying on the masses of students to wage the struggle-- and not by begging to state legislatures or school boards. This movement is becoming a powerful force that is making the rich capitalists and their frontmen school administrators tremble with fear!

Here in Chicago, a city-wide Committee to Fight for a Decent Education was recently formed, with active members on three city college campuses. The students in the committee are determined to carry on the fight against cutbacks and lousy conditions of education-- and as part of this are currently building support for the City College teachers' strike. The Revolutionary Union whole-heartedly supports the actions and demands of the Committee to Fight for a Decent Education against cuts. And we urge all students to join with this committee and actively take up the fight!

What is the Revolutionary Union?

Today the need for revolution is becoming clearer to more and more people, here and throughout the world. The system we live under, ruled by bankers and big businessmen, is heading into deeper crisis and chaos, in this country and internationally. Unemployment, speed-up, inflation, the decay of society and breakdown of social services, attacks on democratic rights, discrimination and degradation of women, domination of oppressed nations and minority nationalities, wars of aggression and the threat of world war—all are increasing as our rulers bear down on us harder and battle others like them for the spoils from the robbery of peoples like us throughout the world.

But this only further exposes how this system is a worldwide system of plunder, a system of imperialism. And the struggle of the exploited and oppressed against this system is growing worldwide. In this country, the last decade has seen mighty mass movements against the oppression of minority nationalities, against wars of aggression, the oppression of women, police terror and government repression, and against the attacks on our living and working conditions.

As a communist organization, the RU bases itself on building these mass movements. But beyond this, the RU bases itself on the understanding that the oppression of the people flows from the basic contradiction of this system: the exploitation of the working people by the capitalist-imperialists. And the liberation of the people lies in the overthrow of the imperialists by the working class, the replacement of capitalism and all exploitation with socialism, under the rule of the working class, which will advance society to communism completely classless society.

To achieve this historic task, to unite and lead all the people's struggles to this goal, the working class must have the leadership of its own Party, the general staff of its revolutionary struggle. In this country the working class does not now have such a Party, since the so-called Communist Party, USA long ago sold out the working class and now aims at preserving the imperialist system. At this time, while working to build and unite the people's movements, the RU sees its major task as uniting with all others standing for the revolutionary interests of the working class to form this new Communist Party.

The creation of this Party will mean a great advance for the people's struggle in this country and will help bring closer the day when the decay and corruption of imperialist exploitation will be overcome by the international working class, representing the great majority of mankind and holding the future in its hands.

Revolutionary Union—P.O. Box 3486, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, Ill. 60654

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