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God on Our Side



**Defend the Panthers
Year of the Strike
Maoism - Ireland - Italy
Death and Taxes - G.E.**

DEFEND THE PANTHERS

Ernest Haberkern

When David Hilliard, chief of staff of the Black Panther Party, spoke to the several hundred thousand anti-war demonstrators in San Francisco on Nov. 15th, he warned them that they could not expect peace in the ghettos. Such a peace, he argued, could only come about if Black people, and especially the Panthers, were to allow police terror to continue unopposed.

The Panthers could no more do that, said Hilliard, than the Vietnamese could win "peace" by ceasing to struggle against the American invader and its puppet regimes. The peace demonstrators responded by trying to drown Hilliard out with chants of "peace now" and just plain booing.

The police authorities, however, were not turned on by the peace chants. Within a month there were major police raids on the Los Angeles and Chicago Panther offices. The results were one Panther leader, Fred Hampton, murdered in his bed, and several others wounded or killed.

The Hampton murder and the response it received in the Black community made it very clear what was at stake. It was not a case of the police versus a relatively small revolutionary group. The Black community of Chicago, led by a Black alderman and supported by the local NAACP and Black police officers on the Chicago force, condemned the killings and, along with Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young, Jr. of the Urban League, demanded a federal investigation of the incident. One of the major speakers at the funeral was Ralph Abernathy. He called the act part of a campaign of genocide against the Black community.

The Reverend Abernathy by coincidence was also one of the speakers at the November Moratorium in San Francisco. The demonstrators loved him. It was not just Hilliard's violent rhetoric that provoked the hostility to him. Neither was it Abernathy's more polished oratory that won him support. It was what they had to say.

Abernathy told the predominantly liberal crowd that it was the Nixon administration and especially Spiro T. Agnew who were to blame. The main point of the talk was the necessity of reconstructing the broad liberal coalition that represented progress in America. He did not mention a fact that seems to have slipped out of so many liberal minds, that the broad liberal coalition had elected Johnson, and originally saw as its standard bearer in the administration Hubert Humphrey - the man who initiated the kind of red-baiting of the anti-war movement Spiro Agnew represents today.

Regardless of its contradictions, the speech soothed the anxieties of anti-war activists who, quite understandably, are somewhat shell-shocked politically speaking, and want desperately to end the war no matter what the cost.

Hilliard's speech, like the Panthers themselves, was not designed to sooth anxieties. He simply said what most of the participants already knew. Nixon and capitalist politicians were out to destroy the Panthers and the Panthers were going to fight back. People knew he was right. They just didn't want to be reminded.

The murder of Hampton - with its graphic demonstration of the complete contempt the police and official justice have for the most elementary democratic rights of Black people who resist oppression - forced everyone in the Black community to take sides. Abernathy, at Hampton's funeral, before an enraged ghetto audience, had no choice but to accept the thesis of the Panthers.

Capitalist politicians will respect the rights of Black people in America under the same conditions that are forcing them to respect the right of self-determination of the Vietnamese. Armed resistance to oppression and a political offensive that convinces the majority of white people that they have no stake in the attack on Black people - these alone can make the price too high for capitalist politicians.

Liberal Democrats, who quite sincerely hope to better the lot of Black Americans through normal political procedures cannot defend the Panthers. Even when they sympathize with the Panthers, liberal Senators and Congressmen are forced to argue as the spokesman for the National Lawyers' Guild, Alan Brotsky, did, that "the so-called violent record of the Panthers is a myth." But if, as Abernathy claims, it is a question of genocidal attacks on the Black community, then armed self-defense is a necessity and it had better not remain a "myth" much longer.

The difficulty the Panthers face, aside from the obvious one of the enormous technical and political power of the beast they are fighting, is that militant, revolutionary rhetoric is too often used as a substitute for a real political attack on the foundations of capitalist politics. Too often the Panthers self-defense is a myth.

The problem of ghetto self-defense is not a technical one. There are plenty of guns floating around the ghetto. Nor is it one of physical courage. Unorganized spontaneous attacks on the police occurred throughout the "hot summers" of 1966 and 1967. The problem is that the majority of Black people, however sympathetic they may be to the Panthers, are not confident that they represent a viable alternative to the Wilkins-Young-Abernathy approach.

If the ghettos were united behind a political movement that refused to compromise with "politics as usual" when it came to the question of police attacks on the Black community, if any Black politician who wanted to win respect in the community were forced to denounce the police and defend the attacks made on them as legitimate self-defense, no cop would dare set foot in the ghetto.

When people like Abernathy call police attacks genocidal, they should be forced, politically, to defend the Panther program of self-defense. Pacifism and "politics as usual" are no defense against pogroms, and even Abernathy cannot hope to get away with such a juggling act - unless no political point is made of the contradiction and it is allowed to go unnoticed.

That is why an independent political party is a vital supplement to armed self-defense. This political offensive designed to win Black people away from liberals and their supporters like Abernathy cannot be carried on in a Democratic Party dominated by those same liberals.

You cannot defend the Panthers and their right to armed self-defense without attacking the leading politicians of both political parties as instigators of, or at least accomplices in, racist pogroms. The National Lawyers Guild is going to have one hell of a time selling anybody the idea that the Panthers are really non-violent. Either you defend the Panthers for what they are, or you expose yourself as a hypocrite and implicitly endorse the political basis of the attack on the Panthers.

The International Socialists have supported the program of the Black Panther Party since its founding. While we have sometimes been critical of the Panthers' implementation of their approach, especially of their failure to relate to people who are not yet convinced revolutionaries (a failing they share with the bulk of the New Left), we continue to support their call for self-defense.

What is more important, we consider this question to be a dividing line for the Left, just as immediate withdrawal is for the anti-war movement. It is not a question of dogmatism or maintaining ideological "purity". It is a practical necessity to raise this demand.

The economic transition following the war will exacerbate the present tensions of the ghetto. Thousands who got jobs during the war will lose them and be thrown on the streets along with thousands of returning veterans who learned many things in Vietnam, pacifism not being one of them. They will not accept the pittance granted them by an economy in the midst of a recession. What is more, they will be struggling in a society embittered and polarized by the war.

Liberal proposals to go through normal channels will fail to pacify people. They would, if accepted, only disarm Black people in the face of reactionary tendencies represented by people like George Wallace.

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WALLER PRESS 19

With God On Our Side

Song My and the Nixon Strategy

Arthur Lipow

The chief chaplain of the American division, Lieut. Col. James E. Shaw, said 'We should be proud of our country because the American Division's rules of engagement are based on Judeo-Christian traditions and are moral, unlike those of the enemy.'

"The chaplain said there were cases when a soldier should obey God rather than men, but the decision in each case was up to each soldier's Christian convictions. He said some of the other chaplains in the division had been asked by soldiers about the moral problems raised by the Songmy case but he had not given any thought to preaching sermons about those problems."

-- New York Times, December 1, 1969

On November 3rd, Richard Nixon threw down the political gauntlet to his "dove" opponents, challenging them to attack not only the Vietnam war, but also the bi-partisan foreign policy of "containment" of which the war is a part.

On November 13, two days before the massive moratorium demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco, the first details of the cold-blooded massacre by American troops of several hundred South Vietnamese civilians in the hamlet of Song My were revealed. In the following weeks, the rest of the story emerged and one person, Lt. Calley, was indicted for murder by the Army.

Congressmen who were shown pictures of the bodies of women and children who had been ruthlessly shot down by the troops confessed themselves sickened by these scenes; Richard Nixon called such ("alleged") acts abhorrent to the American people and promised that those individuals responsible for them would be suitably punished.

On November 15, perhaps four to five hundred thousand people went to Washington and San Francisco to demonstrate their opposition to the Vietnam war. They listened to a wide range of speakers, and, in San Francisco, heard rock bands at what Terrence Hallinan unashamedly called "Woodstock West" (The same Hallinan, working closely with the Communist Party, later boasted that they had taken the antiwar movement out of the hands of the radicals and turned it over to the moderates.). Then they went home.

On December 2nd, with only fifty-five opposing votes, the House of Representatives passed a resolu-

tion in support of Nixon's "peace plan" for Vietnam: gradual withdrawal of American troops and the "Vietnamization" of the war. Eighty representatives including the original 55 later signed a letter denying that they had done what everyone knew they had done - that is, given Nixon a political blank check to be used in the same way that Johnson used the Gulf of Tonkin resolution.

Finally, on December 10, the liberal leaders of the Moratorium committee who had promised to escalate their days of protest as long as the war continued, admitted they were at a dead end - their financial support was waning and the impossibility of carrying out their previous strategy had become clear even to them. They were instead, as had been widely predicted (and as leaders like Sam Browne had openly advocated) now committed to steering the antiwar movement into the Democratic Party, in support of "peace candidates." No new demonstrations would be held, they announced.

Half-a-million people demonstrate against the war. A bloody massacre is revealed, and even the most devoted defenders of the war cannot hide its details. And yet, nothing happens, and the political impact of these two events seemingly evaporates; instead, a new Gulf of Tonkin resolution is passed and the liberals fold up shop.

Senator Fulbright's long-promised investigation into the war is called off until after the beginning of 1970. Nixon is in the saddle and, ever more confident of his ability to defeat his current opposition politically, he allows the full outlines of his policy

to come to the surface.

Why has this happened? Why has Nixon been able to explain away the incident at Song My as an "abhorrent" aberration? What is Nixon's policy - and how has that policy been shaped in the last month by the kind of opposition put up by the antiwar movement?

The answer to the first question is a relatively simple one: at no time did the leadership of the antiwar movement - either the liberals of the Moratorium or the Communist Party/Socialist Workers Party-led New Mobilization - seriously threaten to go outside the existing framework of American politics to challenge the Vietnam war and the foreign policy of which it is an extension. Indeed, they went out of their way to exclude those who might raise questions like independent political action.

The liberals did this because of principle, the CPers for the same reason, and the SWP out of sheer opportunism and a desire to peddle their own sectarian alternative: a slate of SWP candidates. (It may be true, as Murray Kempton has reported, that Sid Lens convened a meeting immediately following the Washington march to discuss the organization of a "new party" - but if Lens or any of the other organizers of the New Mobe had any such idea they certainly succeeded in keeping it secret from the half-million people who participated in the demonstration.)

HARMLESS CHANNEL

What should people do after they have marched and shown they oppose the war, when the leadership, such as it is, tells them in effect to do nothing? People went home and that was the end of it - at least for the time being. Thus, the door was opened by the New Mobe's bankruptcy for a turn to the "moderate" Moratorium leadership's design to corral all of the peace demonstrators into the Democratic Party.

With the potentially explosive political force of the antiwar movement once more channelled harmlessly into the Democratic Party, Nixon could push through the resolution in support of his November 3rd policy with no trouble at all.

Essentially the same methodology is responsible for the way in which the Song My - "Pinkville" - revelations have been allowed to fall flat, providing little new impetus for the antiwar movement.

The bloody murders have been explained away in the priceless words of Time as a manifestation of the "pervasiveness of evil" (obviously ineradicable) or as an example of the brutality and brutalization inherent in all wars. For the specific acts at Song My, individual soldiers may be blamed and prosecuted, but never the men and the social system whose policies and war it is.

What is the response of Moratorium leaders to this outrageous whitewash of a genocidal war policy? Sam Browne argues that "no political advantage" (i.e., no attack on the war) should be made of these events.

In the last analysis, these evasions - including the various expressions of "moral guilt" and even "collective responsibility" which liberals love to indulge themselves in, by way of avoiding any criticism of specific social and political institutions - are all possible because the current leadership of the antiwar movement have resolutely failed to demonstrate - when they have not explicitly denied it - that the war is neither a "mistake" nor an "accident".

WAR WITH CHILDREN

It is for this reason that neither the real meaning of the war nor the answer to the question of who is responsible for the particularly callous incident at Song My have yet been made clear to the American people (or, for that matter, to the bulk of the antiwar movement) despite the fact that more than any single event since the Tet offensive the massacre has provided a handle for tearing the mask from the criminal war being carried out in Vietnam.

The fact that the American Government, contrary to
-- continued on page 18



Maoism and the Working class

Ernest Haberkern

One consequence of the ideological crisis in the New Left has been a renewed interest in the industrial working class as the force capable of building a socialist order. It is characteristic of the confusion of the New Left that this position is represented for most by Maoist tendencies such as Progressive Labor and RYM II.

Despite its origin in the Communist International during the 1920's, and its early leadership of the massive strike movement that led to the virtual seizure of power by the Shanghai working class in 1927, the Chinese CP came to power as the result of a military victory by an army of declassed peasants that had been isolated for twenty years from the urban centers and their working class population. Even its mass peasant following was attracted at least as much by the image of the Eighth Route Army as the most effective organizer of the national resistance to the Japanese imperialists as by the anti-capitalist agrarian program of the party.

In the CP's seizure of power in 1949, the working class played almost no role. In fact, when the entry of the Communist armies led to spontaneous organization on the part of the working class, the party itself discouraged these initiatives and forbade the seizure of factories and other acts that might have interrupted the smooth transition from Kuomintang to Communist rule. The CP preferred a brief period of collaboration with the debilitated remnants of the Chinese capitalist class, who represented, once Chiang was beaten, a far less serious threat to the power of the party cadres than militant factory committees.

It is, of course, standard operating procedure for defenders of the Mao regime to argue that the intention of the Chinese CP was to use the newly conquered state apparatus to train and educate the masses, the industrial workers among others, to a state of consciousness that would enable them to rule in their own name.

The sincerity of such claims is of secondary interest. Similar claims are made, with more or less sincerity, by all of the regimes that have come to power in the former colonial world since the end of the second world war. The observable fact is that the Chinese working class has played no independent political role since the regime came to power.

The first break in this pattern of apathetic dependence came in 1966, in reaction to the attempt to carry the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" from the schools and universities where it started to the factories. For the first time since the massive defeat of 1927, the industrial working class erupted into political action. Almost everywhere the attempt was made, the Chinese workers opposed, often violently, the Maoist Red Guards' occupation of the factories.

This political fact, duly noted and commented upon by journalists of every political persuasion, has been pretty much ignored when the question of an analysis of the Cultural Revolution comes up. The press, both radical and bourgeois, has shown a great deal of interest in such questions as, what does it mean to be a "capitalist roader," what is the role of the army and the students, and even such fascinating questions as, whose side is Chou-en-lai on anyway?

WORKERS' OPPOSITION

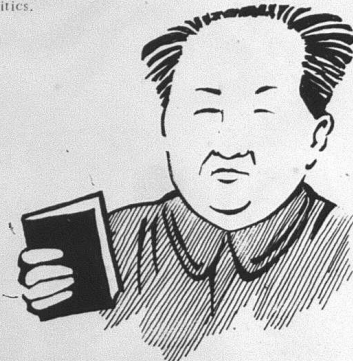
The astounding fact that, in a supposedly proletarian dictatorship, the backbone of the opposition was the working class, and the fact that twenty years after the revolution the workers, according to the Maoists, were supporting those elements who want a return to capitalism, just didn't fit in very well with anyone's analysis.

For supporters of such regimes as China and Cuba, the working class opposition to Mao's program expresses the flat contradiction between their pro-working class rhetoric and the reality of the regimes they support, and while bourgeois commentators laugh up their sleeves at the obvious embarrassment of their pro-stalinist opponents, they cannot make too much of the workers'

movement either.

After all, there is some reason to believe that workers who call general strikes, occupy public buildings, burn down police stations, and in a number of other ways manifest their ability to halt an industrial society in its tracks through their collective power are not really following the capitalist road.

In fact, it is possible to understand the role of the Chinese working class in the Cultural revolution only if you see the democratic mass organizations of the working class as an alternative to both the capitalist corporation and the stalinist state. Posing such a possibility, however, challenges the political and social assumptions that lie behind the ideologies of both the apologists for capitalism and the majority of their radical critics.



The "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" began in the schools and the universities - in the centers, that is, where the cadre of the Chinese state and party are trained. From the beginning, it was the younger cadre who were counterposed to the entrenched bureaucracy. It was they who were encouraged to rebel and set up bureaucratic imitations of the Paris Commune. Their aim was to purify and rearm the bureaucracy - not to overthrow it. From their point of view, the workers' first obligation to the revolution was exactly what it had been since 1949, to work hard and build a greater China. This fact became notorious after the events in Shanghai in December and January, when the attack on "economism" became one of the central themes of the Red Guard campaign.

As early as the previous August, the Chinese press as excerpted in the Peking Review had picked out for high praise those workers such as the Taiching oil workers who fulfilled their duty by increasing production and demanding cuts in pay. Interestingly enough, another section of the working class praised for similar actions was precisely that Shanghai proletariat which was to revolt a few months later and was then singled out for its notorious economism. Shortly after the Shanghai strikes the PR mentioned, although not exactly with banner headlines, that capitalist roaders were also active in strike activity in the Taiching oil fields.)

Despite the hoopla surrounding the recent party congress, the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" now seems to be dead and buried as far as the working class is concerned. In the October 12th edition of the Los Angeles Times, Robert S. Elegant, a generally sober and responsible commentator on Chinese affairs, documents from the Chinese press the massive and apparently successful resistance of the working class to the speed-up and wage cuts that were the heart of the Cultural Revolution's program for them.

As Nanking radio puts it, "The handful of class enemies have incited many selfish people to say publicly that wages, fringes, benefits, and salaries should be adjusted... They are demanding pay increases for workers of all categories, thus raising the sinister wind of bargaining for more benefits and more pay..."

According to Elegant, absenteeism is widespread and factory managers complain that they are unable to enforce the most minimal labor discipline. The younger workers, especially, are rebellious - including in their ranks numbers of Red Guards sent down from the university more or less permanently and inclined to take Mao's rhetoric about revolt very seriously.

Elegant quotes the boast of the steel workers of the Hsiangnan Iron and Steel Plant in Hunan province: "If we want to observe revolutionary discipline we will, if we don't, there is nothing you can do about it." Elegant's report is only one of several that indicate the complete failure of the Cultural revolution to reinforce labor discipline, whatever its effect may have been on the party and state apparatus.

The response of the Maoists in China and abroad has been that the workers were deceived by a minority of self-seeking people, and that peaceful persuasion by the enlightened workers was all that was required to get them back to work. But the actual accounts of Maoist sources themselves tend to undermine this defense.

The initial report in Peking Review on January 13, 1967 admitted that "they (the capitalist roaders) played with high-sounding revolutionary words, giving the appearance of being ultra 'Left' in order to incite large numbers of members of the Workers' Red Militia Detachments, whom they hoodwinked to undermine production and sabotage transport and communications under the pretext of going north to ' lodge complaints'... But lately in many factories and plants it has occurred that some or even the majority of the members of the Red Militia Detachments have suspended production and deserted their posts in production." The Maoist manifesto from which this is quoted, incidentally, is signed by such proletarian organizations as The Revolutionary Rebel Committee of the Shanghai Journalists and The Shanghai Liaison Center of the Red Flag Fighting Detachment of the Peking Aeronautical Institute.

More recently, the Progressive Labor Party organ, World Revolution, reprinted an article from the magazine Eastern Horizon of July, 1967, by Gerald Tannebaum. WR's editors complain that Tannebaum's articles are all so excellent that they had a hard time picking just one. They picked a winner. Tannebaum's article, "Revolution in Shanghai Harbor," gives a revealing account of just who the minority of capitalist roaders were and what the response of the Shanghai dock workers to the cultural revolution was.

The original work team sent down to the 5th Wharf Area of Shanghai saw its mission as weeding out the "rightists" and "counterrevolutionaries" among the workers who had criticized the Party Committee. The attack on the Party leadership of Peking University, by Mao Tse Tung himself, set off, according to Tannebaum, a chain reaction which ultimately reached the Shanghai Work Team and Party Committee.

The attack to which Tannebaum refers was an attack by Mao on those party leaders who were originally in charge of the cultural revolution. Mao charged that these men under the sponsorship of Liu Shao Chi, were going slow because the existing party leadership was afraid of an explosion which would (and in fact did) demolish their positions.

In one day, over 10,000 wall posters appeared, directed against the local leadership - especially the former Party Secretary, who for eight years had "harshly suppressed the opinions of the workers, and imposed on them many unfair systems of pay and work." The Work team and the party committee responded by banning wall posters - so the workers demanded the removal of the work team, which was the original cultural revolution group.

The Party committee directed a witch hunt against

the 532 of 2400 workers who attacked the work team. But a group of younger workers constituted themselves as the "real" Maoists, took up the attack on the old party committee and demanded open public discussion of the issues (The issues between the two groups, incidentally, were, according to Tannebaum, simply control of the dossiers on dissident workers and not the unfair work discipline of the old Party Secretary). Under pressure from a grouping that claimed the support of Chairman Mao, the Party Secretary agreed to the rebels' demands.

At this point, the "real" Maoists felt they had won the victory. By the end of December, the Workers Militia faithful to the old party leadership had all but collapsed, with most of its members joining the Maoists. But then, to use Tannebaum's words, "just as it seemed the rebel groups had things in hand, a wave of economism broke out over the city, engulfing Wharf No. 5 as well."

That is, after the Maoists felt that their fight with the capitalist roaders was over, a spontaneous movement began among the workers. This was not the first time that an internal party struggle in a stalinist regime sparked the working class to action. From this point on, the Maoists, who had had some popular support in their struggle with the old leadership, were consistently opposed by the workers.

As Tannebaum reports, "Some workers, when it came to criticizing the bourgeois reactionary line, were clear-headed and correct. But when they were offered bait in the form of increased wages, welfare benefits, bonuses, and so forth, which touched on individual interests over those of the collective, they did not stop to think whether there was an economic basis for these or not. ... Within two weeks over sixteen different organizations sprang up, seriously splitting the unity of the working class and bringing about a state of anarchy."

In other words, when the Maoists split the party in an attempt to take the apparatus away from the old leadership, that's just principled politics; when the working class begins to organize itself to fight for its economic demands, that's anarchy and economism.

The charge that the workers put individual interest over collective interest is belied by the solidarity which Tannebaum's own article attests to during the "economist" strikes. As for the charge that the economy could not afford such material benefits, the same Peking Review of January 1 which carries article attacking economism on the part of Shanghai workers also boasts of China's first nuclear explosion. Whether China's economic base should support material benefits for workers or nuclear weapons for the Chinese state is a question that does not seem to be discussed much among Maoists.

SCAB ON THE PEOPLE

The rest of Tannebaum's article describes the attempts of the Rebel Group to break the dock strike, with the aid of the Red Guards sent down from Shanghai and other universities to "learn from the people". According to Tannebaum the last holdouts were among the lowest-paid categories of workers - not exactly a social stratum in which you would expect to find the parasites and landowners of the old order that Peking usually holds responsible for economism.

According to Tannebaum, the workers were finally won over by friendly persuasion. The Peking Review of January 20 tells a slightly different story. One of the ten points of the rebel groups is "Those who oppose Chairman Mao, Vice Chairman Lin Piao, and the Party Central Committee's cultural revolution group, and those who undermine the great cultural revolution or sabotage production shall be immediately arrested by the Public Security Bureau in accordance with the law." (Oh yes, I forgot to mention that the other sources of support for the "Red Rebels" besides the students were the police and the army.)

The Maoist revolution in China put in power not the working class but the cadre of the army and the party. Its class goal (which may or may not have been the conscious aim of the individual party member) was the development of the industrial and military power of the Chinese state. This goal was incompatible with the liberation of the working class, since, as Tannebaum points out in his article, the economic base for that does not exist in China isolated from the rest of the world economy.

The liberation of the working class can only come through the struggle of the working class itself - and its goal cannot be the building of a "strong China" but only a world revolution, that alone can provide the material basis for a non-exploitative society. From the point of view of the working class, the nationalist aims of the Chinese bureaucracy are, like all nationalist solutions, fundamentally reactionary.

PL on Cuba Ernest Haberkern

"Notice first the fact that the struggle for socialism, far from being a mass struggle, is understood as a struggle by a leadership that mobilized it only in order to win. From this conception of the struggle naturally flows the conclusion that socialism is equivalent to structural change-- a state-controlled economy..."

"If socialism is merely, or even mainly, structural change, then we have no need of the concept of class struggle or class dictatorship. The structure is above classes; there is an un-class-differentiated 'people,' and the structure can serve it and is controlled by it to the extent the leaders struggle for national economic independence."

The lines above could have been written by a Trotskyist in the thirties, criticizing the "socialism in one country" line of Joseph Stalin. The whole concept of a "national socialism," in which the economic growth of the state-planned economy was the equivalent of socialism, was the distinguishing feature of Stalin's brand of socialism.

It was around this line that Stalin organized those elements in the Soviet bureaucracy who wished to pull free of the complications and risks of the European and world revolutions. For these people, the growth of Soviet industry (and the corresponding increase in the bureaucratic posts) was the measure of Socialism's victory. What is more, this growth, taking place as it did in the context of a competitive world economy, required that the working class give up those unruly habits of self-rule and organization acquired during the period of the October revolution.

It was Stalin whose name, more than any others, was connected with this collectivist bureaucracy and its nationalistic ambitions. That is why it is so surprising that the quote above comes not from a Trotskyist publication of the thirties, but from Progressive Labor, the organ of the Maoist party that has been most prominent in the attempt to resurrect Stalin as a political thinker.

Progressive Labor is not referring, of course, to the Russia of Stalin's day, nor to present-day China. They are talking about Castro's Cuba - which has chosen the wrong side in the Sino-Soviet dispute. The charges they make against Cuba, however, raise questions that go beyond this most recent split in the stalinist bloc.

PL argues: 1) that the Cuban regime is elitist, and sees the workers and the masses in general as simply raw material to be mobilized by the elite - so that it, the elite, can take power and introduce certain necessary reforms; 2) that Castro nationalized property in order to free Cuba from foreign domination, without preparing the workers to control and run the state-owned industry; and 3) that the party's "program" for the workers was work hard and produce.

It is hard to see how anyone can continue to call himself a Maoist and make those charges against Castro. What does the Chinese attack on "economism" mean, if not "keep quiet, work hard, and produce"?

International Socialists have argued from the beginning that the resistance of the Chinese working class to the "Cultural Revolution" was not just a demand for better wages and working conditions (although we support such elementary demands) but rather the first attempt in forty years at political intervention on the part of the working class. The problem for Maoists is this:

You say that the Chinese working class and peasantry are infected with economism, and have not yet reached the stage of political consciousness that will allow them to rule directly. If the Chinese masses are not yet ready to rule, then who has been running China for the last twenty years?

The usual defense of the cultural revolution is that, after twenty years in power, old militants like Liu Shao Chi, who had been disciplined and trained for rule by the People's Liberation Army struggle, had become soft. But the working class had not been involved in that struggle of the PLA against the Japanese, and played no role in the victorious fight of the PLA. Neither did the bulk of the peasantry, who remained outside the areas under the control of the Red Army until quite late.

If, as Jake Rosen's article in PL argues, the overthrow of capitalism without the conscious participation of the masses in the struggle can only lead to the installation of a new ruling class, what happened in China? It is true that the Chinese masses enthusiastically supported Mao's army, but then the Cuban masses enthusiastically supported Castro, too. The Maoists claim that Mao is now trying to arouse the

Chinese masses to conscious political struggle for socialism. If we are to take PL's criticism of Cuba seriously, then Mao is twenty years too late.

The Rosen article is even more interesting for what it leaves out than for what it says explicitly. Rosen at a number of points emphasizes the necessity of conscious participation of the workers. He repudiates the Bonapartist mobilization of the masses from above and demonstrates that it is no substitute for political action and struggle by the masses themselves. Nowhere, however, does he indicate how this independent action is in fact to take place. Also left unclear is what forms this struggle can take.

The demand that is not made in the article, and cannot be made by PL or any other Maoist tendency, is the demand for complete political freedom of agitation and organization for any grouping that does not resort to armed violence as a means of "winning over the masses. Without this completely free struggle of political factions, all rhetoric about letting the people decide remains on the level of a campaign speech by demagogic

One of the techniques favored by the Castro dictatorship against its internal critics is the witch hunt against dissidents. Regardless of the servility of its critics (and the confession of Annibal Escalante, the most recent internal opponent of Castro, was a masterpiece in this respect), no toleration of opposition is possible.

Escalante and his comrades were given sentences of up to fifteen years for distributing reprints of Soviet criticism of Castro's economic plans. Similar penalties were handed out against pro-Chinese elements in the army a few years back. The first victim of this type of attack in Cuba were July 26 militants in the factories who opposed Fidel's handing over of the trade unions to CP hacks (the CP's record against Batista was not outstanding, but it could be counted on to remain loyal to Castro in his attempt to deprive the unions of any independent power).

None of this is raised in the Rosen article. To attack the right of the monolithic party to rule without criticism would not only require an attack on Mao's methods but would also call into question PL's conception of itself.

It was PL that introduced the tactic of physical intimidation into the New Left a few years back. It was they who began the practice of attacking their opponents as counterrevolutionaries. That they themselves have been victims of such attacks in the recent past has not led them yet to any public repudiation of these methods.

All such tactics are justified by the right of the Maoist party to speak for the workers and to crush all criticism. Rosen's attack on Castro is reduced, finally, to nothing more than a criticism of bad leaders. If only the Cuban party were in the hands of a Mao, who was directing the witch hunt against the real counterrevolutionaries, everything would be all right.

This is what's wrong with the whole Maoist approach. Mao was driven into opposition to the Russians, not out of principle, but out of a nationalist conflict. As long as the Chinese believed that the Russians would, or could be pressured into, financing their attempt at rapid industrialization, they were the most outspoken champions of the Russians' hegemony on the block (just as they were and continue to be the defenders of the stalinist concept of the party).

In the general revolt against stalinist rule in 1956, the Chinese found themselves on the other side of the barricades from the Hungarian and Polish workers. They supported those whom they now call the "new Czars." It was only when their national ambitions came up against the imperialist arrogance of Stalin's heirs that they demagogically switched sides.

In this, they are no different from the "national stalinists" of Eastern Europe. The Kadars, Gomulkas, Dubceks and Titos also did not hesitate when Stalin mobilized them against the working class, but were capable of all kinds of demagogic appeals to those same workers when it was a question of preserving their own local rule against Russian imperialism.

The internal disputes of these "new Czars" are of interest to revolutionary socialists for the same reason that the similar conflicts within the capitalist class engage our attention. Internal dissension in the ruling classes have an important tactical significance. They encourage the working class to seize the initiative. If Mao's split with the Russians engenders the kind of questioning of stalinist methods that Rosen's article represents among Western radicals, it will have served some useful purpose.

CIVIL RIGHTS SELLOUT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

John Palmer

To judge from the virtual blackout of news from Northern Ireland in Britain in the past two months, it might be imagined that the civil rights movement has disappeared, perhaps in spontaneous gratitude for the actions of the British government and the "reformed" Unionists. This is not the case.

It is true that the oppressed people of Northern Ireland have won a significant if partial victory in their struggle against the Stormont regime. The Unionist government has agreed to introduce a set of "reforms" and in the process has won the hostility of extreme right-wing and Paisleyite forces who believe that these concessions to the Catholics spell the beginning of the end of the Orange regime.

Socialists, on the other hand, should be clear about these reforms. The aim is to introduce into Northern Ireland the conditions of "normal democracy" found in most capitalist countries. In practice this means a system of elections free from sectarian ballot-rigging and gerrymandering, the abolition of religious sectarian control over the allocation of houses and public appointments and the "secularization" of the state security forces.

REINTEGRATION

The fact is that all of these reforms are essential if British imperialism and British capitalism are to continue to effectively subjugate the economic and political life of both parts of Ireland to their interests.

The existence of a blatant Orange dictatorship in the north of Ireland has become an increasing obstacle to Westminster's plans for control of both parts of Ireland. These plans involve the total reintegration of the whole Irish economy back into British capitalism. This integration is necessary if Britain is to meet the competitive challenge posed by entry into the Common Market.

Total reintegration is not, however, possible within the existing constitutional and political relationship between Westminster and Dublin. The present set-up in the 26 counties has permitted some penetration by rival capitalisms.

It seems that most British politicians favour some kind of federal link with a reunited Ireland, but the situation in the North has prevented serious progress being made to this end. For as long as the Orange regime ruled in such a blatantly discriminatory fashion, there was little chance of the Dublin government being able to sell "rapprochement" with Britain.

Part of the deal for closer links with Britain had to include the destruction of the Paisleyite power bases of the Stormont statelet. Westminster wanted gradual progress to "reforms," but the upsurge of the mass civil rights movement (largely a product of the world wide upsurge last year) changed all that.

When it became clear to Westminster that civil war was a possibility and consequently the whole basis of imperialist and capitalist domination of Ireland might be undermined, the Labour government stepped in to enforce such democratic reforms as were necessary to preserve the status quo.

In return, the leaders of the Catholic middle class--mainly the Nationalist Party and the Labour and civil rights wing-- guaranteed to deliver the street-based civil rights movement bound hand and foot to the state. Leaders like John Hume and Ivan Cooper promised Chichester-Clark that they would restrict their activities to the cloistered irrelevance of the Stormont parliament.

Within days the right wing leaders of the Civil Rights Association (largely aided by the Communist Party "moderate" leaders) started a purge of civil rights militants-- mainly the People's Democracy and left republicans. It now seemed that the civil rights battle had been won, that the suffering of the homeless or the slum dwellers no longer had a place in the civil rights programme and imperialism had, as if by magic, disappeared overnight.

Not only the avowedly right wing forces, but sections of the republican movement, apparently backed by some elements from the Southern Fianna Fail party, have also jumped on the Stormont bandwagon. Both Dublin and the Northern right wing desired, in common with Stormont, to contain and isolate the challenge from the socialists and left republicans within the civil rights movement.

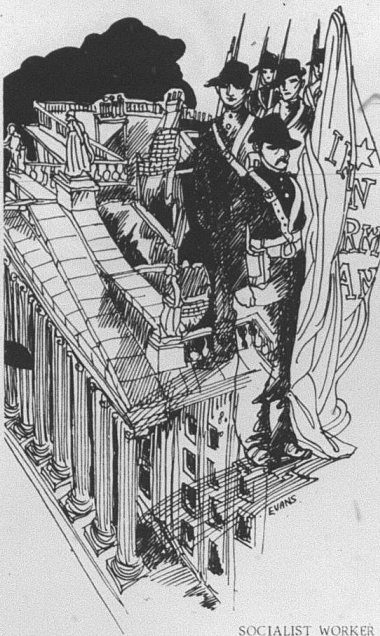
Outside this unholy political alliance stand the revolutionary socialists (mainly People's Democracy and its allies) and the left wing republicans. As can be seen from their paper, *The United Irishman*, a large section of the republican movement is now committed to developing an anti-imperialist movement into an anti-capitalist movement in the struggle for a workers' republic.

What the socialists and the left republicans say is that the only kind of civil rights movement left is one which challenges the imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation of Ireland and champions the cause of working-class civil rights-- Protestant and Catholic, north and south.

They understand that it is only by building a movement on this basis that the working class can be united and imperialism defeated and 100% civil rights achieved. In a sentence, this is the struggle for the workers' republic.

Of course the problems of regrouping the Irish left are considerable. For some "marxists" there is a sectarian reluctance to help build a broad revolutionary movement and there remains the danger that some section of the left may get hopelessly embedded in the Labour reformist organizations.

People's Democracy itself is still evolving from the politics and features of its student origins, but it remains the most hopeful nucleus of the socialist regroupment in Ireland and its attempts to establish a 32 county organization with a national paper is of the



SOCIALIST WORKER

greatest importance. PD's relationship with the left republicans, who include many trade union militants, will partly depend on loyally working together against imperialism and for civil rights and partly on PD's success in raising the whole theoretical level of the Irish revolutionary movement.

The fact that the national Green Tory and social democratic leaders have abandoned the civil rights movement and the attempt to confront imperialism, means in effect that only the socialists and left republicans remain fighting for the oppressed people of Northern Ireland.

As socialists we were always specifically in solidarity with the Irish socialists, however uninfluential they may have been, but for the wider solidarity movement it is also true now that in practice it can only be in alliance with the left republicans and socialists. Since the Irish bourgeoisie has abandoned the struggle against imperialism the only forces fighting for self-determination for the Irish people-- that is, against imperialism-- are those fighting for a workers' republic.

At the same time it remains true that the vast majority of Irish and British workers in this country, including those sympathetic to militant civil rights, do not yet see this. It would therefore be sectarian for the Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign to demand socialist convictions as a pre-condition for supporting a policy of solidarity with the militant civil rights movement.

Equally, our support for the right of self-determination (the defeat of imperialism) has to be unconditional. We cannot accept therefore as a matter of principle that solidarity has only to be with the socialist and left republican forces. In practice only through a workers' republic can 100% civil rights and the goals of Easter week be achieved. But these conclusions have to be proved in real life.

At the same time it would be quite wrong for the programme of the solidarity campaign to lag behind the general civil rights movement in Ireland, or to be the right of the advanced Irish workers in Britain.

For this reason, the International Socialists intend to press the comrades of the ICRSC to accept the following 12 point programme of aims. With such a programme we believe it possible to involve in solidarity action large numbers of Irish workers in Britain and to unite the militants in the wider civil rights movement in a campaign to open a second front in Britain.

THE 12-POINT PROGRAMME:

1. One man, one job.
2. One family, one house.
3. Full support for Catholic and Protestant workers fighting low wages and employment of exploited cheap labour.
4. Full support for Catholic and Protestant tenants fighting rent exploitation and slum landlords.
5. Full support for the right of Catholic and Protestant workers to join and organise trade unions.
6. Immediate and unqualified abolition of the Special Powers Act.
7. Abolition of all special reserve police and military forces and para-military Paisleyite terrorist groups.
8. Support for those organisations seeking to protect Catholic and Protestant workers and their families against intimidation by Stormont or Paisleyite forces.
9. The immediate and unconditional release of all civil rights and republican prisoners.
10. Support for the struggle for civil rights in the 26 counties and for those fighting oppressive legislation in the 26-county government.
11. Support for those fighting British imperialism and its capitalist agents in Ireland and for the withdrawal of British troops.
12. Support for the unconditional right of the whole Irish people to decide their own future, free of imperialist domination, in the knowledge that it is the socialist and left republican forces inspired by Connolly's workers' republic who are leading this struggle.

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Workers' Power



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1970: Year of the Strike

Ever since the Johnson administration's massive escalation of the war in Vietnam sent prices soaring, American workers have been fighting to keep wages ahead of consumer prices. Beginning in 1966, strike activity rose rapidly.

The number of strikes, workers involved and man hours lost rose through 1966 and 1967, until nearly three million workers were involved. This strike wave continued in 1968, with more strikes, lasting a longer time. In the first eight months of 1969, in spite of the fact that no major national contract expired, the number of strikes and strikers stayed ahead of the 1968 level, an almost unprecedented occurrence. Since the General Electric (GE) strike began in October, the level of strike activity probably rose well above that for 1968.

This four year strike wave is as large as that during the Korean War and has already surpassed it in length by one year. Unlike the Korean War strike wave, which was also a response to inflation, the struggles of the past four years have failed to put wages ahead of prices. In fact, real wages have fallen during this four year period, and are now below the 1965 level.

Nor have other issues been resolved or even alleviated in most industries. Over-time is up, health and safety hazards have reached an appalling level (more people killed in the work place in the last eight years than in Vietnam, and the rate of disabling injuries up 20% over the past ten years), speed-up runs wild and working conditions continue to deteriorate.

Against this background, 1970 promises to be a year of dramatically intensified struggle. In this coming year, contracts covering nearly four million workers expire-- this is a million and a half more workers facing contract termination than in 1969. National contracts covering auto, trucking, meat packing, apparel, machinery, and electrical workers, to mention only the largest contracts, expire in the next nine months, reopening a Pandora's box of unsettled grievances and oppressive conditions, as the strike wave enters its fifth year.

For socialists and militant workers, the possibility of victories in the coming year must be assessed in light of the development of this strike wave and the political context in which it is occurring.

INFLATION AND TAXES

The inflation and increased taxes that set millions of working people in motion were caused by the massive increase in military spending required to fight a major war in Vietnam and underpinned by the growing long-term arms budget. In fact, each year it has been more and more the long-term military projects, like ABM, that absorb billions of tax dollars.

It must be remembered that while the appropriation for the Vietnam War itself has risen from about \$2.5 billion in 1965 to around \$20 billion in 1969, the arms budget as a whole has risen from \$50 billion in 1965

over \$80 billion in 1969. Direct payments to private corporations through "defense" contracts have risen from about \$25 billion in 1965 to approximately \$40 billion in 1969.

It is both the War specifically and the constant rise in arms production in general that keep prices rising and taxes high. In both cases, the reason for fallen real wages and declining conditions can be pinned to political causes, rather than mere cycles in the economy.

The war and the arms budget, after all, are matters of conscious political policy by the nation's rulers. Without an attack on these policies, labor is not likely to make any real gains in 1970. In this context, it is significant that what may well be the greatest strike wave in over 20 years, occurs as the nation enters a political crisis over the war in Vietnam and American foreign policy.

Every strike wave, from the CIO strikes of 1937-41 to the French general strikes of May, 1968 and the Italian strike movement of November, 1969 (which as of this writing includes 15 million workers), has its own dynamic. The longer it lasts, the more its character changes.

So it is with the strike wave of the past four years. What began as primarily "simple" struggles for wage increases and improvements in working conditions, have increasingly taken on the character of open power struggles between the workers and management, and not infrequently between the workers and the union leadership. Thwarted in their economic gains, growing numbers of workers express their disgust with the settlements their "leaders" made by voting to reject these contracts.

By 1967, 14% of all contracts were rejected by the ranks at least once - something that barely rated a statistic a few years ago. Wildcats grew in frequency and intensity, and the tendency of strikes to spread grew. Indeed, the high level of strike activity in 1969 was due to wildcats; i.e., strikes that began as wildcat movements but were given some sort of sanction - such as the statewide N.Y. Telephone strike, or out and out wildcats like the West Virginia Miners Black Lung strike last spring. Even the official GE strike by 13 unions was preceded by two years of wild-



Policemen in Lynn, Mass., preventing pickets from blocking entrance to General Electric plant

cats and "interim" strikes following the inconclusive 1967 settlement.

The tone of these strikes is that of a struggle for power and dignity rather than wages, per se. Indeed, rarely have the major issues of the past year centered on wages. The miner's strike was over the deadly black lung disease and was political in nature. The NY Telephone strike, which involved 40,000 workers, many of whom were not even affected by the immediate issues, was about compulsory overtime, i.e., the right of workers to refuse it. The spirit and tone of this strike pointed toward a show of power. The Bell system showed its power by getting the government and the courts to intervene on its side. The GE strike has been quite openly termed a struggle to break the power of the company over the workers.

While declining living standards under the growing strike wave, it has become necessary to pose any and all issues in terms of a power contest throughout industry. Capital is holding on to what it has won during the war, i.e., huge profits, and will not easily give in as the second round of contract openings come up in 1970.

The renewed confidence of the corporations, and the basis of the power it will use against the workers in 1970, flow from the same thing that set the whole strike wave in motion - the arms budget. Virtually every one of the industrial giants that the workers are now fighting receives huge "defense" contracts.

AT&T, the owner of NY Telephone, is one of the largest defense contractors. GE receives at least 20% of its business from the Department of Defense. Auto, machinery, rubber, even the food and apparel industries receive billions of war-tax dollars. This subsidy and the growing inter-relation of industry and government that goes with it, has become the life's blood of corporate power.

From the point of view of the workers, this is true in two senses. First of all, large defense contracts give these corporations the economic reserves with which to mount a longer resistance to strikes. Secondly, the possession of defense contracts is a nearly automatic guarantee that the government and the courts will intervene on the side of the corporation to put down or weaken strikes. This may take the form of an injunction or backroom pressure on the union leadership to "cool it."

Whatever the form, this power equation finds the government and the bosses facing the workers in a united front to "preserve national interest" or some such nonsense. When appeals to the "patriotism" of the workers fail - as they usually do - and injunctions are disregarded, the police and the national guard may be used to break strikes. Indeed, the police have already been used to guarantee free access to scabs and white collar personnel at GE.

The working class, more than any other group in society, has the power to meet this coalition of business and government and win significant victories. The past decade has seen the rise and fall of militant movements in other sectors of the population - the civil rights movement, black power, student and anti-war protests - movements which were often very aware in their political opposition to the policies of this nation's rulers, but which proved to have inadequate power, owing to their lack of roots in the working class. In contrast, a strike movement that saw 3 to 4 million workers swing into action and brought many industries to a halt would in itself set this coalition of business and government back on its heels.

STRAITJACKET

This political confrontation can take many forms; however, we feel that one crucial characteristic required to ensure its effectiveness is that it is independent of the two-party system presiding over the American status quo. All of the gains won on paper could, and probably will, be erased by continuing inflation, if workers fail to attack its causes - the war and arms production, and if the fight for power at the workplace does not develop into a confrontation against the government as well as against the employers.

Rank and file workers should break out of the political straitjacket which the cozy alliance between trade-union bureaucrats and the Democratic Party has imposed on labor. This bankrupt alliance has seen trade union bureaucrats call on workers to support the very politicians responsible for the policies which created the war, its attendant high taxes and inflation, and government support for business against workers' struggles.

The growth of the anti-war movement into a truly mass movement, and the political crisis faced by the Nixon Administration, offer working people the best opportunity in years to intervene effectively in their

own political interest. Clearly, the intervention of millions of workers in this crisis could swing the balance in favor of the anti-war movement.

Already, thousands of trade unionists have participated in the local and national anti-war marches and actions. This is a welcome step which we hope will be taken by thousands more, but which, we feel, is by itself not enough for victory.

These marches and rallies are, as yet, predominantly middle-class in composition and, as such, cannot express sharply the interests of workers opposed to the war in the context of their own economic struggles. Further, a large part of this middle-class anti-war movement is likely to prove extremely vulnerable to overtures by the liberal politicians for support in the coming congressional elections.

In an atmosphere of political crisis, in which politicians will seek to gain the allegiance of working people with vague promises, and conservatives will use the "law and order" issue and fear of black people as a club over the heads of workers, much of the political potential of the nationwide strike wave may be dissipated, if labor and other mass movements do not speak with a political voice of their own, on behalf of their common interests.

To counter this political impotence, it will therefore become a primary task for militant workers to push for a strategy of independent political action now and for the future. Whether or not independent campaigns are possible in this election depends on the strength and strategy of labor insurgents and other militants in local areas: Even if the chances prove to be low in the immediate future, political independence must become part of our perspective, and it's not too early to advance the idea.

During the October 15th Moratorium the UAW shop stewards at the giant River Rouge Ford plant passed around a petition calling on the union leadership to call a work stoppage against the war. Reuther and the UAW bureaucracy of course chose to ignore this petition, but the stewards at Rouge showed what can be done.

NATIONAL WORK STOPPAGE

Even as we prepare for the 1970 strike wave, we can argue and organize for a movement for a National Work Stoppage to End the Vietnam War Immediately - to stop inflation, to tax the rich rather than the workers, and so on. Such an act could help end the war by deepening the political crisis. At the same time, it could be an enormous step toward economic victories in 1970 and 1971, by showing that millions of working people can act in union for political ends, and by bringing the support to our economic struggles of millions of people already opposed to the war.

A National Work Stoppage to End the War Immediately cannot be built overnight. Many strikes, wildcats and job actions, as well as other forms of independent political actions may occur before the message gets around and workers begin to organize themselves for that purpose.

But the organizing for a National Work Stoppage and the building of economic striking power by militant workers can occur at the same time. The experience of both the GE and NY Telephone strikes points to the need for building rank and file organizations and unity. At GE, for example, councils of shop stewards, cutting across job and union lines, could have strengthened the power of the ranks and laid the basis for the on-going fight with GE over contract administration.

Similarly, councils of rank and file workers, based either on the stewards or on newly formed workers shop committees could have given the rank and file the organized power to flout the court injunction and have strengthened the links between upstate and downstate telephone workers for future fights. It is never too early or late to build such organizations and networks.

Although the International bureaucrats and even many local leaders will resist such a development, it should be obvious to the majority of workers that rank and file organization can only strengthen their hand in daily shop floor fights and in strikes. Rank and file organizations, indeed the very process of building them, can also be the basis for organizing political struggle against war, taxes and inflation. Independent campaigns are but one form of independent political action in which workers may engage.

The International Socialists feel that the ranks of labor must go even beyond this and work toward the formation of an independent workers' party. The power struggle that characterizes industrial strike actions is ultimately only a reflection of the power relations of the capitalist system itself.

Because they literally own the economy, the capitalists as a social class "own" the government as well, and increasingly control every aspect of our lives on and off the job. The fight for power in the work place must become the fight for political power.

We have no timetable or magic formula for getting from "here to there," but we do know that it is a rare strike movement that fails to produce some changes in the consciousness of at least significant numbers of workers. More often than not, large, long term strike waves bring forth new political ideas among the working people and often new forms of organization.

We urge those workers who are already opposed to the war to begin now to organize and educate their brothers and sisters. The price for standing still is, after all, not only the further decline of our living standards but the continued slaughter of our youth.

Workers' Power

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Death and Taxes

Kim Moody

Under Nixon, as under Johnson, it seems that death and taxes are indeed inevitable. The war drags on and the death toll mounts, while taxes have become an intolerable burden for millions of working people.

As the anti-war movement has taken on massive proportions, drawing increasingly on working class support, and the possibility of a massive strike wave in 1970 looms overhead, Nixon has been looking around for a way to neutralize working class discontent. His answer seems to be tax relief. Nixon's tax bill, and the Senate version with amendments by Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), however, don't begin to do anything about the real problem of taxes and government spending; the problem of who pays and who profits from this set-up. The politicians, newspapers, TV and all those in power have busted their backs to convince everyone that all this tax money is going to help the poor. The conservatives and reactionary demagogues like Wallace have tried to win white working class votes by saying that all this money is going to the blacks and other minority groups. The liberals have tried to cover up their spinelessness by using the same line to convince minority poor people that they are getting something.

The fact is, that none of this is true. It is not the poor of any race or color that are getting all this federal, state and local tax money - it is the rich. It is a matter of record, that, beyond those minimal public services that most people agree are necessary, the new billions of tax dollars are flowing increasingly from the working people to the bankers and war profiteers.

The table below, taken from the U.S. Government's *Statistical Abstract* for 1969, shows general government spending for all levels of government - federal, state and local - minus payments between different levels of government, for 1967. This is the most recent year for which such a comprehensive table was compiled by the government, but a glance at recent statistics would convince anyone that things are even worse today.

TABLE 1 - General Government Expenditures At All Levels, 1967 (\$ mil.)

Function	Total ** (Fed., State, Local)
Defense, Int'l Rel.	74,638
Space	5,359
Postal Service	6,227
Education	40,214
Highways	14,032
Natural Resources	10,142
Health, Hospitals	9,457
Public Welfare	9,592
Housing, Urban Renewal	2,413
Air Transport	1,326
Social Insur. Admin.	1,210
Interest on Gen. Debt	13,406
Other	28,871
Total	216,888

Using the 1967 figures, we can see that welfare, for example, doesn't amount to a hill of beans - a little more than 4 cents out of each tax dollar, federal, state and local combined. On the other hand, "defense" amounts to about 34¢ on the tax dollar (over half of this defense money goes directly to the giant corporations for arms production). Health and hospitals, which we all need, are only about 4 cents, and housing barely more than a penny of each tax dollar.

The fourth largest government expense is "interest on general debt," i.e., interest of federal, state and local bonds and securities. The overwhelming bulk of these bonds and securities belong to business and financial firms of various kinds. Only about 22% of federal securities (Savings Bonds, Freedom Shares, etc.) belong to individuals, and most of that to the very rich, while another 22% belong to different le-

vels of government. With state and municipal bonds it is even worse, most of them belonging to banks.

What this means is that, excluding interest paid between governments, more than \$10 billion a year goes to the rich and the businesses they own. You pay more to keep the bankers fat and happy than you do to the over 8 million people living on welfare each year -- and the income of government bonds is tax free.

While there is much talk about the rapid growth of welfare, the figures from 1950 to 1967 show that arms spending and interest payments have grown faster. While welfare costs slightly more than doubled from 1950 to 1967, defense costs nearly tripled and interest payments grew by about 8 times. All of this doesn't even include the billions that flow to the rich through other subsidies, graft and boondoggles.

Who pays to keep the rich living in the style to which they have become accustomed? We, the working people, pay most of the taxes, and a larger share each year. In 1950, business paid 47.8% of federal taxes and individuals 39.2% - of which about 70% is from incomes under \$15,000 a year, including joint returns. In 1967, however, business paid only 33.4% of federal taxes, while individuals paid 42.5% (again, 70% from incomes below \$15,000).

The remaining amount, 13% in 1950 and 24.1% in 1967, came from "contributions for social insurance," much of which comes from workers' pay checks, and which, in any case, is not used for the expenses discussed above.

It isn't much different on the state and local level. Whereas, in 1950, 51% of all state and local revenue came from property and business taxes, this was down to 48% by 1965. The difference comes largely from increased sales and income taxes which fall mainly on the working people.

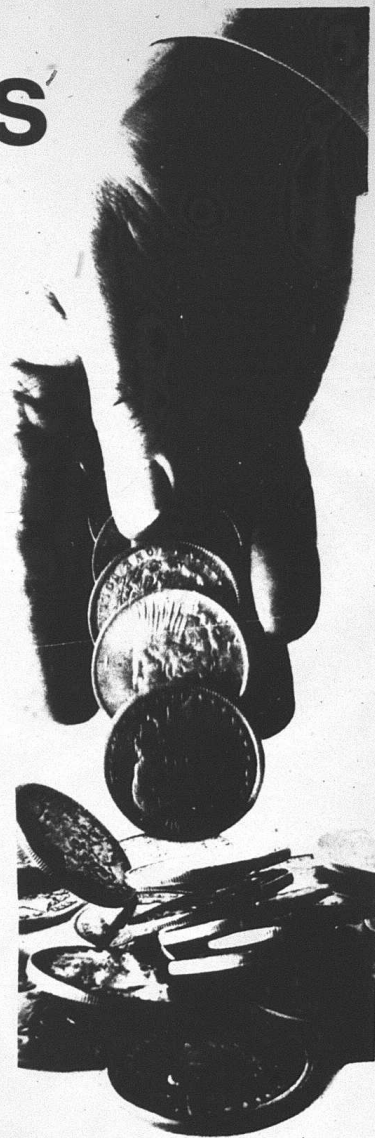
The real burden of taxes is even more absurd if you figure in the billions that go directly back to business. Figuring it out roughly for 1967, using only federal figures, business received about \$40 billion in "defense" and space contracts and another \$8 billion in interest, while tax receipts on business came to only \$47.6 billion. This doesn't even include the huge profits made off other government programs, such as highways. One could conclude that, taken as a whole, the capitalist class pays no taxes at all.

Of course, some capitalists do pay, while others receive the money from the government; i.e., the government redistributes income within the capitalist class as well as from the working class to the capitalists. Any way you look at it, the poor and working people, black and white, lose.

How will the two tax bills now in Congress change all of this? Essentially, the answer is that no matter which passes nothing will change very much. Any reductions in what each of us pays as an individual will eventually be swallowed up by increased state and local taxes, as federal aid to states and cities dries up due to budget cuts.

Neither the Nixon nor the Gore proposals do anything serious to shift the tax burden from the working people to the rich. Under both plans - and particularly under the Nixon plan - the rich will actually pay less on income taxes than they do now. So, while all of us will pay somewhat less, the proportion of total income taxes paid by the rich and the working people will not change significantly.

These reductions in income tax will cause a loss to the federal treasury of \$4 billion in 1970 and \$8.9 billion in 1971 and each year after that. Some of this will be compensated for by budget cuts, but most of it is to be made up by "reforms" and other taxes that



will bring in a new \$6.5 billion under the Nixon proposal and \$5.78 billion under the Gore amendments.

Even if all of this "new" tax money was to come from the corporations, the basic burden would remain on the working people. But this is not in fact the case. Most of this \$6.5 (or \$5.78) billion is to be raised by continuing the 10% tax surcharge, i.e., the 10% war-tax on the workers. The only other revenue-raising "reforms" are a couple of new minor excise taxes and the repeal of the investment tax credit, which is cut out by the Gore plan but in any case would raise only \$720 million.

Essentially, both the Republicans and Democrats are playing a shell game with the federal budget. While they hope to turn our attention away from their multi-billion dollar give-aways by giving us some tax-relief, they are simply short changing the people by holding down spending on education and job producing programs. The much talked-about cuts in the arms budget turn out to be cuts in spending on personnel, with the level of spending on waste/arms production remaining about the same.

Behind their vigorous fight over nickels and dimes, the Republicans and Democrats stand united behind Nixon's attempt to soften inflation by increasing unemployment. As upholders of capitalism there is little else they could do. Their corporate bosses would never sit still for massive cuts in arms production or for any attempt to turn this production into production for peoples' needs. The simple fact is that these corporate bastions of "free enterprise" can no longer function without enormous government subsidy, and it is the working people who are being made to pay for it.

The G.E. Strike And Beyond

George Wilson

The GE strike is the opening battle of what could easily become the biggest labor-industry war since 1946. Within the next year, national contracts in auto, rubber, trucking, and meat packing will expire in the midst of the most severe economic crisis faced by the U.S. in over a decade.

Dating from the military buildup in Vietnam in 1964, the inflationary tendency of the U.S. economic system has burgeoned out of control. By the end of 1968, prices were rising at the rate of 6% a year, and the Federal government had instituted an anti-inflationary policy calling for the suppression of wages and high unemployment. In 1970, if the American worker wants to make any appreciable gains, he must fight not only his employer but also the Federal government's economic policy, a policy necessitated by that government's war in Vietnam.

The GE strike is the most important strike of the coming year, for it will set the precedent for contracts in 1970; it may be the pacesetter strike of the decade. Stalemated in the same deadlock it began at six weeks ago, the strike has generated a massive mobilization of labor resources.

On November 22nd, George Meany announced a nationwide AFL-CIO sponsored consumer boycott of GE, as well as a levy of \$1 per member on all AFL-CIO unions to aid the GE strike. The next day Walter Reuther pledged the UAW to a commitment of \$5 million if Meany can raise \$45 millions.

Underlying the sudden spurt of militancy in the top echelons of the labor bureaucracy is a massive growth of militancy among the rank and file, caused primarily by the inflationary attack on their living standards. The number of wildcat strikes has been growing rapidly in recent years, as has the number of contract rejections by the rank and file (14% in 1968), and heavy pressure is being put on the union leadership to come up with real gains in 1970.

Inflation has hit the GE worker as hard, if not harder, than most American workers. In 1969, a worker at GE is earning 35¢ an hour less in real wages than he or she did in 1966, in part because the 1966 contract did not include an escalator clause which had existed in the past; at the same time, the worker's productivity has gone up 12¢ per hour. In effect, the GE worker has fallen behind his 1966 position by \$977.

Militancy is running especially high in Schenectady, N.Y., GE's original home, because many workers were severely hurt by the provisions of the 1966 contract. Since 1963, when GE eliminated piece work rates by threatening to close the plant, the unions have been unable to prevent the company from instituting pay cuts of as much as \$6,000 per year.

After national acceptance of the 1966 contract, Schenectady workers began a 12 week wildcat strike which was settled without appreciable gains only after considerable company and community pressure that the strike was hurting the war effort. This year, the Schenectady rank and file has put its local leaders on notice that they expect a better showing in this contract, and many say they will not be pressured by the war issue.

Inflation, responsible for much of the workers' militancy, is not a new phenomenon in the US economy. In fact, US economic policy since World War II has called for a moderate but steady inflationary tendency because a well-controlled inflation can mean gigantic profits for corporations.

From about 1950 into the early 1960's, the cost of consumer goods rose fairly steadily at an average rate of about 2% per year. At this rate, workers' wages were able to keep pace with the rising cost of living, and it was only in 1962-1963 that real wages and wage gains started to fall.

Military spending has been largely responsible for the post-World War II inflation: wages paid to workers producing military goods are spent on the con-

sumer market, increasing the demand for consumer goods. However, the production of military materials in no way supplies goods to that consumer market. Therefore, the prices of what goods are available rise. With the advent of major U.S. intervention in Vietnam in 1964, the military budget shot sky high and pulled the inflation up with it.

A secondary but still major element in the creation of the runaway inflation is the consolidation of large corporations, or conglomerates, a tendency which is increasing rapidly towards monopoly in many fields; this increasing concentration, because of the elimination of competition, allows prices to rise freely at the whim of corporate boards of directors.

GE and the rest of the electrical industry are major perpetrators of this kind of inflation. Convicted in 1963 of price-fixing, GE, Westinghouse, and other electrical manufacturers no longer formally discuss contemplated price rises with each other. They simply follow in each others' footsteps. In November, GE announced a 6% increase in the price of several products; within hours, Westinghouse and several other electrical manufacturers announced an identical price rise on the identical products. This isn't "price fixing," this is monopoly capitalism.

The important fact about this price hike is that while GE insists that anything over its 20¢ per hour wage offer will necessitate a price increase, and while they mourn that the GE workers show callous disregard for the inflationary situation, they do not even wait to see what the wage settlement will be before raising their prices.

GE is also involved in a major way in the military side of inflation - building. Twenty percent of GE's production is directly contracted to defense and space spending - primarily for the manufacture of helicopter engines and missile guidance systems along with dozens of other products, all of which added up to \$1.6 billion worth of contracts from the Pentagon in 1968. This places GE second in total military contracts of all U.S. corporations in 1968, a rise from a third place rating at \$1.4 billion in 1967.

Close ties with the Pentagon haven't hurt GE's profits in the past two years. The corporation's net profits rose 13% in 1968 and were rising at an average rate of 11% in 1969 before the strike. But probably even more responsible for the high rate of profit than its military connections has been GE's rabid campaign to cut labor costs over the past 15 years.

Between 1955 and 1965, for instance, GE's production force in Schenectady, N.Y., alone dropped from 28,000 to 5,000 (Since the war boom, employment has increased again to 13,000). The first to be laid off were women. Out of 5,000 workers losing their jobs from 1954-57, women numbered 4,000.

Some of this reduction was achieved through automation, but a large proportion came as part of a nation-wide GE policy of moving entire plants out of high-paying northern cities, like Schenectady, to low-wage, non-union southern states.

GE has also kept profits high by employing large numbers of women at lower rates than men; GE pays women as much as \$1.50 per hour less than men doing the same job.

By the Company's own estimate it made approximately \$1,000 net profit per employee in 1968. The IUE estimated that the figure is closer to \$2,000, and independent reports which include hidden profits range as high as \$8,000 per employee. In all, GE's net profit ranges somewhere between 6-16 billion dollars a year, more than enough to cover the unions' entire

package of 90¢ per hour with several hundred million left over.

Through its anti-strike propaganda machine, GE is evincing great concern over the effects the present crisis will have on the American people and the economic system as a whole. The corporate powers have reason to be concerned: a superheated economy must be cooled off before it rebounds into a depression. In one way or another prices and spending must be stabilized on the consumer market: either the amount of money available for spending must be limited, i.e., wages cut, until prices stop rising, or prices must be suppressed and spending freed until real wages keep up with the cost of living.

The first method exacts the cost of inflation from the workers' standard of living; the latter takes it from corporate profits. The power to institute either of these solutions lies with the Federal government - its choice indicates whose interests it serves.

The Federal government has addressed the bill for inflation to the homes of the working class. The administration hopes ultimately to reduce, or at least limit to present levels, the quantity of spendable income capable of reaching the consumer market. To implement this program the Nixon administration directly attacks a worker's source of income, his job - first, by reducing his take-home pay, and secondly by eliminating his job completely.

Taxes are the primary instrument used to reduce take-home pay. The 10% surtax levied by the Johnson administration had two purposes: the raising of war revenues and combating inflation. The Nixon administration argued for its retention solely because of its deflationary character. In the context of an already regressive tax system which hits hardest on incomes under \$20,000, an across-the-board 10% increase only exacerbates the situation. Nixon also

A second weapon in the Federal arsenal is the creation of unemployment; people without jobs obviously spend less money. The administration has attempted to increase unemployment in two ways. The first is the manipulation of fiscal policy to create a "tighter" economic situation. The essential aim of this approach is to raise the price and reduce the number of bank loans for private construction and corporate expansion.

This policy first reduces the amount of work available to the construction industry, throwing thousands of building trades workers out of work, and then subsequently eliminates thousands of new jobs which expanded corporations would have provided.

The other means used by the government to create unemployment is a cutback in its own spending. A large proportion of the funds spent by the government eventually finds its way to the consumer market through wages paid either to government employees or to employees of corporations with government contracts. Cutbacks in government spending reduce the number of jobs available both in the government and in industry.

Widely-publicized cuts in military spending, including the abandonment of several obsolete bases and the scrapping of certain weapons-development projects - the one form of budget-cutting which really strikes at the roots of inflation - were quickly reversed by Congress in its passage of the ABM program and of almost the entire arms budget requested by the Pentagon. Defense Secretary Laird calculates that the 1970 defense budget will exceed the 1969 total by \$4 billion.

In areas less directly connected to corporate profits, however, the Nixon administration has slashed appropriations: in education, medical research, welfare, housing, and many other vital social services. Cuts in medical research have prematurely terminated over 700 research projects in areas such as kidney disease and leukemia. This termination costs thousands of workers their jobs, but more than that it can render useless years of research. Nixon's policy not only demands that many American workers pay for inflation with their jobs, but also that all Americans pay that cost in terms of reduced quality in medical care and

all other social services.

The effects of inflation fall particularly hard on workers in the electrical industry. GE and its counterparts pay the lowest wages of any major basic industry, running as much as 82 per hour behind such industries as petroleum or rubber. This condition results primarily from the general weakness of the electrical unions.

Because of GE's vast and disparate operations, 13 separate unions represent GE workers; electrical workers themselves are divided into three separate unions: the IUE, thrown out of the AFL-CIO in 1949 for political reasons and shrunken far below its earlier size; the IUE, organized in 1959 as a competitor of the UE and until recently little more than a company union; and the IBEW, far more interested in its craft sections than in its members in the electrical industry. From 1950 to 1966, more union resources, time, and energy were probably wasted on internecine warfare than on struggles against the corporations. Only the corporations could win in such a situation.

To date, the GE contract provides few benefits to the workers; it calls for a pension benefit of only \$5.94 per month, vacations are minimal, the grievance procedure has no provision for arbitration of unsettled grievances, except at GE's instigation, and there is no sick leave.

In 1965, rank and file unrest in the IUE forced a change of leadership. The new president, Paul Jennings, brought with him the idea of coordinated bargaining and, spurred by pressure from the rank and file, he began trying to patch up the old rifts between the electrical unions. He succeeded well enough to present a united front of the leadership to the electrical industry in the 1966 negotiations.

1969 marks the real test of the coalition, its first national strike. To the union negotiators, the united front of the leadership of the 13 unions can mean significant strengthening of the unions against GE. While the IUE and UE, the only unions having national contracts with GE, continue to play the major role in negotiations, the other 11 unions, including the UAW, Teamsters, Steelworkers, and Sheetmetal workers, representing only individual shops and jobs across the country, bring with them vast amounts of labor strength and financial support.

The largest of the unions at GE, the IUE, represents 88,000 of the 150,000 strikers, and thus its contract usually sets the tone for the rest of the industry. The strategy of the IUE leadership this year is two-pronged, focusing not only on winning specific contract demands, but also on challenging GE's 20 year-old bargaining policy.

The IUE presented GE with four demands it calls non-negotiable, and considers to be the only acceptable core for a contract settlement. These demands are: a wage increase of 90¢ per year over 30 months, to be paid in annual increases of 35¢, 30¢, and 25¢; a cost-of-living escalator set at 1/8 for every .4% rise in the consumer price index; compulsory arbitration of unsettled grievances; and a union shop. In addition, although the primary concern of GE workers is winning wage gains, the union leadership considers "smashing Boulwarism" and forcing GE to engage in collective bargaining to be equally if not more important.

This latter demand is in fact a fight to gain union recognition from GE. Legally, the right to union representation was won by GE workers 34 years ago, but, in reality, GE never conceded that right, and looks on the union as an outside force competing with GE for the workers' support.

The company feels it is in a far better position to gauge the workers' true interest. This paternalism is the motivation behind both a massive anti-union propaganda campaign in the shops and the refusal to negotiate beyond their initial "fair" offer.

GE's reactionary labor policies have even left it open to government attack: virtually every strike against GE in the past fifteen years has produced a suit by the NLRB or the IUE demanding that GE's labor policy conform to existing labor legislation and that the corporation deal "fairly" with the union. GE is now appealing a Federal conviction for unfair bargaining methods in 1960 to the Supreme Court.

Along with the demand for arbitration of grievances, the struggle against Boulwarism strikes directly at GE's refusal to recognize the union as the legitimate representative of the workers; as Jennings said last month,

The struggle to win these two major victories will be long and bitter, and success would represent a significant immediate victory and inspire similar militancy among other workers - but ultimately the strategy of the IUE leadership does little to solve the problems facing the GE workers.

The union's wage demands will do little to improve the workers' living standards. If the entire IUE econo-

mic package were won in this strike with a 90¢ wage increase and a cost-of-living escalator, in 1972 the average GE worker would make in real wages approximately 25¢ per hour more than he or she did in 1966, an average increase of 7¢ per hour or about 2% per year.

GE's profits rose 27.5% between 1967 and 1969, and can be expected to continue rising at a rapid rate, but the GE worker will be in almost the same economic position in 1972 as he held in 1966. This is, in fact, the goal of the union leadership: they don't want GE workers to lose ground, but they aren't trying to gain much ground either.

The total picture of the IUE's presentation to GE looks something like this: if GE will grant recognition of the unions' right to represent GE workers, then the unions will not press for any major improvement for the workers. If GE will keep the workers from drowning in an inflationary deluge, then the unions will not demand that GE supply lifeboats and will let the workers tread water for the next three years.

The union leaderships refuse to recognize the causes of the general economic situation or the fact that the Federal government is mounting a blatantly anti-working class program for retarding inflation. Except in a few instances, such as Jennings' quickly hushed-up demands that Secretary of Labor Schultz resign for making statements in support of GE, the union leadership has accepted inflation as a fact of life, and accepts a government policy of extracting the costs of inflation from the workers. They accept a "role" for the unions which entails only maintaining the workers' current position.

The reaction of union leaderships to the fullscale assault by the government and the corporations has been and continues to be purely defensive. In struggle after struggle union goals have been restricted to wringing from individual corporations just enough of a "gain" to keep the workers afloat. Never have the union leaderships seen fit to fight the basic causes of inflation or the fundamental principles of an economic system that forces the price of an "affluent society" solely on the working people.

This is not to say that trade unions serve no function. The traditional role of trade unions has been to protect workers from the most blatant forms of exploitation used by individual employers, and in this role they have won many important gains.

However, trade unions have become increasingly unable to solve the basic problems facing American workers today. Individual employers have become gigantic, international, monopolistic corporations like GE or General Motors, able to dictate with impunity the conditions of the market in which they sell their products. The dependence of the economy on defense spending means that the government and the large corporations are becoming ever more intertwined. The social crisis facing the country goes far beyond the scope of any trade union.

As a result, traditional trade union struggles against individual employers are less and less able to win significant gains. Because the terms of struggle set by the IUE leadership are limited to strict trade union struggles against GE, even the total package demanded by the allied unions reflects their acceptance of their inevitable failure, inasmuch as it would only stabilize the workers' position, making no real progress against an inflationary economy, and making no attempt to tackle the causes of inflation.

This failure of trade unionism to fully meet the needs of the rank and file cannot simply be laid at the feet of an inadequate leadership. The whole mode of operation formalized through a hundred years of trade union struggle is becoming inadequate. The corporate-government complex has spent the past thirty years consolidating itself into what threatens to eventually become one monolithic force to repress the working people in the interests of its profits. But workers' struggles have been limited to fighting one corporation at a time.

GE workers can never beat inflation by fighting GE alone. To overcome inflation, GE workers and all other working people in this country must begin to battle against the causes of inflation, military spending and corporate monopolization. If the union leadership will not undertake this struggle, as we suspect they will not, then the rank and file must begin to organize.

In order to wage that battle, American workers must be unified - not just electrical workers with electrical workers or auto workers with other auto workers, but all working people with all other working people as a class, in organizations built and controlled by workers.

Thirteen unions have adopted a coordinated bargaining system in the battle against GE. What this coordination amounts to is the dissemination of information between the leaderships of 13 disparate forces fighting GE, each in the end to sign its separate contract and fight its own separate battles with GE until the next contract

dispute. This is certainly an improvement over the past history of the electrical unions, but it is far from the unity demanded by the battles facing American labor in 1970. Coordination at the top is not the same thing as a united struggle by the rank and file.

The primary danger faced by American workers in the 1970 contract battles is that if the struggle for higher wages is not broadened to include an attack on the root causes of inflation, and if each individual contract struggle is fought out solely as a struggle against an individual corporation, vast amounts of workers' energies and resources will be wasted as whatever wage gains are won are wiped out by price hikes, taxes, and government fiscal policy.

Under mounting pressure from the ranks, the AFL-CIO leadership has made some overtures towards broadening the GE strike. The organization of the GE boycott of consumer goods is a small move in the direction of bringing the full force of the labor movement as a whole onto GE, but much more is needed.

To be effective, the boycott must aim at destroying all markets for GE products. The grape boycott had sealed off a large proportion of the grape industry's market until the Pentagon bought \$15 million worth of grapes and sent them to Vietnam in 1968. On the first day of the GE strike, the Pentagon ordered \$33 million worth of helicopter engines from GE. If the GE boycott is to be effective, it must go beyond the consumer market; American workers must demand that the U.S. government honor the boycott and cease to do business with GE for the duration of the strike.

Such a demand has not been forthcoming from the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, however, which has supported the war in Vietnam and the military spending policy which underlies it; because of its long-term connections with the Democratic Party, the labor leadership is extremely reluctant to raise demands which threaten the system in any way.

Rank-and-file demands for an extension of the GE boycott can be the first step in building the necessary assault on the government's deflation policy, but others must follow.

The trade union leadership is not really fighting against the Nixon administration's policy of increasing unemployment. A number of unions in New York City, for example, including AFSCME, the SSEU, and the ILA, recently held a rally demanding an increase in welfare allotments; in essence, this is a demand that workers thrown out of jobs get more in terms of welfare assistance, rather than a struggle for those workers keeping their jobs in the first place. Workers must begin to demand that the government cease its policy of slowing inflation by increasing unemployment, that, instead of workers paying for the cost of inflation with their jobs, corporations be made to pay for it with their profits.

In every strike in 1970, American workers will need to supplement their demands on the corporations by making political demands on the government to end both inflation and the overall attack on working class living standards. Such demands must include an immediate end to regressive taxation, in particular to the 10% surcharge, and the closing of such corporate tax loopholes as the oil depletion allowance.

We should demand an end to unemployment, not an increase in it, with government programs paid for by the corporations, to provide jobs for all who want them. Most important, we must demand an end to military spending, including an immediate end to the Vietnam war, and a reallocation of those funds to meet the social needs of this society.

Military spending has been the primary cause of inflation in the U.S. economy, and is responsible for a large part of the taxes taken from workers' paychecks; while corporations make huge profits, the working class has paid. An end to inflation must be demanded now, and that end must be achieved through methods such as 100% tax on all war profits, to place the burden of inflationary costs on corporate profit.

These demands quite obviously cannot be accomplished by an individual corporation, even one so large as GE. They must be fought for and won on a nationwide level. The traditional union attack has been limited to one union against one company, and in 1970 many important contracts will be settled in that way. But these battles fought along traditional lines will only be defensive battles, struggles to protect the workers from the inroads of inflation.

Beyond this the battle to end inflation must also be fought, and this struggle cannot be limited within traditional bounds if it has any chance of success. This fight must overstep trade union limits and be taken on as a classwide struggle - demanding that the government take the cost of inflation off the workers' backs and charge it to the corporations which have profited so enormously from that inflation.

Italy: Mass Strikes Shake Bosses And Bureaucrats

Wayne Price

In the wake of the French rebellion of May 1968, mass strikes and demonstrations have continued throughout Western Europe. Most dramatic in Italy, the widespread struggles of European workers have similar roots to the growing working class militancy in the U.S., but are far greater in scope and being waged on a more political level.

In Italy, the unions with contract up for renegotiation this season represent some 25% of the industrial labor force. However, strikes have not been limited to those industries which had scheduled formal negotiations. Since Sept. 1, Italy has had strikes in auto, construction, metals, chemicals, cement, nuclear, post office and telegraph, restaurants, railways, docks and local government. Since the beginning of the year an estimated 300 to 400 million man-hours have been lost; there has been a 2.5% drop in national production, and \$750 million have been lost in wages, profits, and sales.

On November 19, Italy had its third general strike this year, its fourth in two years. 10 to 15 million workers closed down Milan, Turin, Rome, Genoa, Naples, and most other cities. Huge marches and rallies were held up and down the nation, and these activities are continuing.

As in the United States, the workers of Italy are up against skyrocketing prices, deteriorating working conditions, inadequate housing and high rents, continued poverty among certain social sectors - in the Italian South and the countryside - and the threat that the government will combat inflation by causing unemployment.

Italian working conditions are poor; the typical worker puts in 44 hours, five and a half days a week. In the Fiat auto plants, workers have only recently won the right to a canteen and hot lunches. Like many American workers, they are still not allowed to leave the production line to go to the lavatory. In the last 12 to 14 months, the pace of production on some assembly lines has increased by as much as 20 to 25%.

There have been drastic price increases throughout the economy, including the prices of milk, butter, meat and fruit. Italian workers make 1/2 as much as British workers but butter costs 3 times as much in Milan as in London. Even more important has been the rise in rents, which can now take a third or more of a worker's wages. Large numbers of Italians are coming into the cities from the south and the rural areas, creating a great housing shortage.

The American business magazines, such as US News & World Report and Business Week, agree that the driving force behind the new working class militancy in Italy and all over Europe is the young workers. They have no respect for the union, Communist, and Social-democratic bureaucrats. Instead of acting through the union structure with official strikes, the workers call wildcat strikes, led by "unofficial" plant organizations. In most of the larger industrial factories of the industrialized North, workers have formed rank-and-file Comitati di Base (Membership Committees). The bosses are also particularly worried by the workers' contact with the student revolutionary socialist movement.

"A... disquieting aspect of the [Italian] hot autumn has been the intrusion of provocateurs of the extreme left - Maoists, anarchists, 'worker power' revolutionaries - on the strike scene, and their success in a significant number of cases in provoking violent clashes with security forces. This has occurred in spite of major effort by the union and orthodox Communist leadership to isolate and oust the extremists." (NY Times, Dec. 7, '69)

Unlike the Times, Business Week, and US News, we are happy about these trends. We hope that the "worker power" revolutionaries will ultimately destroy the power of the businessmen, and of the union and CP bureaucrats.

Under pressure from the workers, the three union federations in Italy have had to work together to transfer pressure to the bosses and the bosses' government. (Italian unions are weakened by being divided along party lines: CP, Social-democratic, and Christian-democratic.) They have demanded wage increases of up to 20%; a reduction of the work week to 40 hours, and five days, with Saturday as well as Sunday off; major improvements in pensions, sick pay and hospital cost reimbursements; and the building of low-cost housing by the government.

At the insistence of the rank and file, they have also demanded more shop-floor rights for the workers, including the right to have union and political meetings within the plant, on company time, and the right to conduct bargaining at the local plant as well as nationally.

These last demands clearly tend to undermine capitalist "management prerogatives." They raise the question of the workers running industry and society from the bottom up through their Comitati di Base.

All of Western Europe, America, and Japan - the advanced bourgeois nations - suffer from drastically rising inflation. Their governments are trying to combat inflation by making the workers pay - through increased taxes, unemployment, wage "increases" that do not make up for wage cuts caused by rising prices, and cutbacks in public services.

Increasingly, the workers fight back, unsettling the bosses' chosen way of controlling the "overheated" economies. "... Our man in Geneva cables the summing up of European bankers: 'The competitive position of European industry is likely to weaken, especially in the chronic surplus countries, West Germany and Italy. The wage explosions here also increase the risk of a worse business setback next year than was earlier expected. Governments are forced to adopt still tougher monetary [and] fiscal policies to combat inflation, [and] brake expansion.'" (US News, Oct. 6)

The danger for capitalism is that, with all the major nations trying to each counter its own inflation and "dampen" its economy, a world-wide recession might be triggered.

Hans Maier, the chief economist of the Swiss Credit Board in Zurich, center of world banking, states that "The business slowdown next year will probably be more serious and perhaps last longer than most people now believe. As almost all important countries are now putting on the brakes, we may get a sharper cutback than is wanted." (US News, "Worldwide Recession? Threat that Europe Sees," Sept. 15) These facts make it doubly important that workers in Europe and America fight to improve their standard of living and their working conditions.

If the Italian ruling class is to stabilize the Italian economy by making the workers pay for a curback in economic expansion, it has two basic choices. One is to attempt to further integrate the major misleaders of the working class into the status quo.

The Communist Party of Italy is the largest CP not in power. It is the largest party in Italy, with three million voting for it in elections. It is the controller of the largest Italian union federation. Its main goal in fact is to share in the government with the capitalist Christian Democratic Party and the reformist Socialist Party. But for 25 years, the CP has refused to set up a coalition with the CP, and instead have created parliamentary majority coalitions with various other parties.

For awhile, the Christian Democrats had a coal-

ition with the Socialist Party, but that broke up and now the CDs rule as a shaky minority. They fear to invite the Communists in, because of the CP's few remaining ties with imperialist Russia. More importantly, they fear that the CP will be pushed "too far" by the rank-and-file militant workers for the Stalinists to be useful to the bourgeoisie.

The CP is doing its best to keep up a balancing act. On the one hand it works to restrain the workers, to denounce and beat up revolutionary students, and to sell out the workers' demands - to impress the regime with how "respectable" it is. At the same time, it must give enough leadership and support to the workers so that the workers do not leave it altogether for a genuinely revolutionary organization.

The one thing the Communist Party fears most is a socialist revolution made by politically-conscious, self-organized and self-directed workers. Since the CP shares this basic concern with the capitalists, the government may yet turn to them, albeit reluctantly, as a last-ditch defense of the status quo - if the CP balancing act is a success.

The other alternative available to Italian capitalism could well be some kind of "strong" government to wage war against the workers and revolutionists.

For historical reasons, a rebirth of Fascism does not seem likely - although there has been, particularly in Milan, what the New York Times of December 7 called a "resurgence of the 'squadristi' of the right, the organized bands of bully-boy fascists, thirsting to bomb and beat up institutions and individuals vaguely labelled 'Red'". (The series of bombings in Rome and Milan are only the most spectacular examples of right-wing terrorism.)

More probable at this point is perhaps an army coup and a "government of colonels," like that in Greece. A military dictatorship is certainly one possibility which the Italian workers must be prepared for.

However, at this moment, Italy, like the rest of Europe, is still more or less prosperous. The ruling class still has room to maneuver. The mass of the workers still support the reformist and Stalinist leaders. The young revolutionaries have not yet organized an attractive and plausible alternative to the CP.

Both an attempt at cooptation using the Communist Party and an attempt at repression using the army or right-wing gangs would involve certain risks and exact a certain price from the establishment. But the former may well seem less expensive and less risky in the absence of a really major social crisis.

In short, a life-and-death choice between social revolution or dictatorship does not seem likely in the immediate future.

Nevertheless, there is a certain direction of development that has been increasingly manifested in the growing wave of strikes: toward a crisis that goes beyond the limits to which capitalism as a social system can go in satisfying the mass of the people; toward struggles which go beyond the limits to which the union and party bureaucrats can go to contain the militancy of the working class.

At a time when the foundations of prosperity have been weakened throughout Europe, a number of small crises can quickly escalate into a general collapse that threatens the whole system. Strike committees, organized at the place of work, have more than once developed into workers' councils, organs of a revolutionary struggle for state power.

US News and World Report has claimed that European businessmen are worried that "labor unrest may degenerate into a 'social war' over low wages, poor housing, other complaints." (Nov. 10, 1969) And indeed, there is a sense in which the strike wave in Italy is beginning to take on the appearance of a pre-revolutionary situation.

For our part, we look forward to an escalation of the struggle by the Italian workers. If the outcome should in fact be a "social war" - i.e., a battle between fascism and workers' power - there will be no "degeneration" unless the working class fails to prosecute its struggle to the end.

Workers' Power

New York Supplement

MA BELL AND UNCLE SAM Government Breaks N.Y. Telephone Strike

Bob Thompson

Swinging a two-edged sword, the Federal Government last week moved to maintain the record profits of the Bell Telephone monopoly. First, Federal District Judge Jack Weinstein ordered an end to a seven-day walkout of 40,000 New York telephone workers who were protesting oppressive working conditions and inadequate wages. At approximately the same time the Federal Communications Commission authorized a 1% increase in the profit rate of AT&T, the United States' richest corporation.

The rate increase will cost New Yorkers \$175 million annually, and will add one half billion dollars to AT&T's coffers nationwide. In the last 15 years, New York Telephone's profits per worker have increased from approximately \$1500 to \$4000 per year, or by 300%. Wages during the same period have increased by about 55%, and the increase won in the last contract has been wiped out by inflation and taxes of the last two years.

Nor has Bell's hiring kept pace with the increased demand; the explanation of much of New York Telephone's huge profits are explained by the deteriorating services left unrepaired and an overused capacity which there are no plans to expand.

The strike ended in the face of Judge Weinstein's threat to fine the Communications Workers of America one quarter of a million dollars if the union leadership did not immediately get the men back to work. He ruled that the strike, called while the contract between the CWA and NY Telephone was still in force, was an "unfair labor practice".

Despite this ruling, local union leaders claimed "total victory" because Weinstein instructed the phone company to re-open negotiations concerning wage increases, although the grievance which fueled the strike was over compulsory overtime. Bell is presently requiring many men to work up to 15 hours a week extra.

At least three unofficial strikes have occurred this year, but never before have CWA rank and file gone out statewide while a contract was still in force. Union officials, and even rank and file militants who participated in earlier wildcats, did not anticipate statewide support for New York telephone workers, since the issues, as presented by the union, did not affect upstate workers directly. Upstate support of the strike is also remarkable in the light of the traditional antagonism between New York City telephone workers and their upstate brothers. In recent years, this antagonism has been encouraged by the international bureaucracy as a device to prevent rank and file insurgencies.

The growth of the strike upstate is not the only evidence of rank and file militancy. Several marches passed through downtown Manhattan during which rocks and eggs were thrown at Bell buildings and scabs. On the final day of the strike, three telephone employees were arrested while trying to chain the door to AT&T headquarters shut. Daily

picketlines of 400 or more strikers at district offices surrounded with chants of "Ma Bell - Go to Hell".

However, the strike gained little support from Bell workers not in the CWA, about 50% of the companies' employees. The overwhelming majority of Bell's clerical workers and operators are organized into separate independent unions. In the past their strikes have been broken by the CWA, which, in addition, has supported company plans to automate many of the jobs held by women in these unions.

The CWA's failure to build a base of support among other Bell workers was paralleled by its failure to organize any attempt to raise demands which might gain public support for the strike. Although the men on several marches shouted "Don't pay your phone bill," the strike was sufficiently dominated by the union to guarantee that no demands emerged that were inconsistent with CWA's long-standing policy of defending Bell Telephone's rate increases.

This last strike at Bell is best understood as neither a wildcat or a lockout, although the union leadership claimed both in court. This was not a wildcat strike, because it was dominated by the union officialdom. While the union officials neither discouraged the strike nor led it, their role was to channel the rank and file discontent behind

demands they knew could be won despite some reluctance on the part of the company. Despite brave statements to the papers from local 1101 president defying the court order issued on the second day of the strike, both the company and the National Labor Relations Board asked that the court order not be enforced.

Rank and file anger over compulsory overtime, over generally low rates of pay and over the fact that some newly hired workers start out with more money than those with seniority on the same jobs will not be diminished by any settlement based on the union's program announced thus far. The union officialdom, including the officers of CWA local 1101, whose membership steered the strike, has accepted the court's prohibition against raising issues of compulsory overtime and working conditions generally.

The international as an institution has consistently refused to raise demands which articulate the grievances of the rank and file. The international has proved unwilling and unable to wage a real struggle against Bell even when those grievances were unmistakably clear. This strike, which was forced on the union-bureaucrats after three genuine wildcats, was betrayed at the first opportunity. In a later issue we will develop how this inability is rooted in both the nature of the CWA trade union and the necessities of its partner AT&T.



Fred Hampton 1948-1969

Chris Hobson

The 21 year old Illinois Chairman of the Black Panther Party, Fred Hampton, and an aide were murdered by Chicago law men at 5:00a.m. on December 4. Ten other Panthers were arrested at the same time.

The murders took place in a raid on Hampton's apartment in Chicago's West Side ghetto. The law agents - Chicago police under command of the State's Attorney's office - had a search warrant but, even according to official sources, apparently made no attempt to serve it.

After knocking and being asked "Who's there?" the agents broke down the door. According to the official story, the Panthers in the apartment then began shooting. The facts cast doubt on this version. In addition to the two dead, four other Panthers were critically wounded. Only two lawmen were wounded - one by flying glass, the other by a single shotgun pellet. Nearly all the bullet holes in the apartment walls were on the side away from the door - the side the lawmen were facing.

Hampton's body was found in his bedroom, in the back of the apartment. He was shot seven times, and the Black Panther Party says he was shot in bed.

The history of past shoot-outs - particularly the Oakland incident in April 1968 in which Bobby Hutton was killed and Eldridge Cleaver wounded after surrendering - make it plain that cold-blooded executions are an accepted weapon in the arsenal of police repression. The facts of this latest case clearly seem to establish it as a planned and organized assassination - and it is being widely recognized as such.

In the short run, the state has taken a big step forward in its campaign to smash the Black Panther Party. Hampton was said to be "number three" Panther nationally, and the Illinois chapter has been one of the strongest. More generally, Hampton's death represents a tremendous loss for everyone who fights for a decent life and against the growth of a police state.

Born in Chicago and raised in a mainly-black suburb, Hampton in high school was a high-ranking student and a member of the NAACP. At the time of his death, he had headed the Illinois chapter for a little over a year.

He was not without faults. His speeches were rich in the Panthers' brand of "vanguard" rhetoric and dripped with male chauvinism. To Hampton, as to most Panther men, women were little more than bed-partners for revolutionaries, that is, for men.

But in his speeches, he hammered home the themes of revolutionary sacrifice and of "workers' power" as an ultimate goal. He told his audiences of ghetto youth to get "high on the people." Stressing that race was not the main issue, he spoke of an ultimate revolutionary alliance of black and white workers.

The early-morning raid on December 4th was not the state's first attempt to get Hampton. Early in 1969, he was convicted of robbing an ice-cream truck of \$71 worth of ice cream - which he had distributed to children to make the point that businessmen are taking money for goods which belong to the people. For this "crime" Hampton was sentenced to two years.

In an obvious move to put him behind bars to end his political work, he was denied bail while the case was on appeal. A higher court overturned this decision and set him free, but Hampton knew the state would try again.

During the year that Hampton headed the Black Panther Party in Illinois, the Party grew rapidly. It started a free Breakfast for Children program and worked to found a free "People's Health Care Clinic" to counter the barbaric treatment of poor people in public hospitals. The many ghetto youth whom these programs attracted were enrolled in political education courses to learn the beginnings of revolutionary theory.

All this was not Hampton's work alone, of course, and the state's campaign of repression was directed at the Party as a whole. Undercover agents have sold firearms to Party members and men arrested them for illegal possession. The Party office has been raided re-

peatedly and funds contributed to the Breakfast for Children program have been confiscated. There have been periodic shoot-outs at the Party office.

In recent weeks harassment had intensified. The weekend before the raid, Panthers had warned people close to them that they expected a major bust. In a series of arrests the week of December 1-5, nearly every officer of the Party was jailed. The last major figure, Minister of Defense Bobby Rush, surrendered December 6 on a warrant for possession of an unregistered firearm. Rush could not be kept in jail. But the magistrate showed the real purpose of legislation by setting \$2500 bond on a charge that would earn a white suburban houseowner a friendly reprimand.

In addition, the police gunned for Hampton, and in the end, they got him.

Reactions to Hampton's murder have varied from the inspiring to the ridiculous. Chicago's "moderate" black leaders stepped in fast to head off a spontaneous outburst of fury from the rank and file. The two black aldermen who are independent of the Daley machine, as well as Operation Breadbasket leader Rev. Jesse Jackson, all called the killing an "assassination." At the same time, they called for an "impartial investigation" by the Justice Department - the same Justice Department which has coordinated the nationwide campaign of individual police departments against the Black Panther Party.

This is like calling for an "impartial investigation" of the GE strike by GE. But these "leaders" had no choice. To do anything else would be to discard the my myth that the Federal Government is there to protect blacks and workers - and this myth is the chief tool that "moderates" use to keep people on moderate paths.

In the black community, the outpouring of indignation was overwhelming. The day after the murder, 1200 people attended a memorial mass in a South Side

ghetto church. The mass was conducted by seventh and eighth grade students as a sign that the older generation had failed. "I am black, I am beautiful, I am proud," the seventh-grade speaker cried, hailing Hampton as "a revolutionary hero." "I am ready and willing and able to fight with all that is in me against the indignities and injustices of the world." The clenched fist was raised in a Catholic church.

That night 1,000 people attended another South Side meeting where leaders of the Black P. Stone Nation - a coalition of gangs whose leaders had been at odds with the Black Panther Party - paid their respects to

And on December 6, 2,000 people crowded into a West Side church and 1,000 stood outside as the Black Panther Party conducted its own memorial rally.

There are signs that in murdering Hampton, the state may have overplayed its hand - not fatally, but significantly. In an open show of solidarity, the chairman of the Afro-American Patrolmen's Association accepted Bobby Rush's surrender at the weekly church meeting of Operation Breadbasket, before an audience of hundreds and with Rev. Jesse Jackson at his side, and promised the crowd that Rush would be safe while in jail.

More significantly, newspaper coverage underwent an abrupt change in tone in time for late editions December 5. The cause was an open revolt among black reporters, who demanded to be allowed to write the story as they saw it. As a result, the afternoon *Daily News* (liberal Republican) printed a front-page story which in effect came to the correct conclusion that there is a national campaign to destroy the Black Panther Party.

University radicals have called for the formation of a "white support group" for the Panthers. Primarily this would raise bail and organize protest rallies when Panthers were jailed. It would be designed to attract liberal support.

There is nothing wrong in this, but it will not do the trick. The liberals who were indignant when civil rights workers were killed in Mississippi have been almost completely silent about the unending series of false arrests and murders of Panthers in the last two years. Now the black movement is revolutionary, and not just "militant," and in any case, liberals always cave in when the going gets rough.

The only way to defend the Black Panther Party is the way Fred Hampton himself pointed toward: to lay the groundwork for a revolutionary alliance of black and white working people. White working people must begin - and white radicals must help them - to be militant and uncompromising in demanding their rights as blacks have become. They too must organize and educate as the Black Panther Party has done.

We must learn what Fred Hampton tried to teach - that all wealth belongs to those who produce it. When whites stand up as angry as blacks, an alliance between the two can be born. Out of this alliance can come, on the shop floors, a movement which can build a new society.



Fred Hampton photo by Barba a Hoffberg, LNS

...feedback...

FOR DREAMING

The first mistake Bill Gerchow made (in his review of Abbie Hoffman's *Revolution for the Hell of It*, in IS, no. 13, Oct. 1969) was buying Hoffman's book and reading it. I have not read the book from cover to cover. I picked it up a few months ago, flipped through it for a few minutes, decided I had gotten my money's worth and left it in the store. I came to the conclusion Gerchow did--it was a gas. That conclusion was the only valid part of Gerchow's review.

The second mistake was that Gerchow took the book seriously. To assume that Hoffman speaks for the Yippies is absurd.

More important than the review itself is the general attitude toward real movements in society that the review reflected. This attitude was articulated with an especial clarity in a past issue of IS, in two articles, "From McCarthy to Wallace: the Vacuum in U. S. Politics," by Arthur Lipow, and "Anarcho-Cynicism vs. the Movement," by Kit Lyons (both in IS, no. 7, October 1968).

The most apparent indicator of this attitude's main characteristic--static thinking--is reflected in the illustration (with all respect for Lisa Lyons' beautiful drawings)--it is the exact same illustration that was printed a year ago; a year which, along with the last four or five years, has seen more dynamic activity on the part of the American people than has occurred in almost 30 years. The drawing doesn't change, the analysis doesn't change, of a movement of people, the people who make up what has been called the Cultural Revolution, or Youth Culture.

There are two main thrusts of the anti-Cultural Revolution attitude. 1. The Cultural Revolution is a-political, it is utopian, based on middle class escapism and fantasy. Kit Lyons writes, "If all your ideas are utopian, that is, if no dynamic relationship exists between what you have in mind and the struggles of the social forces in the larger society, then surely, you might just as well withdraw from the world and 'do your own thing.'" (p. 4) On Youth Culture's a-political character, Lyons continues, "Individual acts of party terror... hurt the Establishment like a flea bite hurts an elephant." (p. 5) The conclusion is that they are all inconsequential, "fleas" "impotent," "pipsqueaks."

A subsidiary of this argument is reference to Youth Culture's historical precedents. Lyons refers to "the frustrated German Youth movement in the 1920's." Gerchow sees their history in the Surrealist movement.

"Last century in Europe tiny enclaves of anti-bourgeois artists experimented with drugs and sensations to see if their art would become if not ethereal and magical at least precious and exquisite. The adventure seemed excitingly evil. The price was none too great for Art's sake." (p. 18)

2. Because Youth Culture does not have the "correct" politics, it gets all the blame for the failure of the entire American left. Gerchow coyly asks, "Pray tell, where are those real footholds from which a struggle could be fought?" Lyons wastes no words: "...as revolutionary programs they leave much to be desired." (p. 5) And Arthur Lipow crystallizes it all:

"The hard fact is that the great momentum of anti-war sentiment and critical reaction against established political parties has substantially dissipated--largely BECAUSE of the McCarthy campaign and the consequent failure of the movement to develop a new inde-

pendent political party on the left. The utterly impotent threats of Yippie pipsqueaks about "revolution" have only reinforced this failure..." (p. 7)

Thus, Gerchow-Lyons-Lipow write off the mass threat to the Democratic Convention posed by thousands last year in Chicago. They write off all the human activity that made the Mifflin Street uprising, refusing to see the vital aspects of these incidents.

There are a lot of things working in this attitude. 1. In the name of combatting elitism, the attitude is itself elitist in looking only at the leadership (or professed leadership) and accepting it, or rejecting it, on its own terms, without looking at the movement of real people behind it. Hoffman, Rubin, and Albert did not "lead" thousands to Chicago. Thousands came on their own will, motivated by their own disillusionment with the established political system, including the established left political system, disillusioned and dissatisfied with the quality of their lives. These are real feelings that a revolutionary group cannot simply brush off.

2. From the stance of a self-conceived "vanguard," the attitude continually leads to rear-guard post facto analysis. The people who made People's Park were into the revolutionary importance of ecology, the irrelevance and destructiveness of "private property" ecology. The people who made Mifflin Street were into music, rock and jazz (the police originally came in because a bunch of kids were playing music to celebrate the coming of Spring). These are all motivations which beforehand could be condemned as a-political Cultural Revolution. After the pigs start smashing heads we support the movement, and then we begin our analysis of why it failed.

If these things are so a-political, so non-revolutionary, why do the police and the political system they represent, feel compelled to smash it up, to come down with always more brutal repression? As has happened before, a ruling class often exhibits a keener insight into the motivations of the people it rules than do left groups, reform or revolutionary.

Stanley Elkins called the slaves "Sambos", but the slave masters retained mass arsenals, and were continually using the whip for fear of a slave uprising. They knew the slave was not Sambo. Similarly while a substantial portion of the left had given up on the working class, both Stan Weir and Martin Glaberman point out that business management was alert to the meanings of rank and file revolts; they tried to crush them by moving even closer to the labor bureaucracy.

3. The real meaning of the rear-guard picking at Youth Culture is that it maintains the purity of the political position of whoever is "analysing." Perhaps we are just as much to blame for failures simply because of our purist and narrow conception of politics, which keeps us removed and distant from real forces in society. Neither Gerchow, Lyons or Lipow ever really deals substantially with the real problems in the Cultural Revolution--elements of anti-working class sentiment; corruption through increasing encroachment of business into music and drugs; the real danger of hard drugs; the tendency, through Establishment cooptation, of degeneracy into Cult rather than culture. Instead, Gerchow only writes of Hoffman: "And I hope to god he doesn't box in a sizeable chunk of the movement with him." Who's calling whom impotent? It's not a matter of hope; you've got to be in it, be there to see that it doesn't happen.

There are methodological reasons for the narrow concept of politics which paralyzes

so much of left theory today. "Politics" is a-historically defined in terms that were relevant in 1917 (in terms of making a revolution) and in the late 1920's (in terms of the historical roots of Trotskyism), but which are not relevant in the same way today.

This is not to say that revolution is no longer viable; it is to say that the nature of revolution has gone beyond the scope of 1917--it is to say that the left has not come to grips with the total oppression exerted by Capitalism today.

By ignoring all "culture critique" as bourgeois intellectualism, this position leaves itself in danger of ignorance of the historical development of modern capitalism and the multitude of ways in which it maintains its control. It maintains its control in all aspects of our lives, economic, political, social, psychological, sexual--that means total. That, I think, is the value of a book like *One Dimensional Man*. Whether Marcuse was pessimistic when he wrote the book is beside the point. Pessimism is "self-fulfilling" only if you make it so. Revolutionaries, regardless of how many Marx quotes they throw around, simply will not make it if they don't understand what they are dealing with--and it's not the Czar anymore.

Our concept of "politics" has become static--it doesn't move with history. We have created (or uncritically inherited from the 1930's) a rigid divide between "politics" and "culture" which neither Marx nor Engels intended. "Culture" begins to mean only reading snotty art books, or talk among tea-cup rattling literati. "Politics" remains rooted to a 19th century conception of parties. Both conceptions are divorced from the life experience of real people.

In this sense our static theory falls into the same trap as the worst of bourgeois sociology--looking at people in terms of abstract categories, be they "correct politics" or "roles." This concept of "politics as the only meaningful revolutionary activity seems to me a far cry from Marx's notion of politics as a means of human liberation. Marx began by linking his theory directly to the personal, human living experience of workers and their activities in satisfying their needs. This was the blood of the Marxist dialectic. In fact, the divide between politics and culture is untenable. Both have to do with the variety of ways in which people can oppress others and with the variety of ways in which those others attempt to resist that oppression.

"Politics" has not come to grips with the historical change in the quality of "needs" that contemporary Capitalism leaves in people. Large masses of students (who do not play the same role in 1969 society as they did in 1917 society) are dissatisfied with their lives in much the same way as workers are dissatisfied; dissatisfactions which cannot be handled by established parties and unions. It is up to us to connect the movements of students and their dropped-out comrades, with the movement of black people, with the movement of working class rank and file revolt, not to isolate these movements and ourselves through sterile nit-picking. It is from this perspective that I think we should view movements like the Cultural Revolution. As revolutionaries we ought to be in touch with elements of resistance as people develop them--so we can fortify them, and so they can fortify us.

One historical note about the Cultural Revolution. First, it is "youth" only because at this point in time it is moved primarily by students and their cohorts--it should not be limited to students or "youth." Second, it does

have historical roots in the Surrealist movement of the 1920's. But Gerchow is quite mistaken about the character of that movement. I don't know where he got his information, but it surely wasn't from what the Surrealists themselves wrote.

In January, 1925, the Surrealists said in a broadsheet manifesto: "Surrealism is not a new means of expression, or an easier one, nor even a metaphysics of poetry. It is a means of total liberation of the mind and of all that resembles it." (from Surrealism and Revolution, a pamphlet of surrealist documents published by Ziangi, and available from the Solidarity Bookshop in Chicago). It was a movement based on the notion of irrationality, not as mysticism, but as the real form of relationality in a world gone mad. It was also a movement which identified with the Marxian dialectic, and with Lenin and Trotsky.

In Marxist terms, it addressed itself more to the superstructure than to the base, but it was aware of the base, and of the need for interaction between the two. In 1929 Andre Breton wrote:

"How allow the dialectical method is only to be applied validly to solving social problems? It is the whole of surrealism's ambition to supply this method with the nowise conflicting possibilities of application in the most immediate conscious domain. I really cannot see, despite a few muddleheaded revolutionaries, why we should abstain from taking up the problem of love, of dreaming, of madness, of art, of religion, so long as we consider these problems from the same angle as they, and we too, consider the Revolution." (Second Manifesto of Surrealism, p. 22 above, and p. 141 in Manifestoes of Surrealism, U. of Michigan Press)

Gerchow and the others neglect to mention that Trotsky identified with the Surrealist movement: "The independence of art!" (with Andre Breton and Diego Rivera, July 25, 1938, in Surv. and Rev., p. 30) And, as far as dreaming and fantasy go, their revolutionary potential was long ago recognized by Marx and Lenin. In "What is to be Done?" (pp. 158-159 International Publishers ed.) Lenin wrote:

"We ought to dream!" I wrote these words and then got scared... (he then imagines)... Comrade Martynov rises and turning to me says threateningly: "Permit me to enquire, has an autonomous editorial board the right to dream without first obtaining permission of the party committee?" He is followed by Comrade Martynov who had long ago deepened the words of Comrade Plekhanov) continues in the same strain even more threateningly: "I go further. I ask, has a Marxist any right at all to dream, knowing that according to Marx, man always sets himself achievable tasks and that tactics is a process of growth of tasks, which grow together with the party?"

"The very thought of these menacing questions sends a cold shiver down my back..."

Lenin then quotes Pitarev:

"... Divergence between dreams and reality causes no harm if only the person dreaming believes seriously in his dreams, if he attentively observes life, compares his observations with the airy castles he builds and if, generally speaking, he works conscientiously for the achievement of his fantasies. If there is some connection between dreams and life then all is well."

Lenin concludes far better than I could hope to, so I'll end with his words:

"Now of this kind of dreaming there is unfortunately too little in our movement. And those most responsible for this are the ones who boast their sober views, their "closeness" to the "concrete"..."

Martha Sonnenberg

REPLY: Kit Lyons

The difficulty in replying to Martha Sonnenberg's letter is that I suspect her point of view is in fact pretty much the same as mine.

The following sentence is the key to what I think is her misunderstanding of what I was getting at. "In the name of combatting elitism," she

writes, "the attitude of Gerchow-Lyons Lipow is itself elitist in looking only at the leadership (or professed leadership) and accepting it, or rejecting it, on its own terms, without looking at the movement of real people behind it."

The basic point of my own piece ("Anarcho-Cynicism vs. the Movement," I.S., # 6) was precisely to separate out from youth culture, from the Culture of Dissent, from the Movement, a small group of self-styled "leaders" who were bent on leading it to destruction.

As Sonnenberg herself goes on, "Hoffman, Rubin, and Albert did not 'lead' thousands to Chicago. Thousands came on their own will, motivated by their own disillusionment with the established political system..." Exactly. It was Hoffman and Rubin and the various Motherfuckers and Crazies characterized as "fleas and pipsqueaks"-- not the Movement.

The I.S. has time and again underlined its support for People's Park (I.S., # 11), Miffiin Street (I.S., # 11), for the forces that threatened the Democratic Party (I.S., # 6). It was the Yippies and similar currents-- with their slogans like "Piss in the Polling Booths on Election Day"-- who helped drive the nails in the coffin of what was left of the Movement after McCarthy was through with it.

Sonnenberg criticizes the "Gerchow-Lyons-Ipov" pieces for failing to deal with the real problems of youth culture like hard drugs, for charging that it is a-political. But the youth culture, apolitical or not, was not the subject of the articles in question.

Rubin and Hoffman explicitly present their ideas as a revolutionary program. Anarcho-cynicism is very ideological. The Motherfuckers (just like the Weathermen today) represented a kind of politics-- anti-democratic, utopian, elitist, self-destructive politics, but politics.

The latest Weathermen perspectives ("What this country needs is a little more chaos," says Weather Bureau member Linda Evans in the Berkeley Tribe for December 12-19) sound like they were designed as a case study for my article.

The kind of criticism I would make of the resistance culture growing up among youth-- as opposed to my attack on self-styled Youth Leaders like Rubin and Hoffman-- is that it has not succeeded in relating to the mass of the American people, not taken seriously the job of escalating the culture of dissent throughout U.S. society.

But this is the same limitation which Sonnenberg herself implied when she wrote, "It is up to us to connect the movements of students and their dropped-out comrades, with the movement of black people, with the movement of working-class rank and file revolt..."

If a revolutionary transformation is viewed in Marxist terms, as preeminently a general escalation of popular consciousness to a qualitatively new level, then transformations of culture (institutionalized consciousness) should certainly be and often have been inseparable from transformations of politics and society.

Moreover, it is quite true that the American left is culturally underdeveloped. No instant solutions come to mind, but the I.S. staff have done what we can to raise the cultural level of the particular segment of the left within our sphere of influence, that is, of this newspaper.

Almost every issue since we changed to a tabloid format last spring has included original artwork and poetry. In addition, we have run a series of articles and reprints on art and revolution-- including the same Surrealist manifesto by Trotsky, Breton, Rivera which Sonnenberg referred to when she wrote that "Gerchow and the others neglect to mention that Trotsky identified with the Surrealist movement."

We agree with Sonnenberg and Trotsky that the Surrealist tradition represented a remarkable fusion of revolutionary politics and revolutionary art (cf. I.S., # 2, p. 2, obituary for Andre Breton). Bill Gerchow's reference, I believe, was to fin de siècle currents in Europe, not to the Surrealists.

One final note: Please accept our apologies for running the same cartoon of Jerry Rubin in both I.S., # 7 and in # 13. We would have prepared a new illustration, whether or not our analysis had changed, except that we ran out of time around 4 o'clock in the morning during the layout of # 13. Remember that our readership today is almost ten times what it was a year or so ago when # 7 came out-- we didn't think too many people would be bored by the repetition.

SOCIALISM AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION

The article, "Women, Inc." in the last IS raises the question of how socialists should relate to demands for equality of specially oppressed groups in the society. Susan Strashun refers to a campaign being waged by WI to exert pressure on the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission to fight job discrimination practices of the Fiberglass Company. (For a description of these practices, see the article itself). It is stated that: "a victory won by the EEOC could well prove fatal to the struggle; the women might get better jobs, but in so doing they would only reinforce male-supremacy and widen the distance and hostility between themselves and the men. Male supremacy has one of its roots in the fear that men will be pushed out of their jobs by women... Victory engineered by the EEOC could prove to the men that they were right in fearing these women, for in effect they would seem to be showing that they were after the men's jobs." (IS, #14, p. 14)

We agree that only guaranteed jobs for all can solve the problem of job shortages; no basic solution can come through any simple upgrading of a particular section of the working class - be that section women, blacks, or any other specially oppressed sector. But socialists must not counterpose in a self-righteous way a full employment demand to a reform struggle like that of WI (or of the blacks against racist exclusionism in the building trades); to do so is to hold back the movements of oppressed groups and peoples, accommodating them to the presently conservative attitudes of other sections of the working class.

The working class as a whole will more readily see the need to fight around class-wide demands and presently for full control of the economy when the specially oppressed groups within it raise and fight for these demands for themselves. The exemplary character of these struggles (even with their shortcomings of reformism and problems of narrow consciousness), and the role of both conscious radicals and struggling workers themselves in raising wider demands as extensions of particular demands of women and black workers will be significant factors in bringing working people into struggle around issues in the interests of all.

The development of working-class consciousness cannot be unilinear; some sections move in advance of the rest, both fighting for their own liberation and drawing other layers behind them. We must not ignore or minimize the dangers of internecine warfare within the working class, of white workers against black, for example, from which only the capitalist ruling class would benefit. But these dangers can best be fought through strong movements of specially oppressed peoples and groups, having working-class orientation and leadership, but maintaining an independent, self-reliant character.

Without such movements, these strata can never be liberated, even if capitalism is destroyed. Reform struggles fought by these movements, whose real limitations do in fact become clear in the course of those struggles, to the participants themselves as well as to radicals, will be crucial in building precisely the united workers' movement which some would mistakenly and abstractly oppose to the movements currently shaking America.

IS N.A.C.

WOMEN'S POWER

Susan Strashun's article, "Women, Inc.", in the December IS, raises a problem which socialist women will have to argue through from fresh analyses of the social position and consciousness of women today; it is a moot question whether the traditional socialist position towards women's strug-

gles for equal jobs and equal pay should satisfy us any longer. The pure feminists in the women's liberation movement have a point when they look askance at the dogmatic, often not fully thought through formulations of radical "political" women who, in their concern about formulating analyses and demands which will "unify" the working class, often appear to be willing to subordinate and tone down the militancy of women in struggling for their just demands.

Here is the paragraph that seems to express Strashun's point of view: (and it should be pointed out that it isn't official IS policy.)

"Radical women must help direct these struggles toward success in the long run. This means they often must be critical of actions that are planned that can only lessen the chance of ultimate victory. For example, the next action planned by WI is a

cialists attempt to convince militant black workers that the ultimate victory of their struggles must involve the complete social transformation of this society, and that this can only be accomplished by a united working class, socialist women must advocate the same within the women's liberation movement. Just as International Socialists regard the development of class conscious black militant organizations as a step forward in arousing the political consciousness of workers generally, so they ought to regard the struggles of women such as those in WI.

Another reason for Strashun's position might flow from an analysis of women's economic and social position in capitalist society, indicating that their struggles as women, for a more equitable share in the economic and social life in society, cannot possibly gain anything under capitalism because

the majority of cases, work because they absolutely have to, presently accept their function as mothers and homemakers as justification for the disadvantageous economic conditions they tolerate - lower wages; lack of access to skilled jobs, special vulnerability to lay-off, etc. This is the serious problem socialist women should address themselves to, without assuming pessimistically that the active struggles of working women can only arouse fear and hostility in men.

I would hope that Women, Inc. (and their name is a sad commentary on the male-dominated union, that their identification would be primarily with their bosses' forms of organization) would pursue their struggle, using the paltry weapon the EEOC offers to obtain the skilled jobs they need to obtain dignity and stability in their jobs, while at the same time organizing to demand that their union fight for them as full-fledged workers along with the men.

Socialists should support women who demand an end to being used as a reserve labor market at the mercy of the vagaries of the capitalist system. They should also recognize that even if the "ultimate victory" over women's unfair treatment can't be attained within the present social and economic system, the conscious struggle and organization of women today is vital for the development of good alternatives which could be tried under a system which will be responsive to the needs of the majority of people who live within it.

Beth Greenstein

EDITOR'S NOTE

Editor's Note: In considerations of the "Women Inc." article, readers should bear in mind the fact that several paragraphs had to be omitted from the original draft of the article, which was too long to accommodate in toto within the space allocated for it. The deleted passages read as follows:

"In a society where jobs are getting scarcer and economic security becomes more and more unstable, the only demands that can possibly win are socialist demands, and transitional demands that will lead people to a socialist consciousness. Women must demand jobs for all, in an attempt to show men that they are interested in finding a means to get together on a more equal basis, but not that they are out to get them.

An example of what happens when a caucus formed to end discrimination goes to the government for help, can be seen in the actions of the Committee for Equality, a black group at Bethlehem Steel, at Sparrows Point Maryland.

The Committee for Equality went to the government to bring charges against Bethlehem Steel for discriminating against blacks. If the government found Bethlehem Steel guilty of discrimination and the discrimination was not ended, then it would cancel all contracts with the company. What this would mean is that Bethlehem Steel would put many men, white and black, out of work. The racists would then have been proven right-- the blacks would really have become a direct threat to their economic security.

Socialists must point out the class aspects of the struggle, and must therefore discuss socialist politics. It is dangerous to go to one's class enemy to have them fight the battle for you, for they will surely legislate in such a way that you will ultimately lose. Such action clouds over the fact that there is any class struggle at all, and it is to the benefit of the government that the working class think it is acting in its interests and can resolve its problems.

Calling on the government as the sole agent that can end discrimination can only widen antagonisms which exist within the working class and focus the attention of workers upon these differences rather than upon the need to fight their class enemy and build a working class movement."

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October, 1969

picket of the EEOC office at the request of EEOC, in an attempt to get EEOC more power so that it may win things for WI. But a victory won by women might get better jobs, but in doing so they would only reinforce male supremacy and widen the distance and hostility between themselves and the men. (IS #14, p.14)

In spite of the fact that Strashun implies a caution (correct, I believe) against allowing WI's organized struggle to be co-opted by the EEOC, I'm afraid that the message which comes through loudest and clearest is, unfortunately: don't take any action which will arouse the fear and hostility of the men.

Why would socialist women say that? One reason might be a tendency to take tactics and formulations from the past and apply them rigidly to present situations-- that should not be tolerated in a socialist organization that hopes to have relevance and meaning for present-day struggles.

The attitude that International Socialists take towards the struggle of black workers for better jobs, involving the formation of separate caucuses within the unions (which often arouses the hostility of white workers), seems directly applicable to the similar struggles of women workers. Just as we don't expect black workers to hold back their struggles to avoid alienating the white workers, so we shouldn't ask it of women. Just as so-

cialists attempt to convince militant black workers that the ultimate victory of their struggles must involve the complete social transformation of this society, and that this can only be accomplished by a united working class, socialist women must advocate the same within the women's liberation movement. Just as International Socialists regard the development of class conscious black militant organizations as a step forward in arousing the political consciousness of workers generally, so they ought to regard the struggles of women such as those in WI.

This might be a correct point of view, but it hasn't been argued clearly (at least in recent memory) and ought to be, before being used in such an important way. It should be pointed out that the best that the EEOC can accomplish for WI is tokenism-- one, two or maybe three women will get skilled jobs, and that will be the end of it. Historically, tokenism hasn't had the effect of arousing great hostility between opposing groups. On the contrary, it siphons the energy out of movements abhorring with the consciousness of injustice and the possibilities of fighting it before they can become widespread and present any sort of threat to the status quo.

It is ironic that, while the majority of women in the women's liberation movement recognize that their poor economic position is basically due to their arbitrary assignment to the home and family, their middle-class status offers them that very thing as a cop-out when the struggle becomes threatening to their class interests - and they will take it, regardless of their militant rhetoric now.

On the other hand, working class women who, in

Song My

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

the official story is carrying on a war against the overwhelming bulk of the Vietnamese people - who support the NLF as the enemy of their most immediate enemy, the U.S. and the U.S. puppet Thieu - is clearly revealed not only in the actual massacre itself and in the justification for it offered by the participants, but also in the responses of soldiers and officers in South Vietnam to the events at Song My:

- One soldier tells a reporter that "our officers are very careful about not firing into civilians", but he is hastily reminded by another soldier that "a lot of VC dress up like villagers."

- "The only good gook is a dead gook."

- "We have very bad relations with these people ... We don't know them at all." (From a Mexican-American soldier)

- A staff major: "We are at war with the 10-year old children. It may not be humanitarian, but that's what it's like."

- That place (Song My) was in enemy territory. The women moved around at night and they knew how to cut throats and the children could strip down a weapon like professionals." (Special Forces Adviser, Australian.) NY Times, Dec. 1, 4;

Statements such as these, plus the reminder that American bombers flying over South Vietnam are doing to other villages and their civilian inhabitants just what was done point-blank at Song My say almost everything that has to be said about the war. They reveal that the destruction of the South Vietnamese population together with their homes and crops is a natural part of the war American troops are engaged in; the South Vietnamese whom Nixon is ostensibly saving from a "Communist bloodbath" are being bathed in blood day-in and day-out.

BRING DOWN THE HOUSE

Yet, to effectively repudiate Nixon's view of Song My and to make its real meaning clear would require an antiwar leadership that attacked the basic politics and principles of the cold war foreign policy, politics which led to the American involvement in Vietnam in the first place and which continue to be the basis of the Nixon policy in Vietnam today. It would require a moral and political indictment of all of those political leaders and parties who have supported that policy - and continue to do so - as well as of those who originally supported the American intervention in Vietnam, but who now find it to have been a "mistake" - i.e., a losing proposition.

But for the liberals and their allies, to so act would mean bringing down the whole house, including their own rooms; breaking Nixon would mean breaking the entire political structure; further disillusionment with the old politics - more "alienation" from the established political process - greater danger that the liberals themselves will be destroyed.

ACCEPTABLE CASUALTIES

Hence, we see the rebirth of the line which Eugene McCarthy used to lead the antiwar protest into a dead-end in 1968: off the streets and into the Democratic Party to elect "peace candidates."

It is in this context that the outline of Nixon's underlying strategy for Vietnam has emerged in the last month. Nixon hopes to reduce the level of casualties to an "acceptable" level, thus defusing the sentiment which the antiwar movement had mobilized, while gradually reducing the number of American combat and combat support troops in the process of "Vietnamizing" the war.

As Nixon sees it, American bombers will remain, and military support will still be given to the Saigon government in the belief - astonishing in itself - that the South Vietnamese government can win a military victory over the NLF and the North Vietnamese. This is the line given to a Senate committee by Secretary of Defense Laird and, insane as it may seem (it brings to mind the palmier days of the Johnson administration when the war was always just on the verge of being won), it seems certain that Nixon himself holds it.

CRACKPOT REALISM

The fact that it rests, in the last analysis, on the incredible assumption that the Thieu government can be maintained in the absence of American support - or even with it (and upon the assumption that the NLF and Hanoi are going to give up their political objective of twenty-five years) is only further evidence of the kind of "crackpot realism" which Nixon and Laird are committed to as dedicated, serious, and consistent cold-warriors. That this is Nixon's perspective is confirmed by the downgrading of the Paris negotiations.

The fly-in-the-ointment, however, which Nixon alluded to in his November 3rd speech, and which Laird in secret testimony before a Senate committee two months ago confirmed is the possibility (which is to say, high probability) that Hanoi and the Viet Cong will step up the military pressure on Saigon - leading to an escalation of the American involvement. The possibility of a US escalation should not be discounted: Nixon is perfectly capable of it and it would be completely consistent with his overall policy.

Still, the war remains unpopular, and there is little chance that Nixon will be given the opportunity to buy off the opposition with a "politically acceptable" casualty rate. But if the liberal leadership of the Moratorium is able to solidify its hegemony over the antiwar movement, not only misleading the American public about the imperialist nature of the American foreign policy but at the same time leading it back into the Democratic Party, there will be little to impede Nixon from carrying out his policy.

Alice's Restaurant

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

exists - a society characterized by the oppression of women, but a society now witnessing the development of a movement for the liberation of women (and men). The fact that Alice is aware of her oppression, even though she didn't really know how to handle her awareness, is why I felt the film had a very healthy position on women. It's only when people become aware of their oppression, even in a personal and internal way, that their awareness can then be externalized and developed as a movement.

The final scene, after Alice's wedding, white on white, is a beautiful illustration of the kinds of personal contradictions which make the film. There's Alice, oppressed and aware of her oppression, and there's Ray, caught between his exuberant spirit and a society which only allows that spirit in youth (Ray is considerably older than the rest of the film's characters.). Between Ray and the presence of Woody Guthrie, the whole concept of a unique "youth" culture is shattered - respectively they represent the still-birth of "youth culture" and its expansion to a really human culture.

The difference between Ray and Woody is the difference between "aging children" and ageless man. As long as youth culture accepts the age limits that society imposes upon it for its own purposes (eg., the whole consumer market geared to "youth"), then it relegates people like Ray to marginal positions of frustration, unable to reconcile their spirits with their own lives.

Beyond Woody Guthrie's physical presence in the hospital scenes, his presence dominates the entire film - in Arlo's own development of his father's humor and talk-sing style, but mostly in the sense of human solidarity which was the essence of the man Woody Guthrie. The presence of Woody Guthrie hints at a consciousness of liberation trying to shake off age restrictions, refusing to recognize the hostile dichotomy of "young" versus "old."

NEGATIVE CULTURE

There are a lot of films around now (eg. *Easy Rider*, *If*) which attempt to capitalize on the image of youth culture. The difference between these films and one like *Alice's Restaurant* is the difference between a film which coopts a movement by imposing its image of the movement upon a movement, and a film which depicts a movement as it is, faults and all. It's the difference between what Marcuse calls affirmative culture and negative culture; the idea being that just as much as people may be created by affirmative culture (socialized by society's values), there is always the possibility of their creating their own culture.

What logically follows from this distinction is that as much as people may be created by a society, they are also capable of recreating that society - which is essentially what Marx, Hegel, and J.P. Thompson said, in their own ways and in their own times. Arlo Guthrie says it too, in his own way. When he gets kicked out of college, he says "Schools have a funny habit of dropping out around me."

Arlo's remark represents more than just a clever inversion of a well-known term. The notion of the student as a drop-out is one of the student as a weird misfit who can't make it in an over-powerful educational institution; the institution controls the man. The notion of the university as the "drop-out" sees the student as a human being who rejects a misfit educational institution and the misfit society it emanates from; the man creates his own activity.

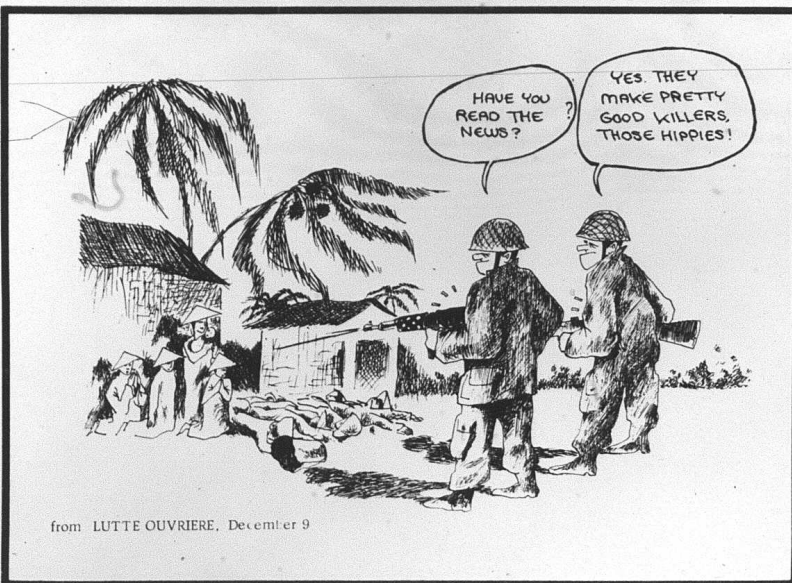
"Born to win, I know I'm born to win.

It's a funny old world that I am in.

I'll fight to change it like it ought to be.

Born to win, I know I'm born to win."

Woody Guthrie wrote that. His son made a great film about it.



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program in brief

We stand for socialism: collective ownership and democratic control of the economy through workers' organizations, established by a revolution from below and aimed toward building a classless society. We stand for an internationalist policy, completely opposed to all forms of class exploitation and in solidarity with the struggles of all oppressed peoples.

We believe in socialism from below, not dispensation from above. Our orientation has nothing in common with the various attempts to permeate or reform the ruling classes of the world, or with the idea that socialism will be brought to the masses by an elite. Socialism can only be won and built by the working class and all other oppressed people, in revolutionary struggle.

We oppose capitalism as a system of class exploitation and as a source of racial and imperialist oppression. In the interests of private profit and corporate power, it presents itself in the United States as a liberal/conservative "welfare state," based on a permanent war economy. It promotes unemployment, poverty, and racism; it violently suppresses militant opposition. As an international system of imperialism, U.S. capitalism struggles to contain and absorb the colonial revolution, and continually deepens the underdevelopment of satellite economies.

IS, is an activist organization which seeks to build a mass revolutionary movement in the United States, to train revolutionary socialists, and to develop socialist theory to advance that movement. We see ourselves, not as the revolutionary leadership, but as part of the process of developing it, we work toward the building of an American revolutionary socialist party—a party, based on the working class, which can provide the leadership necessary for the revolutionary seizure of state power by the working class.

We regard the working class, female and male, black and white, blue collar and white collar, as potentially the leading revolutionary force in society. We see great promise in the new militancy of the labor movement, including the emergence of black workers' organizations.

We support uncompromising struggles by rank and file forces against racism and bureaucratism in the labor movement, and against the subordination of the workers' interests to the demands of the state. In places of work, we fight to build workers' political consciousness, and to link their movement with the struggles of oppressed peoples in this society and internationally. We regard the development of a new radical party based on rank and file workers' organizations as a giant step in the political independence of the working class and in the coordination of all insurgent forces.

Workers, organized as a class, can stop bourgeois society dead in its tracks. More importantly, they can organize society on a new basis, that of revolution.

tionary socialism. In the course of doing so, they will create new instruments of democratic power, just as the workers of Paris created the Commune in 1871, the workers of Russia the Soviets in 1905 and 1917, and the workers of Hungary the Workers' Councils in 1956. Our conception of socialism is bound up with such organizations, which embody workers' control of industry and the state.

We stand together with the struggles of black people and other oppressed minorities for liberation. We support armed self-defense, independent self-organization of the ghetto, and the right of self-determination for the black community. We look to a future coalition of black and white workers; however, blacks cannot allow their struggle today to be subordinated to the present level of consciousness of white workers.

We work to build the movement for women's liberation, both in society at large and within the radical movement. We support the formation of independent women's organizations, in which women will work out the organizational and programmatic forms of their struggles. Within these organizations, we push for an orientation towards organizing working class women.

Women's oppression is bound up with the exploitation of labor in all class societies; thus the struggle for women's liberation can only be won as part of a broader struggle for a socialist society. We do not counterpose women's participation in their own liberation movement to their participation in revolutionary socialist organizations. But women's liberation will not result automatically from socialist revolution; women must build their struggle now, and continue it after a revolution, if they are to be free under socialism. This struggle, like that of other oppressed peoples, will itself be one of the forces which will begin to shake the capitalist order.

The struggles of students and young people against imperialist wars, and against education and training designed to make them the agents of passive victims of oppression, likewise are shaking society. We participate in these struggles not only for their own sake, but also because they will help bring other sections of the population, including young workers, into motion.

We are part of the international movement against imperialist exploitation and aggression. We support popular revolution against American domination, and fight for the withdrawal of American troops from all foreign lands. In Vietnam, we favor the victory of the NLF over the imperialists—but we believe that the new regime will establish bureaucratic class rule, not a socialist society.

We believe that no existing regime can be called socialist. On a world scale, the "capitalist" countries constitute a system of regimes and movements in different stages of development, but with a common ideology and social origin. In place of capitalism,

this system has achieved, and now aims at, not the abolition of class society, but a new type of class system.

In some areas (e.g. France and Indonesia), the official Communist parties—both "Soviet" and "Chinese"—have held back mass energies, in a search for power through maneuvers at the top. Elsewhere, these movements have been able to organize immense popular energies in revolutionary opposition to the capitalist state; but the leadership of these movements does not organize the working class to seize power for itself, nor does it intend to establish a regime in which the masses themselves rule.

The revolutionary struggle expels capitalist imperialism and expropriates the native capitalist class, but the leadership aims at a social system in which that leadership constitutes a ruling class through its control of the state which owns the means of production, and through the repression of independent workers' organizations. Thus, where successful, these movements have placed in power, not the working class, but a self-perpetuating bureaucratic class.

Taking power in backward countries, these regimes have based their attempts to industrialize (successful or unsuccessful) on the crushing exploitation of workers and peasants. In all such cases, popular discontent reappears, but the struggle of the masses cannot be carried forward through the ruling party, but only in revolutionary opposition to it. This system is no less class-ridden, and in its fully developed form (as in the USSR) no less imperialist than capitalism.

In these countries we support and identify with the struggles—sometimes organized, more often not—of rank and file forces for their socialist birthright. We believe that socialism cannot be achieved in these countries without the overthrow of the ruling groups.

In all countries we advocate revolutionary struggles as sparks for the world revolution—it alone offers the solution to the problems of poverty and underdevelopment, which cannot be overcome in the framework of a single country. But this internationalist perspective itself depends on the mass struggles for liberation in individual countries, whether against capitalist or bureaucratic regimes. In the bureaucratic states as under capitalism, socialism means only a revolution in which the working class itself overthrows its exploiters and directly rules the state.

Based its work on the ongoing worldwide struggles against oppression and the ideas of revolutionary Marxism, IS, seeks to build a socialist movement which is both revolutionary and democratic, working class and internationalist: an international struggle in which the world's masses can fight for power and win a new world of peace, abundance, and freedom that will be the foundationstone of classless communist society.

The Alice's Restaurant Anti-Massacree Movement

Martha Sonnenberg

Alice's Restaurant is one of the finest films I've seen in a long time. One of my friends thought it was the most depressing film she'd seen. Another friend thought the film was a put down of youth culture. A third thought it had a "bad position" on women.

After all that, I still think everyone should see Alice's Restaurant; on the one hand, what these people said about the film was true; on the other hand, it wasn't true, and that's essentially why I think it's such a great film - because it honestly expresses all the contradictions of life in general, and of the particular culture we happen to be a part of.

FRIENDLY GESTURE

The film generates from Arlo Guthrie's song, "Alice's Restaurant Massacree." Basically it's about the weird and absurd connections between people having a good time on Thanksgiving, about Arlo's arrest and trial for littering when he was making the "friendly gesture" of getting rid of the garbage left over from Thanksgiving, and about his subsequent rejection from the draft on the basis of this criminal record ("Sergeant, you got a lot of damn gall... I mean... you want to know if I'm moral enough to burn women, kids and houses after being a litterbug...").

As Arlo himself says of the song, it isn't really about Alice or Alice's Restaurant. The same goes for his film Alice's Restaurant: it's about a hell of a lot more. I've already been accused of reading more into this film than is actually there; so with that out of the way, I'm just making a "friendly gesture" of passing along what struck me about the film.

What is so real about Alice's Restaurant is that its characters express on a personal level the severe social conflicts which have the potential for exploding capitalist society wide open. First of all, the film is not just about hip culture - it expresses both the bad and the potential for good within both the middle and working class. Officer Obie, the policeman responsible for Arlo's arrest, is presented as human in spite of his role as pig. Obie is seen as caught between his role and his gut level liking of the Alice's restaurant gang. And while the film beautifully depicts the blind stupidity, the puritanism and bureaucratism of middle-class culture, still, present at the wedding of Alice and Ray are a few middle class and working class faces among all the high "freaks."

I, AN ALBUM

Most of the characters in the film are just groovy people, stoned a lot of the time, and enjoying it. But what the film shows about these people is not all groovy; there's a lot that's tragic about them. One of the best articulations of the development of business corruption in the folk-rock scene, the creeping capitalism of pure profit motive into what began as a spontaneous new music form, occurred in the scene between Arlo and the young teenybopper who wants to make it with him. She wants to make it with him because, as she proudly states, she's made it with a whole bunch of big rock musicians, and she wants Arlo, "because you'll probably be an album soon."

I've heard a lot of hard politics snubbing this film because it isn't about "class struggle" (or their own version of what class struggle is). It may not be about class struggle, but it's a damned important part of it. The girl's line expresses the whole Marxist notion of alienation, the reification of human beings into commodities under capitalism. She articulates the fact that the essence of capitalism has permeated one of the movements which intended to contradict "the evils of middle class culture." So there's Arlo Guthrie - desired

by a woman, not as a warm and loving man, but as a record album.

This is not to say that Arlo Guthrie consciously set out to make a film which expressed Marxist theory ("Dear Arthur Penn, I've just finished Marx's Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts. What a groove. We've got to get it into the film. Peace, Arlo Guthrie."). He didn't do that, which is one reason why the realism of his film is so different from the unclear "socialist realism" of the 1930's. Art, in its own way and on its own terms, expresses ideological world-views just as much as does political theory; it is in this sense that all art is political.

Shelly, the junkie, is really the tragic figure of the film. He's an artist, a beautiful man, and wants desperately to break his addiction - but he's eventually destroyed by it and by himself. Again, this has to be seen in terms of contradiction - between a culture for which "high" has meant a kind

of human liberation, and the development within that culture of hard drugs which only destroy one's humanness.

The woman question is obviously very important; Alice is central to the film. She might be seen as the "movement chick" who is used and manipulated by the men around her. The basis of the Alice and Ray commune was that Alice happened to be a fantastic cook, sort of a hip Julia Child. Alice and Ray open up a restaurant so friends and neighbors can share the good food. Alice, of course, ends up terribly exploited, and she knows it. She is caught between her desire to be warm, to give, and the exploitation which feeds upon that warmth. She is, as she says, "a bitch with too many puppies." The "bad-position-on-women" critic said, "What does Alice do? She marries (yick!) Ray."

But it's not that simple. Alice has to be seen in the context of the whole society in which she

-- continued on page 18

HALF MILE OF DONKEY IN THE MIND

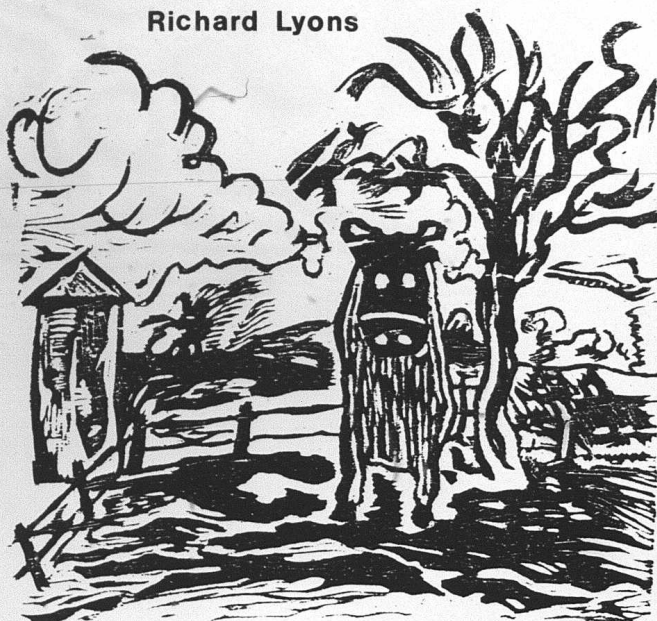
When the fog at last cleared
I found myself alone.
My world had disappeared,
the world I knew, had known
all my life. The ancient road
I woke beside was not
paved. Grass with yellow stems
intertwined apothegms
and white dust in the hot
wet air at the road's edge,
in the ditch, by the wood
fence holding a mildewed
pasture together; sedge
and sage incongruously
mixed, aromatically
green. It had come to this.

And then the donkeys came

and the one mule in no
catalogable file
at random and insane,
spread out for half a mile,
braying both sweet and low.
If one stopped by a rock
in a cliff or the ditch
to rub away the itch
in his rough rump, the rest
ignored him, ambled on
looking for hay, the bray
continuing, a song
to hunger, the old quest.
Praise to the unknown hand
that fertilizes the land.
Bray to the forker praise,
praise to the forker of hay,
they sang. Come on along,

they also seemed to say
to me in the dry weeds
and dust, in time's gray
silt, furless and thirsty.
Follow, follow and raise
a paean to the good
provider of dry food.
But when I almost stood
and opened up my mouth
to haw to the unknown
provider and to scratch
my thigh on an old stone,
a dry wind from the South
scorched my lips, two brown birds
flapped by my ears, the words
died in my throat. My praise
aborted. But the last
donkey winked going past.

Richard Lyons



WELL?

R. Lyons