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Fighting Hard Times

by David Moberg, Chicago NAM

CHICAGO -- You can be sure times are hard when, even in a Presidential election year, Gerry Ford and company tell us unemployment will stay near its present level until 1980. Can he really expect to win by promising a continuation of the deepest depression since the cataclysm of the '30's?

Over 2000 radicals from 40 states came together in Chicago last weekend betting that people won't put up with permanent crisis. Initiated by the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, the above-ground sympathizers of the Weather Underground, the conference was sponsored by a number of groups, including NAM. The policy-making board which planned the conference was, in large part, drawn from black and working class organizations, although the majority of the people who came to the conference were white, in their twenties or early thirties, and well educated. Most were working people -- many in blue collar jobs -- and at least a bit counter-cultural in demeanor.

The conference was best when it was expressive and celebratory, a chance to boo the enemy (The Monster, Imperialism) and cheer for the good guys (victorious Vietnamese, MPLA fighters in Angola, struggling prisoners from Attica to San Quentin). A whole evening of rock and folk music, drama, poetry, and dance made for festive and generally artful propaganda. If the energy spent in sustained yelps of support and standing ovations continues from the conference back to people's neighborhoods and workplaces, then the movement will really be moving again.

Worthy Demands on All Fronts

Unfortunately, the national organization coming out of the Hard Times Conference is, to be generous, flimsy. One clear action will probably take place. There was overwhelming support to join in a July 4 counter-bicentennial demonstration, already called by another coalition led by the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. The demon-

stration will demand full employment and expansion of other rights at the workplace; provision of basic human needs and social services; and an end to imperialist foreign policies, including colonial domination of Puerto Rico and Native Americans.

Other plans for April 15 and November 1 were fuzzy. The Hard Times Bill of Rights proposed at the conference was never brought to a vote. A long list of worthy demands on all fronts, the bill suffered from lack of focus, from being unclearly addressed to a variety of unspecified institutions, and from mixing immediate concrete goals with more distant and general imagery of the good life.

What people at the conference needed and wanted was a strategy for molding the widespread discontent and disillusion in America into a mass movement, a program for action beyond one (or even three) big national demonstrations, and some kind of organization to give unity to the diversity of specific liberation movements (black, women, gay, old folks, Indians, Puerto Rican, Mexican, and various anti-imperialist) and often localized workplace and community organizing groups.

Pains in the Collective Consciousness

Unemployment, public service cutbacks, the iron fist of government -- from behavior modification in prisons to freedom-strangling Senate Bill One -- and speed-up at work for declining buying power were the biggest pains in the collective consciousness. Amid the welter of specific demands, the most important was "jobs for all," and the most problematic was ending racism.

A black steelworker from St. Louis with 13 years seniority -- call him Sam Evans -- complained about "the constant erosion of our working conditions, and the company tactics to nibble away at our benefits" during the past several years at Granite Steel. The union, split among four locals, won't unite. At least three presidents would lose their jobs. Meanwhile, the

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Inside:

- International Womens Day
- UFW elections blocked
- grand juries harass left
- and more . . .

Elections Unite Vietnam

by John Spragens, Jr.

On April 25, voters throughout Vietnam will go to the polls to elect representatives to a new National Assembly for the whole country. These elections will mark a crucial step in the process of reunification which was set in motion nearly a year ago.

The elections were decided on in principle at a November conference in Saigon. At that time, representatives of north and south decided that it was important to have a reunified government. Speeches at the conference stressed the advantages of a single administration and unified economic planning. Vietnamese leaders also stressed to reporters that once the country was formally reunified, the U.S. would have no pretext to veto Vietnam's admission to the United Nations.

Vietnamese are quick to point out that reunification is a process. It has been going on for nearly a year, and other important steps will not take place until after the elections.

One of the earliest steps, taken immediately after Liberation, was restoration of postal service between north and south. It was the first chance some separated families had had to communicate in 20 years. Soon afterward, buses, planes, and ships linking north and south began to bring these families back together. Scientists and technicians from north and south have traded visits, and there have been exchanges of performing troupes. First steps have been taken, too, to coordinate economic planning in the two zones.

April Elections

The April elections will be carried out by secret ballot on the basis of a new census, now in progress. Each deputy will represent about 100,000 people. Details of the election procedures are being worked out by a 22 member commission, with 11 members each from north and south. It has already been announced that most of the former Saigon military and civil service personnel will have completed their re-education courses and be able to vote in the elections.

According to resolutions adopted last November, "As the supreme organ of power of the completely independent and socialist Vietnam, the National Assembly will define the political system of the state, elect leading state organs, and work out a new constitution of the unified Vietnam." Decisions will also be made on the

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NAM Responds to the Guardian

The following article is an editorial by the National Interim Committee of the New American Movement, NAM's elected national leadership

Many groups on the left seem more concerned with, and reserve greater anger for, attacks on each other than attacks on the ruling class. NAM has hesitated to join in this barrage of invective, believing instead that our primary focus must be on organizing a working class movement. We attempt to maintain a comradely tone in our statements of differences and to work with other organizations where a basis for unity exists. At some point, however, strong attacks on us call for a strong answer.

Irwin Silber's latest caricature of NAM is a case in point. Writing in the *Guardian* (a New York-based newspaper of the new communist movement, January 21 issue, p.18), Silber repeats many of the criticisms of eight people in Durham, N.C. who recently left NAM. For these critics, the irrelevance of NAM has finally been proved (though Silber had begun to suspect as much in his last three or four attacks on us) by the departure of the "serious" revolutionaries from the organization. Once looked to as a hopeful way-station for aged new leftists on the road to Marxism-Leninism, NAM has now proved to Silber its permanent attachment to absurd doctrines. Most offensive of these doctrines are socialist-feminism, which according to Silber places sex before class in political importance, and the failure to intone the sacred texts of Marxism-Leninism, which in Silber's eyes makes us social-democrats and utopians.

Silber vs. Feminism

Silber cites not a single piece of evidence for his suspicion that socialist-feminists place the needs of women above those of the working class as a whole. In response to a recent letter to the *Guardian* asking him where he got this idea, he could only claim that countless observers of the women's movement had noticed the same thing. Silber must be watching the women's movement through a mirror, since he has got the real situation exactly backward. Socialist-feminism has been a progressive force in the autonomous women's movement, opposing both bourgeois and radical feminist tendencies that would separate the women's movement from the working class and socialist movements as a whole.

At the same time, it has been necessary for women to define a tendency within the left that can counter the traditional approach of simply subordinating women's struggles to the class struggle. Women's oppression has a distinct

character that is part of, yet partly independent of, class oppression; the forms of women's struggle are correspondingly partly inside, partly outside of the class struggle.

Leninism and Illusions

NAM's failure to speak in the ancient left jargon of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and of the need for a disciplined Marxist-Leninist party has long annoyed Silber and other Leninist critics of NAM. In some small circles these phrases have become a red badge of courage, separating the really "serious" from those who are just pretending. We choose to avoid old jargon because it conjures up images of a bureaucratic, undemocratic society, one which we are not advocating.

But the issue is not just one of jargon. Let us be clear about what we do and do not mean. For Marx and Lenin the "dictatorship of the proletariat" meant that after the revolution it would be necessary to suppress, to be dictatorial toward, the overthrown capitalist class and toward anyone who tried to achieve a restoration of capitalism. It would at the same time be a democratic republic for the vast majority of the working population. Do we advocate that kind of post-revolutionary society? Of course. Do we advocate Stalinist dictatorship and bureaucratic state ownership of industry? Of course not. Which of these does "dictatorship of the proletariat" suggest to the average American worker?

The notion of a disciplined Marxist-Leninist party similarly covers a variety of sins and virtues. "Democratic centralism," the organizational principle of such a party, means for many of its supporters simply democratic election of leadership and votes on major positions, combined with acceptance by the minority of a majority position once it has been reached. Historically, in the Russian and Chinese revolutions, there has been no fixed, magic organizational formula for a party, but rather a changing balance between democracy and centralism in changing political conditions. A party that can work legally can afford far more internal democracy than a party which is forced underground.

The objections of most NAM members to "democratic centralism" are not so much toward the basic notions of taking seriously and acting together on majority decisions, nor to the historical understanding of the changing party structures required by changing conditions. Rather we reject the extravagant excesses of centralism and secrecy which are often presented, by the new communist groups as well as the old Communist Party, as the only "serious" approach to organization. The secrecy of leader-

ship debates to membership, and the secrecy of membership in many cases from members in other branches and from close friends and associates, are stifling to political debate and development -- without, in practice, preventing police agents from infiltrating such an organization.

It is true that three of the most explicitly Marxist-Leninist chapters in NAM have recently left the organization. But those chapters, who represent only a small proportion of NAM members, are by no means the only Marxist-Leninists in NAM, and are certainly not the only people seriously debating the questions raised by Leninism.

The Guardian

We have severe disagreements with the *Guardian* on these and other issues, and can only conclude that Silber is deliberately misrepresenting our positions. As internationalists, we find it embarrassing that the major independent newspaper of the Left must be congratulated for "courage" when it supports Marxist revolutionaries in Angola against the forces of the CIA and South Africa; we are appalled that other portions of the new communist movement can identify the Soviet role in Angola as the main danger. We find it sad that the *Guardian's* canon on the party does not allow for any deviations from a basically Stalinist conception without labelling them social democracy. And we find it ironic that Silber's attacks have increased in fervor precisely as NAM has moved toward a serious consideration of Lenin's ideas in the context of making a revolution in the U.S.

It seems that, while its positions are at times progressive and worthy of support, the *Guardian* remains sectarian at its core: determined to build its own political following at the expense even of other groups that are relatively close to it. Especially it cannot tolerate groups which, like NAM, will not declare themselves part of the "new communist movement." But from the outside, the advantages of joining this "movement" are hard to see. A bunch of small Left groups, many of them totally hostile to each other's positions, sharing an inclination toward rigid, authoritarian, overly secretive organization, and a jargon that is obscure not only to most of the working class, but to much of the Left as well -- why exactly is it that Irwin Silber thinks it is a mark of political progress for people to join this instead of NAM?

(Those readers who wish to pursue the criticisms raised by Silber, and NAM's response, should read NAM's Discussion Bulletin #12, available for \$1.00 from the NAM National Office.)



People who have heard about the Co-op City rent strike may be wondering about the statement on page 1 of last month's NAM Newspaper that 15,000 people live in the apartment complex. Actually, there are 60,000 residents, in 15,000 apartment units, and 50,000 of them are involved in the rent strike.

We also left out the by-line of the article on Argentina on page 12 of last month's issue. It was written by an Argentinian who recently returned from a trip to Argentina, who has asked us not to use his name.

The address for the Norman Political Rights Project, mentioned on page 6 of the January NAM Newspaper, which is raising money for Michael Wright's libel suit, is Box 2518, Norman, OK 73069.

Finally, a mistake was made in editing the article about the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, also on page 6 of the January issue. The ICFTU is not an offshoot of the American Institute for Free Labor Development. We apologize to Rodney Larson, who wrote the original article, for our error in editing.



Frank Bove, Steve Carlip, Sandy Carter, Chris Casey, Chris Ghibelline, Roger Gottlieb, Carollee Howes, Larry Miller, Kathy Moore, Karen Morgan

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Unless otherwise indicated, signed articles represent the opinion of their authors. Unsigned articles represent the opinion of the Newspaper Collective.

The New American Movement (NAM) exists to help organize a movement for democratic socialism in the United States. Our aim is to establish working class control of the enormous productive capacity of American industry, to create a society that will provide material comfort and security for all people, and in which the full and free development of every individual will be the basic goal. Such a society will strive for decentralization of decision-making, an end to bureaucratic rule, and participation of all people in shaping their own lives and the direction of society. We believe the elimination of sexist and racist institutions and the dismantling of American economic and social control abroad are central to the struggle for socialism.

interview

Portugal Today

The Portuguese immigrant community is one of the fastest growing of the country's ethnic minorities. Driven by the tremendous poverty in Portugal, over 18 percent of Portugal's population has emigrated in the past 15 years, many of them to this country. To those were added young Portuguese men fleeing conscription for the colonial wars in Africa.

The enormous political changes that Portugal has experienced in the last year and a half are very important to these people. Jose Aica is a leader of the Portuguese Immigrant Movement. He visited Portugal most recently in December and January. Following his return, the Portuguese Immigrant Movement held a meeting in which Jose spoke to other Portuguese about recent political developments back home. About 200 people were there, a cross-section of the immigrant community. Just before that meeting, Kathy Moore and Larry Miller of the NAM Newspaper Collective interviewed Jose Aica about his organization and current events in Portugal.

K: I'm curious about what your group does in the U.S.

J: Our group was formed about six years ago. A few of us had left Portugal because of the draft, because we were opposed to the colonial wars, because we were opposed to the government. Some of us didn't come to the U.S. right away. I lived in Canada for a year.

After I came to the U.S. I got in touch with some Portuguese people who opposed fascism in Portugal, and four of us started a group which met, talked to other people who opposed the government, and little by little we started on-going meetings, demonstrations against colonialism, against repression inside Portugal, against visits to this country by Portuguese government officials, against groups here that supported the fascist government.

We also organized people for classes, English language classes, political education classes to discuss their own problems here. At times we tried to help people with problems like applying for unemployment, visas.

After the coup d'etat in Portugal we went on holding meetings, participating in discussions and debates and conferences. We are all Portuguese immigrants, all workers, many of us American citizens. This is our country too. But we think about Portugal, the problems of Portuguese people and the problems of Portuguese people back home.

K: Do you see yourselves as part of the socialist movement within the United States?

Anti-Fascism

J: Well, it's very difficult to label us. There are people who are with us who are socialists, yes. There are people who are communists, there are people who are religious. We are linked by a common denominator that's anti-fascism, here, in Portugal, anywhere.

L: I would like to ask you your impressions of what has been going on in Portugal since the 25th of November.

J: I was born in Portugal under fascism. That's the only regime that I knew in Portugal. There were people who were deprived of means of living, who were deprived of an education, who were deprived of the right to develop their minds, their bodies, and be free and enjoy life.

I was away for six years in exile. I went back a year ago. At that time I noticed that there was a chance for things to change in Portugal. The decolonization was taking place, democratization, a cultural revolution, for poor people to have a chance to go to school, a chance to work for the welfare of the country.

At that time I also noticed that the people who identified with the former regime were lying very low. They were afraid, they realized that they were in danger, their privileges were in danger.

This time I was there again and I noticed that this had been reversed. Former fascists, and I am not using the word loosely, they were fascists, these people are back because, you know, they were never really cleaned up. The economic

structure of the country wasn't dealt a final blow as it could have been.

You know, the coup d'etat and the government they formed were very humane, not too many people were killed. Unfortunately it was a "revolution of flowers." With flowers you don't really change things. You can make them look very beautiful, but you can't really change them.

L: Did the people seem demoralized?

J: Yes, yes. The people on the streets are dissatisfied. Things haven't been good lately, and they are deteriorating. Cost of living is rising. Wages have been frozen, but prices have not.

L: Inflation in Portugal is 50% a month.

J: As before people are going hungry. Children are going barefoot in the winter time. There are beggars in the streets.

K: The U.S. papers reported a lot of resistance to revolutionary change by people in the north. Are people in the north of Portugal pleased by the turn things have taken?

North and South

J: In the south oppression was blatant. A few families owned half of the country. Everyone else was a farm worker. A few people worked for the government, maybe a small bureaucrat or a policeman.

Most people in the southern part of the country lived very very poorly. They grew up working the land and they died working the land. So naturally they welcomed a change.

In the northern part of Portugal the situation is similar, but most people own a little piece of land. They are peasants, small peasants. They aren't paid farm workers. Some don't even own the land, but they rent it from the large landowners and they cultivate the land.

In the south, people had nothing, so they welcomed a change. In the north, the influence of the Catholic Church and the fact that they had a house or a little piece of land that belonged to their ancestors made them react to any threat to the social status quo. In fact they had nothing to lose, most of them, but they were made to believe that communism would come and they didn't know what communism is. They don't know what fascism is; they don't know what democracy is. They were afraid the communists, the Reds, would come and take their houses, their land, their families.

They Are Afraid to Die

L: How did people react to the shooting of demonstrators at Custodias? Did people believe the government's story?

J: Well, I didn't. But a lot of people did. You know three or four people were killed there. That is enough to scare a lot of people. They have seen a lot of people get killed before for participating in demonstrations, and, you know, people are afraid of repression. They are afraid to die. It's very normal.

K: How about the strength of the labor unions? Does the left still have a strong base?

J: Yes, the Intersindical, the federation of unions, is still very powerful. But it has been under attack from the Socialist Party and from the Popular Democrats. You know, the forces of the right have been united and they have powerful allies. They have illiteracy, and superstition and backwardness on their side.

L: When I was in Lisbon, I saw a great deal of evidence of the neighborhood commissions. They were organizing against illiteracy, holding meetings and parties. Do you see much of that when you get outside of Lisbon, in the Alentejo or in the north?

J: Oh yes, in the southern part, people are organized. The district committees, the tenants' unions, etc., etc., are powerful. But in the northern part except for the cities they are not. In some places they have never been able to organize. They don't even exist in many areas, the Azore Islands for instance, or Madeira except for one or two in the cities.

You know, those workers' committees and tenants' unions are looked at as enemies of the

ruling classes in that country. And it's true. So they fight them, they resist them, they oppose them.

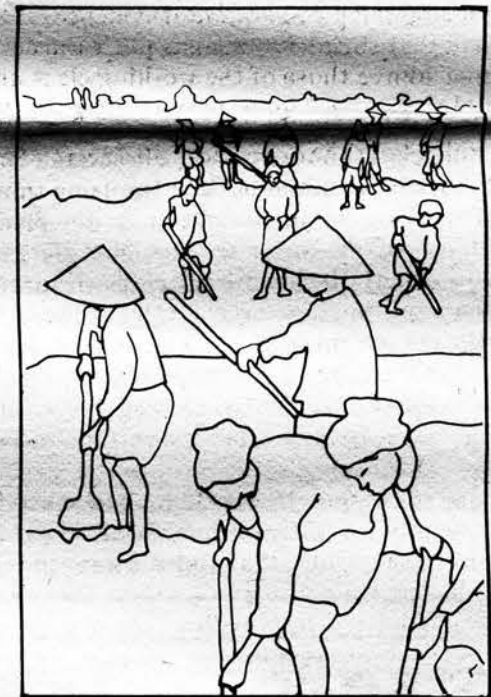
The Church opposes them. I insist on the power of the Church in Portugal. It's a powerful, powerful organization. It has been allied with the ruling classes, it supported them. It supported fascism. It supported Salazar all the way. They praise Salazar even today in church, a lot of priests, I have heard this. When I grew up there, you know, a priest would dedicate a whole sermon to Salazar, talk about his biography and how he had been sent by God to help the country.

L: What do you think will happen?

J: We will have some kind of so-called western style democracy, where people are allowed to vote, to read mostly whatever they want, but they are also allowed to starve. As far as I'm concerned that's not freedom.

L: What will happen to the nationalized industries and cooperatives?

J: The factories will be returned, I think. Land reform never really took place in Portugal. People in the south took over the land. After they took over, laws were passed to regulate the formation of cooperatives. Although the law there hadn't been an Agrarian Reform, in fact, the people were already working the land themselves, organizing cooperatives. Eventually the government and the landowners will try to drive them out. But except by means of force they will not be able to. Land reform is a fact.



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what we mean

The State

by Roger Gottlieb, Newspaper Collective

Another Presidential election year is upon us. We face a host of hopeful candidates, each busily trying to distinguish himself from the others, each one claiming to be interested only in our welfare. It seems worthwhile at such a time to take a close look at the function of government in our society -- and to see if there is really much to hope for from a change in Presidents (or, for that matter, a change in Congresspersons, mayors, Cabinet members, or anyone else in the government).

One thing most of us know from our everyday life in this society is that our country is divided up into groups which have very different interests. Every strike, fiscal crisis, or gasoline shortage makes it clear that there are those who are wealthy and powerful and those who are not. When oil companies' profits skyrocket during the energy crisis or the banks make 17% interest on their loans to troubled city governments, it's obvious that the ruling class -- those who own the banks and large corporations -- usually gain when the rest of us lose.

But, we are told, the government is **above** the class struggle. It functions as an independent institution, enforcing laws made by our representatives, guarding our interests, responsive to our needs. We do not have to make a revolution to get rid of unemployment, war, oppression, pollution, and poverty. We have only to elect the right people to office.

The first function of the state is to **appear** to be separate from the ongoing struggles and competition of capitalist society.

Reality

In fact, what the state really does is manage capitalist society in the interests of the capitalists. This has been true from the first days of the Constitution (when slavery was legal and women weren't allowed to vote) right up to the present (when large corporations are protected and aided by a variety of tax benefits, governmental services, and laws).

Ordinary citizens can lose their jobs, go on welfare which barely meets their needs, go broke. Large corporations like Lockheed get tens of millions of dollars to make sure they're O.K. Masses of working class people die in wars designed to conquer the world for raw materials and markets for U.S. business and to protect foreign investments that take away jobs at

home. High level administrators shuttle back and forth between government agencies and the corresponding private corporations: from Ford Motor Company to the Defense Department to the World Bank (like Robert McNamara) or from the Food and Drug Administration to the large drug companies or General Foods.

New laws, new faces in office, new political slogans -- all these somehow wind up doing the same thing: helping make sure the capitalist class keeps making a fat profit.

Of course, as we've argued before, capitalism is an unstable system. Competition between different capitalists, inefficiency, unemployment, the struggles of working people against the ruling class -- all these mean that in order for the government to manage the whole society in the interests of the ruling class, certain members of that class will sometimes lose out.

Also, it often seems as if the government really is interested in meeting our needs, through such programs as social security, unemployment compensation, and so forth. Is this really the case?

For Instance

In the 1930's, America was struck by an enormous depression. Banks failed, tens of millions were unemployed (as much as 25% of the workforce), businesses collapsed by the thousands, crushing poverty was found throughout the country. The depression was caused by the basic structure of the capitalist economy: production for profit, overexpansion of industry in search of increased profit, and instability due to inadequate planning. The government's response was Roosevelt's New Deal.

The New Deal had two basic functions. First, it had to stabilize the economy by placing it under increased governmental control. Credit was guaranteed by the government and massive public works projects were started to stimulate the economy.

Second, the New Deal had to respond to the massive labor militancy of the '30's. People were fed up with unemployment and poverty. Militant strikes swept the country, including the famous sit-down strikes in auto plants which challenged the right of capitalists to control property. So Roosevelt pushed through, against the opposition of much of the business community, legislation guaranteeing the basic rights of workers to organize and receive unemployment compensation and social security.

While the New Deal improved the economic situation to some extent, what really cured the depression was the massive government spending, with deficit financing, of World War II. The Unemployment rate was practically as high in 1939 as it was in 1933.

The result of the New Deal was an increase in the process of economic centralization: the largest corporations picked up the pieces left by the failures of small businesses, and profited from the government's commitment to maintaining a stable economy. The working class won significant, but minor, reforms. Militance was defused, revolution was avoided, and the capitalist class maintained its power.

Last But Not Least

The government is, however, more than just a policeman for the rich. The instability of capitalism is so great that the government must organize the economy to keep it functioning. Because of the enormous importance, and size, of the government apparatus, conflicts of interest between it and parts of the ruling class can develop. This happened, for instance, when the Defense Department (with the backing of the defense industries) continued to support the Vietnam War against the interests not only of the economy as a whole, but other large corporate interests as well.

In short, the state in this society must **appear** to be impartial while **actually** being on the side of one class against the rest of us. Whichever Presidential candidate finally wins, he'll try to keep our troubled economy afloat without making changes that might hurt his friends. If he does make any changes, he will do so only because our militant struggles in strikes and community organizations force him to.



letters

Letters to be printed should be specifically addressed to this column. They should be no more than 200 words, or they will be subject to editing for length if necessary. We will try to print as many letters as we can.

Dear Comrades on the Newspaper Collective,

I am surprised at the editorial changes the collective made in my article [about this fall's election results]. ... A number of specific changes have to be rated as political. Most strikingly, the conclusion is baffling, and not at all what I meant: I never suggested that the men in power are sure where they are going, that what is happening is the replacement of "a carrot with a stick," that the rest of us are "more confused," or even that there exists a "silent majority." Nor did I qualify my discussion of "resistance" in electoral contests with the word "even." The list could go on.

Basically, what I feel is distorted in the conclusion is the underlying theme of power. I don't think people's problem is that they are confused at all. In many ways, people are much clearer about what is happening than are most radicals. After the last decade, most folks know who runs the society, what the government is like, and what they can expect from politicians. And they know what are the real options in their lives -- it's the lack of mobilized popular power that makes people go rightward, not confusion. People are not going to be generous or daring about new alternatives or whatever when they feel discouraged, defeated, and powerless.

Harry Boyte

To the collective:

After Frank Ackerman's recent article in the paper generally favoring a vote for Democratic Presidential candidate Fred Harris, it must be wondered what, if anything, we have learned from the past decades of the so called "Communist" Party and others in the left, support of various liberal and progressive candidates within the Democratic Party.

The left was always used co-opted and all that was visible after the election results were in, was its corpse.

Leave it to the **New York Times** to provide more information than "marxists." A recent **Times** article points out that Fred Harris, so called "populist," is actively urging strong gun control laws in this country. Harris is trying to disarm the very same working people he claims to support. It is a fact that he is not at the same time calling for the disarming of the fascist police (even as they are disarmed in England, Japan, and numerous other countries). This so called "populist" wants the capitalist government to pass increasingly repressive gun control laws to register and control the people.

During the current worldwide capitalist crisis, the liberals to the conservatives are **frantically** pushing gun control. Does anyone wonder why?

Chile, Indonesia, Uruguay, Brazil, the people of all these countries are now paying the price of being disarmed and lacking explicitly socialist leadership.

Closer to home, in Puerto Rico there are some of the most repressive gun control laws in the world. After several bombings and shootings of Puerto Rican Socialist Party and other independence groups

headquarters, causing tens of thousands of dollars damage, the PSP finally decided to defend its offices (despite the gun control laws), and after shooting one of the local fascists in the stomach as he attempted to plant another bomb in front of their printing office, the attacks "mysteriously" have ceased for almost a year and a half.

Gun control is an important clue to Fred Harris' real political loyalties. The issue is, should the left parade after the Harrises, Ramsey Clarks, McCarthys, McGoverns, Kennedys, Bella Abzugs, etc., or begin the long hard organizational and political work of building united fronts with explicitly socialist platforms and candidates in order to build a mass socialist movement so direly lacking in America today? A mass workers party of the people can only grow out of a mass self-confident and class conscious stirring of the people.

While we must work to win over working class oriented members of the Democratic and Republican parties, we can only win them to a **socialist alternative** which NAM and other groups on the left must begin to construct. Yes, the left is pathetically late, as always, for the 1976 capitalist electoral snow job, but we must be prepared in the future. For example, the 1977 mayoral election in crisis riddled New York City gives the socialist left tremendous opportunities and then come nationwide elections in 1978 and 1980.

For 1976, we would do better to give critical support to the Wright-Dr. Spock People's Party Presidential ticket and begin to create the habits of unity through joint struggle in building the socialist (the only) alternative for the working class.

Peter Anton

Democrats and Republicans

Two Roads to the Same Swamp

by Dollars and Sense

Once more it is time to shift through the rhetoric of a Presidential campaign. After one has dodged the cliches, the personality parade, the apple pie and the just plain lies, what's left?

This year there are real differences between the Republican and Democratic economic programs. The two parties are at odds over the issue of "big government" (that is, the size of government budgets and deficits) and the strategy for recovery. Both parties' strategies would restore business profits, as a key ingredient of recovery; but they would do it in very different ways.

The Republicans are calling for smaller government spending and a gradual recovery. Ford's new budget, in his own words, is "a prudent, balanced approach" which "does not hold out the hollow promise that we can wipe out inflation and unemployment overnight." Reagan refers to the federal government as an oppressive "foreign power." Under the Republican programs, slow recovery and continuing unemployment will hold down workers' ability to win higher wages, thereby boosting profits.

Democrats' Program

The dozen or so Democratic candidates are by no means united, ranging from Harris' sweeping reform and anti-trust proposals to Jackson's eternal enthusiasm for more bombers and Wallace's pretensions that he's about more than racism. Despite their important differences about other issues, however, most of the Democrats have similar positions on unemployment and recovery.

They favor strong government action, and increased spending, to speed up recovery and reduce unemployment. While their rhetoric occasionally attacks "big government," they are not really for major budget cuts. As Bayh put it somewhat defensively, "We will not cure all the problems that beset us merely by resorting to less government."

The Democrats, to be sure, believe in profits as much as any god-fearing U.S. politician; but their program envisions profits growing as a result of rising consumer and government purchases, rather than through the Republican approach of limiting wages.

The Democrats' program reflects the party's effort to maintain its labor and minority support. A recovery program must include a rapid reduction in unemployment to win the approval

of these groups. Rapid recovery is also favored by the liberal business interests -- those who usually prefer to buy off, rather than confront, protest and discontent -- who make up another part of the Democrats' base.

But while the Democratic program has short run benefits for working people, it is hardly a solution to the crisis of the mid-1970's. In fact, Democrats and Republicans have each chosen to hang their hopes on one half of the fundamental dilemma facing capitalism.

Costs versus Customers

In order to prosper, business must deal with two problems. On the one hand, it must keep its costs, including wages, low. On the other hand, it must find paying customers to whom it can sell its products at a profit. Each capitalist's ideal would undoubtedly be to pay his workers as little as possible, while selling products to better-paid workers from other businesses. For the system as a whole, no such solution is possible; the dilemma is basic to capitalism. Wages, a cost of production, must be kept down; wages, a source of consumer spending, must be kept up.

The Republicans attack the cost side of this dilemma. They are concerned with keeping wages down. In their view, the (Democratic) government spending of the 1960's caused rising wage costs, because low unemployment increased workers' bargaining power. To solve this problem they want to cut the budget, especially social services such as food stamps and Medicaid which supplement workers' incomes. Military spending, which does not increase most workers' incomes, is exempt from this budget-cutting pressure.

If the Republicans win the election, a short profit-led recovery could take place. But it would be inhibited by weak consumer demand. The housing industry, for instance, won't recover until a lot more people can afford new homes. And that won't happen as long as unemployment stays high.

The Democrats want to solve the consumer spending side of the basic dilemma. By increasing government spending or lowering taxes, they intend to reduce unemployment and create a lot more paying customers for business.

This program could also start a recovery. But insofar as it succeeds in lowering unemployment and keeping up social services, it would strengthen labor's ability to raise wages and cut into profits. In response, business would quite likely

go on a "capital strike": as in the energy crisis or the New York budget crisis, business would refuse to produce or invest until it was given "incentives" in the form of higher prices and profits.

After Recovery

Neither party's program holds much promise of a lasting recovery. So what's going to happen in 1978?

Whether the near future holds Democratic failures or Republican failures, important aspects of the attempted remedy will be the same. Either party will likely be pushed toward high government spending and some form of wage controls.

Republicans, finding that the lack of consumer spending limited their recovery, would most likely increase government spending to shore things up. However, fearful that this would again strengthen labor and squeeze profits, they would likely accompany new spending with wage controls.

Democrats would probably end up in the same place even faster. Indeed, as soon as their recovery began to succeed, pressure on profits, and therefore pressure for wage controls, would appear.

Controls on wages could take the form of Nixon's "wage-price controls" or some more thorough-going "incomes policy," in which the government steps into all major contract negotiations to push for limits on wage increases. Wage controls might well accompany moves by both business and government toward some sort of national economic planning.

Increased government intervention in the economy would not, however, mean smooth sailing for business. With government at the center of every major union negotiation, conflicts over wages could easily escalate into much broader conflicts over government policy on every front.

Despite the problems with this course, there's not much choice for the winner of next November's election. In every crisis, business wants government to plug up more leaks in the dike. But the government has a limited number of fingers to fill an ever-growing number of holes.

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Promise Them Anything

by Eric Chester, member at large

Jobs for the asking. Full employment. An end to the economic crisis. These are what the backers of the "Equal Opportunity and Full Employment Act" promise. The bill, introduced by Senator Humphrey and Representative Hawkins, has the support of George Meany and the AFL-CIO bureaucracy.

The bill would require the President to prepare an annual labor report, estimating the loss in output and jobs due to lack of full employment. The report would also detail measures needed to attain full employment. But the bill does not set a standard for "full employment," and its planning procedures are too vague to guide federal policy.

The key provision of the "Full Employment" bill is a federal guarantee of a job for everyone who wants one. Unfortunately, the job guarantee would not take effect until five years after the bill's passage. Thus it could not reduce the unemployment due to the current depression.

Even when implemented, the job guarantee would be a fraud. Local planning councils, as established under the existing CETA job training program, would prepare a list of needed services, such as child care and legal aid. The bill calls for community participation in local planning decisions, but the experience of the CETA act has

not been encouraging; machine control rather than community control has been the general rule.

People who were unemployed and unable to find work would register with a Standby Job Corps, which would assign them to the local planning councils to work on previously selected projects. But the bill provides that pay in the Job Corps shall be low enough to "effectively encourage" those in the corps to seek other, private employment. The wage scale cannot be set below the minimum wage, but this is already so low that those earning it who are supporting a family must go on welfare.

In other words, Humphrey's job guarantee is a guarantee of exploitation. The government would create public service positions at substandard wages. With a high turnover, those in the Job Corps would be unable to organize for better pay or working conditions. Those receiving the services, other poor and working people, would get substandard service, since morale in the Job Corps would be low and rapid turnover would make it difficult to develop on the job skills.

Full employment implies that those who want a job can find one at a wage which can adequately support them and their families. Humphrey's "Full Employment" bill provides none of that.



Pittsburgh Fights for Lifeline

by Judy MacLean, Pittsburgh NAM

NAM's People's Power Project (PPP) organized over 20 community, union, and senior citizen groups to testify at hearings held in Pittsburgh on a lifeline bill being introduced in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

Lifeline is a minimum amount of electricity for household necessities available at reasonable rates that cannot be raised.

The groups at the Pittsburgh hearing told the committee that lifeline is needed to avoid tragedies such as the death of a Pittsburgh area woman a week earlier following the shutting off of her gas.

But they also said that the present wording of the bill is unclear. It has been interpreted to say

that costs to the utilities as a result of lifeline rates could only be recovered through raises in rates on the rest of the residential consumption, and not on industrial and commercial users. Paul Garver of the PPP told the house subcommittee that all large users must bear the cost of the lifeline. This would reverse the present rate system, where small users subsidize large users.

The lifeline is an important reform for several reasons. It provides immediate relief for low-income people. A rate structure which penalized large users would discourage waste and lower demand for power. This would decrease the need for expensive investment in new plants, and therefore would lower rates. It could block plans for increasing investment in dangerous power

sources such as nuclear power.

But a lifeline that is paid for by residential users pits low income people against middle-income people, whose bills then become disproportionately high. Like food stamps and other welfare measures, it forces middle income people to subsidize low-income people.

The utilities groups in western Pennsylvania have not been divided by this tactic. The groups agree: a lifeline is necessary and large users must bear the cost.

The People's Power Project is now organizing a statewide network to make sure that a fair version of the lifeline bill passes. The group was previously successful in blocking rate hikes by Duquesne Light, the local electric company.

Shortcuts

DAYTON CITIZENS DEMAND LIFELINE

Over 200 Dayton, Ohio residents demonstrated February 18 to demand lifeline electric rates. The demonstration was part of a year-long campaign to force the city, which can regulate its utility rates, to provide enough electricity for necessities at a fixed, low cost. Earlier, over 65 people, including blacks, working people, and senior citizens, testified in favor of lifeline at a city hearing. The campaign, organized by NAM, is also working to prevent utility shut-offs.

MASS. TO VOTE ON LIFELINE

Small consumers are still fighting for lifeline electric rates in Massachusetts. After a withholding campaign directed at the Department of Public Utilities and an overwhelmingly favorable vote in the state House of Representatives, lifeline was stalled in the state Senate when the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee refused to release the bill for a vote. An initiative petition circulated last fall requires that the bill come to a vote by May.

TEAR GAS STUDIED FOR BICENTENNIAL

The role of tear gas in American history hasn't been neglected by Bicentennial officials. A "History of Tear Gas Used for Riot Control Study" is listed in the official register of Bicentennial activities. The project is described as a "history of the introduction of tear gas developed by scientists of the chemical warfare service during World War I, and its impact on American riots, labor disputes, and civil disorders in the 1920's." (LNS/Lancaster Independent Press)

NUCLEAR COMPANIES GET BREAK

Congress has overwhelmingly voted to extend the controversial Price-Anderson nuclear indemnity act for another ten years. The act protects power companies from citizens' law suits in the event of a nuclear accident. It limits the amount of money injured Americans can collect for damages from a nuclear catastrophe to less than a nickel for every dollar they lose. (Take Over)

WHO OWNS AMERICA?

Sylvia Porter, nationally syndicated financial writer, reports that "the individual owning stocks today more closely resembles the detested 1929 prototype of the 'bloated capitalist' than at any time since that crisis in American history. According to Porter, the average stockholder today is 53 years old, has an income of \$19,000 (the national average is \$11,800), and has a stock portfolio of \$10,500. (Common Sense)



WOMEN JAILED FOR SELF DEFENSE

Two black women, Dessie Woods and Cheryl Todd, were convicted last month for defending themselves against a white insurance agent who tried to rape them. The verdict in Hawkinsville, GA, came after the judge refused to accept a hung jury. Woods was found guilty of voluntary manslaughter and armed robbery, and faces up to 20 years in prison. Todd was acquitted of the murder charge, but convicted of "theft by taking," and faces up to 10 years in jail. The trial, conducted in a rural town of 4000, took place in an atmosphere of intimidation and terror, including school suspensions and threats to fire local black supporters of Todd and Woods. (Workers World/Militant)

KISSINGER SPEECH PROTESTED

Eight hundred demonstrators greeted Henry Kissinger as he tried to drum up support for President Ford's foreign policy in San Francisco last month. While the Secretary spoke, the demonstrators marched outside. They called for an end to U.S. intervention in Angola, support for the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, and a shift in government spending from the military to jobs and social services. (Barb)

JOB CORPS ATTACKS GAYS

The Job Corps has published a new manual on "Sexual Deviation," describing four types of homosexuality and calling for program directors to fire suspected gay people. The Job Corps claims that its purpose is to "increase the employability" of young people.

campus notes

•A lively demonstration at the University of Oregon's Presidential inauguration in Eugene prompted the local evening news to ask, "Is campus protest again on the rise?" The demonstration dominated news reports of the ceremony and was top headline in the state's largest circulation Sunday paper, 100 miles away.

A coalition of groups, including Friends of the Farmworkers, the Eugene Coalition, NAM, Third World Students, and others, sponsored the demonstration. They demanded no tuition hike (a 12% increase is scheduled for next year); no cutbacks (Minority Centers were closed this fall soon after William Boyd was appointed president); and Teamster lettuce off campus. The demonstration and guerrilla theater was directed at students rather than the mill owners and bankers who attended the inauguration. Ten people were arrested, including six students.

At a subsequent United Farm Workers demonstration, Boyd was presented with 3000 signatures supporting the removal of Teamster lettuce from campus. A referendum last spring had asked the same thing. The president replied that this was a moral matter which individuals could decide at the salad bar. He added proudly, "I am a capitalist."

•One hundred people attended a forum at Ohio University to hear speakers on Senate Bill One, a bill which would take away many of the freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights (see NAM Newspaper, December 1975). The forum, sponsored by Hocking Valley NAM, featured speakers from the National Lawyers Guild.

Pittsburgh Teachers End Eight Week Strike

by Anne Hill, Pittsburgh NAM

PITTSBURGH -- On January 27, the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers, Local 400 of the American Federation of Teachers, ratified a 2½ year contract by a vote of 1486 to 657, ending one of the longest teachers' strikes in history. The teachers won a good economic package, but lost important demands won in the last contract, such as smaller class sizes and job security.

The strike began December 1. In early January, the court-appointed School Board won an injunction ordering the teachers back to work. The injunction was based on Act 195, the Pennsylvania law which gives public employees the right to unionize and strike, but allows an injunction if a strike leads to "clear and present danger to public health, safety and welfare."

The union stood firm, and on Monday, January 5, there were more teachers on the picket line than there had been on the first day of the strike. On January 8, the same court which appoints the School Board found the union in contempt of court and promised to levy heavy fines against the PFT. The court cooperated with the Board's union-busting tactics by levying a fine of \$25,000 against the union on January 12, and an additional \$10,000 daily thereafter. To top it off, the court fined each striking teacher personally \$100 a day.

By the time of the settlement, the PFT had been fined a total of \$105,000. But the court's scare tactics backfired. Al Fondy, president of the PFT, appeared on television promising that no teacher would have to pay the personal fines. The teachers held firm, and even fewer scabs entered the schools the following week.

Food Employees Aid Strike

In the seventh week of the strike, Judge Ziegler, who had levied the fines against the union, appointed a specially fact-finding panel to hear both sides of the dispute and make recommendations for a settlement. He selected four white men and a white woman, all professionals. The panel recommended that the Board increase its money offer; Ziegler threatened to "burn" the report before making it public if "any progress" had been made in the negotiations. In the meantime, he padlocked the PFT office, froze its bank account, and threatened to sell the union's office equipment. The Amalgamated Food Employees Union Local 590 posted a security bond of \$100,000 to secure the PFT's office for the teachers.

As the strike dragged on, it became clear that the union was compromising on a big money package and giving up major educational demands for smaller classes and more reading specialists. The School Board and the union settled on a \$9.5 million package: teachers whose annual salaries now range from \$8700 to \$16,700 will receive a \$400 increase in April, and further salary hikes over the next 2½ years.

The Pittsburgh AFT settlement was clearly a conventional one, with economic gains but no gains in managerial power. In fact, the Board stalled the negotiations for weeks while refusing to bargain on issues such as class size, discipline, and the hiring of reading specialists, all of which were bargainable issues in the last contract.

In the end, the union simply held the line on class size, got a "promise" from the Board to review its earlier disciplinary decisions, and got one new reading specialist hired to serve the entire 100 schools in Pittsburgh.

The union traded job security for unemployment compensation. The Board will set up an unemployment compensation system, but permanent substitutes, who will probably be the first to be laid off, will not receive benefits. And Jerry Olson, Superintendent of the Pittsburgh public school system, has already announced that he plans to recommend to the Board that they eliminate 70 teaching positions by March 1.

The economic crunch hitting the working class has set off a wave of public employee strikes over the past year unprecedented in history. From the



sanitation workers in New York City to the social service workers in Pennsylvania to the teachers in Chicago to the policemen in San Francisco, public employees have struck for higher wages and better working conditions in an attempt to keep up with inflation and to fight the cutbacks coming down in all areas of the public sector. 25-30% of the members of the American Federation of Teachers have been on strike in the past year.

Unlike the '60's, the '70's are a time of hard bargaining. We can expect to see continued cutbacks and retrenchment facing teachers and other public employees around the country over the next few years.

The ratification vote by the Pittsburgh teachers was only two to one. 657 teachers voted to stay out after eight weeks to win something more on the educational demands.

"I voted against ratification because the purpose of the strike was not only to win higher salaries, but to win some demands which would help to improve the quality of education in this city," said Dena Meyers, an elementary teacher. "And I'm angry that the union leadership sold us out on these issues! I would have stayed out eight more weeks to force the Board to give us a decent settlement on class size and more reading specialists."

Why was the Board able to get away with a settlement that offered no educational improvements? One reason was that the union failed to take advantage of public support. Other unions offered the PFT all kinds of help. Parents, community leaders, and the Left community offered support. People jammed the open School Board meeting and held a public demonstration to demand that the Board accept the union's demands.

But PFT president Al Fondy kept the reins on everyone, and insisted on the teachers toughing it out to the bitter end on their own. Active and vocal public and labor support could have only strengthened the union. The teachers should have been talking to the community, especially the parents, to win them to their side.

Talking Politics

The Board consciously tried to sway public opinion to its side throughout the strike. Months before the strike, it released the scores of Pittsburgh school children on the Metropolitan Test, a nationwide standardized test. The test showed Pittsburgh children scoring in the lowest levels, and the Board blamed the teachers.

The union should have been talking politics: explaining that education should be financed by a progressive tax structure and not off the backs of the working class; that the Board must give attention to the special needs of black children in the city; and that parents and teachers must cooperate to give direction to the public school system.

What role should socialists play in such struggles? There are many socialists and other radicals in the AFT around the country. We must get together and begin to exert some pressure on the locals to which we belong and in which we work; eventually, we must pressure the AFT nationally.

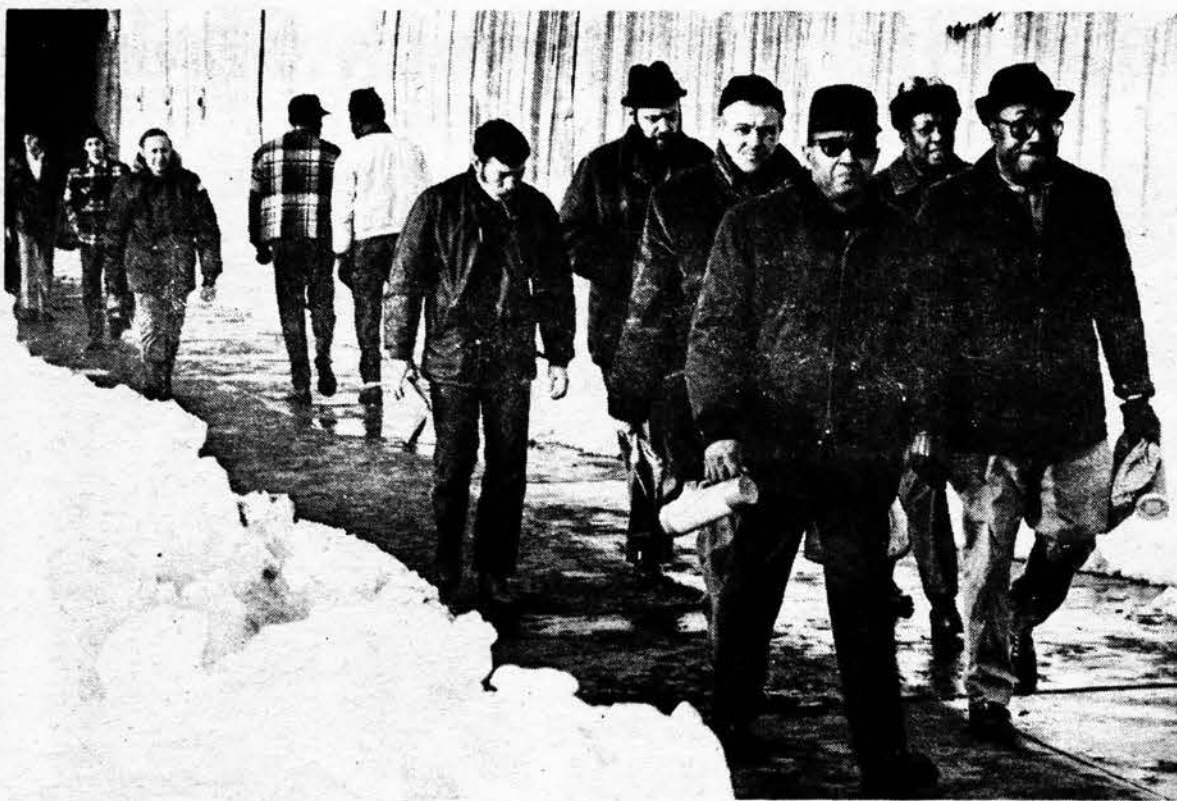
One problem for socialists in Pittsburgh, inside and outside the PFT, was that we were unable to raise significant issues and lend direction to the union's approach to the strike, and at the same time give the union the full support it needed in the face of the School Board and Judge Ziegler's union-busting tactics and anti-union coverage by the media. Most of us disagreed with the union's demand around discipline, but other teachers often felt that our attempts to discuss this issue were divisive. Problems remain, but we must continue to participate in and support working class struggles such as the Pittsburgh public teachers' strike, recognizing that only through such efforts will the Left in this country grow to be a significant political force.



WOMEN BEHIND BARS

AN ORGANIZING TOOL

... an important new booklet which provides an overview of conditions women face in this country's jails and prisons with an eye toward what can and is being done to bring about fundamental change. Included are over 100 capsule descriptions of groups giving prisoners political support and services, such as legal education projects, bail funds and prisoner unions. Articles detail the problems of female prisoners, analyse the role of prisons in society, suggest organizing tactics, and outline the legal system of the People's Republic of China. There are also sketches of six U.S. women political prisoners and interviews with three ex-cons. Annotated listings describe print and audio-visual resources. 56pp., \$1.75, free to prisoners. Resources for Community Change, PO Box 21066, Washington, DC 20009



LMS

1976 labor contracts

4.5 Million Workers for Sale

by Chris Ghibelline, Newspaper Collective

There's a lot of "cautious optimism" from the big boys on the labor front this year, from the Chairman of General Motors to vice presidents of the UAW to William Utery, the new Secretary of Labor and Gerald Ford's top labor troubleshooter. As Utery said, "No major strikes of long duration are probable in major industries next year."

But rank and file American workers have not been heard from yet. They may have something different to say when contracts affecting 4.5 million union members come up in 1976.

Catching Up

The biggest issue is runaway inflation. The seven major contract areas -- auto, trucking, construction, electrical, tire, garment, and food -- were last negotiated in 1973. Since then wages have risen by 20.2%. But a 21.7% inflation rate, combined with skyrocketing taxes, has resulted in a real income loss of 9% for the average union member. The 60% of the workforce which is unorganized is even worse off.

"We have got to have catch-up increases to make up for inflation," says a top negotiator for the International Union of Electrical Workers. Layoffs and rising unemployment have also sparked demands for job security and increased unemployment benefits.

The Ford Administration wants to hold the wage increase level at 10%. Corporations will fight this, but even if the unions win a 10% increase, they will merely catch up to where they were in 1973. With continuing inflation, a slip back in real income will follow. Meanwhile, the average corporate profit in 1975 was 19.1%.

Excesses

In the current negotiations for the Master Freight Agreement between the Teamsters Union and the trucking industry, Teamster president Fitzsimmons announced a contract target of a 44% increase over three years. (Fitzsimmons' move was partly a response to rank and file pressure; see the February issue of the *New American Movement*.) Reports indicate that both Fitzsimmons and the trucking industry, which denounced the initial target as "excessive," are willing to settle for a 30% increase. This would put truckers behind infla-

tion. So rank and file pressure for a cost of living escalator is growing.

67,000 members of the United Rubber Workers union are still angry over their 1973 contract. It provided a 5% wage hike over three years with no cost of living allowance. "It won the sellout of the year award," one rank and filer said. Union president Peter Bommarito was seriously challenged in this year's URW convention. He knows his career (and his \$45,000 a year salary) is over if he continues his pattern of sellouts. He will have to produce a 20% a year gain to make up for past damage. Since signs indicate that the companies are in a fighting mood, we can look for real conflict in the rubber industry.

The contract affecting the most workers -- 717,000 auto workers at GM, Ford, Chrysler, and American Motors -- runs out in September. The main issue in negotiations will be a response to unemployment. 68,000 workers are currently out of work. The Supplementary Unemployment Benefits (SUB) fund was exhausted a few months after the epidemic of layoffs in 1974.

Despite UAW president Leonard Woodcock's initial talk of boosting employer contributions to SUB and shortening the work week, it seems that the UAW leadership is going to continue the support for management it has shown over issues like exhaust controls, foreign imports, and government subsidies. "Militant demands that would reduce the industry's competitiveness are not in the workers' interest, the UAW realizes," reports *Business Week* magazine.

Scared Off

Contracts involving public workers may be another area of union retreat. "The New York City scare has done its job," Terry Herndon, leader of the 1.4 million member National Education Association, said recently. The New York City transit workers, up for contract this month, have already indicated that they will agree to a wage freeze which will leave them unprotected against inflation for the next three years.

Politicians, businessmen, and labor experts agree that unions are taking a moderate stance. In other words, they've been scared off by the economic crises, the threat of unemployment, and the power of big business. But rank and file movements in such industries as trucking and auto may change that moderation to militancy.

•More than a million of the three million workers who built ships for the Navy during World War II will die of cancer or other job-related diseases caused by exposure to asbestos. Asbestos, which was used to insulate pipes and valves of World War II ships, causes lung and stomach cancers which often appear 20 to 30 years after exposure.

Early medical treatment can sometimes cure asbestos-caused ailments, according to Dr. Irving Selikoff, the nation's leading expert on these diseases. But Selikoff charges that the Navy has deliberately kept quiet about the danger to shipyard workers, even though it has known about it for at least five years. By depriving workers of information which would allow prompt treatment, the Navy hopes to avoid an avalanche of compensation claims that might follow any publicity.

•Over 300 Los Angeles residents crowded into City Hall last month to apply for a single unskilled job. Unemployed workers began lining up at 4:00 a.m. The job as an elevator mechanic's helper had not been publicized, but letters had been sent to some previous applicants for city jobs.

•A young French judge has jailed a factory owner for the death of one of his employees. The employee, Roland Willaume, was handicapped, and died as a result of unsafe working conditions. The judge said, "I only regret that more businessmen are not locked up over work accidents for which they are responsible." In reaction to the jailing, French executives and engineers went on strike, and the judge's ruling is almost certain to be overturned by a higher court.



Science for the People

labor notes

•Five members of a California rank and file clerical workers' caucus have been elected to their union's executive board. The caucus, Clerks County, was formed in 1972 by members of SEIU Local 616, which represents half of Alameda County's employees. Its platform called for a democratic union with rank and file leadership, affirmative action for women and minorities, and joint political action with other locals against layoffs. In spite of a red-baiting campaign by conservative union officials, and the removal of one caucus candidate from the ballot on a technicality, the caucus won in five of the seven races, while the old conservative majority was able to elect only one candidate.

•In 1974, Rheingold brewery workers in Brooklyn accepted a wage freeze, 300 layoffs, and a speed-up as part of their new contract. The Teamsters Union locals agreed to the \$10 million in concessions after the company threatened to close down the brewery. The agreement was widely hailed as a "victory for New York" by local politicians. But now, after two years, the company has decided to sever the contract and shut down production anyway. About 300 production workers, who had voted for the contract because they were promised it would save their jobs, have suddenly found themselves unemployed. To compensate for the closing of the Brooklyn plant, Rheingold does not plan to hire more workers elsewhere, but will speed up production in its New Jersey brewery instead.

Growers Torpedo Cal. Farm Labor Law

by Marianne Goldstein

If California agricultural interests have their way, there will be no more union elections among the state's farm workers. Last month, just as the state's new Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB) began to operate effectively, it was forced to end its work. The necessary funding bill has been blocked in the state legislature by Teamster and grower interests who are worried by the number of farm workers choosing the United Farm Workers (UFW) as their bargaining representative.

Farm workers have organized to improve wages and working conditions for over ninety years. In the last ten years the United Farm Workers, led by Caesar Chavez, has built a large and militant organization. Through grass roots organizing and use of consumer boycotts on a national scale, the union was able to win contracts with some grape and lettuce growers in 1970.

When the first contracts ended in 1973, many of these growers signed "sweetheart" contracts with the Teamsters Union. (A sweetheart contract is one in which a union agrees not to press workers' demands too hard, and is therefore tolerated by management.) That summer the UFW went on strike. Picketers were beaten, and two were killed as growers, Teamsters, and police tried to stop the growing organization.

Last summer, continuing unrest in the fields and a nationwide consumer boycott forced growers to agree to a compromise Agricultural Labor Relations Act in California. The purpose of the act, according to its preamble, was to "ensure peace in the agricultural fields ... to bring certainty and a sense of fair play to the presently unstable and potentially volatile condition in the state." Giving farm workers an effective voice in determining their wages and working conditions was not a primary goal.

Union Busting

As the petitions for the first elections were filed with the ALRB, growers used the full spectrum of union-busting devices to defeat the UFW in the elections. They doctored lists of employees to make it appear that less than 50% had signed the union authorization cards required before an election. Workers who were active UFW members were fired before the elections. On many farms, workers were bused to and from the election by company supervisors in an attempt to intimidate them.

Initial enforcement of the new law was chaotic. At first, no state agents were assigned to investigate unfair labor practices. ALRB administrators saw their jobs as mediators who could meet everyone half way.

One report from Fresno County during the first month described a typical situation. A grower fired a worker who had solicited authorization cards for the UFW after a petition for an election was filed. ALRB investigators found the firing to be discriminatory, but would not order the worker to be reinstated before the election.



The UFW lost the election, and the next day every worker who had voted for the union was fired.

In spite of the difficulties in enforcing fair elections, by the end of the first round of elections the UFW had won 57% of the 339 decided elections; the Teamsters had won 36%, leaving 7% voting for no union. Another 42 elections were not yet certified pending hearings on the challenges of their validity.

By the end of January, the UFW had negotiated the first contracts under the new law, covering 3000 workers at 16 farms. The contracts provide a minimum wage of \$3.10 an hour, to be raised to \$3.35 by 1978. Piece rates and the hourly rate for overtime have been increased. Employers must now contribute more to the workers' medical and pension plans, while health and safety standards have been improved.

Sabotaging the ALRB

By the end of January, growers found a convenient opportunity to stop the momentum of the UFW's victories. The funding for the new act proved to be inadequate. When passed, the act included only \$1.5 million for staff operations, which grossly underestimated the number of petitions the ALRB would have to process. As the money ran out, the Board borrowed an additional \$1.2 million and waited for the state to vote a \$3.8 million supplement for the rest of the year.

The supplementary budget requires a two-thirds vote to pass, giving the growers and Teamsters an opportunity to defeat the bill. The grower bloc hopes to hold the bill hostage and force changes in the law.

For example, the present law provides for representation elections at peak season, so that the majority of workers can vote. The growers want to extend the time between the filing of a petition and the voting. This would allow elections to occur after peak season, disenfranchising many migrant workers who must move on to the next harvest. The growers also want the law to recognize labor contractors as employers. The UFW has worked to end the labor contractor system and put in its place a union hiring hall and a seniority system.

As a result of the growers' efforts, the funding for the ALRB ran out on February 6. The ALRB staff has been cut from 175 to 25, and investigations of unfair labor practices and representation elections have ceased.

Although the California legal mechanisms have broken down, the UFW continues to rely on the strength of its organized members and supporters. The boycott continues against non-union grapes and lettuce, as well as against Gallo wines.

Many stores which had agreed not to stock these items started again last summer when the

law was passed. A new boycott has now started of Sun-Maid Raisins, Sun-Sweet Prunes, and other Diamond-Sun-Sweet products. The grower cooperative which markets these products was instrumental in blocking supplementary funds for the ALRB.

The result of the California ALRB elections have demonstrated that the majority of farm workers want the UFW as their union. The United Farm Workers understand, however, that the success of their struggle cannot depend on state laws regulating labor relations. Instead, they must rely on their organized power in the fields and boycott support around the country to fight the greed of agribusiness interests.

AIM SUPPORTERS WIN AT PINE RIDGE

American Indian Movement (AIM) supporters won an important victory on Pine Ridge reservation when long time Oglala Sioux tribal chairman Wilson was defeated by reformer Al Trimble in elections last month. Wilson, whose corruption was well known on the reservation, had hired a personal goon squad to intimidate and sometimes kill opponents. The goons were paid with federal funds or given jobs in tribal offices, in return for their harassment of the people who wished to replace the present tribal government -- controlled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs -- with a traditional form of government. (ZNS/Barb)

ASSATA SHAKUR ACQUITTED

A Brooklyn jury has found black militant Assata Shakur not guilty of robbery and kidnapping. She had been charged with holding up a convicted heroin pusher, allegedly in connection with the Black Liberation Army.

In a statement to the jury, she said, "The government is on a witch-hunt for people who it considers militant. Why? All you have to ask is who controls this government. One percent of the population of this country controls 70% of the entire wealth of the U.S. If you know that, then you know who controls the government, and who is going to be the victim of that government ...

"The concept of the Black Liberation Army arose, and stands for, a whole movement, because of the fact that black people are not equal or free. Ninety percent of the men and women in prison in this country are black and Third World. Ten year old black kids get shot in the back by white cops. Where there is oppression, there will be resistance, and the Black Liberation Army is a part of that resistance." (Off Our Backs/Workers World)



book review

Work Gets Worse

Labor and Monopoly Capital

by Harry Braverman

Monthly Review Press, New York and London

by Kathy Moore, Newspaper Collective

Labor and Monopoly Capital is finally available in paperback. It is an important book, beautifully written and more approachable than many books about the economy because it is about work, the side of the economy most of us are all too familiar with.

Labor and Monopoly Capital documents the transformation of crafts and occupations which once challenged the mental and physical faculties of craftspeople into a series of thousands of petty tasks that dull and destroy the human mind, but are ideally suited for control by management. Braverman traces the development of some occupations which have already been thoroughly routinized, today's "blue collar" jobs. He traces, for example, the anti-development of the weaver into the textile worker. In the mid-nineteenth century, Jonathan Mayhew wrote,

"The weavers were, formerly, almost the only bontanists in the metropolis, and their love of flowers to this day is a strongly marked characteristic of their class. ... There was at one time a Floricultural Society, a Historical Society and a Mathematical Society, all maintained by the operative silk weavers; and the celebrated Dolland, the inventor of the achromatic telescope, was a weaver; so, too, were Simpson and Edwards, the mathematicians, before they were taken into the employ of the Government, to teach mathematics to the cadets at Woolwich and Chatham."

White Collar

Braverman also charts the development of "white collar" occupations, the planning, managerial, engineering, and marketing operations once part of craft production. He shows how intellect has been divided from execution for the sake of profit; how the brainwork and paperwork which would once have been done by a tinsmith or weaver have been categorized as separate white collar work called "engineering" or "management." And he tells how this higher status labor was itself eventually subjected to the same "scientific" management that has made manual work so deadening.

Braverman details the transformation of the secretary into a "word processor" whose typing speed is monitored by a clock and whose every motion has been timed and measured, so that she can be disciplined in exactly how to move each part of her body as she turns toward the filing cabinet. *A Guide to Office Clerical Time Standards*, put together with the help of GE, Stanford University, General Tire and Rubber, and a number of other firms, allows the following times for some standard office procedures:

open and close	minutes
file drawer, open and close, no selection	.04
folder, open or close flaps	.04
desk drawer, open side drawer	.014
open center drawer	.026
close side	.015
close center	.027

chair activity	minutes
get up from chair	.033
sit down in chair	.033
turn in swivel chair	.009
move in chair to adjoining desk or file	.050

Braverman shows that the distinction between blue and white collar, productive and unproductive labor, has become artificial, not just because of the similarity in "clerical" and "operative" wages, but because the division was an artificial one to begin with. Capitalists once created an artificial division between the conception and planning of physical production and its execution. They are now dividing, routinizing,

and demeaning the tasks once associated with intellect.

In demonstrating this process, Braverman makes several political points which can hardly be emphasized enough. He describes eighteenth and nineteenth century craftspeople attending lectures in physics to keep abreast of developments which might affect their crafts, and designing new machinery and new industrial processes. He illustrates quite convincingly that work is not boring because people are stupid or uneducated, but rather the reverse. Capitalism has demeaned work, and in the process attacked the intelligence and the creativity of its workers.

He cites a nineteenth century description of an American "working boy": "... having mastered one part of his business, he is never content until he has mastered it all. Doing one mechanical operation well, and only that one, does not satisfy him or his employer. He is ambitious to do something more than a set task, and therefore he must master all. The second part of his trade he is allowed to learn as a reward for becoming master of the first, and so on to the end, if he may ever be said to arrive at that. The restless activity of mind and body -- the anxiety to improve his own department of industry -- the facts constantly before him of ingenious men who have solved economical and mechanical problems to their own profit and elevation, are all stimulative and encouraging; and it may be said that there is not a working boy of average ability in the New England States, at least, who has not an idea of some mechanical invention or improvement in manufactures."

At the same time, Braverman establishes that the work process has not been divided and trivialized because this organization is efficient in some abstract, neutral technological sense. This is not a particularly efficient way to produce things; it is a particularly efficient way to pay most workers less than they could make if they needed more skills. It is an efficient way to make profits.

He uses Babbage's table of wages paid for different operations of pin manufacture in the early nineteenth century:

drawing wire	man	3s. 3d.
straightening wire	woman	1s. 0d.
	girl	0s. 6d.
pointing	man	5s. 3d.
heading	woman	1s. 3d.
tinning and whitening	man	6s. 0d.
	woman	3s. 0d.
papering	woman	1s. 6d.



cps

and concludes that "if the minimum pay for a craftsman capable of performing all operations is no more than the highest pay in the above listing, and if such craftsmen are employed exclusively, then the labor cost of manufacture would be more than doubled, even if the very same division of labor were employed and even if the craftsman produced pins at the very same speed as the detail workers." The "efficiency" of the capitalist division of labor is that it permits most workers to be relegated to drudgery and paid for drudgery, since they are easily replaced.

Labor and Monopoly Capital is an approachable book because it is about work, about our experience. It does portray capital as the moving force in social change and workers as the victims of those changes. But it is a helpful book because it shows exactly why work as we know it is as hateful as it is, and how and where and why it is getting worse.



Hard Times Conference, cont.

company has cut production crews and extended the shifts of those who remain. A third of the workforce has been laid off at times during the past year and a half. Incentive payments are used to increase productivity of those working, and the laid-off draw \$95 a week. "Workers would fare much better if there were an across-the-board raise," Sam said, "but the company doesn't want it because it would cost more money and would end some of the divisions among workers."

The same story was repeated by auto workers and construction workers -- layoffs, speed-ups, division among workers, a confused and submissive union leadership. Pete Kelley, the co-chairman of the United National Caucus opposition in the United Auto Workers, complained that with as many as 200,000 auto workers jobless, the companies are still working people overtime, because it's cheaper to pay time-and-a-half than to hire another worker and pay a second set of insurance premiums and other benefits.

With 50% unemployment among construction workers in New York, desperation is leading to some strange alliances. Black organizer Jim Haughton has been opening up construction sites to black workers through direct action since 1963. Fight Back, his organization, went to job sites and threatened to physically shut them down if they didn't hire more blacks. Needless to say, neither contractors nor the racist construction union leaders loved him. Now both of those unlikely allies are being approached by Haughton to join with the black community in pressuring the federal government for a \$10 billion program to build or renovate inner city housing for poor people. Each has something to gain in creating jobs to build black housing, and they've just started listening to Haughton "only because of the crisis. Not only do we fight for a


fair crack for the minority, but we say we need this program for whites as well. I'm talking about 50,000 construction workers marching down Pennsylvania Avenue."

"Things have certainly changed," said Pete Kelley, who was attacked as a communist in the '50's when, fresh from Ireland, he mused about how a poor rural country could have better medical care through socialized medicine than the rich United States. "Today you can go into the plants and talk about things you couldn't even mention in the '50's. Vietnam, Watergate, CIA -- it's all having its effect. People are fed up, but they don't know which way to go. They could go left, they could go right."

"Where are the workers? The white worker is disturbed. He doesn't know where to go. He sees the Democratic Party as nigger-lovers and the Republicans in bed with the corporations. And he thinks the company should make a profit. Yet he's going to react if anyone tries to take anything away from him. In 1973 the UAW inserted a harmony clause with the company. They may be reactionary and they may be backward, but they're not stupid."

When all the cheering, applauding, hugging, and stamping has faded, where will the Hard Times Conference have gone? There was a great deal said at the conference that a majority of Americans would agree with. Given some information and argument, they might agree with more. Shown an ability to win victories and a sincere interest by would-be activists in their everyday problems, many people would even join in some action.

But the militant speechmaking of the weekend could not conceal the weakness of national organizing, the lack of coherent strategy, the absence of deep and solid ties between most of the conference-goers and any workplace or community. All of these hinder the expansion of the impressive 2000 person conference into a formidable 2,000,000 person movement.



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International Women's Day

Better Than Mothers Day

by Elayne Rapping, Pittsburgh NAM

For most American women there is only one women's holiday in the year, one day out of 365 when we are singled out and honored for our enormous contributions to society -- Mother's Day. On that day women are wined and dined, given candy, flowers, breakfast in bed, dinner out. But there is no mention of the cultural, political, or economic functions women serve in capitalist society. It is all blurred into a sentimental image of femininity: The American Mother, soft and sweet, eternally loving, giving, and caring.

But there is another, more meaningful women's holiday which most American women know nothing about. On March 8, women all over the world will be meeting and marching in honor of International Women's Day, a socialist working women's holiday with a proud history and a profound political significance for women.

It's not surprising that Americans know so little about this holiday and so much about Mother's Day, for the image of women as "mothers" is central to the structure of capitalist society. Women are supposed to live private domestic lives, isolated from their sisters, unpaid for their labors, lacking the political consciousness or organization to understand or effect changes in their lives.

A Different Image of Femininity

The history and tradition of International Women's Day, on the other hand, is based on a totally different image of femininity. From the start, International Women's Day has celebrated the victories of women working together to change the political and economic conditions of their lives.

It began here in the United States. The organizers of the first "Woman's Day" were socialist women, most of them New York City garment workers, who had been engaged in a series of long, bitter, and brutally fought strikes. On March 8, 1908, they called for massive demonstrations and marched under banners demanding an end to the intolerable working conditions of the sweatshop, the inhuman child labor practices of the day, the right to child care facilities, equal pay for equal work, and the vote.

Clara Zetkin, a leader of the German Socialist Party, was so impressed by the heroism of these women that she called upon the Second International Congress to proclaim March 8 an international working women's holiday to be celebrated in every country.

The first official International Women's Day took place in 1911. All over Europe and America, women left their children with their husbands to attend meetings and demonstrations. The political impact of these events was incalculable. Never before had masses of working women gathered together in recognition of, and struggle against, the injustice and exploitation they suffered as women and as workers. Gradually these women began to see the connection between these two forms of oppression -- sex and class. They saw that under capitalism, a system in which a few men own and control most of the resources of the society, women could never achieve liberation. And they began to link their struggles to the broader struggle for socialist revolution which would put the resources of the society in the hands of the people themselves.

The Women of Petrograd

The women of Petrograd, marching on International Women's Day to demand bread, democracy, and the ending of the imperialist war, sparked off the Russian Revolution of 1917. This socialist revolution accomplished more for women than any other event in history. For the first time, women gained full civil, legal, political, and economic rights.

However, in twenty years' time, many of the most important gains made by Soviet women -- the laws liberalizing divorce, birth control, and restrictions against homosexuality -- were repealed. It became clear that a socialist revolution was not enough to create full liberation for women, psychologically and culturally as well as politically and economically. From this lesson women learned that the struggle against sexism would have to be waged before, during, and after the revolutionary struggle, by women working in their own organizations as well as mixed, socialist organizations. In other words, the need for a revolution that would be feminist as well as socialist was clear.

For women's oppression under capitalism

takes two forms. As workers outside the home, women receive less pay, job security, and status than men. But this economic discrimination is related to the other source of women's oppression -- their position as unpaid workers in the home.

For housewives and mothers are workers. They do the socially necessary labor of maintaining the home, bearing and raising children, and providing men with the emotional support and comfort they find nowhere else in the cut-throat world of capitalist work and play. And this feminine role of physical and emotional caretaker extends outside the home to the workplace itself, where most women hold traditionally "feminine," that is, "housewifely," jobs as secretaries, nurses, teachers, waitresses, and so on.

Women's Struggles

As socialists and feminists, then, we must celebrate International Women's Day in two ways. First, we must continue to wage and support the struggles of women in the United States and everywhere where they are oppressed by American capitalism and imperialism. But we must also attack the cultural roots of sexism which, by keeping women in their "place," help maintain the stability of capitalism.

This means we must commit ourselves to struggle against all manifestations of male dominance and exploitation, whether sexual, political, or economic, because they are all related. We must attack the laws that force some women to be sterilized against their will, and others to bear unwanted children.

We must defend the rights of lesbians to live outside the capitalist norm of the heterosexual, male-dominated nuclear family.

We must demand that women of all races and classes receive such basic necessities as economic security, adequate health care, and full child care facilities, without which no decent, much less "free" life is possible.

We must demand an end to the sexual violence and exploitation of individual women by men.

And we must support the struggles of women all over the globe to free themselves and their people from the global violence and exploitation of United States imperialism.

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